

# SUCCESS STORIES



## SingleCare (formerly FamilyWize)

“The cost of my prescription would have been close to \$500 without SingleCare. That’s the difference between buying groceries or getting medication.” — participant of United Way initiative SingleCare



## Community Cares

“Without United Way’s regular and emergency funding during the pandemic, we could not have maintained the staff to assist Racine’s students, families and schools.” — Br. Mike Kadow, executive director of United Way impact partner John XXIII Educational Center



## Big Brothers Big Sisters

For more than 60 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) — a United Way impact partner — has changed the lives of children facing adversity for the better, forever. They serve children who face adverse childhood experiences, such as social isolation, abuse or neglect. BBBS’ mentoring relationships protect children from the burdens of childhood trauma.

“When COVID-19 surfaced, BBBS surveyed parents on the pandemic’s impact on their families. Some said they were getting by. Others shared that having children home 24/7 created hardship because utilities and food bills had increased. One parent revealed that she had five children who were all attempting online learning and therapy with one computer.

Funds from a Walmart grant enabled us to purchase computers and gift cards for families, some of which paid for their food and utilities. CCB Technologies donated two used laptops to help. As kids returned to school, we reached out for masks to area seamstresses, who donated 3,500 of them. With Sew N’ Save and Tyler Family GMC dealerships, we distributed the masks to hundreds of local families, free of charge. COVID-19 bought the community together rather than divided us with this project.” — a BBBS employee



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## John XXIII Educational Center

United Way impact partner John XXIII helps hundreds of



students finish high school, pursue higher education and support their communities every year. The results are life changing.

“One student continued her education at St. Mary’s University to obtain her master’s degree and eventually became the associate director of its First Generation Initiative.” — Br. Mike Kadow, John XXIII executive director

## Imagination Library

Children with at least 20 books at home are more likely to graduate high school. Our Imagination Library initiative has sent 300,000 books to build home libraries for 11,700 local children.

“When I get books in the mail, it makes me feel happy. I actually really like it.” — Olivia, Imagination Library participant, age 4



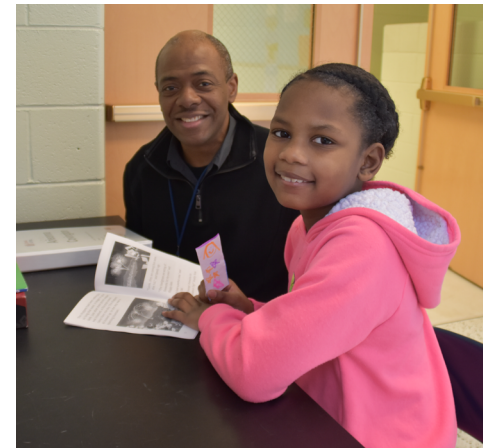
## Schools of Hope

Research shows that third-grade reading proficiency is a powerful predictor of later academic achievement. A student who is not at least moderately successful in reading by the third grade is unlikely to graduate from high school. That’s why our Schools of Hope initiative provides first- through third-grade students with reading tutors throughout the semester.

“Volunteering for Schools of Hope is a rewarding experience. You’re instilling a love of reading at an early age and opening the world to these students.” — Linda Graper, tutor at Wadewitz

“Reading is important because you get to learn more about things, and your mind grows.” — Schools of Hope student

“Schools of Hope is such a great program. Not only are we helping children with their literacy skills, but we’re also forming bonds that last much longer than the school year.” — Julie Stemper, tutor at Olympia Brown Elementary



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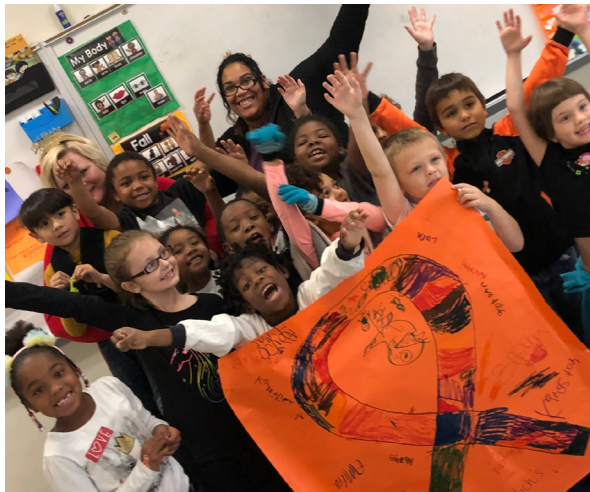
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## LIFT

When Leanna Johnson started attending family nights at Knapp Community School, she immediately noticed the unifying effect of United Way and Racine Unified School District's community school strategy. Ever since then, she's been a staple of United Way's work, from facilitating Knapp's COFI group to fundraising through very successful bake sales. Thank you, Leanna, for your support and leadership!

"I want my kids to feel safe in our neighborhood and at school. When hearing about COFI, I knew this was my chance to not only voice my concerns but to make changes happen. I felt it was important to be involved, and from the first meeting I knew this was an organization that would get things done."  
— Leanna Johnson



## Focus on Community

Focus on Community, a United Way impact partner, prevents crises and supports sound decisions with programs like LifeSkills and Substance Abuse Prevention. Every dollar dedicated to preventing drug and alcohol use saves up to \$20 from potential emergency room care, productivity loss and incarceration.

A Knapp Elementary student shared that he was bullied, had no friends and did not feel like he was smart enough to go to school. After four weeks in LifeSkills, he told the facilitator, "I don't need your help today, miss. I made a new friend, and we are going to work together."

"If it wasn't for LifeSkills giving him the tools to be more self-confident, he wouldn't have asked his classmate to be his partner." — Aja Molitor, Focus on Community staff member



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## VITA

United Way's VITA initiative doesn't just provide millions of dollars of tax returns for free to the Racine County community — it also gives high school accounting students like Kyle Waiss a hands-on opportunity to gain experience in their future careers.

"Joining the VITA team here at Case was one of the best decisions I have made so far in my high school career. The VITA program is an amazing opportunity, both for the students of



Racine Unified School District and for the whole community. For some taxpayers, I have impacted their year greatly, but they have impacted me even more." — Kyle Waiss, Case High School student and VITA volunteer

## Catholic Charities

Brigida is a single mom in Racine whose finances were impacted by the pandemic. She was not alone. During COVID-19, many — including Brigida — sought help with sudden unemployment. Lost paychecks prevented many from buying food and basic necessities.



Catholic Charities — a recipient of United Way's COVID-19 response funding — organized a food drive to meet the urgent needs of people like Brigida. They distributed food boxes, basic hygiene kits and gift cards to clients who didn't qualify for other assistance, even delivering to those with no transportation.

Brigida shared that Catholic Charities was "life-saving" when she and her children were in dire need. She couldn't be more grateful for all Catholic Charities has done for her and her family over the years, and their support during this very difficult time was no exception.



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## Women's Resource Center

When survivors shelter at Women's Resource Center (WRC), a United Way impact partner, their lives improve dramatically. One client fled to WRC's shelter after surviving the dangers at home for months. She quickly secured a great job that enabled her to save for her first apartment. Once she left, she had transformed from a shy woman with low confidence into one empowered enough to speak at WRC's annual gala.

"Watching someone realize they are finally safe is one of the most rewarding feelings I have ever experienced." — Anna Pepple, lead WRC advocate

"The most meaningful part of my job is to help people in the scariest, lowest part of their lives. To be able to step in and say, 'We can help you through this; it can and will get better.'" — Jori Chambers, WRC executive director



## Racine County Food Bank

In Racine County, 37 percent of households are unable to meet their basic needs. The Food Bank — through its affiliate pantries, homeless shelters and community meal programs — provides 2,000 meals to Racine County residents every single day.

"Hunger is an income issue. If you have sufficient income, you have the ability to purchase nutritious food for yourself and your family.



With help from United Way of Racine County, the Racine County Food Bank works with a network of emergency food pantries and meal programs to provide nutritious food to individuals and families. Together, we aim to eliminate the food insecurity that can be a barrier to health, education and financial stability, the basic building blocks of a successful life." — Dan Taivalkoski, Racine County Food Bank executive director



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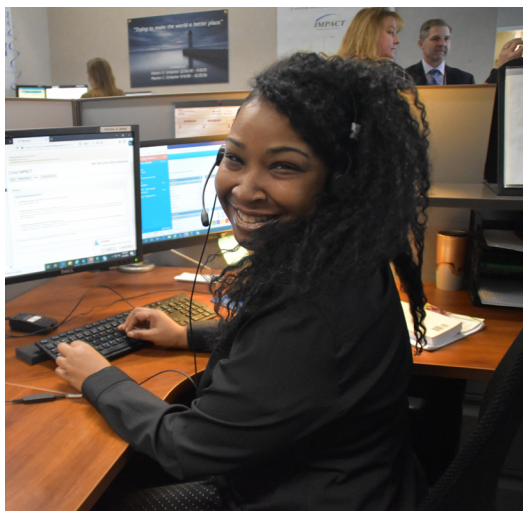


## IMPACT 2-1-1

“When I came home to a broken furnace and knew that I could not afford to have it fixed, it was one of my low points. We were huddled in our kitchen, and I was really afraid we would freeze that night. They talk about people who die using their stoves to keep them warm, but I was getting desperate.

Then I remembered 2-1-1. You told me that I qualified for the Furnace Repair or Replacement Program because I own my home but have limited income. You also encouraged us to spend the night at an emergency warming shelter to be safe.

When we returned the next morning, the repair man was ready to fix my furnace. I was just amazed at how wonderful everyone was who helped us. I’m so glad I reached out to you.” — Chloe, a client of United Way initiative IMPACT 2-1-1



## Burlington Transitional Living Center

Racine County has the highest concentration of homelessness in southeastern Wisconsin. With partners like Burlington Transitional Living Center, United Way is keeping neighbors off the streets and moving towards their long-term health, education and financial stability goals.

After overdosing, a pregnant, single woman moved into Burlington Transitional Living Center.

She knew she needed to rebuild her health before she would be prepared for motherhood, so she placed her baby up for adoption. After overcoming her substance use, she has since rebuilt a relationship with her family.

“She wanted her sons to be proud of her and what she did. She has now been clean for three years.” — Cristin Chaffee, Burlington Transitional Living Center staff member



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## Festival Foods

United Way of Racine County has supported Racine County for a century, so we have a rich history of partnerships with local companies like Festival Foods. We've been partners for 30 years, and they always find new ways to educate employees about our work and creatively support our community — such as when employees below took a pie to the face for a United Way fundraiser. Thank you, Festival, for helping us create change!



“There’s a feeling of pride to see the money we raised, together with all the money raised by organizations, truly does make a difference in our community.” — Jon Allred, Festival Foods staff member

## Racine County Economic Development Corporation

To RCEDC, supporting the community is a big deal. In addition to running a campaign for United Way every year, they regularly volunteer and find extra ways to give more than just money. Last year, they wrapped presents to give to local families — and this year they did a contactless gift card drive instead. They do great work, and we’re grateful to have them as a partner!

Laura Million is a United Way campaign cabinet member and RCEDC deputy director. She’s coordinated RCEDC’s campaign for years and admires their dedication to the community.

“The Racine County Economic Development Corporation team is passionate about improving and facilitating investment in our community. While we weren’t able to enjoy in-person volunteering this year, we were pleased to assist families of United Way’s LIFT initiative at Julian Thomas Elementary School through our gift card drive.” — Laura Million



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## Board Leadership

"I am a fervent believer that we exist to do for others so the world we live in is as good as it can be in each moment. We all have the capability of putting even the smallest band-aid on the most mundane ill we witness or come across in a day. Human kindness and giving is the eternal salve of a civilized society. Whether it is teaching adults to read, donating a bag of food to the food pantry, doing community clean up on a 'day of caring,' every little bit that each of us does means something to someone someplace.

The beauty of volunteering is often you will never know whom you helped just that you did something good. And let's face it, giving of yourself for the benefit of others is pretty good food for anyone's soul." — Barb Bakshis, United Way board member



## The Investment Process

"Participating in the volunteer committees is a constant eye-opener for me. I see folks who are competent, compassionate and caring. Folks with very busy lives who continue to make time to do important work on these committees. And through conversation, I see that these volunteers work for the community in so many other areas.

I saw the impact of our work especially clearly when I went to a car wash that was hosted by RADD during their summer camps. Seeing the kids with varying capabilities laughing and having a good time was more meaningful to me than I had expected. They were doing something that, for some folks, would not even seem important. But for these kids, this 'normal' summer event would not have been possible for them. It reminded me that United Way helps the soul." — Peggy James, Community Investment Committee volunteer and United Way board member

