

UNITED WAY OF KANKAKEE & IROQUOIS COUNTIES  
ANNUAL REPORT 2020

# TRANSFORMATION & IMPACT



**UNITED WAY FIGHTS FOR THE HEALTH,  
EDUCATION AND FINANCIAL STABILITY  
OF EVERY PERSON IN EVERY COMMUNITY.**

**OUR VISION**

UNITED WAY ENVISIONS A WORLD WHERE ALL INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES  
ACHIEVE THEIR FULL POTENTIAL THROUGH EDUCATION, INCOME STABILITY  
AND HEALTHY LIVES.

**OUR MISSION**

TO IMPROVE LIVES BY MOBILIZING THE CARING POWER OF OUR COMMUNITY  
TO ADVANCE THE COMMON GOOD.



## A LETTER FROM OUR LEADERS

**In the past year**, United Way has experienced significant change and transformation. One thing remains true - through hardship, there is hope.

Our community looks different in 2020 than it did in 2019. The COVID-19 pandemic has, in many ways, transformed our lives. We've experienced unprecedented challenges in the face of this global health and economic crisis. Yet, in such a challenging time, the thing that gives us great hope and inspiration is seeing how quickly our community has come together.

Since United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties and the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley launched the Kankakee and Iroquois Counties COVID-19 Response Fund on March 28th, we have quickly deployed more than \$600,000 to the organizations on the frontlines, providing essentials to our neighbors hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic.

For more than a century, United Ways have demonstrated the ability to rise to the occasion - we were born out of a health and economic crisis in the late 1800s. By 1921, the United Way movement found its way to Kankakee County. Since then, we have helped our community withstand the effects of war abroad, unemployment and work shortages, civil disturbances, economic uncertainties like the 2008 economic recession and today, the COVID-19 crisis. This is what we were built for.

In 2019, United Way transformed in other ways, too. We introduced our new community impact strategy for Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. Focusing our efforts on bold goals in Education, Health and Financial Stability was a shift in perspective for many of our constituents. However, it wasn't a shift from our core mission-driven work. United Way remains committed to making positive, sustainable change in the community, helping residents learn more, earn more and lead safe and healthy lives.

We also welcomed three new employees. This small, but mighty team of game changers hit the ground running - connecting with donors, partners, families and business leaders to mobilize resources to help our community thrive.

As our local United Way enters a new chapter, we know there will be both challenges and successes along the way. We also know that we are stronger together. To live better, we must LIVE UNITED.

We need you as advocates for our community because, together, we CAN make a difference.

Without you, we simply wouldn't be where we are today - and for that, we thank you.

Sincerely,



**KYLE BENOIT**  
Board President  
United Way of Kankakee  
& Iroquois Counties



**KERSTIN RUST**  
Executive Director  
United Way of Kankakee  
& Iroquois Counties

	<h2>Childhood Success</h2>	<h1>725</h1>	<h1>100+</h1>	<h1>40%</h1>
	<p>\$64,557 INVESTED</p>	<p>families accessed high-quality, affordable childcare</p>	<p>Theraplay trained practitioners supporting healthy child-caregiver attachment</p>	<p>Kindergarten students meeting developmental milestones</p>
	<h2>Youth Success</h2>	<h1>2,324</h1>	<h1>543</h1>	<h1>88%</h1>
	<p>\$7,895 INVESTED</p>	<p>teens taught how to identify dating violence and healthy relationship behaviors</p>	<p>youth participated in mentoring and skill-development programs outside of school</p>	<p>of high school students graduated on-time</p>
	<h2>Economic Mobility</h2>	<h1>585</h1>	<h1>407</h1>	<h1>64%</h1>
	<p>\$71,460 INVESTED</p>	<p>individuals accessed free civil legal services</p>	<p>households accessed housing stability, homeless prevention, financial management services</p>	<p>of households achieved financial stability</p>
	<h2>Access to Health</h2>	<h1>3,965</h1>	<h1>\$700,000</h1>	<h1>88%</h1>
	<p>\$184,215 INVESTED</p>	<p>individuals received mental and behavioral support services</p>	<p>saved on prescription medication by individuals with FamilyWise discount cards</p>	<p>of households are food secure</p>



591 S Elm Street, adjacent to East River Street in Kankakee is home to the first Strong Neighborhood project.

### Strong Neighborhoods Initiative

Healthcare, childcare, housing, education and basic needs are all anchored in neighborhoods. Neighborhoods shape the outcomes of children and families, and strong neighborhoods matter. Through strong neighborhoods, we can support macro-economic vibrancy in our cities, our counties and our beautiful state of Illinois. The **City of Kankakee, Kankakee School District 111** and United Way opened the first Strong Neighborhood House at 591 S. Elm Avenue in Kankakee's 2nd Ward. Together, we aim to support health, education and financial stability through place-based strategies specific to neighborhood residents' needs and aspirations.

### Pembroke Township: Access to Health

With the help of numerous community partners, United Way convened local community members to address needs related to healthcare access in Pembroke Township in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pembroke's trusted community nurse, Brenda Stewart, led the charge for community health education and PPE distribution to over 1,000 residents at the CITGO gas station. Pembroke Township also tackled food insecurity and unemployment by creating jobs to deliver emergency food and supplies to hundreds of immunocompromised individuals and seniors. Local leaders also developed the Farm Readiness and Community Resiliency Program to provide "Pembroke Pride Produce Boxes" full of healthy foods.



# LASTING SOLUTIONS THROUGH POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

## Success By 6: Early Childhood Collaboration

As the African proverb states, "it takes a village to raise a child." And our entire community has come together to address a critical area of impact - early childhood development.

United Way and the Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley convened over 50 local partners to collaborate on solutions that support early childhood development through policy formation, environmental changes and direct services.

United Way partnered with the **Erikson Institute** to implement a second wave of the Early Development Instrument (EDI) in four school districts within Kankakee County. The project leveraged **288** school district employee hours to survey **733** kindergarten students and provide neighborhood level data on early childhood development across the county.

At the same time, the Success By 6 coalition and our community partners celebrated many big wins this past year including:

- **Project SUN** secured a \$2.1 million grant to address childhood trauma and resources for families in Kankakee County,
- Kankakee County now has the most Theraplay-trained practitioners in the world, with over 100+ people certified,
- **Kankakee School District 111** hired a child psychologist to better address social-emotional issues in children,
- **Bourbonnais Elementary School District 53** introduced parent newsletters that provide caregivers with activities to support further development,
- **Bradley Elementary School District 61** teachers, staff and community members engaged in Project 375 to promote awareness of mental health,
- And local churches "adopted" Bradley Elementary classrooms to volunteer and donate essential items to families in need.

## Project Full Circle: Recognizing Healthcare Workers & Supporting Small Business

Small businesses faced new and greater challenges in the face of COVID-19. United Way believes Giving Back Is Good Business. As a small business owner, you are in it for the long haul. Your business is rooted in the community. We are so grateful for our small business partners, and we can't imagine our community without them. Many are regular supports of United Way.

In April 2020, United Way launched Project Full Circle with **Senator Patrick Joyce** to recognize healthcare workers serving on the front lines of the pandemic and support small businesses. United Way reinvested \$3000 into small businesses **Creme of the Crop**, **Dress Well Boutique & EVOLVE Clothing Co.**, **Stefari Cafe** and **Yellow Elephant Gallery** and gifted 260 healthcare workers with a free meal.





Each year, United Way works with corporate partners to improve lives and strengthen communities. The 78 companies listed here are members of our Corporate Leadership program, with those in bold representing our newest partners. Combined, these companies and their employees contributed nearly \$450,000. We thank them for their passion for change and commitment to our shared purpose.

\* Criteria for membership Corporate Leadership program includes (but is not exclusive to) running a workplace campaign, raising at least \$100 per year and contributing at least 50 percent of funds raised directly to United Way.

- Accenture
- Advance Auto Parts
- Ameren
- AMITA St. Mary's Hospital
- Aqua of Illinois
- Arc of Iroquois County
- Armstrong Flooring
- AT&T
- BASF Corporation
- Bishop McNamara
- Bradley Bourbonnais Community High School
- Bradley Elementary School District #61
- Carle Foundation Hospital
- Catholic Charities
- Cigna
- CITGO Petroleum Corporation
- City of Kankakee
- CNO Financial Group**
- Comcast
- ComEd/Exelon
- Commscope**
- County of Kankakee
- CSL Behring
- Dow Chemical
- Easterseals
- Equian**
- Exxon Mobil Corporation
- FedEx Corporation

- First Financial Bank
- First Trust Bank of Illinois
- Gardant Management Solutions
- General Electric
- Good Shepherd Manor
- Grinnell Mutual & Grinnell Mutual Group
- Harbor House
- Helen Wheeler Center
- Hospice of Kankakee Valley
- Huber Group
- IKO Sales**
- Iroquois Mental Health Center
- Iroquois Federal
- Illinois Tool Works Inc.
- JCPenney
- Kankakee Area Career Center
- Kankakee Community College
- Kankakee School District #111
- KCCASA/ISAS
- Lowe's
- LSC Communications
- Manpower Inc.
- Meijer
- Midland States Bank
- Nebraska Medicine
- Nelnet-Remote
- Nicor Gas
- Norfolk Southern Foundation
- Olivet Nazarene University
- Options CIL

- Peddinghaus Corporation
- Peoples Bank of Kankakee County
- PNC Bank
- Prairie State Legal Services
- Ricoh USA
- Riverside Healthcare
- State of Illinois
- Security Lumber & Supply Co.
- SKDO
- Supervalu (Jewel Osco)
- Target
- Thrivent Financial
- Union Pacific
- UPS
- US Bank
- Village of Manteno
- Walmart
- Wells Fargo
- YWCA
- Zachry



Each year, United Way works with local nonprofit agencies to improve lives and strengthen communities. The agencies listed here received funding to support programs in education, financial stability and health during the FY 2019-2020 fiscal year.

## EDUCATION

- Boy Scouts of America, Rainbow Council**  
Comprehensive Youth Development
- Childcare Resource and Referral Network**  
Social Emotional Learning Facilitation
- Girl Scouts of Central Illinois**  
Leadership Experience
- KCC ALIVE**  
Baby Talk
- Kankakee Area YMCA**  
Childcare  
JUMP Mentoring Program
- Kankakee YWCA**  
Childcare

## FINANCIAL STABILITY

- American Red Cross of Illinois River Valley**  
Disaster Preparedness & Response
- Aunt Martha's**  
Homeless Youth Services
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet**  
Homeless Prevention Program  
Money Management  
Senior Case Management  
Transitional Housing
- KCC ALIVE**  
Adult Literacy
- Options Center for Independent Living**  
Emergency Services
- Prairie State Legal Services**  
Civil Legal Services

## HEALTH

- Arc of Iroquois County**  
Respite Program
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Joliet**  
Adult Protective Services  
Hands of Hope Counseling  
Senior Companion Program
- Center of Hope**  
Food Pantry Protein Program
- Child Network**  
CASA Program  
Children's Advocacy Center
- Easterseals**  
Pediatric Therapy
- Gigi's Playhouse**  
Fantastic Friends
- Harbor House**  
Prevention Services  
Survivor Services  
Youth Counseling
- Helen Wheeler Center**  
Family & Child Services  
Outpatient Case Management
- Iroquois Mental Health Center**  
Psychiatric Services
- KC-CASA ISAS**  
Advocacy  
Counseling  
Education
- Onarga Nexus Academy**  
Sensory Rooms
- Volunteer Services**  
Caregiver Services  
Grandparents Raising Grandchildren



# EVENT SPOTLIGHT: WOMEN UNITED



**W**omen United is an annual United Way event that brings together women from across all walks of life for a time of inspiration, transformation and celebration. The event features dynamic women leaders and provides a space for participants to connect with each other and the community which we call home.

United Way made a quick pivot to a virtual web-series that launched in June 2020. With over 200 registered participants, Women United welcomed Tami Galbreath to share her insights on mindfulness and the importance of slowing down, practicing gratitude and living a life full of grace and faith.

Women United raised **\$19,000** towards United Way's investments in building stronger neighborhoods through health, education and financial stability. The event series will continue through Summer of 2020 featuring speakers: Dr. Debra Mayconich Baron and Jenny Schoenwetter alongside local nonprofit agencies.

Together, women in Kankakee and Iroquois counties ignite change. In each community we serve, we tackle issues that matter most to the people who call it home. We empower each other to leverage our ideas, expertise and resources to transform the very conditions in which people live.

## *Thank You Women United Committee Members*

**CHRISTINA CUSUMANO**

United Way

**BARBI BREWER-WATSON**

City of Kankakee

**SARAH MARION**

Manteno Chamber of Commerce

**MAUREEN POWELL**

CSL Behring

**LAUREN SHORT**

Riverside Healthcare

**MARY THOMSON**

Hospice of Kankakee Valley



## *Presented by:*

**CSL Behring**  
Biotherapies for Life™



United Way of Kankakee  
& Iroquois Counties



# UNITED FOR ALICE: THE FIGHT FOR FAMILY- SUSTAINING INCOME

**U**nitedWay has a long history of bringing people together to ask tough questions about society's problems, and to act collectively to accelerate solutions. It's been our focus for almost 80 years, and it holds tremendous potential in today's challenging environment.

In 2020, United Way released its ALICE report to demonstrate that financial hardship doesn't stop at the poverty line. ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, is a new way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford a bare-bones household budget.

For far too many families, the cost of living outpaces what they earn. These households struggle to manage even their most basic needs - housing, food, transportation, childcare, healthcare, and necessary technology.

When funds run short, cash-strapped households are forced to make impossible choices, such as deciding between quality childcare or paying the rent, filling a prescription or fixing the car. These short-term decisions have long-term consequences not only for ALICE families, but for all of us.

The persistence of low wages, underemployment, and loss of employer-sponsored benefits have led to financial insecurity for many ALICE households. As a result, many of these families turn to programs funded by United Way to feed their families, access healthcare and medications or pay rent and other bills. Unfortunately, with **one-third of families struggling to afford basic needs in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties**, we are left with especially large unfilled gaps in assistance - 39% gap in housing, 49% gap in childcare and even 50% gap in transportation.

At United Way, we fight for the education, health and financial stability for all community members. We are working to remove barriers that prevent families from achieving financial stability, now and in the future. But we can only win this fight by living United.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE

## UNITING FOR

### COMMUNITY IMPACT

**A**t United Way, we step up whenever our communities need us. Never is this need greater than when a community is facing a disaster. And we faced unprecedented challenges in 2020.

### Restoring Hope During a Pandemic

In times of past crisis, we've always risen to the challenge as a nation: growing victory gardens during WWII, raising flags after 9/11, stacking sandbags during floods or sending supplies to communities hit by disaster. In March of 2020, we were again faced with a crisis. The outbreak of COVID-19 in our community caused widespread health and economic impacts felt by many within our own community. More than one-third of Kankakee and Iroquois County residents were just one lost paycheck away from financial crisis *prior to the pandemic*.

As events were canceled, sales plummeted and businesses closed, many local households lost much-needed wages and tips. As schools closed, families adapted to remote-learning and were forced to seek emergency childcare or cut hours at work. And survivors of domestic violence faced even greater dangers as they were instructed to remain at home with their abusers.

United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties partnered with the **Community Foundation of Kankakee River Valley** to establish the Kankakee and Iroquois Counties Community Response Fund. Together, we raised **over \$600,000** to support local health and human service organizations serving neighbors and communities significantly impacted by the health and economic impacts of coronavirus.



Below is a list of local organizations awarded grants through the Kankakee and Iroquois Counties COVID-19 Community Response Fund. Funds distributed to these organizations helped increase organizational capacity to provide access to essential services such as emergency food and supplies, health services, financial assistance through direct cash transfers, as well as mortgage, rent and utility assistance.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| AGAPE COMMUNITY OUTREACH MISSION, INC.   | KANKAKEE COUNTY YOUTH INTERVENTION AGENCY     |
| THE BABY FOLD                            | KANKAKEE SCHOOL DISTRICT 111                  |
| BOURBONNAIS ELEMETARY SCHOOL DISTRICT 53 | LIVING ALTERNATIVES PREGNANCY RESOURCE CENTER |
| THE BREAD BASKET OF WATSEKA              | NEXUS INDIAN OAKS FAMILY HEALING              |
| CATHOLIC CHARITIES DIOCESE OF JOLIET     | NEXUS ONARGA ACADEMY                          |
| COMPASSIONATE MINISTRIES CENTER OF HOPE  | NORTHERN ILLINOIS FOOD BANK                   |
| EASTERSEALS                              | PEMBROKE FARMING FAMILY ASSOCIATION           |
| FORTITUDE COMMUNITY OUTREACH             | PEMBROKE PUBLIC LIBRARY                       |
| GOOD SHEPHERD MANOR                      | P-JAY'S HOUSE                                 |
| HARBOR HOUSE                             | SALVATION ARMY                                |
| HELEN WHEELER CENTER                     | SPANISH COMMUNITY CENTER                      |
| IROQUOIS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT | THRESHOLDS                                    |
| KANKAKEE AREA YMCA                       | VOLUNTEER SERVICES OF IROQUOIS COUNTY         |
| KANKAKEE YWCA                            | YOUTH FOR CHRIST LIFE CENTER                  |
| KANKAKEE COUNTY COMMUNITY SERVICES INC.  |   |



---

## UNITED WAY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The United Way Board of Directors is charged with providing oversight, control and management of the affairs and property of United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties. Its responsibilities include strategic leadership, resource and relationship management, reputation building, stewardship of assets and oversight of public policy agenda and advocacy.

### **BOARD PRESIDENT**

**KYLE BENOIT**  
Senior Vice President, Chief Operating Officer  
Riverside Healthcare

### **VICE PRESIDENT**

**MICHAEL O'BRIEN**  
Commercial Relationship Manager  
Midland States Bank

### **TREASURER**

**MILEEN JOINES**  
Certified Public Accountant  
Geoffrey Johns & Associates

### **SECRETARY**

**KATHY PETERSON**  
Director of Community Development  
AMITA St. Mary's Hospital

### **PAST PRESIDENT**

**ALAN SWINFORD**  
Chief of Police  
Village of Manteno

### **AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBERS**

**DR. MICHAEL BOYD**  
President and CEO  
Kankakee Community College

**BARBI BREWER-WATSON**  
Executive Director  
Economic and Community Development  
Agency, City of Kankakee

**LARRY BURTON**  
Financial Associate  
Thrivent Financial

**KEVIN HACK**  
Director of Ambulance/EMS System  
Riverside Healthcare

**KRISTEN HARMS**  
NA Supply Chain Manager  
ITW Zip Pak

**TIM JONES**  
Relationship Manager  
Cigna

**JOHN KEIGHER**  
CEO  
Urban Farmer

**SARAH MARION**  
President and CEO  
Manteno Chamber of Commerce

**AMANDA MARTINEZ**  
Business Development, Commercial Loan  
Officer  
Federated Bank

**MAUREEN POWELL**  
Site Head of Communications  
CSL Behring

**DR. AMBER RESIDORI**  
Dean of the School of Life and Health Sciences  
Olivet Nazarene University

**DR. LAURA SZTUBA**  
Patient Safety Specialist  
AMITA St. Mary's Hospital

**DR. GENEVRA WALTERS**  
Superintendent  
Kankakee School District 111

---

## UNITED WAY STAFF

United Way of Kankakee and Iroquois Counties added several new staff members in 2019.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
KERSTIN RUST

**DEVELOPMENT MANAGER**  
CHRISTINA CUSUMANO

**COMMUNITY IMPACT COORDINATOR**  
KATE REED

**DATABASE COORDINATOR**  
ANGELA BUZAS

**United Way of Kankakee  
& Iroquois Counties**  
200 East Court Street, Suite 500  
Kankakee, Illinois, 60901 USA  
815.932.7476  
info@myunitedway.org

## CHANGE DOESN'T HAPPEN ALONE.



Help us to get the word out.

Please share how **YOU** plan to join the fight and transform your community with United Way.

Be sure to include **#LiveUnited**



[facebook.com/localunitedway](https://facebook.com/localunitedway)



[instagram.com/uw.kankakee.iroquois](https://instagram.com/uw.kankakee.iroquois)



[linkedin.com/company/united-way-kankakee-iroquois](https://linkedin.com/company/united-way-kankakee-iroquois)