

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER. LIVE UNITED.

MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

IMPACT

Total community service fund budgeted = \$7,500 and total spent = \$6,600.

Total Community Impact Allocations to 18 agencies and other Agency Designations budgeted = \$122,100. In 2015 the total spent was \$120,912 on allocations to 18 agencies for impact programming; as well as donor designations to specific agencies. This was a 4.2% increase from the prior year.

In 2013 the United Way Board established and maintains a Disaster Relief Fund with funds available to support any major disasters. In 2015 \$2,000 was given to the Joe & Michelle Fuscher-Brown family for their house fire emergency. The year-end balance is \$28,326.17.

- Approved \$6,000 for 2-1-1 Call Center to service Lincoln County for 2015. This call center provides key information and resources for Lincoln County residents.
- We continue to support the County and other community organizations promoting countywide health as identified in the final Lincoln County Health Plan of March 2013. The plan focuses on 3 areas; oral health, mental health and Nutrition/Healthy Eating.
- In April the Board of Directors engaged in a planning session led by Art Lersch. The Board reviewed progress and established current and future organizational goals. All of the goals were addressed throughout the year.

- United Way was again recognized by FamilyWize for encouraging use of the program which resulted in thousands of dollars in savings for prescription drugs in 2015 for Merrill area families.
- The Board of Directors visited funded agencies throughout the summer to gain a better understanding and enhance relationship. It was interactive and beneficial for a broader understanding of how United Way dollars are used to impact lives.
- In 2015 Our Sister's House, Tomahawk was added to the funded agencies. It officially opened in October, 2015. Also Red Cross, per their request, and Junior Achievement were not funded in 2015.
- Purchased 2 ton of potatoes for area food pantries and other non-profits = \$200.
- Allocation Teams met in fall to review mid-year progress of the impact programs and evaluate the agency allocation applications for 2016 funding.
- Regular, almost monthly, articles ran in the Foto News to highlight United Way and create greater community awareness of United Way's role in the community.
- Numerous media releases, speaking engagements and media interviews were done throughout the year.
- The Cosmo Theater continued to run United Way ads on the big screen to help get our message out.
- United Way has not pursued the Emergency Food and Shelter Program since 2013 due to decreased support and non-payment.
- Community Service Fund provided \$400 to the annual Christmas Spirit Appeal to make the holidays brighter for families in need.
- We continue work on the United Way Face book page and are regularly upgrading our website at merrillareaunderway.org.
- All United Way funded agencies participate in the mid-year reports demonstrating how they impact their clients with the dollars provided by United Way. This information is reviewed by the Board of Directors.
- In December the Board approved of \$151,200 for 2016 allocations.

COMMUNITY WARMING CENTER

- In spring of 2012 community groups, including the United Way Director, came together to discuss homelessness in Lincoln County. Since then the Lincoln County Homelessness Task Force was formed and in 2014 the Community Warming Center Committee formed to open a Warming Center that fall.
- The LC Homelessness Task Force also ensures that two nationally required Point-In-Time studies are done in January and July.
- In 2014-15 we ran the Community Warming Center 5 months and served clients on 90 service days, helping 11 guests; 7 male and 4 women.
- In summer 2015 the lease was again signed to continue with the Community Warming Center at the former Auto Bank building on West Main Street to open again on November 1st.
- Barb Ziemer agreed to continue as the Volunteer Coordinator and has recruited many volunteers to staff the facility. In February all volunteers gathered for an Appreciation/Brainstorming Coffee at the T B Scott Library.
- Volunteer training sessions were held at the County Annex and the Menard Center. Ziemer has been the biggest asset to the Warming Center. Call Barb at 715-536-0231.
- The greatest need for the center continues to be volunteers to cover the three shifts every night for five months of operation.
- In 2015 approximately \$4,400 has been donated to support the project, with many additional gifts from the heart i.e. meal gift cards, bus tokens, blankets, supplies, hats, glove, boots, outerwear, etc. Merrill is a beautiful, giving community. No additional clothing or outerwear is needed at this time.

OPERATIONS

- The most significant operational change for United Way, was our relocation to the Menard Center with several other agencies March 1, 2015.
- The relocation supported changes to our computer system upgrade, changes to our phones, and Wisconsin Public Service donated a great LaserJet Color printer. These technological changes make a difference in our daily efficiencies. The move also nudged us to purge some files with Board members Kelly and Jane assisting.
- The 7th Annual Run/Walk, to support United Way, changed to the Community Kolor Run in 2015, utilizing the newly opened River Bend Trail. Riverside Athletic Club sponsored the event which was held on May 2nd with almost 900 participants. The event was incredibly fun. WJFW was a key media supporter and local media coverage was very strong. \$8,000 was raised for United Way initiatives. 30 sponsors helped to make the event successful.
- United Way met with compliance measures with United Way Worldwide filing all necessary documents and very in depth reports. These included the annual Membership Certification and the Data Base II reports.
- The United Way finances were audited by Krause, Howard and Company and met with acceptable accounting standards. All appropriate tax reporting/payments were completed.
- In January 2015 Merrill Area United Way was recognized for the important role they play in supporting the Samoset Council Boy Scouts.
- Campaign leaders – Church Mutual Insurance (raised \$137,868—best year ever), Weinbrenner Shoe Company, Marshfield Clinic, Graham Architectural Products, Reindl Printing, Lincoln Community Bank, Wisconsin Public Service, Harley Davidson, Associated Bank, City of Merrill, Xcel Energy, State Farm Insurance, Liberty Mutual, Walmart, BMO, Ministry Health Care, and Lincoln County government. Individual and retiree giving remained very strong.

APPRECIATION

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- The funded agencies participated in one of two Impact Training Sessions held in July with the assistance of Art Lersch.
- Enhanced the 2015-16 campaign by increasing campaign outreach. Campaign work is significant to our success and includes our every-door-direct mailer to every household/business in efforts to expand donations.
- The Executive Director has been the program/speaker at several community groups, including the Merrill Optimists, the Lions Club, the Rotary Club, Bible Presbyterian Church and others.
- The Executive Director actively participated in many organizational development programs in 2015, including the United Way Wisconsin Campaign Roundtable an Impact Roundtable, and the United Way Wisconsin Summer Conference in Green Lake, July 9-10. The Executive Director also regularly attends the Central Wisconsin United Way Directors meetings, the 2-1-1 meetings, the Lincoln County Homelessness Task Force meetings and Chairs the Community Warming Center Committee.
- Increased United Way visibility and awareness through the media with ongoing press releases, media coverage, TV, interest stories, a regular Foto News column, and our face book page and website, maintained by Pat Burg and Joe Breaman, Jr.
- Participated in the half-day Lincoln County Health Needs Assessment program at Ministry Health Care.

- The United Way extends a grateful Thank You to Linda Murray & Associates and Reindl Printing for assisting with our marketing and campaign pieces.
- The Merrill Foto News, WJMT Radio, the Merrill Courier, WJFT TV in Rhinelander and the Merrill Focus have been wonderful media support partners.
- Thanks to the Merrill Housing Authority and their generosity, we have a Community Warming Center.
- Barb Ziemer has been a great Volunteer Coordinator for the Community Warming Center, and the volunteers involved have been so supportive, giving and generous with their time. Many thanks to all.
- Thanks to the Cosmo Theater for their ongoing support in getting our message out to the public.
- Thanks to the United Way Board of Directors, our Officers and Executive Committee for their ongoing work and dedication to this important organization.

2016 INITIATIVES

- Foremost, work for an incredibly successful campaign.
- Held a first-time ZUMBA event with 70 participants to benefit the Warming Center and the Food Pantry.
- Continue further development of the United Way website and Face book page to increase usage, bring added value, add helpful links, and with a focus on it being more user-friendly.
- Host a great “Business After Hours” on March 16th at Les and Jim’s with our four underwriting sponsors.
- Strive to increase the numbers for the Community Kolor Run on May 7, 2016 on the River Bend Trail.
- Work toward long-term, sustainability of the new Community Warming Center.