

Change is the Only Constant in Life



Sharon Campbell,
Missouri Farm Bureau
United Way Board Chair

There's an old saying that goes: "Change is the only constant in life". And it's still as true today as it was in 500 BC. Things constantly change. "Life" is constantly happening to us. United Way and the agencies we partner with aren't immune to this, and they are adept at rolling with the flow when change, or life, happens. This constant melding has allowed the United Way to stay relevant for its nearly 100 years of service to the central Missouri community.

Change happened when an EF3 tornado rolled through Miller and Cole Counties. The damage that was visible that next morning was devastating. So much so, that it was hard to know how to get

started assessing the damage and working on a plan to assist those who were in its path. Working alongside other nonprofits, faith-based organizations, businesses and community leaders, United Way staff and volunteers quickly assembled and created a plan to assist those affected by the tornado, with United Way serving as the lead organization for volunteer efforts as well as the leader and fiscal agent for the Short and Long-Term Recovery Committees. I was especially grateful for the United Way at that time because it has the unique ability to bring together so many community groups as a united front. Can you imagine how much harder it would have been, and how much longer it would have taken, to get food, shelter and other services to the people who needed it most if we weren't all working together?

Change happened when a pandemic hit and required radical changes to the way we all do business and how we live our lives, particularly the agencies that serve the 9 counties in the United Way of Central Missouri footprint. Once again, the staff and volunteers worked with community partners and stepped up to help find solutions on how to get food and services to those people who couldn't get help elsewhere.

Change is happening right now

as citizens and agency partners work to stretch dollars and prioritize needs as inflationary prices use up available dollars.

The constant through all of these changes is that the charge has been led by United Way of Central Missouri President/CPO Ann Bax. Ann has been the person who put the right people together, at the right time, to get things done.

United Way will experience a different type of change this year as Ann retires after 13 years of service. Selfishly, I'd love to see her stay "just another year". In reality though, we are so happy for her to be able to spend more time with her beautiful and growing family. It has been a privilege to serve under her leadership over these last 13 years. I am constantly in awe of her composure, and I admire her incredible gift of always knowing just the right thing to say.

In the next few months, a devoted team of passionate volunteers will look for the next perfect person to lead the United Way into the next change that rolls our way. We are lucky to be in a community of many talented people who are willing to share their time and talent to make our community a better place to live.

Thank you, Ann Bax, for your leadership. You have made central Missouri a better place to live.

GFI Digital: A Community Focused Team

By Kasie Luebbering,
GFI Digital

Jefferson City native, Bruce Gibbs, founded GFI Digital in 1999 in St. Louis with a purpose of providing superior products and services in office technology. It has since grown to 13 office locations and 370+ employees across the Midwest with office equipment and a national presence in IT services. The Jefferson City office opened in 2000 with 7 employees. Over the past 24 years GFI Digital has grown to be an industry leader in office technology offering a single vendor solution to create efficiencies in every aspect of business. The Jefferson City branch now employs 68 passionate team members. GFI Digital recently hosted its 20th United Way workplace campaign, the last nine of which have been as a Pacesetter. This year's campaign marks over \$250,000 in cumulative contributions.

Since the beginning, GFI Digital has been people driven and technology focused. Founder and President, Bruce Gibbs' famous mantra is: "People are everything." It's rooted in our mission statement, "To develop and support our customers and employees through our commitment to service excellence." This transcends into every aspect of the business. Partnering with the United Way of Central Missouri allows GFI Digital to support multiple community organizations and needs under one cohesive umbrella. It's deeply rewarding for the employees of GFI Digital to serve and support the communities that support the business and its employees' livelihoods. Corey Backues, the Vice President of Sales at GFI Digital and Board Member of the United Way of Central Missouri, says "It's an honor to have several United Way partner agencies entrust GFI Digital with their technology needs and choose to support our locally owned business. It all comes full circle."

These organizations need funding to provide essential services, and as we all know, money alone is not enough. In addition to contributing financially to the United Way and its partner agencies, several GFI Digital employees also invest their time into this important work. You can find members of the GFI Digital team on the Board of Directors for the United Way and Little Explorers Discovery Center; committees for the United Way including the Campaign Leadership Team, Fund Allocation and Governing Body; and as participants and committee members for various partner agency fundraisers.

Several employees have served as internal campaign coordinators to lead the GFI United Way Campaign



Bruce Gibbs (President), Kasie Luebbering (Campaign Coordinator), Corey Backues (VP of Sales), and Connie Seabaugh (Campaign Coordinator) attend the 2022 United Way Community Campaign Launch Social at Capital Bluffs Event Center.

throughout the years, and the team always looks forward to campaign spirit week events. During the months of June, July and August each year, GFI Digital team members rock their "Live United" t-shirts on any given day. One of GFI Digital's core values is "Fun," which is deeply engrained in our culture. Throughout the years we have had a wonderful time incorporating fun United Way campaign themes into team building activities. Some of the team's favorite highlights have been various themed dress up days and decoration contests, carnivals, minute to win it competitions, trivia contests, cornhole tournaments, snow cone trucks, barbecues and pledge participation contests.

Last year's Willy Wonka theme provided the perfect opportunity for another awesome spirit week to hype up the team with fun activities, and of course, plenty of sugar! Every employee who submitted a pledge card received a chocolate Wonka bar as a thank you. These had golden tickets under the wrapper specifying different prizes such as scratcher tickets, GFI Digital merchandise and additional entries into a grand prize raffle. As an added incentive, employees who submitted an increased pledge received an automatic golden ticket

to be entered into the raffle. We are quite a competitive bunch, so naturally, Spirit Week activities included fun games and competitions for prizes with bragging rights! Employees participated in a Golden Egg Scavenger Hunt, an ice cream sundae bar with all the chocolatey toppings, a Bubble Gum Blowing Contest, a Golden Egg toss with water balloons on a hot summer day, and a Saran Wrap Ball game filled with tons of candy and other goodies.

As the team and its community involvement have grown, so have the contributions from GFI Digital and our employees. Total campaign pledges and giving consistently increase year after year. The GFI Digital team takes great pride in having been honored with multiple campaign awards such as the Outstanding Pacesetter in 2016 and 2020, as well as the William W. Quigg award in 2012. Since day one, Founder and President, Bruce Gibbs, has led by example with his generosity and service to others. GFI Digital has always prioritized people over profits and invested heavily in the things that truly matter: employees, customers and community. Gibbs notes GFI Digital looks forward to continuing this mission for many years to come.



(Above) During a Willy Wonka themed spirit week for United Way, GFI employees participate in a "Golden Egg" water balloon toss.

(Below) GFI team members gather for a group photo with their United Way Willy Wonka hat, decorated for the competition.



The Heart That Makes This Community Extraordinary



Ann Bax,
United Way President

The recent United Way of Central Missouri Annual Meeting included recognition of the extraordinary support and dedication from our community... businesses, partner agency staff members, individuals who support financially, and volunteers who tirelessly give their time. The room was full of community champions who fight for our neighbors, our families, our friends and people we will never meet—and the 300 people in attendance represented the 7,000+ other people in our community who also champion the United Way of Central Missouri cause. People who care about a perfect stranger, a lonely woman, a hungry child. People willing to do what it takes to help someone sleeping in the cold find a warm bed, help a child feel safe instead of living in fear, help a man grow old without losing his passion for life.

There was applause and laughter and lots of standing O's for some very deserving businesses and individuals. But as the program drew to a close, the room grew quiet when Jessica Hamill came to the podium. Jessica shared her story about her son Henry who was born pre-mature but healthy, but serious complications at 7 days old caused doctors to prepare her and her husband Ted for potential outcomes

including brain damage and hearing loss. At 12 days old they were told the MRI indicated Henry would have cerebral palsy and would never walk or talk, and best case scenario for Henry was that he might be able to itch his nose after years and years of therapy.

About a year ago Henry and his family moved to Jefferson City and his parents' first call was to the Special Learning Center, one of United Way of Central Missouri's 28 agency partners, to find out how to get Henry enrolled. One year later, Henry is not only exceeding his "best case" expectations—he and his Special Learning Center team of therapists are pushing for new ones. Henry is starting to pull and stand, he has learned to say over 50 words and has passed his hearing comprehension test with his cochlear implants. Jessica shared that parents don't expect to be parenting a child with special needs and it is a whole new world to learn. But Special Learning Center helps parents navigate that new world. Just as the United Way envisions a community where all individuals and families have an opportunity to succeed and thrive, the Special Learning Center has that same goal for every child to learn to thrive in a world with their disability and live life to the fullest.

Henry's story gives us hope... his is a story of perseverance and resilience. It shows how Special Learning Center makes miracles happen every day through dedication and passion for the children and families they serve. Special Learning Center is just one of the 28 United Way of Central Missouri agency partners that exist to serve and protect our community. Jessica's courageous story reminded us all that there are people in our community who are facing challenges... problems that are difficult or impossible to solve alone. But with the support of our

caring community working together, we can achieve results no single individual or group can accomplish alone.

The 2022 United Way Willy Wonka-themed campaign slogan was "So Shines a Good Deed in a Weary World". That slogan was especially appropriate after the last four years which included a tornado, pandemic and soaring inflation. But it was even more appropriate when we looked around and saw the infinite good deeds shown by our community. Despite the challenges, once again our community did it... you showed us what you are made of by helping us exceed our \$2.3 million goal by over 10%!

Due to the success of the campaign, the United Way Board of Directors has announced two exciting opportunities to offer additional support to health and human service agencies to continue to address critical, unmet needs to continue our work to serve and protect our community.

These opportunities include \$350,000 in immediate one-time grant funding available to health and human service 501(c)(3) organizations serving Cole, Osage, Moniteau, Miller, Morgan, Camden, Phelps, Maries and southern Callaway counties; as well as potential expansion to include an additional member agency to the United Way of Central Missouri network. To be eligible to apply for partner agency consideration or one-time grant funding, organizations must meet specific eligibility criteria outlined on the United Way website at www.unitedwaycemo.org. A committee comprised of community volunteers will review applications and present recommendations to the United Way of Central Missouri Board of Directors for final consideration.

Thank you for caring so much. Once again you showed the heart that makes this community extraordinary!

Embracing People, Inspiring Health

By Dr. Crystal Sullivan, Community Health Center

Community Health Center of Central Missouri (CHCCMO) is a Federally Qualified Health Center located in Mid-Missouri. Our mission is to provide improved access to primary care, behavioral healthcare and oral health care services for medically underserved individuals in central Missouri regardless of their ability to pay.

To meet our patient's needs, CHCCMO offers family practice, pediatrics, behavioral health, dental, ob/gyn, optometry, ultrasound and lab services. CHCCMO has clinic locations in Jefferson City, California, Fulton, Linn and Mokane.

Our Jefferson City clinic has been growing and undergoing renovations to better serve our patients. We are looking forward to opening a pharmacy in our Jefferson City clinic, hopefully in the early summer of 2023. This will allow our patients to get their prescriptions before they leave our building. It is our hope that this will help overcome any transportation barriers patients may have.

Additionally, CHCCMO has been expanding our clinic locations in rural Mid-Missouri. We now have a school-based clinic in Mokane and are able to provide medical services to school children and teachers without them having to leave school. CHCCMO is also preparing to open up a much larger clinic in Linn. We are partnering with Compass Health at our new Linn location to

be able to provide behavioral health care services as well.

CHCCMO also has three mobile units. The mobile dental unit provides dental services to children in 21 schools across Mid-Missouri. With our dental mobile unit, we can complete preventative dental care, help children with dental pain and any other dental procedure the dentist would do in a regular clinic. We also have two mobile medical units. Both medical units have all the capabilities that a normal exam room would have, down to the ability to collect lab specimens. The mobile units allow CHCCMO the flexibility to help better meet the patient's needs. Our mobile units have also attended community events like Project Homeless to provide better access to medical and dental services for those that may have transportation or other barriers to receiving care.

By partnering with the United Way of Central Missouri we are able to provide funding assistance to patients who have trouble affording their dental care or the cost of their prescriptions. This

helps decrease financial barriers our patients have to care. Helping patients with the cost of their prescriptions helps increase patient medication adherence and improve health outcomes. This assistance helps bridge the gap until we can get their medication from a pharmaceutical prescription assistance program.

The United Way also provides us with a wonderful network of community agencies. We have found this partnership to be very beneficial in disseminating information to other organizations, helping us to know about all the resources that are available in our community and enhance partnerships with other United Way agency partners to serve our patients in a holistic manner.

Community Health Center of Central Missouri is ready to help anyone in need. With a full range of services, we are here to provide quality healthcare to all. We strive to achieve our vision of embracing people, inspiring health.



Community Health Center has three mobile units that provide dental services to children in 21 schools across Mid-Missouri. Through these mobile units, the agency can provide preventative dental care, help children with dental pain and provide any other dental procedure the dentist would do in a regular clinic.



By partnering with the United Way, Community Health Center is able to provide funding assistance to patients who have trouble affording their dental care or the cost of their prescriptions. This helps decrease financial barriers patients have to health care.

COLE COUNTY AREA MOBILE FOOD PANTRY SCHEDULE

April 2023

- (SAT) 1 **CATHOLIC CHARITIES**
1015 EDMONDS ST, JEFFERSON CITY
9:00 - 11:00 AM
- (TUES) 11 **TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH**
13007 ROUTE C, RUSSELLVILLE
1:30 - 3:30 PM
- (THUR) 13 **KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS**
1822 TANNER BRIDGE RD, JEFFERSON CITY
3:30 - 5:30 PM
- (SAT) 15 **CAPITAL WEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH**
1315 FAIRGROUNDS RD, JEFFERSON CITY
8:00 - 10:00 AM
- (WED) 19 **BOYS & GIRLS CLUB**
11105 LAFAYETTE ST, JEFFERSON CITY
4:00 - 6:00 PM
- (WED) 26 **ST. MARTINS CATHOLIC CHURCH**
7148 ST. MARTINS AVE, ST. MARTINS
4:00 - 6:00 PM
- (THUR) 27 **ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC CHURCH**
310 MILLS ST, CALIFORNIA
4:30 - 6:30 PM

The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri and United Way of Central Missouri partner to provide food at no charge to those in need at the following locations. Please note any location, date and/or time changes for this month. Schedule subject to change. For questions, call The Food Bank at 573-474-1020 or United Way at 573-636-4100.

- Mobile Food Pantry Tips:
- Stay home or send a proxy to pick up food for you if you feel ill.
 - Remain in your vehicle for distribution; it is a drive-thru process.
 - Clear space in your trunk or back seat to receive food.



YES! I want to support our community! My total annual gift is \$ _____.
Gifts to United Way of Central Missouri are tax-deductible. For information about the tax advantages for including United Way in your will and estate planning, please call 573-636-4100. United Way provides no goods or services in consideration for this contribution.

Name _____ Phone _____
Address _____ City _____ State _____
Zip Code _____ E-mail Address _____
☐ I would like to remain anonymous in any publications regarding my donations to United Way of Central Missouri.

Payment Option 1: Cash or Check

Include your cash/check donation with this cutout and mail to the United Way of Central Missouri at 205 Alameda Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

- ☐ Please use my donation to benefit all of the United Way of Central Missouri partner agencies, allowing me to make a greater impact in our community.
- ☐ **DESIGNATIONS:** Please designate my donation to the following partner agency(s). Minimum designation amount is \$25.00. Designations to agencies not a part of the United Way of Central Missouri network will be directed to our general campaign fund.

Payment Option 2: Online

Make your donation online by going to our website at www.unitedwaycemo.org or scanning the QR code below:



To support our community cut out the form, complete the information, and mail it to the United Way of Central Missouri at 205 Alameda Drive, Jefferson City, MO 65109.

Partner Agencies

- 4-H Youth Program
ABLE
American Red Cross
Big Brothers Big Sisters
Boys & Girls Club
Boy Scouts
Capital City CASA
Capitol Projects
Central Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association
Community Health Center
Compass Health Network
Council for Drug Free Youth
Dreams to Reality
- Girls Scouts
Homemaker Health Care
Jefferson City Area YMCA Child Development Center
Little Explorers Discovery Center
Osage County Community Living
Rape & Abuse Crisis Service
Salvation Army
Senior Nutrition Council
Special Learning Center
The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri
The Sneaker Project
Tri-County YMCA



What's Happening



Special Learning Center was the winning organization for the Ameren Missouri Power Play Goals for Kids fundraising competition. The donation is at \$16,500 and rising--every time the Blues score a Power Play Goal for the remainder of the season, an extra \$500 is added to the donation. Thank you Ameren Missouri and St. Louis Blues for supporting our partner, Special Learning Center!



ABLE & Missouri River Regional Library partnered together for its annual Used Book Sale—which generated the second highest grossing sales to-date at \$56,000! In addition to sales, 150 boxes of books were given free of charge to teachers as well as representatives of the Missouri Department of Corrections when they presented identification. Additionally, a religious group out of Illinois, Love Packages, was given more than 50 cases of Christian literature to be sent overseas.

Serve Jeff City will be held on April 22 from 8:00 am to noon and is an opportunity for volunteers to help beautify Jeff City. Register now at www.unitedwaycemo.org/volunteer!

APPLY

TODAY



COMMUNITY SUPPORT GRANTS

United Way is proud to announce the immediate opportunity for up to \$350,000 in Community Support Grant funding to 501(c)(3) health and human service agencies in our service area to start a new program, enhance an area of service or purchase needed equipment and supplies.

Deadline to apply:
March 31, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

NEW MEMBER AGENCY STATUS

Due to the success of recent campaigns and to be responsive to the growing needs in our community, the United Way of Central Missouri Board of Directors has approved consideration to add a member agency to the United Way of Central Missouri network.

Deadline to apply:
April 7, 2023 at 5:00 pm.

LEARN MORE & APPLY AT
WWW.UNITEDWAYCEMO.ORG

United Way of Central Missouri & Member Agencies Events Calendar

March

March 22: Mental Health First Aid Class with Compass Health Network

April

April 21: Special Learning Center Capital City Cook-off Fundraiser

April 22: Serve Jeff City

April 29: JC Area Board of Realtors Cinco de Mayo 5K benefiting Council for Drug Free Youth

May

May 2: Early Childhood Educator Appreciation Dinner

May 15: Driving Out Domestic Violence Golf Tournament benefiting Rape & Abuse Crisis Service

June

June 2 & 3: Council for Drug Free Youth Pickleball Tournament

June 5: Capital City CASA Golf Tournament

June 12: Boys & Girls Club 1st Annual Golf Tournament

June 28: United Way Pacesetter Campaign Launch

For additional information, please visit www.unitedwaycemo.org/calendar.

IT'S TIME TO



APRIL 22, 2023



REPUBLIC SERVICES

Event brought to you by Republic Services of Jefferson City

We'll handle it from here.™

www.unitedwaycemo.org/volunteer

This community-wide day of service will make a significant impact on our city and be an opportunity for individuals and organizations to exhibit their community pride. The event will begin at 8:00 am at McClung Park with pancakes and sausage served by Lt. Governor Mike Kehoe and Senator Mike Bernskoetter, then groups will break for their projects around 9:00 am. Stay tuned on our Facebook page @ServeJeffCity for details!

ALSO SPONSORED BY:



Meet Our Board: Patricia Wright-Tatum



Why did you say yes when asked to be on the United Way Board of Directors

Actually, my term on the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors had just ended and I was contemplating what my next step to volunteering in the community would be when Ann Bax approached me about serving on the Board for the United Way. Two other persons informed me that they had recommended me as a prospective Board member as well, and because I respected

those persons, as well as Ann, and their community involvement, it was an easy “yes” for me.

Favorite thing about United Way

What I like most about United Way is the professional and the strategic ways by which business is conducted in meeting the needs in our community. Serving on this particular Board affords me the opportunity to stay cognizant of the many needs in our community and to assist by volunteering for agencies that I very likely would not have if I were not a member of this Board.

Favorite thing about our community

One thing I experienced about the Jefferson City community while I served on the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors is how giving this community is. Without Lincoln University stepping forward to donate the land that the club now sits on or the generous donations and in-kind services from various segments of this community, this state-of-the-art facility would probably not exist. Having graduated from a Historically Black College and University (HBCU), I am most proud of our Boys and Girls Club being the first to be headquartered on an HBCU campus

in the country. It all happened because of this giving community.

Number one on your bucket list

I have many items on my bucket list because I keep adding to it. My number one item for this year is to travel abroad to France. Due to the Covid virus, this item was reprioritized in 2020.

Fun fact about you

At the age of 65, I decided to take an item off my bucket list, and I enrolled in private piano lessons from the late renowned pianist, and Lincoln University Professor Emeritus, Robert L. Mitchell. Unbeknownst to me, he expected me to practice four hours a day. After about two months of us having different philosophies on practicing piano, we parted ways and decided our relationship as friends was more important than a relationship as teacher – student. This was the first and only time I was dismissed from a class, but another item was removed from my bucket list.

Words you live by

“Don’t Forget Where You Came From”. These words are generational in my family, and I live by them daily because they keep me humbled, grounded and grateful. I take nothing for granted.

Transportation Is Urgent Business

By Loretta Schouten, Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition

The mission of the Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition is to end and prevent forced labor and sexual exploitation of innocent children, women and men. Through advocacy, active engagement in community collaboration and education, the coalition seeks to identify victims, expose traffickers and users, promote slave-free practices and support survivors of human trafficking on their journey toward wholeness. The coalition envisions communities free of modern-day slavery.

The coalition continues to raise awareness of human trafficking and support local survivors in and around Central Missouri. The coalition facilitates numerous trainings, seminars and various events each year to bring attention to the cause. Annual events such as the Freedom 5K Walk and the Freedom by Fashion Show benefit are held to raise funds to provide local survivors the needed support enabling them to break the chains of their trafficker. The coalition has funded counseling sessions, provided shelter and food, and even secured and/or provided transportation.

Getting by without a car has always been hard, but now it can be the tipping point toward loss of housing. If you can’t get to work then you can’t pay rent, so transportation is often urgent business. With help from our United Way of Central Missouri Community Support Grant and a partnership with Cars 4 Columbia, the coalition has donated two cars to working, single parents with urgent needs and has provided six car repairs to help survivors keep their cars running. The coalition has plans (and grant funds) to donate two more cars as soon as minor repairs and inspections are completed.

Ann (pictured) is the recipient of a donated minivan made possible by United Way grant funding. We could hear the

despair in Ann’s voice when she told us of the pain she endured driving her 20+ year old car. Ann’s car was a stick shift and the seats had hardly any padding left. It made her back hurt every time she drove it, so she didn’t drive much. Ann has endured numerous back surgeries to repair injuries she suffered at the hands of her trafficker. In Ann’s case, a minivan provided much more than a comfortable, safe vehicle to get to doctor’s appointments, grocery shopping and other errands; it helped her look beyond the pain she endures and it empowers her to help other survivors whenever she can. It’s powerful when people get the help they need.

Erika is the recipient of the second donated car made possible by United Way grant funding. When Erika first came to the coalition needing help with transportation, she said “I feel like I’m trying so hard but constantly on the verge of drowning.” Just a few weeks later, Erika had reliable transportation again, thanks to a car donation from the coalition. She could not be more grateful or happy!

More than 10.5 million households in this country don’t have a personal vehicle. Many people who don’t have cars are already part of a marginalized group, such as low-income individuals (households with an annual income of less than \$25,000 are nearly nine times as likely to have no personal vehicles), those with disabilities (only 65 percent of people with disabilities drive compared to 88 percent of non-disabled people), or people of color (14 percent of people of color households don’t have a vehicle compared to 6 percent of white households, and immigrants across races are even less likely to have a car).

The transportation options that exist for people without cars were already imperfect — they’re time consuming, don’t cover many areas and can be inaccessible — but they’re even more challenging now. Budgets for public transit across the country have been cut and service has been reduced,

making it increasingly risky and difficult for those who do need these services to use them safely and effectively. This combination directly impacts people who don’t have cars. While the pandemic has made many businesses and medical facilities nimble and creative, it has widened the inequality gap for those who don’t have cars.

Drive-thru services are often very literal. One night in my early twenties, I was staying with friends and we found ourselves hungry at 10 pm. The only places open were drive-thrus, so we tried to convince the staff at a drive-thru to let us order and pay from the window even though we didn’t have a car. Not having a car was a deal breaker. They said they legally couldn’t serve us or they’d lose their jobs.

The survivors we serve have had dozens of moments like that throughout their life... Turning down a job offer because they had no way to get there, choosing not to go to the doctor because they felt too sick to walk but not sick enough to call an ambulance, asking a friend to help print out a school assignment because they wouldn’t have enough time to walk to the library to print it themselves, calling the coalition to come pick them up when they got sick at work because they had no other way to get home, not applying to jobs because they weren’t on public transit routes and were too far to walk to.

I hope in reading this article, it makes you wonder what you would do if you didn’t have a car. You would be facing the same choices millions of Americans have to make now. Can I afford to take an Uber to get to work every day? Should I cancel my follow-up appointment if I have to get on a bus to get there? How much will it cost if I call an ambulance to get to the hospital because there is no bus service near me?

No one should have to live this way, and with grant funding from United Way, the coalition is working to make sure people who have been impacted by trafficking do not have lack of transportation as a barrier to success.

Unmet Needs Committee Celebrates 30 Years of Service to Our Community

The Unmet Needs Committee is a community-wide committee of health and human service organizations that meets monthly to share resources, network and provide case conferencing as needed.

The committee was originally formed due to the flood of 1993. Now, thirty years later, the committee still meets monthly. The original committee was formed to identify available resources, gaps in resources and sources for closing those gaps and to assess unmet needs through the development of a case management system. The mission of the Unmet Needs committee was to provide recovery services to individuals and families affected by natural disaster and/or community emergencies. The Unmet Needs Committee took on the role of a COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster). In the early days of the committee, organizations met regularly to provide case management services to individuals and families. The committee was led by Marylyn DeFeo, Volunteer Executive of the Samaritan Center. When a family is affected by disaster, reaching a level of self-sustainability will take three to five years. The goal of recovery is to bring a community back to a new normal after the devastation of the disaster.

Over the years, the committee saw the value of meeting regularly to assist families and continue networking with health and human service agencies, so the committee continued. The monthly meetings consisted of a featured speaker, agency updates and case management.

United Way had always participated throughout the years. In September of 2015, the United Way of Central Missouri was asked to take over leading the group. This opportunity aligns with United Way’s mission and vision to improve people’s lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community; and to be the leader in bringing partners and resources together to address priority needs and provide solutions that strengthen our community. The committee continues to meet and has kept the meeting format similar as in the past. A typical meeting currently has 35-40 people present.

In 2019, the Unmet Needs Committee responded to the tornado that tore through mid-Missouri. United Way mobilized the caring power of

INTERESTED IN JOINING

Unmet Needs Committee?

The Unmet Needs Committee is a community-wide committee of health and human service organizations that meets monthly to share resources, network and provide case conferencing as needed.

Contact us!

573-636-4100

kerrie.delaney@unitedwaycemo.org

our community by initiating a meeting with the Unmet Needs committee to address the short and long term needs of disaster survivors. Through this committee, a Short-Term Immediate Needs Recovery Committee (STRC) was formed to address immediate needs of disaster survivors and to limit duplication of services. In addition, it was also a way to streamline the process, work collaboratively with community agencies and faith based organizations, and develop a system for long-term recovery. Over sixty organizations came together to address immediate needs. From there, a Long-Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) was formed. Subcommittees were established for material donations, monetary donations, volunteers, case management, community assessment & social service agency resources, spiritual & emotional care, and housing & construction. An LTRC is essential if and when a FEMA declaration is made, which will bring in additional resources to our communities. The LTRC continued to meet regularly from 2019 - 2021 and then occasionally in 2022 and 2023 as case management cases were completed. Today, the LTRC has one active case.

In 2020, the Unmet Needs committee came together to address the needs of

the COVID-19 pandemic. The United Way of Central Missouri and the City of Jefferson initiated the Cole County COVID Assistance Helpline, and the Unmet Needs Committee members were instrumental in assisting with this important resource. This helpline allowed Cole County to have one phone number for community members to access groceries and prescription medication delivery and other direct services. This collaborative effort was made possible through the partnership with health and human service organizations, churches and organizations already providing these services in order to work together efficiently, effectively and compassionately to serve those in need due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the Unmet Needs Committee meets at the United Way office at 8:30 am on the first Wednesday of every month. Recently, the group established a Google Drive folder to share resources and upcoming events in the community. The committee list has grown to over 200 community members.

If you would like to join the Unmet Needs Committee, please e-mail kerrie.delaney@unitedwaycemo.org or call the United Way office at 573-636-4100.



Thanks to a grant from the United Way of Central Missouri, Central Missouri Stop Human Trafficking Coalition was able to gift a minivan to client and survivor, Ann, who had been driving a 20+ year old vehicle that was so worn it caused pain to her already-injured back.

Volunteer Spotlight: Gaye Suggett



Tell us about you

I grew up on a farm in New Bloomfield a daughter of Richard and Jean Rackers. I'm married to my high school sweetheart Tim and we have 2 grown children. Our son Timothy is married to Chelsie, and they have our 4 adorable grandsons. Our daughter Amy is married to Justin, and they have our grand dog. All live fairly close to us so we are able to be a part of their lives and see them almost every day.

Profession

I have worked for Ameren Missouri for 37 years. Hard to believe it has been that long. I can remember when I was just one of the kids trying to

find my way to the copy machine. I started my career for Union Electric at the Callaway Energy Center shortly after the nuclear plant began operation. One of the things that helped me to get hired was because I could write and read shorthand (which is something I don't think is taught in school any longer). I worked there for 3 years before coming to Jefferson City. Ameren is a great place to work and believes in investing in their employees. They helped me to complete my Bachelor of Arts and my Master of Business degrees as I worked during the day and then went to school in the evening. Ameren also believes in strong communities and encourages employees to get involved in and be a part of the communities where we live and work. That message of "giving back" is what first prompted me to begin my volunteer career with United Way of Central Missouri, and I haven't looked back since.

Community involvement

We have such a great community made up of great people and so it is easy to get involved. Our Jefferson City Chamber of Commerce has served our community since 1893. The Chamber believes in the importance of working together with businesses and community leaders to strengthen the local economy and increase opportunities for residents,

not only for this generation, but for generations to come. The Chamber has a vibrant membership base of nearly 1,700 business and community leaders in the Jefferson City area and strives to grow by promoting local business, economic vitality and offering our members networking, marketing, and professional development opportunities. Our Chamber is the catalyst for improving business climate and quality of life for residents. Last year I was asked to serve on the Board of Directors for the Jefferson City Chamber. This year I was selected to be Chair-Elect and next year I will serve as the Board of Directors Chair. I am truly honored.

I also believe it is important to be involved in other aspects of your community, so I'm involved in my church as well as other organizations that help individuals and our community grow and become stronger. By working together, we can accomplish many things.

Volunteer experience with United Way

I began volunteering with United Way many years ago. The first opportunity I had to volunteer was on a Fund Allocation Panel. This is probably my very favorite volunteer opportunity with the organization because there are 70+ volunteers from all walks of life that come together to review the agencies

that receive money through donations to United Way. This process allows United Way to be totally transparent and talk about the great ways each agency is using the money received to help those in need. I also help with the community campaign each Fall and in 2006 served as co-chair of the campaign with Duane Schreimann. Through my work with the United Way Campaign each year, I'm able to see businesses and individuals having fun raising money. This process shows how very generous the people and businesses in our community are. In 2022, United Way raised \$2.53 million to support 28 agencies who served over 119,000 people in 2021. That is so amazing! United Way's agency partners are serving youth, providing healthcare, employment, food and shelter services to groups such as people with disabilities and low-income. I have been honored to serve on the Board of Directors, and I served as the Board Chair in 2014.

Why do you say yes to volunteering for United Way?

When people ask me why I say yes to volunteering for United Way, I normally say because Ann Bax asked me. You can't say "no" to Ann. But seriously, I say "yes" because I love everything

about our United Way of Central Missouri. I love that we have hundreds of diverse volunteers coming together to help provide everyone the tools, resources, and opportunities to succeed and thrive. This makes our community stronger!

Favorite thing about United Way and our community

The people. Most definitely the people are what make this community and United Way so very special. We have so many people that are so generous with their money, their time and their talent. Our community has had a few challenges recently with the tornado hitting Cole and Miller counties, and then with the pandemic. During every challenge you see the great people in our community step up and help those in need. People from every walk of life work together as one. United Way has been there leading the way to help those in need. It's beautiful!

Number one on your bucket list

I don't really have a bucket list. I just try to enjoy every day. I have had the opportunity to do quite a bit of traveling and I love that. But I also love spending as much time with my family as possible. We have 4 grandsons and every day is a new day with them. They keep life interesting, and they keep me young and active. I love putting on my muck boots and going on

adventures with them! Always be prepared to hold a frog or a lizard!

Fun fact about you

I grew up on a farm in New Bloomfield. I was the only girl with 3 brothers, so most of the time I had to help mom at the house. But every once in a while, I was able to get out on the farm and since I was the oldest, I got to drive the hay truck. It was pretty fun, especially since my boyfriend (and future husband) was one of those hauling hay. Of course, I'm not sure he thought it was fun because he says they had to restack the hay a few times because I would pop the clutch and the back tier of hay would fall off the truck. I really don't think he minded, though. He did marry me a few years later.

What are some guiding principles you try to live by?

I'm an optimistic person; so I guess I'm a glass half full type of person versus a glass half empty person. One thing I think is really important and seems to have helped me through life is to always be thankful. Ephesians 5:20 says to "Always give thanks to God the Father for everything."

The Importance of Early Learning

By Theresa Verslues, United Way of Central Missouri

United Way of Central Missouri has championed the Early Childhood Initiative for over fifteen years. Through this initiative we support early childhood programs in the central Missouri area to ensure children birth through 5 years old receive quality early learning opportunities, aid parents in positive parenting practices and support strong transition programming into kindergarten.

The United Way of Central Missouri Early Childhood Initiative supports early childhood providers, facilitates the annual Week of the Young Child activities and events, and provided the resources for the Born Learning materials at Memorial Park.

Over the past several years, our Early Childhood Initiative work has grown substantially and we are proud of the enhancements which are helping to have a positive impact on our local early childhood providers, the early childhood field and the families and children we serve.

One of the enhancements is the training and coaching of Conscious Discipline which provides training at no cost to parents, grandparents, teachers and agency leaders. Conscious Discipline provides a proven and comprehensive approach to discipline that empowers caretakers with the self-awareness, brain information, developmental knowledge and usable skills necessary to create safe, connected, problem-solving skills.

"Conscious Discipline meets families where they are, empowering all families to experience success," says founder of Conscious Discipline, Dr. Becky A. Bailey. "Families already connected and secure will learn healthy ways to manage typical frustrations.

Families struggling with challenges will learn essential skills for stabilizing the family through safety and connection."

United Way's Early Childhood initiative also provides Conscious Discipline Administrator Training, which works with preschool directors and key staff on how to implement Conscious Discipline in their centers and how to work through challenging situations with parents and/or co-workers. United Way continues to support this group by providing six or more trainings a year for childcare providers, parents and other volunteers/organizations.

Jennifer Clark, owner of Early Explorers Preschool said, "We have benefited greatly from the Early Childhood group. We have had the ability to collaborate with other early childhood professionals and share experiences and ideas. We have also been able to receive an immense amount of support as well as high quality training that we would not have received otherwise. We could not be more thankful for this opportunity and team."

Most recently, the initiative implemented a Conscious Discipline Pilot Program for elementary school principals and key staff to ensure Conscious Discipline continues into the elementary schools. This developed through feedback from Early Childhood Directors who expressed the need to expand the program to elementary schools to ensure a successful transition to kindergarten. Currently we have six schools participating in the pilot program.

In early 2021, the State of Missouri announced nearly all early childhood programs across the state would be consolidated in a single Office of Childhood. Prior to, each state agency provided various services for children and families. The transition to one office allows early childhood work across the state to be more streamlined, consistent and effective.

Later, United Way was asked to be part of a regional Early Childhood Community Leaders group, a Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education project under the new Office of Childhood. The

ultimate goal of Community Leaders is to create a coordinated system of early care and education connections with a place for every family to access resources and services that promote safe and healthy learning environments for young children. Locally, as part of the Early Childhood Community Leaders work United Way of Central Missouri provides support and resources to Cole, Osage, Moniteau and Miller counties. We hold monthly meetings rotating between the four counties. These meetings provide valuable resources, updates on programs, grant funding opportunities, networking and identifying gaps and barriers in services. Through this work the need for early childhood teachers was identified as a critical need.

Recently, this Community Leaders group was asked to join the Jefferson City Area Chamber of Commerce Workforce Coalition to assist the committee with early childhood information and ideas. From this partnership a pilot program was established with the Chamber's current Partners in Education (PIE) program to expand the program to early childhood centers. Six centers and businesses are participating in the pilot program.

"The opportunity to partner with a community business was something I had never considered until introduced by the United Way and Chamber of Commerce," expressed Julie Schmitz, Owner of Show-Me Child Care Center. "I am excited to be one of the six programs participating in the pilot program. Show-Me CCC has partnered with SSM Health St. Mary's Hospital. Our partnership kicked off in December with SSM attending our preschool Christmas party. They brought Santa with them and it was a HUGE success! SSM has donated a few items that we are happy to recycle. Old signs have become painting posters and a dry erase board became our pre-K instructional tool! I feel the kids at Show-Me are also learning about giving and doing for others through the PIE project. The preschoolers have provided some color sheets and holiday projects to share with their staff and patients. I look forward to watching the PIE program grow in our community. Making memories and connections is the backbone of Show-Me CCC and we have found a great partner

with SSM!" Early Childhood Community Leader Administrator Shauna Kerperin said, "It's all about relationships. Building relationships with providers, educators, businesses and families so we can all work together as one team to help every child in our community be healthy, safe and ready to learn. We are a TEAM: Together, Everyone Achieves More!"

Our Community Leader work has also developed an extension resource list for the four counties we service, provides a monthly newsletter, developed a Facebook page and works with area Parents as Teachers programs to increase screenings. Early Childhood Community Leaders is also working on providing twelve hours of early childhood training as an introduction to individuals who would like to work in the Early Childhood field. To show our appreciation of the work of early childhood professionals, we are planning an appreciation dinner for Early Childhood Educators on May 2, 2023.

United Way's Early Childhood Initiative and our Early Childhood Community Leaders are hard at work to ensure young children are safe, healthy and successful learners, reaching their full potential!

If you are interested in the Conscious Discipline Administrator Training or have questions regarding the United Way of Central Missouri Early Childhood Initiative, please email theresa.verslues@unitedwaycemo.org or call (573) 636-4100.

If you are interested in the Early Childhood Community Leaders work, please contact Shauna Kerperin at skerperin@blairoaks.org or (573) 619-4192.



United Way Kicks Off 2023 at Annual Meeting

United Way of Central Missouri officially closed the 2022 business year with its Annual Meeting, sponsored by Jefferson Bank, held on February 9 at Capital Bluffs Event Center. During the luncheon event, elections were held for the 2023 Governing Body and Board of Directors, supportive businesses and individuals were recognized for their incredible commitment to the United Way, and a new volunteer program for the organization was unveiled.

“We are so grateful to have so many friends of the United Way here today to celebrate the resilience, perseverance and heart shown by our community in 2023 and honor exceptional businesses and individuals who have been by our side this year,” said Andy Fechtel, 2022 United Way Board Chairman.

“And to talk about what’s ahead in 2023,” continued Ann Bax, President/CPO of United Way of Central Missouri. “After what we have accomplished and overcome the last several years, I think we have proven we can do whatever we set our mind to... so I can’t wait to see what we can achieve in 2023!”

Five outgoing board members were honored for their service and dedication to the organization; including Mark Mueller (Jefferson Bank), Ben Musholt (Polsinelli), Britt Smith (City of Jefferson), Bev Stafford (SSM Health St. Mary’s Hospital and Stacy Sturm (retired from Modine Manufacturing).

The 2022 Board Chair, Andy Fechtel of Fechtel Beverage & Sales, was recognized for his service; and Sharon Campbell, Missouri Farm Bureau, presented closing remarks as the 2023 Board Chair. 2022 Campaign Co-Chairs; Kyle Shimmens, Osage Ambulances, and Cassandra Atchison, Modern Litho, were honored for their service and for exceeding the \$2.3 million goal and raising a projected unprecedented \$2.53+ million total for the 2022 Campaign. Kyle was honored for his two-year dedication as Campaign Co-Chair, and Cassandra announced her new co-chair for the 2023 campaign, Doug Hagenhoff, Assistant Vice President and Consumer Loan Officer of Hawthorn Bank.

In addition to the aforementioned honorees, several individuals and businesses were recognized for their outstanding service to the United Way of Central Missouri (pictured).

The Top Five Employee Workplace Campaigns were recognized:

- Central Bank/Central Technology Services (\$187,823)
- Scholastic (\$129,346)
- Missouri State Employees

Charitable Campaign (\$122,000+)

- Ameren Missouri (\$63,056)
- Osage Ambulances (\$51,320)

And the Top Five Corporate donors were recognized:

- Diamond Pet Foods (\$275,000)
- Osage Ambulances (\$34,500)
- ITW EAE (\$30,827)
- Farmer Companies (\$30,000)
- Wallstreet Group (\$27,529)

Before the event’s conclusion, the details of GIVE 5 were outlined, a new volunteer program coordinated by United Way and Aging Best thanks to a grant Aging Best received from the State of Missouri. GIVE 5 is an innovative ‘civic matchmaking’ program that connects central Missouri retirees and soon-to-be retirees aged 60 or better with meaningful volunteer opportunities. On 5 days, over a 5-week period, retirees will tour nonprofits in the community to gain a better understanding of central Missouri’s challenges and the volunteer opportunities available through those agencies. At the conclusion of the program, participants can select one, or more, nonprofits they choose to ‘give 5’ hours a month of volunteer service to.

“This program matches retirees with unfulfilled volunteer opportunities—it’s our opportunity to reimagine what volunteerism can look like,” said Bax. “For example, Rape & Abuse Crisis Service is looking for retired healthcare professionals who can advocate for their clients; Salvation Army is looking for retired professionals to teach life skills classes such as budgeting and cooking; and Transformational Housing will be looking for people who have knowledge of building trades such as retired electricians and carpenters. Participants can expect to have fun, make new friends and find volunteer opportunities that match their talents, passions and personality.”

The pilot class of GIVE 5 will begin on March 29. Applications for Class 1 have closed, but those interested should stay tuned for information about the next class on the United Way’s website at www.unitedwaycemo.org/give5.

United Way of Central Missouri extends its deepest gratitude to the central Missouri community. Thanks to the incredible support of over 7,000 individuals and businesses, United Way continues to help people live their best possible lives and looks forward to the 2023 year ahead.



Central Bank/Central Technology Services received the Outstanding Campaign Event Award for their standout campaign events and efforts during their United Way Workplace Campaign.



Hitachi Energy received the LIVE UNITED Corporate Award, Community Campaign Division, for its exemplary support of the United Way and the community.



Vicki Myers received one of three LIVE UNITED Awards for her outstanding service to the United Way of Central Missouri.



Cole County Government received the Outstanding Pacesetter of the Year Award, Small Firm Division.



Stephanie Lehmen, (Big Brothers Big Sisters Volunteer) received the Linda E. McNany Volunteer of the Year Award, an award that recognizes a volunteer of a United Way member agency for distinguished service.



Scholastic received the William W. Quigg Award, Major/Large Firm Division, for its outstanding service to the United Way and the community.



Public School Retirement System received the William W. Quigg Award, Small Firm Division, for its outstanding service to the United Way and the community.



Rusty Drawing Chevrolet Buick GMC Cadillac Toyota received the Outstanding Pacesetter of the Year Award, Major/Large Firm Division.



(Top Right) Andy Fechtel (Fechtels Beverage & Sales) received one of three LIVE UNITED Awards for his outstanding service to the United Way of Central Missouri.

(Top Middle) Wallstreet Group received the LIVE UNITED Corporate Award, Pacesetter Division, for its exemplary support of the United Way and the community.

(Top Left) Marian Bridges received one of three LIVE UNITED Awards for her outstanding service to the United Way of Central Missouri.

(Middle Left) Wade Middaugh (Boys & Girls Club) received the Ruth C. Meloy Award, an award that recognizes a staff member of a United Way agency whose work and dedication exemplifies the mission of the United Way of Central Missouri.

(Bottom Left) The Missouri Farm Bureau Team was awarded the Outstanding Campaign Coordinators of the Year Award.

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