



Greater Milwaukee
& Waukesha County

For Immediate Release

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United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County to Focus on Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement in 2020 Campaign

The Community Campaign is now underway, with a goal of \$55 million.

MILWAUKEE 09/03/2020 – On Thursday, September 3, 2020, United Way held a virtual version of their annual Community Campaign Kickoff. The event was sponsored by BMO Harris Bank and highlighted some of the key initiatives that United Way is focused on for the 2020-21 season. At the event, they also announced their campaign goal of \$55 million.

One of the key initiatives mentioned at the event was **Reducing Barriers to Employment & Advancement**, led by United Way's Diversity Leadership Society. This initiative is anchored in the belief that all adults of working age in our community should have the opportunity to obtain permanent employment with a livable wage at a workplace where they are treated with dignity and have opportunities for advancement. This is a multi-faceted approach focusing on African Americans with an emphasis on education, training, and credentials; transportation, involvement in the justice system; and diverse talent retention. ManpowerGroup is a major sponsor of this initiative.

"We know that over the last several months, unemployment rates have skyrocketed," said Amy Lindner, President & CEO of United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County. "The barriers that people face will only continue to grow. This is our time to reimagine a workforce in our community that provides equal opportunity for everyone. That's why reducing barriers is such an important initiative for us this year, and for years to come."

Other key initiatives that United Way is focused on for 2020 include:

- **COVID-19 Response, Recovery, and Reimagining.** Many in our community were in crisis long before COVID-19. The pandemic is shining a spotlight on these issues for the entire world to see. United Way is ready to lead the way on equity, removing barriers, and increasing opportunities for everyone.
- **Safe & Stable Homes: Ending Family Homelessness.** The priorities in 2020-21 will be on the prevention of evictions through legal aid, financial assistance, and the creation of the Rental Housing Resource Center. United recently announced funding of 13 additional programs in the fight to end family homelessness.
- **Community Schools:** Transforming schools into places where students, families, staff, and the surrounding community can work together to ensure every student is successful. United Way collaborates with MPS and community partners to support 12 local Community Schools.
- **Techquity.** COVID-19 has exposed the inequities in our community, and one of these inequities is the digital divide. Many do not have access to technology in their daily lives. Techquity connects stakeholders from our business, education, and social sector to promote digital equity and inclusion with a focus on access, education, and innovation.



- **Young Men United.** United Way is proud to be part of the national expansion of the successful MKE Fellows program, in partnership with MKE Fellows and United Way Worldwide. The goal is to support 25,000 young men of color, particularly young Black men, to successfully complete college over the next 10 years. Young Men United seeks to develop groups of young men who are not only well-educated, but who provide servant leadership that will be emulated by others.

2020 COMMUNITY CAMPAIGN

United Way's focus is on health, education, and financial stability, the building blocks for a good quality of life.

At the virtual event, United Way announced their annual campaign goals:

Raise \$55 million for the annual Community Campaign. The funds raised will mobilize local resources to provide vital health and human services to thousands of families in Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington, and Waukesha counties.

Coordinate volunteering in a COVID-19 world. United Way connects individuals, workplace teams, school groups, and entire organizations to meaningful volunteer experiences. This year the focus is on delivering volunteer experiences while keeping everyone safe and healthy. The year-long Seasons of Caring effort is sponsored by Rockwell Automation.

United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County has four community leaders heading up the 2020 campaign: **Jud Snyder**, BMO Harris Bank; **Austin Ramirez**, Husco; **Dr. John Raymond**, Medical College of Wisconsin; and **Kelly Grebe**, Community Leader.

"We are so grateful to have these co-chairs who are leading our campaign during these challenging times," said Linda Benfield, Board Chair for United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County. "We know we absolutely have the right group of people leading our efforts this year."

"United Way is a pillar of the community that has been driving positive change for generations," said Jud Snyder. "For me, co-chairing is an opportunity to go out and tell the community how much I – and BMO Harris Bank – believe in the work they do."

"This year has been a great case study in why United Way is so important and why I am so passionate about it," said Austin Ramirez. "I have my favorite causes that I am involved with. What United Way does, and I could never do myself, is understand the full diversity of need especially during times of crisis. United Way connects the capacity the community has for giving with organizations that can meet the urgent needs of the moment."

"United Way: Those two words are so significant when put together," said Dr. John Raymond. "United Way brings our community together in a way that promotes accountability and compassion for everyone. It shows us the pathway forward for helping to identify and focus on our most pressing needs. We needed that guidance in unanticipated ways this year."



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“I think it goes without saying that none of us knew what this year was going to bring when we agreed to be co-chairs,” said Kelly Grebe. “We have really seen how much need there is, and United Way, because of its track record and its scale, has been able to provide help where it is needed the most.”

Join the fight.

You can get involved by giving through a workplace giving campaign or a direct personal contribution, advocating for lasting change by sharing United Way’s message on your social media platforms, or by connecting to the community through volunteering.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF GREATER MILWAUKEE & WAUKESHA COUNTY

United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County fights for the health, education, and financial stability for every person in our local community.

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