

Thank You for Your Generosity



Sharon Campbell,
Missouri Farm Bureau
United Way Board Chair

I received the first Christmas card of the season in early December, and with that first card, it became abruptly apparent that Christmas is in full swing; and soon after that we will celebrate the new year. It's impossible at this time of year not to take some time to think, at least a bit, about the year we will soon be saying goodbye to.

My time with United Way has been filled with firsts, and there were a few firsts for our United Way family as well. United Way of Central Missouri welcomed three new partner agencies in 2023. That's certainly a first! These new partner agencies completed applications, came for interviews, accepted United Way staff and volunteers into their spaces to answer yet more questions; they took time to show us they are committed to being good stewards of the dollars that come from our community

through workplace campaigns and from special givers. It was particularly satisfying to hear that the new agencies wanted a partnership with United Way, and a partnership with the existing partner agencies, that went far beyond just receiving help with funding. This partnership was like a seal of approval for them. As the United Way family grows, these new agency partners will have the existing agency partners as role models; and no doubt, these new partners will bring their own best practices to share with our existing agency partners.

It's not every day United Way gets to welcome a new large employee campaign. But this year; Greg Callahan and Ashley Varner and the entire Hitachi Energy team stepped forward with a commitment to hold their first workplace campaign. Greg, Ashley, our Campaign Co-Chairs and the United Way staff held employee rallies around the clock. And boy, did it pay off! This incredible group raised more than \$148,000 – for their very first United Way Campaign! Thank you Hitachi employees for your selfless giving.

Our new President, Lee Knerschild, has finished her first campaign in her new role. That time of year is a whirl wind of activity for United Way staff and the Campaign Co-Chairs. Not only did they survive, they

thrived. The results of the campaign showed an increase in donations that will help fund the partner agencies and perhaps fund Community Support Grants again in 2024.

Although the calendar year has a set beginning and end, at United Way, the processes continue to cycle; moving from the annual meeting, to the strategic funding meetings, to the pacesetter and community campaigns. And then, without even getting a break, Lee and staff and volunteers immediately begin the strategic planning process to ensure United Way stays relevant in our community.

I'm a little sad that my time as Board Chair will be ending, but I'm not at all worried about the United Way. Gregg Bexten, the 2024 incoming Board Chair, brings with him so much experience and knowledge and a whole lot of common sense. I'm anxious to see how Gregg and Lee lead United Way into the next year.

At this time of year, we can't say thank you enough. Thank you to every single person who made a contribution to the United Way Campaign. Your generosity will help make this holiday season better for those who are food insecure, those who don't have warm shelter as the days get darker and colder, those who need a little help keeping their heat on, and so much more.

From my family to yours, blessings for a joyous holiday.

We Make a Life By What We Give

By Barb Prasad,
Genesis Company

We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.
~Winston Churchill

Since its inception the Genesis Company's slogan has been: Enhancing the Seasons of Your Life. Our business philosophy has been to provide health and wellness services to our community that can offer our clients the opportunity to live life to the fullest no matter what the age. We are always on the lookout for opportunities to bring new and innovative treatments and products to Jefferson City. There have been so many advancements in the past 15 years in vein care, esthetics and wellness services; and we love being able to bring these advancements to our hometown!

Genesis is a family-owned small business and we recognize that no business can survive without the support of its community. We also believe that as a business we should do our part to support the community that supports us. When we first opened, one of the first things Genesis did was establish its charitable giving program. Every year a predetermined portion of our company income is reserved for community donations. We call it Making Our Community Beautiful fund. The philosophy of this program is to earmark our donations for organizations in our community that provide assistance to people who are needing a hand up and

do this by also providing mentoring in some manner to the people being helped. We are so lucky to have so many organizations in Jefferson City that not only provide assistance but also loving care!

Who and how we have helped has changed over the years but we have continued with these core values. Currently our charitable giving partners are Central Missouri Foster Care and Adoption Association, HALO, Big Brother Big Sisters, Boys and Girls Club, Catholic Charities, CASA, Pregnancy Help Center and Red Slipper Warrior Project. We believe all of these organizations lend both a helping and loving hand to those in need and we are so happy that we can do our small part to support their efforts. By earmarking a significant portion of our giving to the United Way we also have the opportunity to support the other worthwhile charitable organizations in our community that are not one of our giving partners.

We get our staff involved in this in a few ways. First of all, our staff is our team and without them there is no profit to share with our community. We make sure to highlight any giving that occurs every month in our staff meetings. We want our staff to know that they are an integral part of the business being able to do this! Genesis giving is from them, too. We also offer them opportunities to attend fundraising community events and learn more about the organizations we are helping.

Genesis is also proud to

have been a United Way Pacesetter organization since our inception. Supporting the United Way is something every employee is encouraged to get involved with and learn about. It is the one time we also ask our employees to individually get involved in the giving. A large percentage of our staff take the \$365 Challenge by donating a dollar a day through payroll deduct. We have also provided volunteer help in many ways too, both to the United Way and its partner agencies.

December is our favorite giving month! It is the month we take a look at what has been given throughout the year and then any excess in our charity fund is spread amongst our partner charities. We love getting to be the little elf bringing an end of year donation to these organizations that do so much to help make this community a special place to live. Our staff and our family love to get to work doing something we enjoy and are passionate about. But more than, that we love the life we have made in this community and are thankful that we have been able to give back to a community that has given us so much.

Together Anything Is Possible



Lee Knerschild,
United Way President

Reflecting on the past year, I am struck by how our mid-Missouri community comes together when called upon. At our November 1 Victory Celebration, our 2023 Campaign Co-Chairs, Cassandra Atchison and Doug Hagenhoff, announced our incredible campaign results. The collective efforts of thousands of individuals and over 400 businesses helped the United Way of Central Missouri not only meet but exceed our \$2.4 million goal.

Our community was blessed to have two amazingly passionate individuals lead the campaign. Cassandra and Doug were champions for the United Way and our partner agencies. Never missing an opportunity to share their personal stories, they spoke at nearly 100 campaign rallies inspiring others to give. Along with their team of campaign volunteers, agency leaders, board members and campaign

coordinators; our community rallied to show support of our 29 partner agencies. Meeting our campaign goal ensures that our partner agencies are able to help feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, provide safe harbor for the abused and neglected and assist seniors in their homes.

Our agencies are hard at work each and every day creating a safety net that is critically important for a strong, healthy community. Just last year...

- Council for Drug Free Youth educated 9,500 youth on the importance of leading a fulfilling alcohol and drug free life.
- 466 mid-Missourians remained in their homes with the support of medical equipment provided by Homemaker Health Care.
- Special Learning Center's Super Kids Infinite Possibilities Clinic provided life changing therapy assisting children with their first steps and more.
- Compass Health Network brought holistic and affordable mental health, primary and dental care to medically indigent and underserved populations.
- American Red Cross administered over \$148,000 in direct financial assistance to those affected by disasters; directly impacting 569 individuals' lives.
- Children of low and middle income working families found affordable, quality childcare through Little Explorers Discovery Center.

- 1,312 survivors received shelter, counseling, advocacy, case management, hotline and referrals services thanks to Rape & Abuse Crisis Service.

These are just a few examples of the work being done with your support. While there is still work to do, we know that no matter the obstacles, no matter the odds together we stand ready to help those with disabilities, challenges and lost hope.

Thank you for helping us create positive change in a world where possibilities become a reality.

As we look ahead to 2024, we are excited about the addition of our three new partners. Our partnership with Catholic Charities and Common Ground Community Building further enhances our commitment to support individuals facing food insecurity and lends a hand to those who dream of financial stability. UCP-Heartland Gibbs Center for Independence guarantees that children and adults with varying abilities have a safe, positive environment to thrive in all aspects of life. This expansion of the United Way family is only possible because of you!

As the year draws to a close we want thank you for helping us create positive change in a world where possibilities become a reality. Thank you for supporting us and for proving that Together Anything Is Possible. On behalf of the United Way of Central Missouri, we want to wish you a happy and safe holiday season.



Christina Winder, Barb Prasad and Rachel Barfield represent Genesis Company at the United Way of Central Missouri's Community Campaign Launch held in early September.

Addressing Needs for our Neighbors Living in Poverty

By Tina Mollenkamp, Common Ground

Common Ground is a small nonprofit started by several churches in 2012 and which has been supported generously by local churches and the larger community since then. Our mission is to provide an innovative and relationship-focused approach to addressing the needs of our neighbors living in poverty. Common Ground helps people in the Jefferson City School District through two initiatives—the Benevolence Fund and the Families Forward Housing Program. Common Ground doesn't receive any regular government funding, so we are flexible and able to follow the current needs in the community. We partner with most of the major agencies in Jefferson City to work to make our assistance effective and efficient.

Common Ground's Benevolence Fund provides emergency financial assistance and professional resource counseling to families in the Jefferson City Public School District. This help is for utilities, rent, transportation, birth certificates, state ID and other types of assistance as determined on a case-by-case basis. As we experience a housing shortage in our area, the needs in the community have greatly

increased. People who have never asked for help before are coming to ask for help paying bills.

As part of the benevolence office we also have the Public Assistance Access Fund. This fund specifically helps people get into Public Housing or use a Housing Choice Voucher by paying first month's rent, deposits, old Ameren bills or old debt to a housing authority. United Way of Central Missouri helped Common Ground start this fund in 2021 with a Community Support Grant and again provided the same funding in 2023.

The Families Forward Housing Program is aimed at helping families transition from homelessness to independent living. Eligible participants must currently be homeless or face imminent eviction, have at least one child in the home under 18 years of age, and have sustainable monthly income. It provides advice, information and referral, goal-setting assistance and follow-up. The program also provides financial support to help cover rent, but in amounts that decrease as the family becomes independent by the end of twelve months. Right now we have three families in the program which brings us to 23 families served. One graduate of the program said, "The program saved us. I didn't see any hope until we got help. I had never applied for assistance before this. This program was a blessing. The program did more for us than our friends and family did. We can't thank you enough."

On Tuesday, August 29, United Way of Central Missouri announced that Common Ground will be a new partner agency starting in 2024. We are excited to work with all the partner agencies as well as the people of United Way to

continue to make a difference in the lives of people in our area. We are looking forward to attending the monthly agency meetings and learning from the vast knowledge of the United Way on how to strengthen our board. Our board has already written several policies at their suggestion and is working on developing a signature fundraiser. We are also looking forward to being a part of the amazing community-wide fundraising campaign for United Way. We already have volunteers stepping up saying they want to be involved in creating the art for the front of our building as a United Way Pacesetter.

Common Ground is currently in the middle of its own annual campaign. This has been our major fundraiser for the last several years and we really appreciate so many people giving to our organization. We held an Open House on Giving Tuesday to celebrate our supporters that give of their time, talents and treasure. Next year we also plan to have our first ever Trivia Night and Awards Ceremony.

A beautiful part of Common Ground is the more than 50 volunteers that support the four part-time staff members and help keep the organization running smoothly. Volunteers do everything from mowing the lawn to answering the phones to serving on the board. If you are interested in learning more about how you can get involved at Common Ground, you can call us at 573-522-4314. You can sign up for our newsletter or request assistance on our website at www.cgcb.org. Donations can also be made through the website, Facebook or mailed to us at 1015 East Atchison Street, Jefferson City, Missouri 65109.



Volunteers Virginia Irvin and Melinda Sanders serve as front desk volunteers at Common Ground Community Building.



QUALIFIED CHARITABLE DISTRIBUTIONS ALLOW ELIGIBLE IRA OWNERS UP TO \$100,000 IN TAX-FREE GIFTS TO CHARITY

Individual retirement arrangement (IRA) owners age 70½ or over can transfer up to \$100,000 to charity tax-free each year.

These transfers, known as qualified charitable distributions or QCDs, offer eligible older Americans a great way to easily give to charity before the end of the year. And, for those who are at least 73 years old, QCDs count toward the IRA owner's required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.

Normally, distributions from a traditional IRA are taxable when received. With a QCD, however, these distributions become tax-free as long as they're paid directly from the IRA to an eligible charitable organization.

Any IRA owner who wishes to make a QCD for 2023 should contact their IRA trustee soon so the trustee will have time to complete the transaction before the end of the year.

SUPPORT OUR FOUNDATION

The United Way of Central Missouri Foundation operates to further the mission of the United Way of Central Missouri by maximizing fundraising potential. The Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors and is a separate 501(c)(3) with the same high standards of fiscal accountability and good stewardship as the United Way of Central Missouri. The Foundation was established in 2003 to build a permanent, sustainable avenue of support for the United Way through gifts, bequests and planned giving.



COLE COUNTY AREA MOBILE FOOD PANTRY SCHEDULE

The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri will be providing 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.

- 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.



<i>January 2024</i>	
(SAT) 6	CATHOLIC CHARITIES 1015 EDMONDS ST, JEFFERSON CITY 9:00 - 11:00 AM
(TUES) 9	TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH 13007 ROUTE C, RUSSELLVILLE 1:30 - 3:30 PM
(THUR) 11	KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS 1822 TANNER BRIDGE RD, JEFFERSON CITY 3:30 - 5:30 PM
(WED) 17	BOYS & GIRLS CLUB 11105 LAFAYETTE ST, JEFFERSON CITY 4:00 - 6:00 PM
(SAT) 20	CAPITAL WEST CHRISTIAN CHURCH 1315 FAIRGROUNDS RD, JEFFERSON CITY 8:00 - 10:00 AM
(WED) 24	ST. MARTINS CATHOLIC CHURCH 7148 ST. MARTINS AVE, ST. MARTINS 4:00 - 6:00 PM
(THUR) 25	ANNUNCIATION CATHOLIC CHURCH 310 MILLS ST, CALIFORNIA 4:30 - 6:30 PM



Staff, volunteers and supporters of Common Ground Community Building celebrate becoming a United Way of Central Missouri partner agency at a press conference held this summer.

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 Catholic Charities Central Missouri Foster Care & Adoption Association Common Ground Community Building 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 Rape & Abuse Crisis Service Salvation Army Senior Nutrition Council Special Learning Center The Sneaker Project Tri-County YMCA UCP Heartland - Gibbs Center for Independence
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United Way

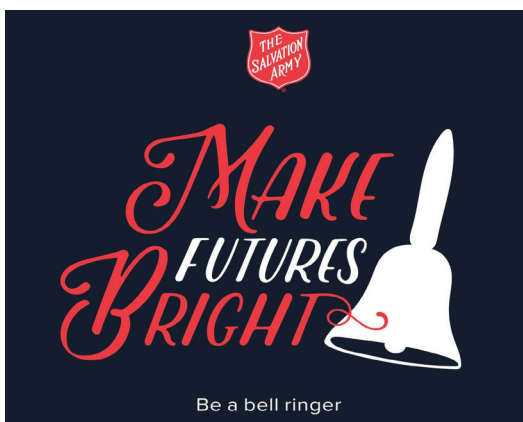
What's Happening



Thank you Missouri River Regional Library for hosting your annual Craft & Bake Sale in early December to benefit the United Way!



Happy Holidays from United Way of Central Missouri! We are wishing you a joyous and fun-filled holiday season!



The Salvation Army is hosting its annual Red Kettle Campaign, with a fundraising goal of \$410,000. Volunteers wearing red aprons and ringing bells will be out front of many local stores again this holiday season, raising funds for the drive to support The Salvation Army's shelter, food, rental/utility assistance and case management services. To volunteer as a bell ringer, visit registertoring.com.



NEXT MEETING FOR COLE COUNTY COAD

JOIN US



February 27, 2024
5:30 pm



Missouri Soybean Association
734 S Country Club Drive
Jefferson City

The first Cole County COAD Formation meeting was held in mid-November, 2023. Our goal was to provide a high-level overview of the purpose and goals of a COAD, and why we need community members and organizations to consider becoming members of the COAD. Our next meeting is February 27 at 5:30 pm. Please consider joining us for this next meeting to continue the COAD conversation as we begin to solidify subcommittees and forward action for the group. The QR Code above will take you to the Cole County COAD landing page, which at this point is under the United Way of Central Missouri's website. This page will continue to be the source for all COAD information.

COLE COUNTY 4-H FLOWER FUNDRAISER

Send flowers to anyone, anywhere, anytime

Scan the QR to go to our ordering webpage

Call Dakota Souders with any questions 573-634-2824

Working Together

Virtual Meeting Via Zoom
---Choose one, space limited---

Session A: 8pm Thursdays
Nov 30, Dec 7, 14, 21, Jan 11, 18

Session B: 8pm Thursdays
Feb 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Mar 7

Session C: 9am Tues & Thurs.
June 11, 13, 18, 20, 25 and 27

All session Central time

Working Together represents an international effort to engage youth from different countries and allow them to learn about different cultures. We hope that sharing their food, family structure, hobbies, and sports in an online safe environment will increase their cultural understanding. Our project is organized into seven lessons, being the first one an introduction to online learning and internet etiquette, all the lessons are divided into five sections, purpose, background, procedure, group reflection, and evaluation. Review of internet safety will occur 30 min prior to first session.

Must be ages 12-18 to participate. Register for the Working Together Event on v2.4honline.com. Contact your local 4-H MU Extension staff for more information.

COALITION MEETING

We're diving into crucial safety topics, exploring the impact of various drugs on our youth and community, and brainstorming collaborative solutions. It's a chance for us to unite, learn, and make a positive difference together.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11TH
THE STUDIO ON DUNKLIN - 6 PM

RSVP
[HTTPS://FORMS.GLE/AFDHSGRGUKPZHFVWS](https://forms.gle/AFDHSGRGUKPZHFVWS)

SCAN ME

SERGEANT KYLE GREEN
Missouri State Highway Patrol
Public Information Officer for Troop F

Your presence matters! So, whether you're a long-time resident or a new face in the neighborhood, join us for an engaging, fun-filled evening. Let's strengthen our community bonds and make a positive impact together.

www.jccdfy.org

CAPITAL CITY Festival of Lights

A Drive-Thru Light Park
Proceeds to help Homemaker Health Care and other local charities
All guests must remain in their vehicle at all times
Location: Binder Park, Jefferson City, MO
\$20 per vehicle \$35 per bus and limousine
Directions:
Apache Flats exit off HWY 50
Right on Binder Lake Rd/Left on Rainbow Dr
Right on Binder Lake Rd park entrance
Use Rainbow Dr entrance only
December 2nd - 31st
6:00pm - 9:00pm
Closed Mondays

Follow us on at www.facebook.com/ccfestivaloflights

Enhancing Support for Individuals with Differing Abilities

By Kevin Litt,
UCP Heartland

In a significant stride towards fostering inclusivity and support for individuals with differing abilities, UCP Heartland has recently joined hands with the United Way of Central Missouri. This collaboration marks a pivotal moment for both organizations as they work together to amplify their impact and contribute to the well-being of the community.

At the heart of UCP Heartland's endeavors is a steadfast mission: to provide people with differing abilities the extraordinary care and support needed to thrive in school, at home, at work and in the community. The organization has been a beacon of empowerment, offering a range of services aimed at enhancing the lives of individuals facing unique challenges.

The Gibbs Center for Independence, a flagship initiative of UCP Heartland, has been a driving force in achieving this mission in Jefferson City. Through a focus on fostering independence, the center empowers individuals to overcome obstacles and lead fulfilling lives. The Gibbs Center for Independence not only serves as a support hub for the Community Services, Supported Employment and Day Camp programs, but is also a testament to the organization's commitment to inclusivity and holistic development.

UCP Heartland being invited to join the United Way of Central Missouri network reflects a strategic move to amplify our impact. By becoming a member agency, UCP Heartland gains access to a broader network of resources, support and collaborative opportunities. This partnership not only facilitates increased outreach but also opens doors to potential grants that can further fuel the organization's initiatives.



UCP Heartland was thrilled to be included as one of three new member agencies announced at a United Way of Central Missouri press conference held last summer.

But the value of the United Way partnership extends beyond financial support. UCP Heartland is now part of a collaborative ecosystem where ideas, best practices and resources are shared among member agencies. This synergy enhances the collective ability to address community needs comprehensively.

As UCP Heartland steps into this new chapter of collaboration with the United Way of Central Missouri, the organization envisions a future where individuals with differing abilities not only receive the care and support they need but also actively contribute to and thrive in their communities. The synergy between UCP Heartland and the United Way reflects a shared commitment to building a more inclusive and compassionate society.

In the spirit of unity and shared purpose, UCP Heartland invites the community to join hands in supporting our fundraisers and initiatives. This past October, UCP Heartland hosted its 2nd Annual Gibbs Center Fall Classic; lead by Tami Turner, Hal and Jada Gibbs, Corey and Paula Backues, and Rebecca Rademan. This one-of-a-kind, farm to table event, garnered community support and financial contributions to further enhance the center's capabilities. For future fundraisers, please stay tuned on our Facebook and our website: www.ucpheartland.org. From awareness campaigns to collaborative events, our fundraisers are designed to engage the community and cultivate a sense of shared responsibility towards individuals with differing abilities.

Together, we can make a lasting impact and create a community where everyone, regardless of ability, has the opportunity to lead a life of dignity and fulfillment.

Creating Hope Where Neighbors Need Care

By Ashley Wiskirchen,
Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri

“Providing care, creating hope for those in need – regardless of faith, culture, or situation.”

This is the call of our work at Catholic Charities of Central and Northern Missouri, and the crux of our work. Catholic Charities provides high quality care in social services and legal services delivered with dignity, regardless of circumstances.

As the charitable arm of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Jefferson City, a member agency of Catholic Charities USA, and the Local Resettlement Agency affiliate for mid-Missouri, we characterize it this way: we are called by our faith to serve, not to serve only those who are Catholics. Our program areas are thoughtfully designed to encounter the whole person, first accompanying them toward stability, then seeing them thrive, all while honoring their stories and experiences.

“We recognize the inherent value in every individual, regardless of their faith, cultural background, or current circumstances,” shared Litz Main, Executive Director of Catholic Charities, “Our commitment is to deliver exceptional services through five comprehensive programs, working collaboratively with each person.”

Those programs address food security and client choice in the Catholic Charities Food Pantry, chronic disease management and health workshops in the Health and Nutrition Services Program, Counseling Services, family reunification through legal Family Immigration Services, and Refugee Resettlement – often reuniting with families after years-long waits in refugee camps.

“We advocate for those facing significant challenges and accompany them with genuine respect throughout their journey,” Main continued, “this year our agency has touched the lives of nearly 7,500 people.”

Our Health and Nutrition Services program saw 1,974 families visit the Catholic Charities Food Pantry to shop its shelves in the comfortable, grocery store setting, filling both their pantries with nutritious food and their peace of mind.

Our Community Services program encountered 35 people with housing needs, counseling them on building credit, educating them on housing issues, and accompanying them toward their goals. We also supported over a dozen individuals seeking relief from high-interest loans – the refinancing of which has given them room to breathe and regroup, finding first stability then thriving as they set goals with our Financial Stability Specialist. Our case



Pictured above: Staff and volunteers prepare for a shift at the Catholic Charities Food Pantry where they will help neighbors shop, check out groceries and load their car.

Pictured below: Catholic Charities staff member, Jennifer Hudson, explains how pantry points work in the client-choice, grocery model, Catholic Charities Food Pantry to a neighbor on their first visit.



management for disaster survivors and Hispanic community members has helped nearly 200 individuals navigate the ins-and-outs of many complex systems from immigration to healthcare – and beyond.

Our Family Immigration Services team hit a record high number of open cases in 2023 as Ukrainian refugees traveled to be united with family or familiar neighbors in Sedalia, Missouri. The rapidly shifting landscape of immigration law, temporary protected status, and USCIS renewal dates has kept our five DOJ Accredited Representatives busy – but our clients have still found time to celebrate, even gifting our staff with homemade baked goods as a sign of their gratitude. To see those we've served pour themselves back out to us is truly humbling.

In the Refugee Services program, our case management staff have been diligently serving newcomers. From reception at the airport where friends and families often reunite after years-long waits, to the community partnerships

that have grown into friendships, the resettlement services we've provided since 1975 are still bearing fruit as a generational work of love across mid-Missouri. This year 249 individuals began planting roots in welcoming communities across our service area, and we are grateful to journey with them.

Knowing the great need for mental health care across our service area, and acutely in more rural locations where health-care is already challenging to access, we continue to seek a Director of Counseling Services who can help rebuild our efforts to provide faith-informed counseling for youth, families and individuals – and who can help implement social and emotional supportive curricula for Catholic Schools across the diocese.

It has been such a blessing for our agency to enter the United Way as a member agency this year. Though we cover 38 counties across central and northern Missouri,

many of our neighbors have similar needs. To network and nurture relationships with other United Way member agencies is invaluable to both our work and our clients.

One way we've put our membership into practice is by developing a preferred referral. We know that case management and material support are more holistic and successful for our neighbors when they are accompanied by a relationship. If a neighbor has already established a relationship with a United Way partner agency, we want to prioritize supplementing their services with what we have to offer. We've seen that reciprocated in our own referrals, as well.

It is truly beautiful to see a community of helpers rally to meet the needs of neighbors. We are honored to provide care and create hope for our community and grateful for the many supporters and community partners that weave that network of care around those in need.



Sr. Director of Programs and Services, Chelle Smith-Vandergriff (right) talks with to visitors at Catholic Charities' open house event earlier this year. Visitors were able to learn about the five programs at Catholic Charities, see the impact these services have on community members, and learn how to support those efforts through volunteerism.

Meet Our Power of the Purse Co-Chair: Ashley Wilde



Ashley Wilde, Rusty Drawing Automotive Group

Tell us about you/your family:
My husband Matt and I have been married for 6

years. We have 3 children: Justice, Cami and Paige. We have one grandchild, Hadlei, and a second grandchild on the way.
Occupation:
I am the Executive Assistant to Rusty Drawing.
Community involvement:
I am a Special Learning Center board member, Dreams to Reality volunteer and United Way Power of the Purse host committee member and Co-Chair for 2023.
Favorite Power of the Purse component:
The live auction! There is always so much energy in the room. There is nothing better than seeing people's excitement about the bags and experiences that have been donated.

Favorite Power of the Purse memory:
One year, Central Bank donated a hot air balloon ride as an experience in the live auction. Dave Minton was a purse model that year, and he ended up donating a second ride on the spot due to a bidding war. Probably the most money one bag and experience has ever brought in!
Why are you passionate about the United Way?
Having volunteered for two other United Way partner agencies, I've seen first-hand how United Way truly is a great partner for its agencies.

Community Organizations Active in Disaster Ensures Community Resilience



The recently formed Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) hosted its first community meeting in mid-November. The next meeting will take place February 27 at 5:30 pm, and those interested in attending can register at www.unitedwaycemo.org/disaster.

By Ann Bax

Our community was changed forever on May 22, 2019 when the destructive EF3 tornado tore through Central Missouri; starting with a vengeance in Eldon, then raging northward along Highway 54 before descending on Jefferson City and cutting a terrible path of devastation right through the center of the city. But despite the wind and the water, which were strong... our community showed we were stronger. I remember Zach Paul's words resonating heavy in my heart that night as he confirmed a tornado had actually touched down in our community. I immediately began thinking about United Way's role in disaster. Prior to that night we had many discussions with other United Way's around Missouri regarding disaster response and recovery--so we had a playbook in our heads--but not on paper. And we had not formally had that conversation with our community leaders, health and human service agencies, organizations or faith-based groups to determine who would do what....and what hats we would each wear should a disaster happen in our community. Immediately, experts in disaster response and recovery.... Missouri State Emergency Agency, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Missouri Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster and the Adventists gave our community a crash course in disaster response and recovery best practices. Part of this crash course included a meeting at the United Way of Central Missouri office with health and human service agencies, faith based organizations,

civic and government agencies to discuss each organization's strengths and how they could best serve the community in the short term and long term post disaster. From that meeting a Short Term Recovery Committee was established to address immediate, unmet needs of disaster survivors and to limit duplication of services. This Short Term Recovery Committee transitioned into the Intermediate Recovery Committee and finally the Cole and Miller County Long Term Recovery Committee (LTRC) several months after the disaster. The LTRC provided a coordinated recovery effort and provided assistance to individuals affected by the disaster who did not have adequate personal resources for basic needs as a result of the disaster. In July 2023 the LTRC closed the last open case from the tornado of 2019. Now the role of the LTRC is to lead the formation of the Cole County COAD in order to be prepared to respond to and help our community in the case of future disaster or community emergency. Although we did not have a playbook, and our community's response to the 2019 disaster was unscripted; we have so much to be proud of! My role with United Way of Central Missouri provided me with a vantage point to observe firsthand how our community came together to take care of each other—I saw a community uniting with a common cause. I saw people coming to help their neighbors, friends and people whose names they did not know. I saw tremendous cooperation and collaboration and so many people demonstrat-

ing just how much they care so much about our community!
So now we want to use what we learned from the disaster of 2019 and get the script written so we will be a stronger, more resilient community ready to face whatever comes our way. A Community Organization Active in Disaster (COAD) is a volunteer coalition comprised of representatives from public, private, civic, faith-based and not-for-profit agencies; whose mission is to enhance our community's ability to mitigate, prevent, prepare for and recover from future disasters and community emergencies. The goal of a COAD is to strengthen area-wide disaster coordination by promoting advocacy and planning to reduce the impact of disasters, including facilitating communication, coordination, collaboration and cooperation. The Cole County COAD will ensure we have enhanced coordination among community organizations; we will pool resources to alleviate strain on individual organizations; and we will not use precious time to plan what to do when a disaster or emergency happens. We will have the plan. We won't have to ask "Who is doing what? What is my role or my organization's role?" We will already know the answer and we will know how to respond. We invite all individuals and organizations interested in any aspect of social service to attend the next Cole County COAD meeting on February 27 at 5:30 pm at the Missouri Soybean Association. To register, go to www.unitedwaycemo.org/disaster.

Meet Our Power of the Purse Co-Chair: Patty Kehoe



Patty Kehoe, Community Volunteer

Tell us about you/your family:
My husband John and I are grade school sweethearts and will be celebrating our 48th anniversary in January. We have been blessed with 3 children: Christy (Jeff)

Johnson, Katie (Ryan) Lock and Dan (Becky) Kehoe; along with 9 wonderful grandkids: Ethan, Owen and Graham Johnson; Ellie, Nora and Mia Lock; and Maddie, Ben and Dominic Kehoe.
Community involvement:
I am a member of United Way's Women United affinity group and the Power of the Purse Host Committee. I served as Co-Chair for Power of the Purse this year.
Favorite Power of the Purse component:
My favorite part is working with all of the members of the Host Committee and United Way staff. It's great watching all of these talented women coming together, volunteering their time and throwing out great ideas for the purses, experiences, and making the night enjoyable for all of the attendees. The best reward is seeing everyone having a great time

during the Live Auction, watching the models enjoying themselves while encouraging the ladies to bid higher, and seeing the excitement when someone has the winning bid.
Favorite Power of the Purse memory:
Two years ago I won the Pick of the Auction raffle and was able to choose one of the Live Auction Purses before it went up for bidding. I never win anything. I was so excited. I picked a small black Gucci purse, which I still love and use all the time.
Why are you passionate about the United Way?
Our United Way is made up of such passionate people who really care about our community. Being able to help out is just so rewarding.

Women United Hosts Record-Breaking Power of the Purse Fundraiser

United Way of Central Missouri's Women United committee hosted its seventh annual—and successful—Power of the Purse fundraiser in November at a new venue this year, Capital Bluffs Event Center. This event brought together nearly 300 community-minded women who are passionate...not only about purses, but about the bigger message beyond the gorgeous Gucci, Coach and Chanel handbags...joining in the fight for the health, education, financial stability and basic needs of every person in our community. Thanks to the generosity of community supporters, the event offered over one hundred purses for the silent and live auction, mystery jewelry boxes, permanent jewelry linking and a variety of quality wine selections in the wine pull. Purses ranged from vintage collectibles to brand name favorites, and thirteen selective purses were elevated from silent auction to live auction status. It was a perfect evening that concluded with local celebrity gentlemen modeling the live auction purses that had unique experiences tucked inside...experiences such as a 3-hour limousine ride for 8-10 passengers, a



Women United hosted a coat drive earlier this month for two United Way agency partners, Special Learning Center and Little Explorers Discovery Center, to make sure children have the winter attire they need to stay warm and healthy. Each agency was given 17 coats and 4 hat and glove sets.

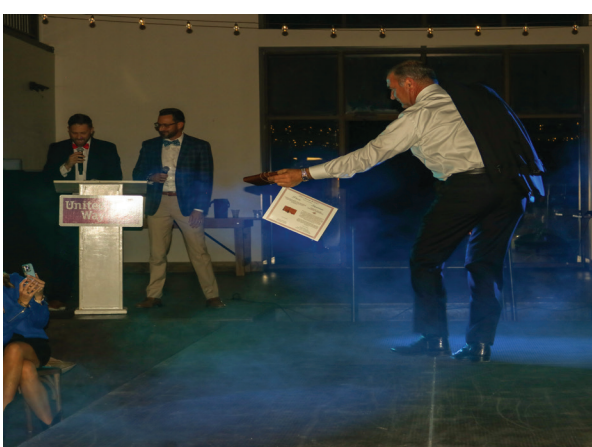


brewer's experience at Last Flight Brewing Company, a long weekend stay in Big Sky Montana, a trip to Jupiter, Florida to watch the St. Louis Cardinals Spring Training, two tickets to the Bengals vs. Chiefs game on New Year's Eve, complete with two pre-game field passes and a parking pass... and more!
Our accolades to the ladies who vision and dedication saw the Power of the Purse to a successful \$66,000+ conclusion—a record amount in Power of the Purse history! Thank you to our event co-chairs Ashley Wilde and Patty Kehoe, and their host committee comprised of talented, creative and compassionate women! And a special thank you to our two emcees, Doug Otto and Kyle Shimmens!
Power of the Purse was created to provide an avenue for women to get more involved with the United Way at a community level. The United Way needs passionate women—because in truly great communities

like ours, we take care of each other! Power of the Purse is one example of the type of events and networking opportunities that is available through United Way of Central Missouri's affinity group: Women United. Women United is an opportunity for women of all ages, backgrounds and skills sets to come together to help children, families and seniors in need through volunteering, advocating and special-event fundraising. Just over the last month, this incredible group of ladies hosted Power of the Purse, ran two coat drives to support Special Learning Center and Little Explorers Discovery Center and also gifted Christmas presents filled with personal care items to 45 individuals in need. If you are interested in being a part of this dynamic, philanthropic group please visit www.unitedwaycemo.org/womenunit to learn more and sign up.



Women United filled Christmas bags with personal care items to gift to 45 individuals in need this holiday season.



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