



Spring Wrap Up 2026

the COMMUNITY CIRCLE

Quarterly newsletter brought to you by United Way of Washington County-East



What's Inside?

Youth for Youth

Young Leaders. Lasting Change.

Women United

Women Investing in Women

UW Gala:

A Night of Generosity

Community Investment

100% Community-Driven Impact

Fish United

Raising over \$27,000!

What's next on the calendar?

Looking ahead,
join us this Summer!

Community in Full Bloom

Can we agree that there's something special about spring in our community? It's a season of fresh ideas, blooming flowers, new partnerships, and neighbors coming together to create lasting impact.

Over the last few months, we've watched the young leaders of Youth United step forward during their Youth for Youth event and seen our community bloom with generosity and connection at our annual gala, A Night in Full Bloom. We've also welcomed new volunteers through our Community Investment Grant Process and cast lines for a cause at another successful Fish United Tournament. **While each event looked different, they all shared one thing in common: people showing up for one another.**

Because of supporters like you, we're able to continue this incredible work. As we enter summer, we're carrying that same momentum into some of our biggest initiatives of the year. From Stuff the Bus and You R You to volunteer opportunities and community events, there are countless ways to make a difference. We hope you'll join us as we continue building a stronger, more connected community – together.



Be sure to follow us on our social channels to stay connected to all things United Way!

Youth for Youth

Young Leaders.
Lasting Change.



The young leaders of Youth United hosted their annual Youth for Youth event on March 3 – and what a night it was! Stillwater Area High School was filled with community, connection, and a whole lot of heart.

Together, they raised more than \$3,000 to support local youth programs. Guests enjoyed delicious soups, breads, and desserts, bid on silent auction items, and tried their luck at the raffle table – all made possible by generous community donors.

During the program, Youth United member Amelia Kozlowski shared a powerful reminder of why this work matters. She highlighted that nearly **3 out of every 10 students** report experiencing long-term mental health challenges lasting six months or more. But there's also hope: when young people feel connected to friends, their school, and caring adults, their mental health outcomes improve. As Amelia shared, "Youth United is about more than volunteering or planning events; it's about building community and showing up for each other. And when adults show up for youth, it makes a meaningful difference."

Youth United was also proud to support a community underwear drive benefiting St. Andrew's Community Resource Center. Thank you to everyone who donated!

The impact of Youth for Youth is just getting started. Throughout the year, Youth United members raise **funds that are reinvested directly into local youth-serving organizations through their annual grant cycle.** This spring, the group received applications from St. Andrew's Community Resource Center, Valley Friendship Club, The Connect Center, and Cimarron Youth Center. In the coming weeks, members will visit each organization, learn more about their work, and thoughtfully discuss funding recommendations before making their final allocations. It's a hands-on opportunity for these young leaders to experience philanthropy in action and make a meaningful investment in the future of our community. **Stay tuned to see where their generosity makes an impact!**

Thank you to our Donors

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Women United

Give to Gain

On International Women's Day, we took a moment to reflect on the incredible women who make our community stronger every single day. Women who lead, volunteer, mentor, advocate, and show up for one another in ways both big and small.

This year's Women United theme, Give to Gain, is a simple but powerful reminder: when women share their time, talents, and voices, our entire community benefits.

We're especially grateful for the remarkable women who continue to champion this work. Last summer, the incredible team from **Stillwater Modern Dentistry** closed their office for the day so every member of their team could volunteer at You R You, creating an unforgettable experience for local girls.

Year after year, **Kristin Rehkamp** and the team at **La Vie Est Belle** generously donate empowerment journals, giving every participant a place to reflect, dream, and discover their own voice. Kristin and her team also volunteer day of the event, which is such a fun way to team build and be part of this community.

And we're thankful for Women United Chair **Holly Corbid**, whose passion and leadership continue to inspire our mission and keep this work moving forward.

These women represent just a few of the countless individuals who believe in investing in the mental health and well-being of women and girls. Together, they are helping create spaces where girls feel seen, supported, and empowered to become confident leaders in their own lives.

To every member, volunteer, donor, and advocate who stands beside us – thank you. Your generosity creates opportunities, builds connections, and reminds us that when women lift one another up, entire communities thrive.

Interested in getting involved? Whether you're looking to volunteer, connect with like-minded women, or make lasting impact, there's a place for you! Learn more online at www.uwwce.org/women-united or click the button below.

Click to Sign Up!



UNITED WAY
Washington
County-East

**WOMEN
UNITED**

A Night in Full Bloom

Presented by First Resource Bank

What happens when a community comes together with generosity, compassion, and a shared vision? Incredible things.

This spring, more than 250 supporters gathered for **A Night in Full Bloom**, an evening dedicated to celebrating the power of local philanthropy. Together, our community raised **more than \$218,000** to support programs that strengthen youth, promote health, provide basic needs, and create pathways to self-sufficiency throughout Washington County.

One of the evening's most inspiring moments came during our Paddle Drop giving moment. **Eighty-seven individuals** stepped forward to sponsor backpacks filled with school supplies, ensuring local students have the tools they need to start the school year with confidence.

continue reading on next page



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I know that I could have been an ALICE* for at least a while. We feel very fortunate, and it inspires us to try to give back.

Anne Schmiechen - United Way Gala Attendee + Supporter

*ALICE - Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed



The impact grew even further thanks to the generosity of **Dr. Bijan Shayegan and Jody Dick, who matched the first 20 backpacks with a gift of \$2,100.** As a pediatrician and an elementary school teacher, they see firsthand how access to basic school supplies supports both learning and well-being. Their leadership inspired an even greater investment in local students, **bringing the total to 107 fully funded backpacks** before the evening came to a close.

While the flowers have faded and the tables have been cleared, the impact of the evening is just beginning. **Every dollar raised will be reinvested into our community** – supporting local nonprofits, strengthening essential programs, and creating opportunities for children, families, and neighbors to thrive.

To everyone who attended, sponsored, volunteered, donated, or bid in the silent auction – thank you for helping our community bloom. **Your generosity continues to grow far beyond a single night.**



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AWESOME night! There were so many positive comments about all you've done to make huge advancements.

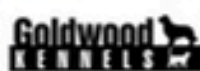
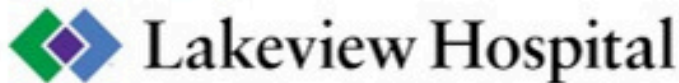
Aaron Siegle | United Way Gala Attendee + Board President

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Community Investment

Neighbors Investing in Neighbors

Every year, our Community Investment Grant Process brings together local volunteers with one shared purpose: **investing in the organizations that make Washington County a stronger place to live, work, and grow.**

This spring, 34 dedicated community members stepped forward to review **37 program applications requesting more than \$731,000 in funding.** Over the past several weeks, volunteers have visited nonprofit partners, learned about their programs firsthand, and engaged in thoughtful conversations about the challenges - and opportunities - facing our community.

The need is real.

Today, 8% of Washington County residents lack adequate access to food*, 3.8% do not own a vehicle#, making transportation and accessibility even more critical, and the average family spends 34% of its income on childcare for two children.* These numbers are more than statistics - they represent our neighbors, friends, and families.

Data Sources

*[County Health Rankings 2026](#)

#[ACS 2020-2024](#)

As Washington County Director of Public Health and Environment, David Brummel, shared with our volunteers, **“Public health works at the speed of trust. We build trusted relationships by meeting people where they are.”** That spirit of trust and collaboration is at the heart of Community Investment.

Our volunteer panel met just last week to make final funding recommendations, helping direct local dollars to programs that strengthen youth, improve health, provide basic needs, and create pathways to self-sufficiency.

We look forward to announcing our 2026–2027 Partner Agencies and celebrating the incredible organizations working every day to build a stronger, healthier, and more connected community. Stay up to date on all things United Way by following us on our socials



5th Annual Fish United

Presented by Reflections

The 5th Annual Fish United Tournament, presented by Reflections, was another incredible day on the water – and an even greater day for our community.

Thanks to the generosity of anglers, sponsors, volunteers, donors, and supporters, **we raised more than \$27,000 to support local programs and services through our nonprofit partner agencies.** Those funds will help strengthen our community by supporting programs that provide food, shelter, recovery support, counseling, legal advocacy, and other essential resources for local families and individuals.

While the competition brought plenty of excitement, one of the most memorable moments of the day took place along the shoreline. Through our Youth Fish from Shore experience, local children had the opportunity to cast a line, celebrate their catches, and create lasting memories alongside parents, grandparents, and volunteers.

A special thank you goes to **Walleye Willy's, Lakeview Hospital, River Runner Guide Service, and volunteers from Dodge Nature Center** for helping make this experience possible. Thanks to the generosity of Walleye Willy's, 32 fishing rods were donated during the event – and every child was able to take their fishing rod home.

Fish United continues to be a powerful reminder that when we come together around a shared purpose, the impact extends far beyond a single day. Whether you registered a boat, sponsored the tournament, bid in the silent auction, volunteered your time, or cheered us on, thank you for helping create a stronger, healthier, and more connected community.

We're already looking forward to next year's tournament and the opportunity to continue this tradition of fishing, connection, and community impact.



FISH UNITED
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Reflections



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CORVAL GROUP



What's next on the calendar?

As we turn the page from a busy spring and head into summer, we're gearing up for two of our favorite community traditions – and we'd love for you to be part of them.

As always, thank you for being part of our United Way community. Together, we're creating opportunities, strengthening connections, and building a brighter future for everyone who calls Washington County-East home.

Stuff the Bus – Help us fill 1,000 backpacks!

Our biggest back-to-school initiative is back! Each year, Stuff the Bus helps ensure local students start the school year prepared, confident, and ready to learn. This year, our goal is ambitious: 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies for students across Washington County.

Whether you make a donation, host a collection drive, volunteer your time, or help spread the word, every act of generosity brings us one step closer to our goal.

Learn how you can get involved by visiting our website www.uwwce.org/stuff-the-bus.

You R You Returns for Year Three

We're excited to share that You R You is back for its third year! Created by Women United, this one-day retreat is designed to empower girls entering sixth grade through meaningful conversations, hands-on activities, and opportunities to build confidence and connection.

This year's retreat will take place on Wednesday, August 12, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Hidden Pines Ranch. Throughout the day, participants will engage in small group discussions, creative activities, and empowering experiences that foster self-esteem, spark new friendships, and provide practical tools for mental wellness.

Registration is now open! Learn more and register at www.uwwce.org/you-r-you



You R You

SEE YOU AROUND THIS SUMMER



WE ARE YOUR LOCAL UNITED WAY

MISSION

Through trusted relationships, generated resources, and effectively distributed funds we will unite and strengthen our community.




VISION

Create new ways to develop an empathetic and engaged community and generate abundant resources to meet or exceed our local community needs.

DEI STATEMENT

We are dedicated to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in all we do. We strive for a vibrant and equitable community.



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