

Engaging Volunteers to LIVE UNITED

Sue Haupt, Communications Director, United Way of Marathon County

What do Career Closet, Sisterhood Suppers, Christmas for Mommies and Children's Spaces have in common? All four are volunteer run projects that serve children and families in Marathon County.

Here's how:

- Career Closet is a project of United Way Emerging Leaders. Having appropriate clothing for a job interview or to start a new job is frequently a struggle for people who are looking for work and trying to improve their situation. At the Career Closet, volunteers will help you select an outfit or two, often with accessories like shoes. We all know how important first impressions are, and being dressed appropriately can really improve your confidence level.
- Children's Spaces are being installed at four organizations across the county this fall by groups of Emerging Leaders volunteers. These spaces are comfortable, interactive, visually stimulating, educational areas at Tyler's Home, Spencer Kids Group, Edgar Public Library and the Achieve Center. Each is unique and designed to meet the needs of the children using the spaces. Last year Emerging Leaders installed Born Learning Trails at two area parks. Children and families can turn a walk in the park into a fun learning experience. Check out the trails at Three "M" Park in Wausau and Machmuller Park in Weston
- Sisterhood Suppers are a project of United Way Women in Action. One of the goals of Women in Action is to remove barriers to financial stability for low-income women with children. Several times a year Women in Action members prepare and serve a meal and provide childcare for women attending budgeting and financial literacy classes.
- Women in Action will also be recognizing the efforts of moms who are working hard to better themselves and improve things for their children in December. The fourth Annual Christmas for Mommies will provide gift bags for 50 moms who have shown initiative, commitment and a sincere desire to increase their family's financial stability.

In addition to their volunteer projects, members of both groups have opportunities to network with other members and learn more about our community at special member lunches and events.

Members of these two United Way groups demonstrate the true meaning of LIVE UNITED every day. While giving to United Way is part of what they do, they also roll up their sleeves and do the heavy lifting to make these projects successful.

If you are interested in learning more about getting involved in Emerging Leaders or Women in Action, contact Toni Dunwoody (Emerging Leaders) or Jenn Golbach (Women in Action) at 715-848-2927. More information is also available at www.unitedwaymc.org.