



United Way Newsletter Blurbs 2023

July

Did you know that of the 10 leading causes of death, seven are chronic illnesses? Half of all Americans are living with at least one chronic health condition. Donating to the United Way Impact Fund gives resources to programs that support individuals living with chronic disease and help to provide assistance and education to them and their families.

August

August is the month when many students in our community head back to school. Nearly half of Lincoln Public School students receive free or reduced lunch, which is an indication of poverty levels in our community. By third grade, the reading level of these students tends to be 16 percentage points lower than their peers, making these students four times more likely to drop out of school without a diploma. United Way is working to level the playing field for all students in our community by addressing these disadvantages. By targeting specific needs at three elementary schools through the ENGAGE.EMPOWER.GRADUATE. initiative as well as a focus on Education through the United Way Impact fund, together we are creating a stronger Lincoln and Lancaster County.

September

Among the most pressing concerns in our community is the mental health of our young people. According to recently released data from the CDC, 22% of high school students across the country seriously considered attempting suicide in 2021. Here in our community last year, LPD received 641 calls for service specifically for the mental health of children ages 7-18, which is almost two calls a day. Eighty-five of those calls (or 7 each month) were about suicide. These calls are not isolated to a particular zip code, but are coming from every neighborhood in our community. By donating to the United Way Impact Fund, you're helping our partner agencies provide support to individuals who struggle with their mental health, helping them get back on the path to living a fulfilling life.

October

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month. In 2021 (the most recent year of data available) there were 1,185 domestic violence assaults reported in Lincoln. Your contribution to the United Way Impact Fund helps give local nonprofit partners the ability to assist these individuals so they can provide them with the comprehensive and positive support they need.



November

Many of us think about our favorite foods during the month of November as we prepare for gatherings with family and friends to give thanks for our blessings. Unfortunately, there are members of our community struggling to put food on the table for themselves and their loved ones. According to data compiled by Feeding America, in Lancaster County, just over 33,500 residents are food insecure. That includes 1 in 7 children. Thanks to community support, last year, 6,948,270 pounds of food were distributed to those in need by United Way funded partners. Additionally, 1,549,074 meals were served. Your contribution to the United Way Impact Fund helps feed our neighbors facing food insecurity.

December

Too many families in our community are struggling to maintain stable housing. In 2022, 51% of all calls in Lancaster County to United Way's 2-1-1 helpline were for rental and utility assistance. Thanks to community support, over \$640,000 in rental and utility assistance was proved to community members facing economic instability. And when members of our community could not stay safely in their own home, 40,559 nights of emergency and transitional shelter were provided to individuals this past year. Your donation to the United Way Impact Fund helps provide accommodations to those in our community who need it most.

January

January is National Mentoring Month. In 2022, 5,208 youth enrolled in United Way funded mentoring programs developed positive relationships with at least one adult. This is a key indicator of future success. Your donation to the United Way Impact Fund supports an array of programs that close the achievement gap in our community.

February

2-1-1 is United Way's helpline providing information and referrals to individuals and families in need, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you are anyone you know is in need of services, you can dial 2-1-1 or visit ne211.org. Last year, trained 2-1-1 staff helped with 5,499 requests for assistance from callers from Lincoln and Lancaster County. That is an increase of 26% over last year.



combined health
agencies drive



March

Reading for just 15 minutes a day exposes a child to over 1 million words of text in a year. In 2022, United Way distributed 4,841 books to children in Lincoln and Lancaster County, helping them build their home libraries. By donating to the United Way Impact Fund, you're supporting programs that ensure the children in our community are given opportunities to become proficient readers.

April

April is the month when many of us think about our finances. For some in our community, the picture isn't as rosy as we hoped it would be. According to the most recent census data, over 40,000 people in Lancaster County are living in poverty, which is 13% of the population. Of those in poverty, 10,000 are children, which is 14% of all children in the county. With rising inflation and workforce issues, crisis situations have been created for many families who never before thought they would be in a situation requiring assistance. And for those living near the poverty line, unanticipated events, such as a medical emergency or a major car repair, can be devastating. Your donation to the United Way Impact Fund assists these families so they not only have access to food and shelter, but also programs that help them build a more stable future.

May

Children who don't meet developmental milestones are more likely to fall behind their peers in cognition, language, and behavior control, which will have great impact on their learning and academic achievement later in life. Access to high quality early childhood experiences enables children to be kindergarten-ready and to develop into successful community citizens. However the cost is prohibitive for many families, and at times access has been strained. In fact, Nebraska is one of the least affordable states in the U.S. for childcare. The annual cost of \$10,000-\$14,000 for childcare for an infant would take up almost 15% of income for a median two-parent family. In Lincoln, 78% of children live in households where all parents are in the workforce. For them, childcare remains a vital service to provide a safe and loving space for children while their parents work. And yet, 42% of Lincoln families with children under age 6 live in poverty or near poverty. Your donation to the United Way Impact Fund supports the development of children in our community.

June

As we celebrate our community's graduates, let's take a moment to remember all the teachers, family members and community support that helped them along the way. Did you know that children who spend at least half their childhood in poverty are 90% less likely to graduate with a diploma? By focusing on the interconnected areas of Health, Education and Financial Stability, United Way is helping give everyone the opportunity to thrive, including students.