

Merrill Foto News

June, 2016

Most people have played the board game Monopoly at one time or another. Remember the Community Chest Cards – reminds me of the many Community Funds that have been established through the years to help cities, towns and villages across the United States. In most places that has been replaced by a local or regional United Way. Here in Merrill we have a strong, active United Way – however, we continue to have a line item in the United Way budget called the Community Fund. Compared to other areas like agency designations and our annual agency allocations the Community Fund has a rather small budget amount. It is however, the account that allows us to support the community in different ways and gives us a little flexibility to address needs that occur annually, or pop-up during the course of the year between budgets.

Some examples of funds expended through the Community Fund would be to partner with other central Wisconsin United Ways by financially participating as a County in the 211 Resource Information Program, acquire special items for people (in larger numbers-not individually) in need, support the Christmas Spirit Appeal financially, provide small grants to help in our three impact areas and look at unique programs that help groups of people. This year we are providing seed funding to a summer program for Hispanic children of single working mothers, that would otherwise be at home alone. The program is designed to continue to educate these children while ensuring they are safe, properly fed and cared for. We thank our strong donor base for helping us meet these community needs.

Another special line item in the budget is the Warming Center. The Community Warming Center Committee and the Merrill Area United Way have received our notice to vacate the Community Warming Center and will do so by June 30. We have appreciated the full support and free rent we received from the Merrill Housing Authority in that location. The Merrill Housing Authority is now proceeding with their new expansion project, which is very important to the entire community.

The Warming Center Committee will put furniture and other items into storage until we can find another suitable facility for the purpose we serve. It is our hope to find another site before our November 1st opening. We need a facility that is centrally located in the city. We require a minimum of 800 square feet, small kitchen area, bathroom(s), washer/dryer hookup, storage, partitioned area for office/volunteers and parking for 4-5 vehicles.

Contact the Merrill Area United Way office at 715-536-2016 or united813@frontier.com. We encourage you to visit our website at merrillareaunitedway.org to learn about the great work that is being done in our community.