

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER. LIVE UNITED.

MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.

2016 ANNUAL REPORT
(Presented February, 2017)

IMPACT

Total community service fund budgeted = \$10,800 and total spent = \$7,250.

Total Community Impact Allocations to 19 Funded Agencies and other outside Agency Designations budgeted = \$158,012. In 2016 the total spent was \$151,200 on allocations to 19 agencies for impact programming; as well as donor designations of \$6,812 to specific agencies. This was a 23.5% increase from the prior year to support programs.

Since 2013 the United Way Board established and maintains a Disaster Relief Fund with dollars available to support local major disasters. That fund's year-end balance is \$28,340.

- Approved \$6,000 for 2-1-1 Call Center to service Lincoln County for 2016. 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 March 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 2016 for Merrill area families.
- The Board of Directors visited funded agencies during the summer to gain a better understanding and enhance relationships. It was interactive and beneficial for a broader understanding of how United Way dollars are used to impact lives.
- Our Sister's House officially opened in October, 2015 and received allocations in 2016.
- Two tons of potatoes were distributed to area food pantries, Haven and other non-profits = \$200 for gas costs.
- Allocation Teams met in fall to review mid-year progress of the impact programs and evaluate the agency allocation applications for 2017 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 continues 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 due to decreased support.
- Community Service Fund provided a summer playground program partial grant to a family in need of assistance; \$500 toward the "New Adventures" special summer program for Hispanic children; \$400 to the annual Christmas Spirit Appeal to make family holidays brighter.
- We continue to enhance the United Way Face Book page and upgrade our website at merrillareaunitedway.org. Pay Pal is now offered as an option for donors/donations.
- 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 \$152,400 for 2017 allocations.

OPERATIONS

- United Way met with all compliance measures set by United Way Worldwide, filing all necessary documents and the very in depth reports. These included the annual Membership Certification and the Data Base II reports. United Way Worldwide has acknowledged and credentialed our organization.
- The United Way finances were audited by Krause, Howard and Company and met with acceptable accounting standards. All appropriate tax reporting/payments were completed.
- Technology upgrades made to our computer system and other office equipment in 2016 have improved our daily efficiencies.
- The 8th Annual Run/Walk to support United Way, the Community Kolor Run (second year for Kolor) was held May 7th. Sponsored by Riverside Athletic Club, the event drew about 800 participants. The event was incredibly fun. WJFW TV, Rhinelander, was a key media supporter and local media coverage was very strong. \$7,400 was raised for United Way initiatives. 30 sponsors helped to make the event successful. Event scheduled for May 6, 2017!
- Campaign leader – Church Mutual Insurance raised \$131,279, other campaigns by Weinbrenner Shoe Company, Marshfield Clinic, Graham Architectural Products, Lincoln Community Bank, Wisconsin Public Service, Harley Davidson, Associated Bank, City of Merrill, Xcel Energy, State Farm Insurance, Liberty Mutual, Walmart, BMO, Pieper Power/Technology Systems, Lincoln County, City of Merrill and Ascension Ministry Health Care. Individual and retiree giving remained very strong.
- Enhanced the 2016-17 campaign by increasing campaign outreach. Campaign work is significant to our success and includes Company/Employee campaigns and our every-door-direct mailer to every household/business in efforts to

increase the number of donors.

- The Executive Director has been the program/speaker at several community groups, including the Merrill Optimists, the Rotary Club, community Churches and others.
- The Executive Director actively participated in organizational development programs in 2016, including the United Way Wisconsin Roundtables and the United Way Wisconsin Summer Conference in Green Lake, July 7-8. 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 ongoing visibility and awareness through the media with press releases, media coverage, TV, interest stories, and a regular Foto News column. Our Face Book page and website are maintained by Pat Burg and Joe Breaman, Jr.

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 and the Community Warming Center Committee formed to open a Warming Center that operated the winters of 2014-15 and 2015-16.
- 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 11 guests (men and women) totaling 90 service days. In 2015-2016 13 guests stayed for 127 service nights.
- The Merrill Housing Authority generously provided us with rent free space for two years. In spring of 2016 we were notified to vacate the property. A search for a suitable site met with no avail and we are housing homeless in alternative locations for the 2016-17 winter.

COMMUNITY WARMING CENTER - CONTINUED

- In early fall 2016 two Sessions were held with the United Way Board, the Lincoln County Homelessness Task Force and the Community Warming Center Committee to address the future direction for meeting the needs of homeless in the Merrill community.
- That conversation continues as we work to establish a separate entity and move toward meeting funding needs and self-sufficiency to meet the varied needs of homeless people.
- As in the past the needs to sustain a homeless warming center/shelter will be great and include facility support as well as volunteers to cover the hours of operation.

APPRECIATION

- The United Way extends a grateful Thank You to Linda Murray & Associates and Reindl Printing for assisting with our annual marketing and campaign pieces.
- The Merrill Foto News, WJMT Radio, the Merrill Courier, and WJFT TV in Rhinelander have been wonderful media partners.
- Thanks to the Merrill Housing Authority for their generosity.
- Barb Ziemer and her team of volunteers that served the Community Warming Center through March of 2016 were greatly appreciated.
- 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

- Continue MAUW marketing momentum including ongoing development of the United Way website and Face Book page to increase usage, value, links, and focus on user ease (continuation from 2015).
- Recruit additional agency clients and directors to tell stories of assistance, success and improvements in lives.
- Create stronger connections between MAUW and younger generations.
- Work toward an incredibly successful campaign, while recruiting three new company/internal employee campaigns.
- Continue operation of the Community Warming Center (continuation from 2015).

The Merrill Area United Way Board of Directors continues to work hard on improvements for the organization in an effort to better meet the needs of people living in the Merrill area. The Board recognizes the need to be good stewards of the funds provided and ensures great accountability.

The ongoing development of investment resources to support the funded agencies is imperative. MAUW couldn't do it without the financial support provided through our participating companies and our civic-minded community members who support United Way with their donations. For each and every donor whether, individual, retired person, employee or corporate gift – we are so very grateful.

OUR SINCEREST THANK YOU

