

Merrill Foto News Column
May, 2017

Thanks to a great community, a very successful Kolor Run/Walk was organized and executed by the incredible staff at Riverside Athletic Club. A special shout-out to Paul Kienitz and Becci Schuman for all their efforts. This is a wonderful fun, family friendly event and all the participants are greatly appreciated for supporting the United Way efforts. Financial sponsors and auxiliary help groups were a big part of this Run/Walk. Thanks to everyone who played a part in the event. Almost 450 participants enjoyed the morning. United Way is the benefactor of all proceeds to support our funded agencies. THANK YOU EVERYONE.

Already 2017 has been a busy and fruitful year, much like 2016 was. The Board of Directors has been engaged in our annual planning, facilitated by Art Lersch of the UW Extension office, and we have areas we will continue to strengthen this year and into next. Work is being done to site a future warming center/shelter for our homeless population. What homeless you ask? In the face of closing the warming center operated in 2014-2016, St. Vincent De Paul Outreach stepped up and coordinated the 2016-17 homeless efforts, placing people and families in other shelters or in transient accommodation at the cost of \$6,135. November 1 to April 31 they placed 37 adults for 193 stay nights. These numbers have increased from our two prior years. Those assisted when released from incarceration are not included in the reported numbers.

Our Lincoln County Homeless Task Force and our Merrill Community Homeless Center committees continue to meet to address the homeless needs. As we progress and get to a point of securing a future facility, we will keep the community informed and hopefully involved. We will be announcing a support campaign as the basic components are finalized.

The United Way office has recently met all compliance and reporting measures and with United Way Worldwide. During the summer months our Board members will be making visits to our 18 funded agencies in review of the mid-year reports and to show support for the great work they do. 2015 promises to be another busy and fruitful year for United Way. Soon the work will begin for early preparations for the fall campaign which gets underway right after Labor Day. It is our hope to add three additional company campaigns this year. Interested? Let us know we will be happy to assist in setting up a successful campaign.

Donors who requested their funds go to specific agencies can be assured that their dollars are being properly applied to the agency requested. Those checks go out by the end of May. If there are folks who would like to know more about our Merrill Area United Way, go to the website listed in this article to see our 2016 Annual Report and much more information.

United Way works to improve the lives of people in the Merrill area and to make a difference in the three major impact areas of health, education and basic needs/income. For more information about the Merrill Area United Way visit us on Facebook or our website at merrillareaunderway.org or contact us at P. O. Box 813, Merrill, or email united813@frontier.com.