



Xcel Energy volunteers help sort Shoebox Project donations at our United Way office.

UNITED WAY NEWSLETTER

IMPACT IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR *"United Way Year in Review"*

Jan Porath, Executive Director, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

2014 was another active year for our United Way. We began the year by celebrating community generosity at the Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards recognizing the achievements of the 2013 campaign and highlighted individuals who make a difference in our community, often times quietly, with their time, talent and treasure. United Way is proud to report raising \$2,162,000 in 2013 and the results for 2014 continue to be reported.

The Emerging Leaders coordinated two new special event fundraisers including Dueling Pianos by Piano Fondue, and Wisctoberfest. United Way helped recruit volunteers as part of the National Association of Letter Carriers food drive, Global Youth Service Day, and a record-breaking 744 volunteers as part of the 20th annual Day of Caring and published the Volunteer Guide. We celebrated 50 Years in the Valley with a special Gala on June 19th. We teamed up with Wal-Mart for the "Fill the Bus" school supply drive and Target as part of "Give a Tree" where surplus Christmas trees are donated to local families.

The 26th annual United Way Golf Tournament was by all accounts a success and allowed us to add dollars to the United Way endowment fund. The 1st annual Community Block Party was held last September to kickoff our 2014 community campaign and more importantly draw attention to education, income and health initiatives and programs. The Emerging Leaders held the 4th annual Shoebox Project where thousands of dollars worth of personal care items were collected, sorted and distributed to local agencies.

United Way serves as a convener for the Bi-County Emergency Food and Shelter Program and last year worked with the local EFSP board and 17 agencies to allocate \$58,739 funded by FEMA to support local food and shelter needs. Annual progress reports completed by 41 Program Partner organizations indicate over 65,000 services provided to Chippewa Valley residents last year.

Started in the spring of 2014, in partnership with 50 volunteers, United Way began application review and grant making. Details of the process are outlined in page 5 of this newsletter and at the time of print, the review committees and councils have made recommendations to United Way's board of directors for approval at the January 2015 board meeting. This is a major undertaking for the organization and I express my gratitude to the volunteers who took their role seriously and made the time to read, process, analyze, and consider the applications. The work completed will lead our organization for the near future and launch the community impact work that has been years in the making.

All of this couldn't be done without hundreds of volunteers and dedicated staff—to our good fortune, we have both. 2012 Campaign Chair Peg Leinenkugel often cited the quote, "Many hands make light work" (John Heywood) to describe the power of volunteerism and the impact that it can have. We have room for many more hands; I invite you to become involved in your United Way.





GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

SAVE THE DATE - SUBMIT YOUR NOMINATIONS

Spirit Awards to celebrate 2014 campaign and those in the community who are making a difference

Every year, we celebrate the achievements made and efforts given to make the United Way campaign a success at our Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards (formerly Gold Awards). On this special night, we also honor individuals and organizations that are making a significant impact on our community.

On Tuesday, March 31st, 2015, we will once again enjoy dinner and ceremony at The Florian Gardens as we commemorate the 2014 campaign and this landmark year for United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley. Registration for this event is available on our website, or you can RSVP by phone at 715-834-5043.

Our United Way is also again asking our community members to submit nominations of individuals and nonprofit organizations who are serving the common good of our community. Nominations are being accepted in the following categories:

- **Humanitarian Award** – Honors an individual for their efforts to make the Chippewa Valley a better place to live by action, philanthropy, volunteerism and involvement.
- **Senn Award** – Established in 1998 by Kaye and Steve Senn, this award honors an individual for their professional excellence and achievement in the nonprofit sector.
- **Nonprofit Excellence** – Honors a nonprofit agency for their efforts to make the Chippewa Valley a better place to live by demonstrating superior performance, quality and consistency in pursuit of its mission.
- **Outstanding Emerging Leader** – Recognizes an individual for their remarkable dedication to the Emerging Leader Society through a mixture of leadership and volunteerism

These are among the most prestigious awards our United Way presents, and we rely on community members to provide worthy candidates who go above and beyond to serve our community and its residents. Nomination forms are available online, or can be e-mails or faxed by request.

To learn more about the Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards or to submit a nomination, visit www.uwgc.org/chippewa-valley-spirit-awards.

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Nomination Deadline is February 6, 2015



Clint Markin (left) receiving Outstanding Emerging Leader Award from Dustin Olson



Jan Porath (right) presenting the Humanitarian Award to the Sheridan family for Terry Sheridan



Wynne Cook (left) receiving Senn Award from Dustin Olson



Rachel Keniston of The Community Table (right) receiving Nonprofit Excellence Award from Clint Markin



THE FORGOTTEN VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Children suffer consequences when witnessing domestic violence in the home

More than one in three women and one in four men in the United States have experienced intimate partner violence (IPV) at some point in their lifetime (rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner). The breakdown for Wisconsin is very similar (32% of women and 23% of men).



But what of the children who see a parent threatened, demeaned or hurt? Who hear fighting and abuse through their bedroom wall? Who wake up to see bruises on a parent's face? Who may be manipulated by an abusing parent to hurt the victim. For children living in households where domestic abuse is taking place, they exist in an environment of continual tension and fear. They carry this anxiety with them wherever they go, potentially affecting school performance and social relationships.

More than 3 million children witness domestic violence in their homes every year as reported by Safe Horizon, the largest victims' services agency in the United States. These children also suffer abuse or neglect at high rates (30% to 60%). Locally, Bolton Refuge House in Eau Claire and Family Support Center in Chippewa Falls have provided services to just under 500 children in the past year.

The effect of children's exposure to IPV is significant. In fact, in the opinion of Bolton Refuge House Executive Director Pat Stein, "It's just as damaging to a child to witness it as it is to experience it."

Erika Stevens, domestic violence youth advocate for Family Support Center, agrees. "The threat of violence is equally as triggering and traumatic as the act of violence." Even in the case of children who don't witness the violence directly, their imagination will make up for or magnify the violence of words or actions they hear behind closed doors. Even in infants, the effects are very noticeable, such as low weight, absence of smiling, and general disengagement. Stein explains how, many times, the victimized parent will think the infant is simply an "easy baby," and not realize the child is being adversely affected.

Emotional, cognitive and physical development of a child is most critical from birth to five. For children who grow up in a home with domestic violence, Stevens states, that development is adversely affected.

According to the "Children's Trust Fund Report, Adverse Childhood

Experiences (ACEs) in Wisconsin 2010", there is a strong association between traumatic experiences in childhood and mental and physical health struggles in adulthood. Specific to witnessing domestic abuse, adults who lived through this adverse childhood experience were found to be more likely to have physical and mental health problems, engage in high-risk behaviors, have a lower quality of life and be more likely to lack health care or be enrolled in Wisconsin Medicaid programs. They had an increased likelihood of depression, cancer, diabetes, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), substance abuse, smoking, ischemic heart disease, chronic bronchitis or emphysema, skeletal fractures, suicide and homelessness.

Exposure to parental violence as a child has been found to be a strong predictor of whether a person experiences domestic violence in adulthood. Living through domestic violence can also lead to habits of violence and coercion as a learned behavior to resolve conflict. And, as the child may blame themselves for the physical and verbal abuse occurring between parents, so they can in turn assign blame to other victims of abuse, or to those they would abuse.

Most critical to the problem of intimate partner violence is its tendency to perpetuate future violence. Long-term effects of exposure will lead to men who are more likely to abuse their intimate partners, and women who are less likely to seek help should they experience domestic violence. And so the cycle continues—creating assailant and victim, unless early intervention can occur. The best hope to end, or at least greatly reduce, domestic violence may very well be to focus on children.

Addressing Children's Exposure to Intimate Partner Violence

Upon first encounter, Stein states the importance of establishing individual needs in the child, and this begins by utilizing the protective parent's knowledge of the situation: what did the child witness, was the child also abused, is the child exhibiting particular characteristics and behaviors (tantrums, biting, hitting)? Dialogue is initiated between child and parent or guardian. In this way, not only does the case worker get to know the child and situation better, but also builds the child/parent relationship, which likely has been interrupted or damaged because the parent was too overwhelmed as a victim of abuse to effectively perform the role of parent.



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Domestic Violence - continued

“It’s heartbreaking to see a young child consoling their parent,” Stein says, expressing how fractured this relationship can become.

Age of the child is a key factor in how the trauma of domestic abuse is addressed. Stevens describes working with her younger clients through games and activities to bring out what the child can’t verbalize. Last year, Family Support Center began using art therapy and says it has been extremely successful for both child and family.

With teenagers, the advocate or case worker has the best success with allowing them to lead the discussion by setting their own goals. Most important is to establish an environment that is safe and confidential, a place where they feel in control. “Research shows the importance of youth having a healthy relationship with an adult,” Stevens says. When the advocate, as an adult, is able to validate the feelings shared by a teen, Stevens says it can be a very healing experience for them.

Safety planning is another important element to building children’s resilience. These are individual strategies, personal to each child and family, that identify safe people, places, things, and practices.

It includes ways to calm their nervous system in times of stress, and gives them plans only known to them on how they can be safe. These strategies, besides being a best practice in time of potential threat, also releases them from the perpetual state of “fight, flight or freeze” by the reassurance of options when otherwise they would feel helpless.

Research-informed strategies and principles to build resilience to the traumas children experience when encountering domestic violence also include: removing blame; fostering self-esteem; modeling and encouraging empathy, kindness and respect; developing skills for communicating their stress; and teaching the parent how to talk to their child about violence.

These proven models of service provide the best chance of breaking the cycle of domestic violence. As United Way moves forward with its Community Health Initiative partnership, one of four key focus areas is domestic violence. Recognizing the importance of helping children in households where domestic violence took place will be a key component to significantly reducing this serious issue over time.

IN BRIEF

- United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley **thinks all community members who donated to the Shoebox Project** for yet another successful year. Shoe boxes filled with personal care items have been distributed to multiple area nonprofits to be given to those who are in need, including The Community Table, Positive Avenues, Beacon House, Sojourner House, Chippewa Valley Free Clinic, Open Door Clinic, The Salvation Army and more.
- **The Mental Health Action Team of Eau Claire County**, as part of the **Healthy Wisconsin Leadership Institute (HWLI)**, produced a video about barriers to mental health services with the help of Milwaukee-based Ninjas for Health. This video and the work of the action team was called out in an online article posted on CommunityCommons.org, an interactive mapping, networking and learning utility to help build healthier, sustainable and livable communities. Members on the Mental Health Action Team represent public health, healthcare and nonprofit organizations, including United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley. The goal of the team is to create a mental health road map so that resources are more easily accessible to those needing help. Article and video can be viewed here: www.communitycommons.org/2014/12/youth-mental-health-services/?km Dec-10-news=mental
- The **L. E. Phillips Career Development Center** and **West CAP** opened office space on Bridge Street in downtown Chippewa Falls on Decem-

ber 10th, 2014. This serves as the new central intake for homeless and those facing financial hardship, with staffing available Tuesday through Friday. Customers needing assistance should call 715-861-5002. **Community Cupboard** will also be reopening. Customers should call the same number to schedule an appointment if they are in need of furniture, linens, household items, or winter wear. A **Community Connect event** will be held with the Homeless Point-In-Time Count on **January 29th**. Location and time to be announced. Agencies will be invited to share information on their services with attendees. A free meal will be provided to the public.

- **Catholic Charities** will be hosting **Lucky In Love**, their second annual Mardi Gras fundraising event, on **Friday, February 13** from 6 P.M. to 10 P.M. at The Florian Gardens in Eau Claire. Enjoy hors d'oeuvres and tasty treats, live jazz music and casino-style games all night long. Visit www.cclse.org to register and to learn more.
- Make plans now for achieving better health with one of the evidence-based health promotion programs offered by the **Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County**. All of these are highly interactive and fun! Programs include: **Healthy Eating for Successful Living**; **Living Well with Chronic Conditions**; **Stepping On** – Building confidence, reducing falls; **Strong Women, Strong Bones**. Registration deadline is one week prior to start. Register online at www.adrcevents.org or call 715-839-4735, 1-888-338-4636, tty: use Relay (711), or email adrc@co.eau-claire.wi.us.

UNDERSTANDING THE 2015 UNITED WAY GRANT PROCESS

How does United Way decide who receives funding

Recent History of United Way Funding & the Transition to New Initiatives

Chippewa and Eau Claire counties have over 600 registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations. Last year, United Way's 2013 campaign raised \$2,160,000. So, considering the limited funds available, how does United Way determine the best way to invest these dollars in the community?

For many years, United Way and its board of directors made these decisions based on the quality of an individual agency's grant application. Each program generally served the education, income, health or basic needs of the population. Determination was based on what the program is, how it is administered, the financial stability of the agency, who is being helped, and how they are being helped.

It was recognized, however, that despite the quality and efforts of these programs, the needs in our community were increasing. In 2012, United Way held Community Conversations across our two counties and through online surveys to help identify primary issues in our community that were affecting quality of life and creating the need. Meanwhile, United Way recruited three volunteer councils of experts in the fields of education, income and health. Using national, regional, state and local data, these advisory councils targeted issues in our community causing the greatest negative effect on lives, and developed specific plans to address those issues.

The plans identified, defined and detailed the following most significant obstacles preventing a good quality of life in Chippewa and Eau Claire County: obstructions to early childhood development that hinder academic success; lack of financial literacy, and access to skills training for career advancement, that hampers financial stability; and pervasive problems of mental illness, alcohol misuse, obesity and domestic abuse that prevent overall good health and well-being.

These plans lay out specific measurements and projected outcomes that, when put into practice by a collaborative network of partners, will be one of the most concerted efforts ever attempted in our community to provide at-risk populations the best opportunities for success in life. Furthermore, by partners working together under comprehensive plans, United Way will be able to monitor success by unified measurements and report back specific outcomes to the community. Meanwhile, basic needs support (food, clothing, shelter/housing, medical and dental care) will still be supported to serve those in immediate crisis.



Collaboration Summit held on March 13, 2014

The Current United Way Grant Process

The grant process for 2015 funding opened on February 21, 2014, when **Intent to Apply** forms began being accepted. Ninety-seven submissions were received. In March of 2014, a Creative Collaboration Summit was held where all organizations applying for United Way funding could attend an in-depth presentation and discussion of collaboration in human services and community solutions, as well as receive guidance in the grant application process. The Intent to Apply form review process involved United Way staff, the Community Mobilization Committee and advisory councils.

In April, 93 of the 97 organizations who submitted Intent to Apply forms met the requirements to submit a **Grant Application**. These organizations were also invited to attend any of the five *Application Information and Assistance Sessions* offered between April and May to help them with the process. Free consulting from three University of Wisconsin--Eau Claire academicians were also arranged to assist organizations in how to craft outcomes and measurement tools, as well as how to use that data to evaluate the program. Grant applications would be judged on their overall alignment to the plans, and how specifically they would gauge overall effect of their program based on measurements taken and long-term outcomes achieved. The deadline for grant applications was June 30, 2014, and 74 were received. Grant applications were thoroughly reviewed by the advisory council members based on a detailed point system tallied first by individual members, then as a group, with all results compared and a final consensus reached by council members.

At the end of this stage, 47 programs advanced to **Site Visits**, which took place from late September to early December. At the site visits, volunteer council members and a United Way staff member visited the

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Grant Process - continued

location of each program to meet staff, take a walk-through of the program, and ask specific, pre-established questions about the program. As before, site visits were evaluated on a detailed point system that would then be reviewed by the council until consensus was reached.

As of the writing of this article (December, 2014), all site visits have been scored, council meetings have been held, review teams have evaluated results, and 38 programs have been recommended to the Community Mobilization Committee (comprising board members). On January 16, 2015, the mobilization committee, along with the chairs of the advisory councils, will make their funding recommendations to the board. When final motions have been approved, United Way will announce to the public its program partners for the funding cycle of July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2017.

What the Future Holds

The Chippewa Valley will be stronger. This is the goal of United Way. This is the future we can achieve when we focus on the root of problems that cause people to be in need. United Ways across Wisconsin and the nation are achieving unprecedented levels of impact on local social issues that will ripple out into succeeding generations.

If we can help more of the almost 5000 children in our two counties in families below 200% poverty be cognitively, physically, and behaviorally prepared to succeed in school, the Chippewa Valley will be stronger.

If we can provide money management skills to families to reduce debt and save for the future, and skills training to individuals in the 27% of households earning less than \$25,000 per year so they can advance their careers, the Chippewa Valley will be stronger.

If we can promote healthy lifestyles by addressing mental health issues, reducing obesity and alcohol misuse, and addressing domestic abuse, the Chippewa Valley will be stronger.

Though the roster of United Way program partners may look different in 2015, they will be a collaborative force of results-driven programs working together with United Way to achieve increased efficiency, reduced duplicative services, and expanded service to underserved populations. By focusing on key issues affecting our area, we can reduce need. What the future holds is that we will do the most good for the most people, for the greatest results.



2013 ANNUAL REPORT NOW AVAILABLE

2013 Leadership Roster also now available online for viewing

United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley now has its 2013 Annual Report available for review on our website. The annual report covers all organizational activities which took place during the 2013 campaign year from July 1, 2013 through June 30th, 2014.

The United Way Annual Report is one of the primary ways we maintain transparency with the public, report on fund distribution to area programs, and increase overall awareness of activities that affect the community. This report can be found on our “Accountability” website page under the “About Us” menu.

Also available online is our 2013 Leadership Circle Roster. Leadership Circle donors consist of those who invest \$500 or more in a year to the United Way community fund. Although they make up less than 13% of our total donors, they made up nearly 40% of total contributions made in 2013.

View our 2013 Annual Report:
www.uwgc.org/accountability

View our 2013 Leadership Circle Roster:
www.uwgc.org/leadership-circle



BASIC NEEDS



HEALTH

POSITIVE AVENUES

Where those suffering mental illness and homelessness can feel safe and welcome

Larry was assigned community service at Positive Avenues in downtown Eau Claire after a driving-while-intoxicated violation. “Don’t expect him to show up,” the county clerk office had said to the daytime drop-in center, explaining Larry’s physical disabilities. “And if he does make it in, just have him sit down and talk to people.”

“Well,” says Susan Howe, program supervisor at Positive Avenues, “he came in, and he never left.”

Five years later, and Larry has become a vital part of the Positive Avenues team as a regular volunteer. “He opens and closes. Without him, we wouldn’t be able to remain because he’s like the backbone here.” Besides Larry, Positive Avenues consists of Sue, case worker Tessa Linzmeier, certified peer specialist Anneke Brainerd, and volunteers.

Positive Avenues is operated by Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan. Located in the lower level of the old Holsum Bakery, it provides a safe, stigma-free environment along with social services for persons living with mental illness and those experiencing homelessness.



Larry, Sue and Tessa from Positive Avenues

“On a good day there’s problems,” Sue says, and laughs. “And on a bad day there’s lots of them.” Larry and Tessa join her good-natured chuckling. Sue refers to the expected issues that can occur when as many as 60 to 70 people a day come through

their doors who struggle with mental health issues, homelessness, and the challenges that relate to these issues. One might think this daunting for such a small roster of staff and volunteers, but Larry explains otherwise.

“The secret down here is, you find out that people are real nice once you get to know them. You might have someone with an attitude. You tell them to leave it outside, or calm down, or talk to them, and they’ll be all right after that.”

Sue has been with Lutheran Social Services for over 26 years, with the last 16 of those years at Positive Avenues. Back at its start in 1998, she says, “there would be sometimes 11-12 people in a day.” Sue

gives multiple reasons for the five- to six-time increase in demand since then, from greater awareness to the economy. Many people who come to Positive Avenues are there because they are assigned community service. Of those, a surprising number continue to come even after serving their required hours. For the average walk-in, however, they have lost everything through economic downturn, divorce, mental health, loss of job and other issues. “And then you wind up here,” Sue says, “and it’s like, ‘How did I get here?’”

“It’s amazing how many new people we see,” Tessa says. “I’ve been working here going on five months now, and it’s almost every week you see a couple new faces.”

When someone first arrives at Positive Avenues, they find a large room with tables and chairs, often with people sitting and chatting, or playing a game, or eating when food is served. There is a recently-remodeled kitchen, a TV lounge and pool table. A small area with three computers is available to assist people with such things as job and apartment hunting, or to do research such as exploring details related to a medical issue. After 1 P.M., the computers can also be used for games and other entertainment. Against the back wall, a large number of lockers are available to store personal possessions since many overnight shelters allow only a small bag to be brought in. “We need more of those,” Larry says adamantly.

Positive Avenues was recently able to extend their space and now have a second activity room where people can play games, do puzzles, paint, or any of a variety of things. In this room, Sue shows off four elaborate metal insect model kits assembled by a regular of the drop-in center. He is a drywall contractor who, because of mental and physical health issues, is unable to work regularly and is now homeless.

Illustrations also hang on the walls—portraits of people, landscapes—often peaceful, serene images that would seem to contrast with lives often facing anything but peace and serenity. And yet,



A moment of relative quiet at Positive Avenues during Community Table’s lunch service taking place upstairs.

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GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

Positive Avenues - continued

these reflections of creativity and positivity seem appropriate when being created in a place called Positive Avenues.

An area psychiatrist recently donated a recumbent bike to support physical fitness, especially for those prescribed psychiatric drugs that often cause weight gain. Positive Avenues uses the bike to have tournaments where teams who ride the most miles in a three week period win. They also have regular pool and dart tournaments, card games and board games. These activities help individuals develop better social skills. Other programs include creating resumes and self-esteem building.

The center receives considerable support and collaborations from area organizations and individuals. The CVTC nursing program makes visits to do presentations about relevant health issues like diabetes, frostbite, and hypothermia, as well as provide basic first aid and blood pressure checks. UW-Eau Claire theater groups come to entertain, as well as to volunteer and have a chance to experience life outside their normal parameters. The Eau Claire Police department also stops by regularly just to say hi and interact.

Another recent advancement is their hours of operation, which had not included weekends. "Starting November, we extended our hours,"

says Sue. "We're now open seven days a week, 8 to 6." This extension of services, running through April, is possible because of funds raised by the Progressive OutReach with our Community's Homeless (PORCH) committee, who raised \$30,000 to make this happen.

Because Positive Avenues exists, individuals who otherwise would have extremely few or no places to go can come there, be safe, feel wanted, and not be judged based on their disability or hardship. They can connect with the community as a member of the community and find guidance and opportunities for a positive next step in their lives.

Larry says this about his years of volunteering: "It's been a joy for me to get to know everybody personally. It's like one big family. If someone has problems, they come to you and you sit down and try to help them out or explain to them what to do to get them help. It's nice. I like it. It's never a dull moment."

"I never pictured myself working with the homeless population," Tessa admits. "I always wanted to be a school social worker. I'm so glad I got the opportunity to work with them, because it's definitely eye-opening ... when you actually work with the people, it's pretty life-changing."

United Way is proud to have Positive Avenues as a program partner and support a place that opens doors of shelter, acceptance and opportunity to those facing hardship and struggle.

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**PROUD TO SUPPORT
 UNITED WAY
 IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY**

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT - NICK WHITE

Giving back to the community is second nature



Who is a volunteer? What motivates them? Why do they give their time and efforts to support organizations and causes?

Too often, these questions are asked because a singular reason or cause is expected. A loved one lost to cancer leads to volunteering for the American Cancer Society. A tragedy results in efforts to prevent future

tragedies. A person helped out of crisis wants to give back and help others. These motivations, perhaps, are the answers we look for because we believe volunteerism—or, at least, the desire to volunteer—is extraordinary or exceptional.

And certainly, in some respects it is. Only one in four Americans volunteer at least once in any given year based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But, time and again, when United Way volunteers speak about why they do it and how they got started, it is not the result of any significant event. Instead, our volunteers are most often like Nick White.

“It’s just something you do,” says Nick when asked why he volunteers.

Nick White is a name that comes up over and over again on the United Way volunteer rosters. From helping to run events such as the Golf Tournament to hands-on community support through Stamp Out Hunger and Day of Caring, Nick’s name is most likely there on the line up.

For Nick, volunteering has always been a “family thing.” His parents were, and still are, active volunteers through their church, Optimist Club, and other organizations. Some of Nick’s earliest memories of his Dad are cooking spaghetti and flapjacks to help raise money for good causes. It was natural for Nick to want to do the same thing, which led him to his first volunteer activity at St. Francis Food Pantry when he was a child.

There is more that motivates Nick now as an adult, of course. He mentions a phrase he hears a lot since beginning at L.E. Phillips Career Development Center as a program development specialist: “You’ve got to give something to get something.” For him, this means giving back to the community in order to make it better. Having been born

and raised in this area makes his volunteering more personal. “I was pretty fortunate with having a good upbringing here, and I want to help give others the same opportunities I had.”

His mentality toward volunteering, however, remains matter-of-fact and nonchalant, such as volunteering for Taste of the Valley. “I’m going to be there anyway,” he reasons, “so I can hand out maps for two hours.”

It was about six years ago that Nick first became involved with United Way. Marianne Klinkhammer, another active United Way volunteer, had approached Nick through the Eau Claire Chamber during a volunteer event at Feed My People Food Bank and told him, “You should sell raffle tickets at the United Way Golf Tournament.” Nick’s answer, which makes him that consummate volunteer, was, “Why not?”

Another quality that is perhaps core to a volunteer mentality is that, to Nick, it often doesn’t seem like he’s really volunteering. He enjoys the opportunities of socializing with friends and colleagues and meeting new people. “Sometimes, you can be helping out at an event, and it doesn’t seem like you’re doing a lot,” he says, “but the fact is, they need you there. It may not seem like it, but you really are making an impact.”

What can make a volunteer remarkable is not their reasons for volunteering, or how they choose to volunteer. A true volunteer either is or becomes one by the nature and act of volunteering itself. The volunteer enjoys it for the experience just as much as for the personal fulfillment or commitment to others.

This seems apparent when, as the interview ends and Nick is asked if there is anything else he would like to add, he replies by asking, “So, tell me about the United Way Emerging Leaders Society . . .”



Nick White (at left in green) with Eau Claire Chamber YP Group volunteering at Trinity Equestrian during Day of Caring.

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

UNITED WAY MARKETING COMMITTEE

Marketing and communications professionals volunteer time to help spread the word

Communicating the United Way mission to the public is an essential element of United Way's mission. For any organization, making sure people are aware of your organization, are knowledgeable about what you do, and know how they can help, is critical to success. That is why, in late 2013, we extended an invitation to area marketing and communications professionals from our local media and in area businesses to be part of the United Way Marketing Committee.

The United Way Marketing Committee is facilitated by James Peters, director of marketing at United Way. Often present at these meetings is the incoming campaign chair, the spokesperson of a given year's campaign. Also present at meetings is Jan Porath, executive director.

This marketing committee has given United Way a panel of professionals with the expertise to review and explore communications and outreach concepts, as well as offer an increased leveraging of relationships. These members volunteer their time to meet once per month, and were instrumental in our 50th Anniversary Gala Event and



Community Block Party planning, campaign material development, and overall strategic planning.

We thank each of our marketing committee members for all they have contributed to United Way efforts to make our Chippewa Valley stronger. If you are a marketing and/or communications professional and looking to apply your expertise to a good cause, consider joining this fantastic team of volunteers!

For more information about the United Way Marketing Community, or to join, contact:

James Peters, Director of Marketing
 Email: jpeters@uwgcv.org
 Phone: 715-834-5043

MARKETING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Jeannine Fox – Mason Companies

Carla Lueck – Spectrum Industries, Inc.

Emily Matchey – Matchey Marketing, LLC

John Murphy – Mid-West Family Broadcasting (News Talk 790)

Ben Stroinski – Satellite Six, LLC

Amie Winters – WQOW News 18

Liz Wolf Green – Xcel Energy

Reggie Geissler (2014 Campaign Chair) – Mason Companies (outgoing committee member)

Vicki Hoehn (2015 incoming Campaign Chair) – RCU (incoming committee member)

James Peters – United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

2014 CAMPAIGN UPDATE

As of December 22, we have raised \$1.5 million during our current fundraising campaign, which is just over 65% of our projected goal. Over 300 companies have supported the campaign, with nearly 200 companies running an employee giving campaign. Over 4,000 donors have contributed to the campaign thus far.

Thank you to all who have participated, and to all our volunteers who help us run the campaign. We are looking forward to announcing final projections at the Spirit of the Chippewa Valley Awards on March 31.

STOP HELPING “OTHERS”

*Changing our perspective will bring us closer
as a community*

By Dustin Olson, director of Resource Development, United Way

Fear. Anxiety. Borderline terror. I remember all of those feelings pounding in my ears as I hopped out of a van in the housing projects in Brooklyn, NY with a bagged up hot lunch. I was delivering meals to a person on the route for a nonprofit called God’s Love We Deliver. I was 21 and I was spending spring break in the projects delivering free meals to people suffering from chronic diseases that had left them too weak to prepare their own food. It was cold, it was raining, and I had never wanted to be sipping a rum punch on a sandy beach so badly in my life.

By the end of my three- day volunteer stint in New York, I was much more comfortable. The city felt less intimidating, I was (a little) less leery of the rickety elevators that often occupied the crumbling apartment buildings I was visiting, and I got to know and joke around with my driver. But what helped me get over that initial angst most was meeting the people who needed those meals. I quickly realized that aside from some relatively superficial differences, the people I encountered had much more in common with me than I thought. I hadn’t anticipated that in this enormous city in these relatively foreign circumstances, I would be reminded of my grandparents, family members and people I knew from my tiny little hometown, population 508.

“I was 21 and I was spending spring break in the projects delivering free meals to people suffering from chronic diseases that had left them too weak to prepare their own food. It was cold, it was raining, and I had never wanted to be sipping a rum punch on a sandy beach so badly in my life.”

That volunteer job planted a simple but important thought that has been reinforced over the past several years as a nonprofit professional: we need to stop helping “others”. It seems that, especially when it comes to philanthropy, we as donors and volunteers are prone to view recipients of our generosity as “others”. These are *not* people not like you, your coworkers, and your family.

It doesn’t take a trip to Brooklyn housing projects for examples of how we divide and separate ourselves from “others”. We do plenty of it right here in the Chippewa Valley. City vs. city, North Side vs South Side, political views, race, social status – it seems second nature for us to build divisions, and it makes our community weaker. It allows for us to cling to inaccurate generalizations and often to act out of fear and ignorance toward one another instead of with empathy and generosity.

The good news is, it’s pretty easy to stop viewing people in your community as “others”. You can meet them. United Way can help you do that in a number of ways, including our Impact Tours. But, from my experience, there has been no better way to do that than to get out and volunteer. Get out of your neighborhood, out of your school, out of your workplace and volunteer somewhere that is out of your comfort zone. You might have some fear, some anxiety, maybe even borderline terror at first, but those feelings will quickly subside as you realize that you’re not helping “others”, you’re helping mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, neighbors, and coworkers. You will most likely find that you’re also helping yourself.

Look up our online volunteer guide, take part in Stamp Out Hunger or our Day of Caring, or give our office a call for opportunities here in the Chippewa Valley.



Day of Caring volunteer helping out at Wisconsin
Veteran’s Home during 2014 Day of Caring

UNITED WAY NEWSLETTER

IMPACT IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

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UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH - APRIL



MARCH

Chippewa Valley Spirit Awards

Tuesday, March 31st, 5:00 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.

The Florian Gardens, Eau Claire

Join us in celebrating all the good being in our community.

\$30 per person (\$240 per table of 8).

RSVP at: www.uwgcv.org/chippewa-valley-spirit-awards

APRIL

Emerging Leaders present: Dueling Pianos

Friday, April 24, 7:00 P.M. - 11:00 P.M.

Pizza Plus, Eau Claire

Enjoy this all-request show of great music mixed with comedy and fun. \$20 advance tickets, \$25 at the door. Learn more at:

www.uwgcv.org/piano

There's a lot more you want to know at:
www.uwgcv.org



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Greater Chippewa Valley

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.

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