



2022-2023 United Way Campaign

***Building Stronger Youth, Stronger Families and
a Stronger Community***



United Way's mission may be more important today than ever before. The backlash from the COVID pandemic combined with high inflation is putting horrific stress on our lower income families. Today, our community is experiencing a significant increase in youth and families that are facing enormous stress and challenges in meeting their most basic living needs.

Committed to Helping our Youth Thrive: As in previous years, we remain committed to helping our youth thrive so they can reach their full potential.

Safe Community: Community safety has become one of our highest priorities. This year, United Way is launching a new initiative to significantly improve public safety. We are spearheading a Safe Community Coalition to significantly reduce crime, violence, and illegal drugs in our community and provide safety and drug prevention information and support for our youth and families. Our quality of life is dependent on Fort Dodge and Webster County being a safe place to live, work and raise our families.

This year, our United Way is focused on six important community issues and priorities.

Priorities:

1. Preventing Child Homelessness
2. Building Strong Youth - Basic Needs for Kids
3. Building Strong Families
4. Provide Emergency Support
5. Supporting our Frail Elderly Seniors and the Disabled
6. Building a Safer Community

**When we reach out a hand to help one, we influence the condition of all.
When we build the strength of our neighbors, our youth and our
families, we bolster the health and vitality of our community.**

Preventing Child Homelessness and Unstable Housing

What can be more traumatic and devastating than a child without a home; a safe and stable place for a child to live and sleep at night?

Preventing Child Homelessness

1 out of 5 children live in households that are at risk of becoming homeless; i.e. they are just one unpaid rent payment from eviction. Today, many children sleep in a different place almost every night because they have no home – be it a friend’s apartment or a relative’s house, these children have to sleep in a chair, a couch or on the floor. Some even sleep in a car with their parent and other siblings.



It is estimated that 125 to 175 children are homeless in Fort Dodge at some time during the year. It may be for a few days, a few weeks or a few months. Most of these children only have their mother in their lives and their single parent family is destitute.



United Way’s Homeless Prevention Fund helps these families in financial crisis with temporary housing in a safe place so they don’t have to sleep in a car or in a tent. United Way also provides emergency financial assistance so they can avoid eviction and remain in their homes so the children do not become victims of homelessness.

Unstable Housing

1 out every 5 children and adolescents in Fort Dodge live in households that struggle each month to pay their basic living bills – utility bills for water, electricity and heat. It is estimated that during the course of a year, as many as 500 to 1,000 or more children live in homes that risk going without water or heat for a period of time; from a week or even up to six months.



United Way provides emergency assistance for impoverished families with children to help them keep their heat and electricity on and the water running in their homes.

Donations to the United Way Child Homeless Prevention Fund can help make a huge, even life-changing impact for children.

Champion for Children – Basic Needs

Basic Needs: For children and teens to learn effectively and grow and develop in a healthy way, their basic needs must be met. Unfortunately, too many have to deal with barriers and traumatic stress due to the challenges and social ills they have to overcome. The recent 2020 census shows that 1 out of 4 children and adolescents are living in a household that is at or below the poverty level or close to it.

Preventing Child Homelessness

1 out of 5 children live in households that are at risk of becoming homeless; i.e. they are just one unpaid rent payment from eviction. United Way works to help keep families from becoming homeless.



Unstable Housing

Many children live in homes that are at risk of having no electricity, heat or running water. United Way is helping families keep their heat and lights on.

Fighting Hunger

In Fort Dodge, one out of every seven children are food insecure and are periodically coping with hunger. United Way provides food assistance for families.



Beds for Kids

There are many children in Fort Dodge that sleep on the floor at night because they do not have a bed. A good night's sleep in a warm bed can make all the difference in the world for a child. United Way has distributed over 1,000 beds to children in need of a warm bed.



Hope for Healing Fund

Transportation - United Way helps low income families that have a child with cancer or other serious medical conditions and they need transportation assistance to a larger medical center in Des Moines, Iowa City or Rochester for lifesaving medical care. United Way provides these families with gas cards and other travel costs.

Prescription for Kids – United Way's Prescription for Kids program provides financial support for children in need of prescription drugs when their family does not have the financial ability to pay for the drug.

Medical Equipment – When a child is in need of medical equipment such as a wheelchair, crutches, walkers, oxygen concentrators, nebulizers, etc., United Way is here to help.



Education and Enrichment

United Way provides support for a wide range of educational and enrichment programs for at-risk students including after school programs, tutoring, and extracurricular activities such as youth sports, art, music and youth leadership clubs. We want no child to be denied the chance to participate.



Building Stronger and More Stable Families

Strong, stable families are the foundation of vital, healthy communities. Unfortunately, families in poverty or close to the poverty level struggle to meet their basic living needs which often leads to family instability and dysfunction. In Fort Dodge, 17% of households live in poverty; and 43% of families with dependent children are headed by a single parent, usually the mother. United Way administers programs that are focused on helping families with children become stable and self-sufficient.



By helping impoverished families avoid becoming homeless, pay their utility bills, feed their children and provide beds for the kids, United Way is helping stabilize families that are facing financial crises.

Bridging the Gap

We accept donations of household items, beds, and gently used furniture that that can make a house a home. These items are distributed to needy families including families coming out of shelters that have almost nothing. These donated items touch the lives of families in need in truly meaningful ways.



Wheels for Work Program

Not having a car makes the challenge of raising a family extremely difficult. It also makes it very difficult for a parent to get and keep a job if she or he lacks personal transportation. In partnership with Fort Dodge Ford - Toyota, our Wheels for Work program accepts donated vehicles and gives them to qualified families with children that are in desperate need of a car. Having a car gives these families the independence they need to hold a job and build family stability and self-sufficiency.



Women's Support Network (WSN)

Women are disproportionately affected by poverty, as they tend to hold jobs in low-paying sectors while having the responsibility for family caregiving.

The Women's Support Network (WSN) empowers women by providing mentoring support and guidance, and connecting women and their families to resources and supports to help them overcome economic and social barriers to create family stability. WSN serves as a central point of coordination for women to help them and their families address challenges and overcome barriers to stabilize their lives and become more economically self-sufficient. In partnership with our network of human service agencies, WSN helps women develop financial literacy and life skills, and offers them employment services, and job search assistance. We know that improving the circumstances and well-being of women and their children will greatly benefit our entire community.



Emergency Support

Family emergencies are very difficult to deal with for all families, but for lower income families with little or no disposable income, they can be devastating.



United Way provides emergency assistance for families facing a crisis due to a house fire, home eviction, a death of a parent or child, divorce, a parent's job loss, a serious medical emergency and other emergencies that often leave families and their children in desperate situations. Families facing an emergency often need immediate help for housing, food, clothing, transportation, and other critical needs. For lower income families, emergencies often lead to immediate loss

of income and the inability to cover basic living expenses. Not only are these families coping with a family crisis that is extremely emotional, they are also having to deal with an immediate financial crisis.



Emergency Support for Seniors

Our senior citizens are members of the "greatest generation" yet many are low income and need our help. United Way funds provide support for seniors facing an emergency and need support to help them deal with a crisis that might be impacting their health or well-being. United Way helps frail elderly seniors that might need a window air conditioner, or a microwave oven, durable medical equipment or maybe a safety home repair. United Way is here to lend a "helping hand."



Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels staff and volunteers are committed to enriching lives and promoting independent healthy living by offering nutritious food and a friendly visit. Our Meals on Wheels program provides nutritious meals to frail elderly and homebound seniors and individuals with disabilities who no longer have the ability to cook nutritious meals for themselves. Five days a week, Meals on Wheels volunteers deliver hot, nutritious meals and a warm smile to seniors in need. For many of our Meals on Wheels clients, a friendly conversation may be the only human contact they will have during the day. Offering nutritious home-delivered meals is not simply a matter of convenience - it's a service that allows our frail elderly seniors and the disabled in the greater Fort Dodge area to remain safely in their own homes for as long as they desire.



The safety of our seniors is also very important, that is why there is much more to Meals on Wheels than healthy food. Our Meals on Wheels volunteers also provide a safety check that offers clients a sense of caring, support and friendship. Meals on Wheels volunteers provide clients with a safety check in case a client has fallen, become ill or is in an unsafe condition in his or her home. All volunteers watch for troubling developments in each home. This provides peace of mind for clients and their families. The importance of a daily visit is, quite simply, immeasurable.



Safe Community Coalition



Advancing Public Safety, Crime and Drug Prevention

"If we do nothing - we will accomplish exactly that." President Franklin Roosevelt

Safety and crime prevention is critical for the health and vitality of our community. Citizens need to know that their family and friends can walk in their neighborhoods and parks without fear and that their streets, schools and public places are safe and peaceful. Safety is also critical to economic development. When communities are safe, quality of life is enhanced and local economies flourish.

Community safety and crime prevention is not just a police issue; it's truly everyone's responsibility. It involves encouraging citizens to support law enforcement and engaging all sectors of the community in helping Fort Dodge become a safer place to live, work and raise our families.

United Way is spearheading a Safe Community Coalition for Fort Dodge and Webster County focused on improving public safety by combatting crime and violence, and significantly reducing the illegal use of drugs. This is a common sense approach to protecting our children, keeping our schools safe, and reducing the threat of violence in our community and county.



The Safe Community Coalition will lead a coordinated intervention process between local law enforcement and numerous community partners that combines best practices in public safety, crime, violence and drug prevention to make Fort Dodge a safer and healthier community. The Coalition will take a proactive approach in creating an atmosphere of cooperation, trust, and understanding in our efforts to create healthy and positive change.

Our Vision: The greater Fort Dodge area will unite and embrace the important goal of becoming a safe, healthy and more vital community.

Our Mission: We will work together to establish a safe, caring, drug-free and crime-free community by significantly diminishing criminal activity and reducing the illegal and inappropriate use of drugs, alcohol, and vaping. We aim to support responsible decision-making skills with our youth so they will make good decisions and healthy choices in life. We will also address improving youth and family safety.

Fort Dodge Safe Community Coalition includes: United Way of Greater Fort Dodge, Fort Dodge Police Department, Webster County Sheriff's Department, Webster County Attorney's office, Crime Stoppers, Serving our Servants (SOS), Webster County Overdose Prevention Coalition, Webster County Health Department, local school systems, Iowa Central Community College, local businesses, Unity Point – Trinity Medical Center, Community Health Center, Greater Fort Dodge Growth Alliance, local nonprofit agencies, local churches and parent organizations.

Being a safe community requires strong law enforcement, effective city ordinances and laws, and a proactive and engaged citizenry. The safety of our youth is our first priority and protecting them from illicit drugs and engaging in anti-social behaviors is critical for their well-being. Understanding and protecting our youth from the many dangers presented to them via the Internet and social media platforms and apps on their phones and computers is also very important.

Coalition Action Steps



Support Law Enforcement

Provide our police and sheriff's departments with the tools and support they need to effectively enforce our laws and improve public safety. Coordinate an ongoing public relations campaign supporting local law enforcement and the important work they are doing to keep our community safe.

- * Provide grant support for law enforcement tools and technology
- * Support the Fort Dodge Police Dept. K-9 program
- * Crime Stoppers

Youth Substance Abuse Prevention

By using evidenced based programs, educate youth and parents about the dangers of illicit drugs and the destructive consequences that come with abusing drugs and alcohol. Teach and encourage youth on making healthy and positive choices.

- * Partner with schools and youth organizations on prevention education

Crime Prevention

By organizing and coordinating projects and programs that can help reduce crime in the greater Fort Dodge area.

- * Neighborhood Watch programs
- * Promoting the use of security cameras for businesses and homes
- * Public education on preventing crime and reducing drug use and addiction
- * Education on preventing human trafficking

Youth and Family Safety

Organize and coordinate programs on:

- * Internet safety for youth
- * Avoiding drugs, alcohol and other illicit substances
- * Fire safety at home
- * Suicide prevention

Media – Communications

Develop an effective communications program to increase awareness and understanding about public safety principles and to educate parents on child safety tips.

- * Develop an informational website for parents and the general public
- * Use social media
- * Partner with the Messenger and Alpha Media
- * Coordinate ongoing public relations campaigns

Together we can make Fort Dodge and Webster County a safe and peaceful community

United Way of Greater Fort Dodge



Touching Lives and Building Hope



United Way of Greater Fort Dodge is focused on helping the less fortunate in our community and building a better, stronger and more vital community for all of us.

Donations to United Way are used effectively in ways that touch the lives of so many children, adolescents and their families that can use a “helping hand.” These donations are administered effectively and efficiently to make the biggest impact possible.

Support from our leading companies and businesses in our community and region is critical to our efforts to improve the health, vitality and well-being of our community.

Donations to the United Way campaign, be they large or small, can help UNITE our community and truly touch the lives of hundreds of children and their families.



United Way of Greater Fort Dodge 24 North 9th Street Suite B Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501
Email: rk@fd-foundation.org Phone: 515-573-3179