

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER. LIVE UNITED.**

**MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.**

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**2020 ANNUAL REPORT**  
(Presented February 2021)

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**2020 – A year to remember, and parts to forget**

The year 2020 had many twists and turns for everybody, and United Way did not escape from numerous changes, the virtual meetings, virtual classrooms for area children, and addressing being COVID-19 safe. Yet, we supported our agencies and continued to make a difference through the agencies we support. If there were ever a time to show our relevance this was the time. Unique to this year, were four significant changes:

- The efforts for our annual campaign were enhanced in all areas this year, knowing it could be difficult with the pandemic underway. Not knowing what to anticipate, MAUW ended up with the best campaign year in its history.
- Doing our annual fundraising campaign virtually, and working with our company campaigns, i.e., Church Mutual Insurance Company, to run their employee campaign virtually, was met with great success. CMIC, including company match, raised \$239,000.
- Reaching out to our agencies in March-April to assess what they were experiencing and identify the dire needs they had because of the “Stay at Home” mandate. Those agencies received an additional grant to offset costs related to COVID-19 so their agency could meet the needed changes.
- United Way does not typically do direct project work, but to fill a community gap and provide a Christmas for children who would otherwise go without, we sponsored the Children’s Christmas Project. \$35,330 was raised due to United Way and

other very generous donors. It was a COVID-19 safe event, a drive-thru, providing **\$75 per child** in Chamber Certificates, a ham, and chocolates to enjoy the holiday. It helped 135 families, reaching 361 children, with a very special Christmas!

**2020 Impact**

In 2020 the total spent to the Community Impact Allocations, our 19 funded programs/agencies, was \$174,055. In addition, funds were sent to 15 outside agencies based on donor designation requests which totaled \$7,238. Yet, another \$8,800 was spent through the Community Fund used to support the 2-1-1 service to Lincoln County and other small Merrill community requests and needs. *In all, **\$190,093** supported the United Way impact areas and the people served by our agencies.*

In 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 \$20,234. In 2020 we provided **\$5,100** in additional COVID-19-pandemic related agency grants. In recent year funds went to families that experienced horrific fires.

- In compliance with United Way Worldwide’s directives, our three major impact areas are: Health, Education, Basic Needs/Income.
- The Board designated \$6,000 for the 2-1-1 Call Center to service Lincoln County for 2020. This call center is a key referral service connecting people with services they need.
- In 2020, we have interfaced (virtually) with the County COVID-19 Team to track testing and testing results. We continue to support countywide health as identified in the current Lincoln County Health Plan in the areas of oral health, mental health, nutrition.
- The United Way found it necessary to cancel its annual Planning session, and continue to focus on prior year organizational goal, while adapting to the necessary changes needed because of the pandemic. MAUW continued to work on their prioritized goals:
  - ***Recruit new companies for the 2020-2021 campaign.***

- *Collect and communicate impact stories from agencies.*
- *Build relationships with our community agencies.*
- We brought on additional business donors and increased our individual giving.
- The Board of Directors virtually visited our funded agencies to gain a better understanding of their programs. This relationship is beneficial to both the Board and our agency representatives.
- Through the Community Fund we supported several requests, but with so many efforts and events cancelled the requests fell off for some projects.
- Allocation Teams met in November. The teams reviewed mid-year progress of all impact programs and evaluated the 19 submitted agency allocation applications for 2021 funding. Due to the outstanding campaign, MAUW was able to meet all agency requests plus some additional funds.
- Regular monthly articles ran in the Foto News to highlight United Way and the services supported.
- Media releases and interviews were done throughout the year.
- Two Board volunteers continue to enhance the United Way Facebook page and upgrade our website at [merrillareaunitedway.org](http://merrillareaunitedway.org). Donors can contribute through PayPal on our site.
- All United Way funded agencies provided a mid-year report demonstrating how they impact their clients with the dollars provided by United Way. The agencies were very creative with their virtual outreach efforts during this pandemic year.
- In December, concluding the most successful campaign to date, the Board approved **\$213,825 for 2021** allocations to agencies: an increase over the 2020 amount of \$174,055, or a **23% bump from 2020**.

### 2020 OPERATIONS

- Merrill Area United Way has complied with all United Way Worldwide compliance measures, filing all required documents

and the very vigorous reporting. These included the annual Membership Certification and the Data Base II reports. ***United Way Worldwide has annually acknowledged and credentialed our organization for meeting the standards of excellence.***

- The United Way 2019 finances were audited by Kerber Rose CPA's. MAUW met with acceptable accounting standards.
- All appropriate federal and state tax reporting were completed.
- Additionally, the Board ensures that all insurances are carried.
- Full oversight of all related employee records, tax reporting and filings are also accounted for.
- The Wisconsin Department of Finance Annual Report and Wisconsin Form 1952, and other State Credentials were filed by deadlines.
- Executive Director Olsen actively participated in organizational development programs virtually in 2020 through United Way Wisconsin and the Central WI United Way Director meetings. She serves on the Wisconsin United Way Board of Directors.
- So many programs were cancelled this year, limiting our participation.
- Our internet service provider changed mid-year, forcing some other changes – including our email address. It is now [Delores.Olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org](mailto:Delores.Olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org).

### 2020 AGENCY INFORMATION

- United Way funds programs that impact people's health; education; and meeting their basic needs of food, shelter, electricity, and heat. Each agency/program brings important, necessary services to our local people in need.  
*Here is a brief glimpse of a few services:*
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters has two Merrill programs; School-based and Community-based. They match adult and/or high school students (bigs) with younger kids (littles) to give them a stable portion of time to talk, interact, do special activities with. Another program called Bigs with Badges, matches police and fire department officers with kids. 71 kids are served in Merrill.

- The Alzheimer’s Association increases awareness about Alzheimer’s and dementia to enable early detection through education programs; offer consultations, information, and referral services through a 24/7 helpline; assists in forming support groups; and helps caregivers. An estimated 35-40 families are served through the helpline, and 10 through personalized, individual care consultations.
- Since March 4, 2019 the Merrill Community Homeless Center, Inc., a not-for-profit organization, has operated and is known as MAC Home. They have now provided over 2,200 safe stay nights for clients – impacting over 190 people, of which about 20% are children. For the security and safety of all, they have a trained staff person on premises 24/7/365 days.
- MAUW also funds another homeless shelter called Our Sister Place in Tomahawk.
- Healthy Minds for Lincoln County is a coalition supporting healthy choices regarding alcohol, drugs, and vaping and the effects these vices have on the social and emotional well-being of teens and others. Services are available to all Lincoln County residents. United Way dollars fund 1) Parent Pact 2) Promotion of Know (parent information and resources) 3) Mock Teen Bedroom and 4) Social Norms Project.
- HAVEN provides a wide range of services, including shelter, to individuals and families affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. HAVEN can house up to 24 individuals in 6 rooms. HAVEN provides unduplicated services to an estimated 300 plus people a year, about 30% children.
- So many agencies, 1,000’s of successful stories!
- With many of the United Way funded agencies, volunteer opportunities are available. Visit their websites for more information.

## 2020 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.
- Recruit more agency clients and directors to share success stories about improving and changing lives of those receiving United Way support.
- CMIC worked with United Way to bring in 3 agency representatives and volunteers to develop a campaign video telling agency stories. This was virtually sent to all employees and can be viewed on the MAUW website.
- Although on the back burner in 2020, going forward our Endowment Fund Committee will continue to work on the development of an endowment fund through United Way to support local efforts. Information gathering is underway.
- The Board hosted a catered, socially distanced Agency Appreciation Picnic to acknowledge the great work done by our supported agencies.

## 2020 APPRECIATION

- The United Way extends a heartfelt Thank You to Linda Murray & Associates and Reindl Printing for assisting MAUW with our annual marketing and campaign pieces.
- The Merrill Foto News and BlueJay 730 AM have been wonderful media partners.
- Special thanks to Pat Burg and Joe Breaman II for maintaining and managing our website and Facebook.

*The Merrill Area United Way Board of Directors continues to seek improvements for the organization to better meet the needs of the Merrill community and our area people. The Board of Directors deserves a debt of gratitude for their ongoing work and dedicated*

service. The Board recognizes the importance of being exemplary stewards of the funds provided and ensures great accountability. The ongoing development of investment resources to support the funded agencies is imperative.

**A huge debt of gratitude to all United Way Donors!**

MAUW could not do it without the financial support provided through our participating companies and our generous, civic-minded community members who support United Way with their annual donations. For each donor whether an individual, retired person, employee, or corporate gift – we are so very grateful.

**2020 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*Kelly Zagrzebski, President*

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*Stacy Stevens*

*Tom Zentner*

*Dee Olsen, Executive Director*

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