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BRINGING CHANGE TO WELD COUNTY TOGETHER

Vol 2, 2020

United Way of Weld County

OUR MISSION: TO IMPROVE LIVES BY MOBILIZING THE CARING POWER OF OUR COMMUNITY.



A warm, safe place to stay this winter

What homelessness looks like in Weld County

See page 3

814 9th St - Greeley
330 Park Ave - Fort Lupton
www.UnitedWay-Weld.org
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UNITED WAY OF WELD COUNTY
VIRTUAL COMMUNITY LISTENING FORUM

Every story of homelessness looks different

United Way of Weld County (UWWC) successfully held its first virtual community listening forum Oct. 27 on Zoom to discuss Weld's Way Home and the work and partnerships of attaining and maintaining stable housing for households in Weld County. UWWC board members Mike Bond and Angel Flores, community partners Jodi Hartmann and Meredith Munoz and UWWC staff member Melanie Woolman were featured and took questions.

Every story of homelessness looks different. An example during the forum regarding the problem in Weld County is people living outdoors outside of housing. Flores said there are two sides to this – the humanity and financial sides.

More than half of the people experiencing homelessness in Weld County are from here, not faceless drifters passing through. They could be people we went to school with, people who lost their parents at an early age, etc., and their lives took a different path in life. The humanity side is that we want to be decent as a community and can't turn a blind eye to what is happening.

If you would like to watch the Oct. 27 forum, go to:

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/listen

Feel free to share it. The video is also on our Facebook and website.

Flores said that on the financial side, there is a cost associated with doing nothing. In addition, there is a cost associated with addressing the problem, too, but the issues for most of the people who experience homelessness or housing instability can be resolved in a day or two. That is what UWWC and its partners do at the Housing Navigation Center, which helps those experiencing homelessness regain housing and prevents those at-risk of homelessness from losing housing. Flores also addressed the chronically homeless and how we're tackling the problem in human and compassionate ways, and it's the most cost-effective way to deal with it. If we ignore it, the cost is going to be much higher to us as a community.

Heaven gained another angel in Christi Smith



Christi Smith
May 26, 1959 - October 13, 2020

"Some people come into our lives and quickly go. Some people come into our lives, leave footprints on our hearts and we are never ever the same."

I am not sure where I first read this quote nor who said it, but it captures our sentiments when we think of the passing of our colleague, Christi Smith. Christi dedicated 21 years of her professional career to United Way of Weld County. She helped bring 2-1-1 to our community and to Colorado, shared her aptitude for technology helping advance our systems, organized many annual events and led several of our fundraising growth strategies. Christi sincerely cared deeply for our staff members, donors, volunteers and partner agencies. She believed in the United Way mission, values and work to help children, youth, families and older adults in Weld County. Her greatest love was her family and her faith was central to her life.

United Way of Weld County is honored that Christi's family chose our organization as the recipient of memorial contributions honoring Christi's life. Our hearts reach out to them during this difficult time. Christi had a collection of angels in her office at United Way. We have no doubt that heaven gained another angel named "Christi."

- Jeannine Truswell
President and CEO, United Way of Weld County

Tax incentives for donors help nonprofits like UWWC

Tax incentives from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) provide an opportunity to help nonprofits like United Way of Weld County (UWWC). To boost charitable giving during COVID-19 in 2020, the CARES Act includes tax provisions rewarding people who donate to charities.

For people who do not itemize deductions in 2020, you can still reduce your taxable income by up to $300 for cash donations to any public 501(c)(3) charities like UWWC. Not deductible are donations to donor advised funds. Donations will be waived for 2020 taxes for people who itemize the 60 percent of adjusted gross income (AGI) that usually applies to cash donations.

The CARES Act will also suspend the requirement that seniors take a minimum withdrawal from their IRAs, 401(k) plans and other retirement accounts in 2020. An "IRA charitable rollover" allows you to contribute up to $100,000 to UWWC or other nonprofits from your IRA without paying income tax on the distribution.Please check with your financial advisers or accountant to see how tax incentives under the CARES Act may apply to you.

UWWC has other tax incentives available for donors including Enterprise Zone and Colorado Child Care Tax Credit. If you have any questions, please contact us at (970) 353-4300 or go to www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/benefitsofgiving

Thanks to all who helped raise almost $4,200 in 'virtual' 5K race for the Housing Navigation Center



Thank you to our generous sponsors - Noble Energy Colorado, Park Avenue Realty, FirstBank, FR Clothing & Supply, Precision Oral Surgery – Dr. Rick Mellin, OtterCares Foundation, Roche Constructors, The Masters Financial Group, Brad and Christian Team – Sears Real Estate, Chick-fil-A Greeley, Dr. Bryan Casseday, ServPro of Greeley and Windsor, ESTUS and Wells Fargo, and to the volunteers, and the 78 participants for helping raise $4,183.50 during UWWC's Steps for Stability Virtual 5K Run (3.1 miles from Oct. 24-31) to benefit the Housing Navigation Center, which helps those experiencing homelessness regain housing and prevents those at-risk of homelessness from losing housing.

Congratulations to the two fastest participants in the male and female class - Shawn Walcott of Greeley (23 minutes, 47 seconds) and Jessica Burhaug of Franktown (24 minutes, 53 seconds).

(From front cover)

Thanks to you, they don't have to sleep in their car this winter



An older married couple is staying at the United Way of Weld County Non-Congregate Shelter at Bonell for people who are especially COVID-19 vulnerable because of age or an underlying health condition. Jim is 76 and Ella is 75; he has congestive heart failure with a pacemaker, she has epilepsy with occasional grand mal seizures; Jim, a former law enforcement officer and paramedic in Weld County, worked at the Greeley-Weld County Airport for a number of years. Some time ago, the couple was sharing a rental home with their son when the landlord decided to sell. Living on a limited income, they were not able to find a new affordable place, including paying security deposit and first three-month's rent (which many landlords require of people that don't have good credit).

As such, Jim and Ella have been living in their car for the past three years, during warm times and cold. The Community Action Collaborate-connected Squad 1 - a partnership between Greely Fire, North Colorado Health Alliance, North Range Behavioral Health and United Way of Weld County - found the couple when Ella had a seizure and they called for help. A worker at Squad 1 and the shelter, made the connection and offered them a unit. Staying at the shelter for the next five months will help Jim and Ella stay healthy and provide the stability they need to work with community health workers to figure out how to get back into permanent housing.

The need is greater than ever. Please give today!

See enclosed envelope



Need to give during pandemic has become greater than ever

Randy Watkins
Chairman, UWWC Board of Directors

Dear United Way Family,

As I compose this letter, we are all going into our ninth month of coping with something none of us could have ever anticipated or imagined. I promise to do my best to avoid using the word "unprecedented," which is so obvious it's irrelevant. As I entered my term as Chair of the Board of Directors on July 1, 2019, our vision did not contemplate a world-wide pandemic that forced life to change in ways that still seem unreal, an election season with more division than I can remember in my lifetime, a social revolution that is forcing us to all reflect on our own personal biases in ways we haven't seen for generations, and the list goes on (I didn't even mention the murder hornets…). Yes, 2020 has been incredibly tumultuous, but in all of this, I've witnessed not only the lowest of lows, but also some of the highest of highs. Let me explain…

Your United Way of Weld County has been working hard, collaborating with regional organizations in remarkable ways, and improving the lives of our friends and neighbors which will be seen in our community for generations.

Just prior to becoming the Chair, the United Way was embarking on a journey shifting from a community impact approach to a Collective Impact approach that put the needs of the community in the center and built a coalition of service providers and services around that need. Truly putting the issue in the bulls-eye of the target and assembling the best marksmen available. Our first collective impact successes came in our work around Household Stability, as noted below:

- Your United Way facilitates the Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System or CAHPS program, and in coordination with 40 partner agencies has stably housed 435 homeless veterans since 2016 with the vision of ending veteran homelessness in Larimer and Weld counties by the end of 2021.
- Weld's Way Home, a program developed with the help of United Way and other notable agencies, operates the Housing Navigation Center (HNC), which has provided shelter, a warm meal, and a place to sleep to 596 men and women from November 2019 to May 2020.
- The HNC has also provided 223 men and women with 24-hour shelter in place services since March 15.

Other notable success include the following:

- In March 2020, your United Way partnered with the Weld Community Foundation and helped raise $330,422 for the Weld Recovers Fund: COVID-19 Relief and has distributed these funds to 26 agencies throughout Weld County.
- Since March 2020, almost $100,000 worth of in-kind supplies, such as masks, diapers, wipes, snacks, cleaning supplies, new basic clothing items were collected and distributed to families in need.
- UWWC's Reading Great by 8 (formerly Promises for Children) staff distributed more than 119,000 diapers to struggling families and partner agencies in Weld County during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Opened on Nov. 6, 2020, and available until April 15, 2021, UWWC is providing a non-congregate around-the-clock shelter for people experiencing homelessness who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19 because of being 60-plus years of age or having a health condition such as heart disease or diabetes. Located in Greeley, up to 39 people will have a place to shelter from the cold and COVID-19. The UWWC's Non-Congregate Shelter at Bonell is being funded by the City of Greeley and the State of Colorado Department of Local Affairs Division of Housing.

You can be proud of your United Way of Weld County. The staff and volunteers at United Way have been pouring their heart and soul into caring for our families, friends and neighbors, and our community. This work is only possible thanks to the continued generous support of our donors. The need persists and, in many cases, has become greater.

As we come to the end of the year and as we each reflect on our own experiences of 2020, I appeal to you to dig deep and give what you are able, as no amount is too small. As a fan of quotes (plagiarism is just easier…), I share one from President Ronald Reagan, "We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone." While this may be true, I challenge us to try to help everyone in our community.

We can't do this important work without you. Give today!
See enclosed envelope

UWWC's partnership with The Playground shows importance of play to help kids' development

As parents are the first and best teachers for their children's development, United Way of Weld County provides opportunities for parents to engage their children in activities that help get them ready for school.

Signs in English and Spanish to inform parents and kids about the importance of engaging in activities are sprinkled throughout The Playground at the Greeley Mall.

The Playground, a large indoor play space for children 1 to 11 years of age, has partnered with United Way of Weld County's Reading Great by 8 to help teach parents and their kids how important physical activity is in their lives.



Hanging between three basketball hoops on a bright green wall is a sign saying that the repetition in this activity builds large muscle groups and increases hand-eye coordination.

Another sign by the sliding board says that not only does it promote spatial awareness, but it fosters challenges as well as patience and turn taking. The ball pit area has a sign that says: Ball pits are especially calming for children with high sensory needs. And they also help develop fine and gross motor skills, as well as social skills.

"We partnered with The Playground to inform families on the importance of play on early childhood development," said Adriana Carrillo, UWWC's Reading Great by 8 coordinator.

Carrillo said at a Children's Team meeting that took place at The Playground, one of her colleagues had the idea to create signs similar to UWWC's Born-Learning Trail at local parks in the Greeley area.

"(The Playground owner) Maribel Molina was excited about the idea," Carrillo said. "Play as a part of development is very important to the vision of The Playground."

Molina of Greeley said United Way and The Playground have exactly the same vision and mission for children. "Physical play is so important especially at this age. We want to make sure that kids develop, keep and fall in love with physical play," Molina said. "The collaboration with United Way has made it real. It's one thing when we educate our customers, but it's another one when it comes from United Way."

Molina said the idea of The Playground, which has been in existence for five years, came about when she and her husband didn't have a place to take their 3-year-old son. "He was super hyperactive, and we wanted him to get out there and play and get all those chemicals in his brain rolling," Molina said. "We decided it's needed in the community and let's make sure we're able to provide the safest place that we can. Kids have an amazing time with other children, and they don't see race, color or anything. They're just having fun."

And about those informative signs?

"The signs were created and displayed around that playground that teaches parents about what benefits specific kinds of play gives to their child," Carrillo said. "The signs also connect parents to the Colorado Early Learning and Development Guidelines which helps parents evaluate where their children are developmentally."

Molina said the partnership with UWWC is a perfect fit. She found out about UWWC through her friend Nina Duran-Gutierrez, a board member for UWWC. "Nina is so passionate about United Way, and she told me what United Way does and how they advocate for children," Molina said. "As long as we're here, I want to be with them hand by hand."



Pictured are, from left, Dan Frazen (City of Greeley), and UWWC's Jeannine Truswell, Meredith Munoz, Melanie Woolman and Lyle SmithGraybeal.

Thank You, City Of Greeley!

The City of Greeley is providing United Way of Weld County (UWWC) $270,000 from the federal Coronavirus Relief Fund to provide day and night emergency shelter to our neighbors experiencing homelessness who are most vulnerable to COVID-19.

Community need has not changed. In fact, it is amplified!

Please give today!

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org

or see enclosed envelope

Volunteer Spotlight:
Megan McClanahan



Megan McClanahan, top left, with Madison McClanahan and Shane and Tyler Dunkel during UWWC Day of Action in 2017.

UWWC: How old were you when you first started volunteering? Is there a fond volunteering memory?

MM: I dabbled in volunteering in college, but didn't really get into volunteering until starting at PFC, USA. United Way was hosting Day of Action on June 22, 2013. My daughter, Madison, and I were tasked with clearing pathways to make the seats wheel chair accessible at the FunPlex. It was a wonderful experience for both of us. I saw Madison really take charge, and I loved that.

UWWC: How did you become engaged in volunteer work in the Weld County community?

MM: It was from the Day of Action that I saw that I could make a difference in the community. No matter how small the project, it makes an impact in the community. Stuffing backpacks for District 6, helping Santa Cops, helping at the Weld Food Bank, United Way events, it doesn't matter what it is, it makes a difference in someone's life.

UWWC: What drives you to give back to your community through volunteering?

MM: I find value in giving back where you can. Whether it's giving two hours of your time to make hygiene kits, or giving up your afternoon to help at Weld Project Connect, whatever it is, volunteering makes an impact. We might not see the immediate reward, but it's there. By making plastic yarn to be made into mattresses for the homeless, or making hygiene kits to be taken to someone in need, that makes me feel good.

UWWC: As a parent, how have you found success in getting your family to be active volunteers?

MM: Volunteerism is an important life skill. We've done various things, focusing on United Way volunteer projects, and volunteering at the Weld Food Bank, where our competitive sides come out and we strive to do better than the last time we were there.

UWWC: During the holiday season, where do you find the most fulfillment in volunteering, and why?

MM: I find it at the food bank because there's always something to do, and it provides meals to those in need. We've delivered food boxes, we've put together senior kits, we've done it all.

UWWC: Lastly, what list of local organizations are you an active volunteer at and what volunteer roles do you participate in?

MM: Ongoing volunteer roles are Neighborhood Clean-up – cleaned up the area around the UWWC Housing Navigation Center (HNC), UWWC Day of Action, Weld Project Connect, building hygiene kits for Weld Project Connect, clean up the HNC to get ready to start the cold weather shelter, Weld Food Bank every month. Annual large events I volunteer for are UWWC's Kickoff Campaign and the UWWC Live United Celebration.



Volunteers are essential at UWWC during holidays and throughout the year

United Way of Weld County (UWWC) would not be able to help the community without its amazing volunteers. Last year, 840 people volunteered at UWWC, and we appreciate each and every one of those volunteers.

Nicole Quinn, donor engagement manager for UWWC, said volunteering is a great way for individuals or teams to come together to learn about the needs in their community. "Volunteering helps support programs that strive to make Weld County a healthier, stronger, more connected community," Quinn said. "The UWWC Connect volunteer webpage is a great resource to find volunteer opportunities year round, but especially during the holiday season. Visit www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/volunteer to find a volunteer opportunity for you."

Quinn said volunteers are still very much needed during the coronavirus pandemic.

"As we continue to navigate through the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to remember that volunteers are still needed at organizations across Weld County," Quinn said. "You can volunteer in person at the Weld Food Bank, Guadalupe Shelter or Housing Navigation Center.

"You can volunteer as a delivery driver for home-bound community members through Meals on Wheels or 60+ ride, or even in your own home doing kit-making projects, crochet or sewing projects or lending your marketing/design talents to a local nonprofit of choice. The opportunities to volunteer are endless."

Company Spotlight:
Chick-fil-A Greeley

United Way of Weld County (UWWC) thanks Chick-fil-A Greeley for being a Cornerstone Partner for the past six years. Over the years, Chick-fil-A's owner/operator Ken Rotramel and his staff have provided UWWC with food and gift cards for our events and for several of our direct service programs including feeding the homeless, as well as donating baskets of Chick-fil-A goodies for our annual auction to help raise money for those in need in the community.

"Partnering in a community is extremely important to me personally and to the organization. We want to be the world's most caring company," said Rotramel. "I feel, and the organization feels, that to do that we need to dig into the community and find organizations in the community that are worthwhile and will help us be the most caring company in the world."

Chick-fil-A Greeley was a deserving recipient of the 2020 Community Partner of the Year, presented to an organization that makes an outstanding partnership effort with United Way of Weld County. Chick-fil-A Greeley joins hands with UWWC to impact and improve the lives of children, youth, families and adults

For more about Cornerstone Partners, please visit www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/cornerstone



"Why United Way as a partnership? Because of how well United Way's known not just in the Greeley community but across the nation. In our community, United Way knows better than I do what the needs of the community are. I really believe that I'm able to go into the community by giving to United Way and letting them address where those needs are. Anytime we interact with United Way, it's very simple. It's an easy partnership. It is my pleasure to know that some of the dollars that come from the revenue of sales are able to help organizations like United Way."

- Ken Rotramel, Owner/operator Chick-fil-A Greeley

NextFifty Initiative grant focuses on recruitment for Weld County agencies serving older adults

As one of our collective impact focus areas on adults aging well in community, United Way of Weld County (UWWC) brought together agencies serving older adults in Weld County. One of the top needs identified was the agencies all needed help with recruiting volunteers. UWWC responded, wrote and received a NextFifty grant that enabled us to hire a volunteer recruitment coordinator who will help these agencies.

UWWC received a grant from NextFifty Initiative for $255,483 over two years (July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2022) and is pleased to welcome Jazz Garrison, who was hired as the Aging Well volunteer recruitment coordinator who will be working on this effort. Garrison's position will benefit the older adult serving organizations for which the recruitment is being done, the volunteers that will make new social connections and gain meaning and fulfillment through service, and, most of all, the older adults that will be served by the volunteers.

Diana McFail, president and CEO of NextFifty Initiative, said in the award letter that NextFifty is excited to partner with UWWC as the organization works to positively change the landscape of aging and to improve the future of aging.

The participating agencies in Weld County asked UWWC to apply for resourcing to hire and manage this position as they know that having such a capacity building role shared between organizations will:

- increase volunteerism for older adult services
- increase connection between older adult serving agencies
- improve older adult services that promote socialization, improve mobility, and enhance engagement in community
- promote inter-generational engagement. Such a role would complement, increase, and focus ongoing UWWC volunteer engagement efforts.

The grant not only includes the hiring of the coordinator, but also for community outreach, workshops, social media campaign, other advertising, technology and other expenses.



United Way of Weld County
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2-1-1 Colorado at United Way of Weld County
CONNECTING WELD
United Way of Weld County

COVID-19 forced all of us to approach things differently. Our once daily routine was completely uprooted, and a new set of rules were put into place. While we all adapt to this "new normal" it is important to recognize that community need has not changed.
In fact, it is amplified!

We need your help now more than ever. Please consider making your donation today! Mail in the enclosed pledge envelope or make a secure online donation at:

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donate

NO MATTER THE SIZE OF YOUR GIFT IT MAKES A DIFFERENCE FOR SOMEONE IN WELD COUNTY!

GIVE

Your gift funds the programs and initiatives that make life better for 1 in 6 people in Weld County who need help.

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org

VOLUNTEER

You can help people in your own community. Tell us what you love, and we'll pair you with the perfect volunteer opportunity.

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/volunteer

LEAVE A LEGACY

Your legacy gift ensures that the issues and community you care about most will enjoy continued support after you are gone.

Contact us at 970-353-4300

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