



United Way
of the Lakeshore

United Way – advancing the common good in your community

Chances are you've heard of United Way. You may have seen United Way mentioned while watching your favorite NFL team, or experience a fundraising campaign at your place of employment. Each year United Way's annual fundraising campaign visits hundreds of businesses across the county and you may contribute through payroll deduction or by writing a check once a year - and for that we thank you.

Even with the thousands of people who do give to United Way of the Lakeshore every year, there are thousands more who do not really understand what we do. United Way is not a direct service organization like, say, the Red Cross or Hospice, but what United Way does is ensure the money that is donated goes to numerous programs and organizations in an efficient and effective manner. This doesn't just happen – it takes many devoted donors and volunteers.

Each United Way is governed by local volunteers who come from all walks of life to give back. Local volunteers raise the money needed to address those needs. . Local volunteers in your community – about 100 in Muskegon, Oceana and Newaygo counties - make funding recommendations for programs addressing local issues. Local volunteers serve on a variety of committees to see how they can best use their time, talent and treasure to make your community a better place.

Our mission is to mobilize the caring power of our community to improve the lives of people in our lakeshore communities. Our vision: United Way will be a catalyst for positive community change. We improve the quality of life in our community by impacting education, income and health.

United Way has been known for its fundraising for decades, and with good reason. We raise almost \$3 million every year in Muskegon, Oceana and Newaygo counties. That money goes back to the community. Volunteers distribute that money to agency programs focusing on helping kids succeed (education), promoting financial stability (income) or improving health.

Education, income and health - these are the building blocks for a good life – a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement and good health. Our goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place.

This community impact work requires us to think differently and work together with other agencies if we hope to get at the root causes of issues facing our community, rather than a “band aid” approach of temporarily fixing the problems.

In addition to investing money in programs such as housing and shelter programs, counseling, disaster services, mentoring and child abuse prevention programs, United Way is involved in the community in many more ways. We are at the table with collaborative dealing with preventing homelessness, promoting early childhood education and health, , asset building, dropout prevention, promoting a college-going culture and building a healthy community. We are meeting with businesses, labor, educators, government officials and nonprofits to see how United Way can help build a stronger community. Sometimes we bring money to the table; sometimes we bring the right people; other times, we bring our voice. We give. We advocate. We volunteer. We encourage people to LIVE UNITED.

We encourage people to GIVE. ADVOCATE.VOLUNTEER. Give by donating to United Way. Advocate by being a voice and championing United Way's work. Volunteer and be the change you want to see in your community.

We love to share stories on how we're helping in our community – through the wonderful work being done by so many great nonprofit organizations and volunteers. We look forward to more conversations – and we hope you find your own way to LIVE UNITED.