

# IMPROVE LIVES... STRENGTHEN OUR COMMUNITY

## 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**

**United Way  
of Marathon County**

[UnitedWayMC.org](http://UnitedWayMC.org)

**LIVE UNITED**

**United  
Way**



## 2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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**United Way  
focuses on  
three building  
blocks that  
we all need to  
be successful  
in life!**



## Education

Research is clear – learning and brain development occur at the greatest rate between birth and three years of age. That’s why it is critical that we reach children early – starting with good pre-natal care and continuing through the school years.

We are working to ensure that all kids have the skills they need to be successful when they start school. If a child isn’t reading at grade level by 3rd grade, for example, they may never catch up to their peers.

At the same time we are providing supports and resources to help youth navigate the challenges of adolescence and be prepared for college or the workforce.

## Income

The stress and turmoil associated with poverty and long-term financial struggles negatively affects families, especially children. Lack of nourishing food or a stable place to call home impacts work attendance and performance, school attendance and behavior, and also leads to chronic health problems for children and adults.

We are working with our funded partners and coalitions to increase food and housing options for low-income families in our community to meet immediate needs. We’re also implementing programs that help individuals overcome barriers to being self-sufficient.

## Health

Good health is fundamental to our capacity to enjoy life, to provide for our families, to realize our full potential and to contribute to society.

Untreated mental health conditions, alcohol and drug abuse and domestic violence cost all of us. These issues affect our businesses through absenteeism and lost productivity. Education is hampered by missed school days and behavioral issues that affect every child in the classroom. These are community challenges that impact every resident of Marathon County.

With the steady increase of residents over the age of 65, our community will also be challenged to meet the needs of our aging population. Keeping our seniors safe and living independently whenever possible will have a positive effect on their health and well-being.

The best way to understand United Way is through the stories of people whose lives are touched by your generosity. You are making a difference for Daniel and Beth, Corinna, Mary, Sandy and Chris... and thousands of others in our community. You'll find their stories in this report.

Our impact work ensures that:

- People have adequate food and a safe place to sleep.
- Individuals and families receive counseling.
- Kids are in quality child care or after school activities.
- Organizations work together to improve lives.

Your local United Way strives to be a top performing organization that provides accountability and transparency to our donors and our community. The Board of Directors carefully monitors quarterly and annual dashboards across all segments of the organization.

Other organizations have also recognized our effectiveness in 2015:

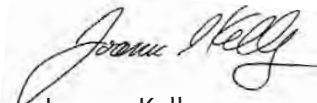
- The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce awarded us the Small Business of the Year Award for non-profits.
- United Way's 2-1-1 achieved full re-accreditation from the National Alliance of Information and Referral Systems.
- Our United Way received a 4 star rating (highest available) from Charity Navigator. Only

29% of 8000 charities receive that rating based on efficient use of donations and sustained programming and services over time.

We encourage you to visit our web site at [www.UnitedWayMC.org](http://www.UnitedWayMC.org) to learn more about the great work that is being done in our community.



Keith Fierek  
2015 Board President



Joanne Kelly  
Executive Director

## Daniel and Beth's Story

Daniel and Beth\* are prepared to do whatever it takes to help their children adjust to life with Reactive Attachment Disorder (RAD). They adopted three siblings after caring for them as foster children. They were not aware of the severity of RAD in each child, but did know that their biological mother had been in and out of jail on drug and prostitution charges.

All three children are in counseling and play therapy has been helpful in treating their RAD, but life is still very challenging. Beth spends her time taking children to counseling or therapy and meeting with teachers and principals. "The easiest way to explain what RAD is, is to say that my children have no conscience. They know right from wrong, they just don't care," Beth explained. "If they want something, they will steal it. If they want to hit someone, they will, and the consequences don't matter," she added.

Beth also shared that by age 20, 50% of RAD children will be dead, either due to suicide or risk taking behaviors; 25% will be in jail, and 25% will have responded to treatment and learned to cope with their illness. "I refuse to let my children be part of the 75%," Beth said. "That's why the workshop on RAD offered by the Partnership for Youth Coalition was so helpful to us. There's not a lot of information available for parents," she commented. "It's good to know that we're not alone," Daniel added.

\*names changed for confidentiality



# Focused on EDUCATION

## GOALS:

- Improve school readiness
- Improve academic performance and career readiness



## BY THE NUMBERS:

**15.6%**  
Marathon County children  
live in poverty\*

**30 Million**  
fewer words heard by  
low-income children  
by age 4

**88%**  
kids who don't read  
in kindergarten that  
continue to struggle  
in grade 3

\*for a family of four earning  
less than \$24,250

## 2015 Accomplishments:

- One of six partnerships that received a state grant to encourage businesses and organizations to invest in early childhood priorities.
- Secured five businesses as Champions of Early Childhood in Marathon County.
- Hosted a “Baby Business” forum attended by more than 100 area business leaders.



- Developed an online car seat safety education module for [www.RaiseGreatKids.org](http://www.RaiseGreatKids.org)

## 2015 Accomplishments:

- Launched five Parent Power Hour sessions to connect parents with opportunities for support and leadership.
- Established a cross-sector team of 29 individuals representing schools, law enforcement, social services and area non-profits to develop community based approaches to keep youth out of the juvenile justice system.



- Partnered with United Way's 2-1-1 to gather youth input and local content expertise for the new edition of the Community Help Guide for Teens.
- Hosted a professional development offering on reactive attachment disorder and suicide prevention.

## Corinna's Story

Corinna and her husband have two children and are expecting their third. Several years ago Corinna started taking classes to obtain a degree as a substance abuse counselor.

With only her husband's income, tuition costs and the cost of child care were a struggle. Fortunately, she learned about Good Start Grants funded through United Way and found she was eligible for assistance.

Corinna attended the Parent Power Hour series sponsored by the Early

Years Coalition and Partnership for Youth. She found the presentations and referrals to other resources very helpful and learned practical parenting tips from others.

Corinna will soon complete her studies and is looking forward to the birth of their third child. The help she received from United Way programs helped her finish her degree and move forward with plans to help others in our community who struggle with addiction.



# Focused on **INCOME**

## GOALS:

- Reduce hunger and homelessness
- Increase skills to improve self-sufficiency



## BY THE NUMBERS:

**1:10**

Marathon County families live in poverty

**27.1%**

LIFE Survey respondents struggle to buy food

**359**

families receiving housing assistance in 2014

**113**

average homeless count in 2015

## 2015 Accomplishments:

- Added over 84,000 pounds of nourishing food including proteins, fruits and vegetables to food pantries.
- Presented ‘Cooking on a Budget’ classes to over 250 people.
- Contributed over 2,200 volunteer hours supporting projects and events.



- Developed and collected a “Barriers to Basic Needs/Financial Stability” survey to assess barriers, root causes and gaps in services offered.

## 2015 Accomplishments:

- Created a pilot housing program that provided case management, temporary housing and financial assistance to 10 adults and 18 children for a total of 1277 days.
- Increased awareness of homelessness issues for 28 community leaders during a bus tour of local agencies.
- Released the 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness.



- Continued to support the Wausau Area Warming Center, the first project initiated by the Housing and Homelessness Coalition.

## Sandy's Story



Sandy lost her job and found herself struggling to keep food on the table.

She didn't qualify for unemployment benefits, so she had to make do with her savings. What little she had was enough to pay rent, but it didn't leave any room for groceries.

She called United Way's 2-1-1 to find out where she could

find help. The Information Specialist told Sandy about local food pantries.

Sandy was embarrassed to go to the food pantries at first, but she received the help she needed. With their help, she was able to stretch her savings until she could get back on her feet.

*\*Name has been changed to protect confidentiality.*

## Focused on Health

### GOALS:

- Decrease relationship violence and sexual assault
- Improve mental health
- Reduce alcohol and drug abuse
- Improve seniors' ability to live independently

### BY THE NUMBERS:

**18**

annual average deaths  
by suicide in Marathon  
County

**7.6%**

LIFE survey respondents  
without any health  
insurance

**#1**

Wisconsin's rank in drunk  
driving rates

**14.6%**

Marathon County  
residents over age 65

**4297**

calls to local domestic  
violence/sexual assault/  
abuse support line

## Connie's Story

Connie Nowak describes herself and her family as “everyday people” who just needed a little help from a United Way funded program to meet the challenges they faced.

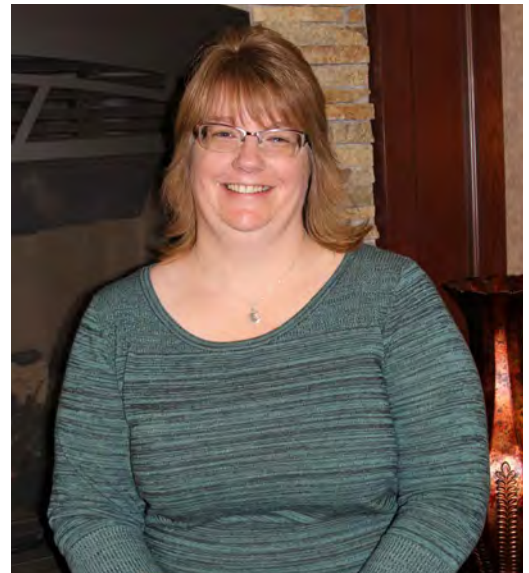
Connie's son, Dawson, was a high energy toddler who started to experience challenges when he started kindergarten. Initially diagnosed with ADHD, the first treatment plan was based on medication to manage symptoms. Connie and her husband, Brian did not feel that medication alone was the answer to the situation.

They wanted Dawson to learn how to understand his anxiety and triggers and handle them in an appropriate manner.

Dawson started seeing a mental health counselor. The sessions helped Dawson learn to cope with his illness, but the cost of treatment was staggering. The family's medical insurance didn't cover mental health counseling, and even with two adults working full time, the bills kept growing.

The counseling agency suggested that Connie and Brian apply for assistance through the sliding fee scale program funded by United Way. They were very reluctant to do so.... They were DONORS to United Way and never expected to be using funded services. Eventually, they did apply and received a small weekly benefit to defray the costs of counseling. “While the \$15 a week might not seem like much, it made it possible for us to make some headway on the mounting bills,” Connie recalls.

Today Dawson is in 8th grade and doing well. He's learning how to deal with the things that trigger his emotional outbursts and continues counseling sessions. He shares his experience with understanding friends and knows that medication alone won't treat his illness. As for Connie and Brian, they have become outspoken advocates for those suffering from mental illness. “People don't talk about it... it remains some big secret and those dealing with it too often suffer in silence,” Connie noted. “People need to know that if it can happen in our every day, middle class family, it can happen to anyone. We're just thankful that United Way was there when we needed a little extra help,” she added.



# United Way Funded & Coalition Partners\*

United Way brings together individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, faith groups, schools and government agencies to work together to meet changing community needs. No one organization or group can make the impact that we are making together.

- |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|---|
| Achieve Center                           | Dudley Foundation                        | Marathon County Public Library         | State of Wisconsin Division of Housing  |
| AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin        | EO Johnson Business Technologies         | Marathon County UW Coop Extension Serv | The Neighbors' Place                    |
| American Red Cross                       | Everest Metropolitan Police Dept         | Marshfield Clinic                      | The Women's Community                   |
| American Society for Laser Medicine      | Faith in Action                          | Ministry Saint Clare's Hospital        | United Health Group                     |
| Aspirus, Inc.                            | Family Planning Health Services          | Mirror Image Supervision Services LLC  | US Bank                                 |
| Associated Counseling Services           | First Impressions SC                     | Montessori, Mountain View              | VA Tomah VA Health Care System          |
| AXA Advisors LLC                         | First United Methodist Church            | Mosinee School District                | Village of Rothschild                   |
| B.A. & Esther Greenheck Foundation       | Forward Services Corp                    | Mount Olive Church                     | Wausau Area Mobile Meals, Inc.          |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters                 | Gazebo Outreach                          | Newman Catholic Schools                | Wausau Child Care, Inc.                 |
| Boys & Girls Clubs, Inc.                 | Girl Scouts of the NWestern              | North Central Community Action Program | Wausau City Government                  |
| Bridge Community Health Clinic           | Great Lakes                              | North Central Health Care              | Wausau Community & Economic Development |
| Catholic Charities of Diocese La Crosse  | Grebe's Inc.                             | Northcentral Technical College         | Wausau School District                  |
| Center for Veterans Issues               | Greenheck Fan Corp.                      | Office of Congressman Sean P. Duffy    | WI Automotive & Truck Education Assn.   |
| Central Wisconsin Literacy Council, Inc. | Grubb & Ellis                            | Open Door                              | WI Dept of Workforce Development        |
| Childcaring, Inc.                        | Habitat for Humanity                     | Opportunity Inc.                       | WI Public Defenders Office              |
| Children's Hosp. of WI Community Service | Highland Community Church                | Peaceful Solutions Counseling          | WI Dept of Veterans Affairs             |
| Community Care Connections of WI         | Hmong American Center, Inc.              | Professional Services Group            | WI Judicare Inc.                        |
| Community Center of Hope Inc.            | Hope Life Center                         | Randlin Family Adult Care Homes, Inc   | Woodson Art Museum                      |
| Crystal Finishing Systems                | Institute for Community Alliances        | Ruder Ware, L.L.S.C.                   | Woodson YMCA, Inc.                      |
| CTL Company Inc.                         | Liberty Mutual                           | Salvation Army                         | WSAW Channel 7                          |
| CW Solutions                             | Lutheran Social Services WI & Upper MI   | Samoset Council Boy Scouts             |   |
| D C Everest School District              | Marathon Cheese Corporation              | Spencer Kids Group                     |   |
| Downtown Mission Church                  | Marathon County Government               | St Anthony Retreat Center              |   |
|  | Marathon County Child Development Agency |  |   |

\* A total of 470 individuals are involved from the organizations listed above and an additional 100 people are community volunteers not associated with an organization. This list also includes our funded program partners and additional organizations that may receive funding as part of a collaborative project.



## Mary's Story

Mary became homeless with her four children after leaving an abusive relationship. The family moved into an apartment building that is part of the new Housing First pilot project where Mary received ongoing case management support from a local agency. The goal of this project is to help individuals and families overcome the barriers to being financially stable. One of the first challenges is often finding a job with a reliable income that will allow them to live independently. With the help of her case manager, Mary learned to set goals and take steps to achieve them. She successfully completed the program and the family is now living in their own home.

# Connecting People

Mobilizing volunteers is a core service of United Way through United Way Volunteer Connection and United Way RSVP. We also connect people in need to services that can help through United Way's 2-1-1.

All services are free and available to everyone, 24/7, via phone or on-line database at: [www.UnitedWayMC.org](http://www.UnitedWayMC.org)



## United Way Volunteer Connection

### *Helping You Help Others*

In 2015 Volunteer Connection launched a new software that saw 4090 unique visitors searching for volunteer opportunities at local organizations.

**More than 4800 individuals were referred** to or participated in an event coordinated by Volunteer Connection. Volunteer Connection recruits and organizes volunteers for the Make a Difference Day raking project, **servicing more than 170 elderly or disabled residents** with this annual task.

The Workplace Volunteer Council depends on Volunteer Connection to assist them with volunteer recruitment and organization during their annual

**Fill a Backpack program serving almost 3,000 low income students** each year.

Another major project for Volunteer Connection is the Bundles of Joy program. From Thanksgiving to Christmas, volunteers wrap packages for donations at the Wausau Center Mall. In 2015, **417 volunteers wrapped almost 4500 gifts, raising over \$7,000 for Bundles of Joy.**

After the holidays, Volunteer Connection coordinates the ordering and distribution of emergency supplies of diapers and formula to local agencies. With last year's donations, they were able to **serve approximately 880 families in crisis.**

In 2015 United Way Volunteer Connection piloted a "reading buddy" tutoring and mentoring project at Mosinee Elementary over the last three months of the school year. 18 adult volunteers were matched with students in kindergarten and first grade who needed a little extra help with reading.

By the end of the pilot program, **85% of students had increased their reading comprehension.** The program is continuing this school year and recently expanded to Marathon Elementary.





# United Way RSVP of Marathon County

Connecting Volunteers 55+ to Community Needs

Individuals who volunteer with RSVP see improved happiness and well-being while meeting new people and making new friends. Members have the option of attending social events and educational offerings that best meet their needs. Their service is critical to many non-profits in our community. In 2015, **352 individual RSVP members provided 45,239 hours of volunteer service to 44 non-profits. That service is valued at \$1,019,737 by the Independent Sector.**

## 2015 Highlights:

- The RSVP Blood Pressure Screening Program provided screenings and heart related education to 1,409 individuals.
- Monthly Coffee Hours and Retirement Well-Being classes provided free educational events to 526 people. And over 500 older adults participated in a Technology Tutoring program.
- The Presidential Service Award was presented to 129 volunteers and The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Eileen VonHoltum who has volunteered 4,302 hours at Ministry Saint Clare's Hospital since joining RSVP in 2011.



## To Give or Get Help.

United Way's 2-1-1 provides information and referral services 24 hours a day/7 days a week. This free, confidential service is available to any resident of Marathon County. Last year information specialists **answered 11,265 calls, representing 12,935 requests for services. They were able to make an appropriate referral in 93% of cases.**

The 2-1-1 database is available on-line in a searchable format for those seeking assistance and not wanting to speak with an information specialist.

In 2015, 25% of calls were seeking referrals or information to assist with a basic needs issue. Basic needs calls are those seeking assistance with housing, utilities, food, transportation, clothing or household items. In recent years, the calls and requests have become more complex and challenging. While we have a resource rich community, navigating the systems is difficult. United Way's 2-1-1 information specialists can help.

## Chris' Story

Chris became ill and was unable to work for over a month. He and his wife struggled to provide for their young children without his income. They were using most of their money for diapers and food, which made them late on their rent. Chris received an eviction notice, so he called United Way's 2-1-1. They gave him information on rent assistance and food pantries, to try to relieve some of the financial burden. Later, Chris shared that he had received help with one month's rent and had been using the food pantries. This help made him feel like he could make things work. He was very grateful for the help and was glad to know the 2-1-1 service was there if he ever needed help again.



## United Way Emerging Leaders

United Way Emerging Leaders is a leadership giving group comprised of young adults who are interested in philanthropic opportunities, leadership development and serving our community. They support United Way's efforts to realize a better tomorrow for all who live, work and play in Marathon County. They take pride in offering their members opportunities to **CONNECT.SERVE.LEAD.**

### 2015 Highlights:

- The first SmackHunger&SayCheese event brought together 120 volunteers to package 36,000 servings of vitamin fortified mac & cheese to distribute to area pantries through the Marathon County Hunger Coalition.
- Members served a Community Meal to more than 200 people and helped more than 500 children discover their inner SuperHero at CommUNITY Fest.
- Career Closet served over 220 individuals by helping them find appropriate clothing for interviews or new jobs.



- 10 members participated in the January Point in Time Count with the Housing and Homelessness Coalition.
- Members installed a 4th Born Learning Trail at Mosinee Elementary.
- Six Emerging Leaders were among this year's Wausau Daily Herald's "20 Under 40" Honorees.

## United Way Women in Action

United Way Women in Action is a leadership giving group helping local women facing various hardships. Their mission is to increase the self-sufficiency of women to improve their lives.

Members are involved in raising awareness, funds and resources to help bridge gaps in local services. All funds raised are used to support women and families in Marathon County.

### 2015 Highlights:

- Funded financial incentives for 20 Project Step Up families who met savings goals, attended classes and paid off debt. Members also hosted meals and provided childcare for families attending monthly financial classes.
- Thirty nominated "mommies" received a special gift basket for their commitment to improve their family's financial stability at the annual Christmas for Mommies event.
- Over 10,000 clothing items were distributed to children from low income families in our community through Rebecca's Closet.



- Scholarships were provided to Northcentral Technical College and the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County for non-traditional female students. One of the recipients said that because of the scholarship, she will be the first person in her family to graduate from college.
- Power of the Purse, Women in Action's signature fundraiser, raised over \$15,000 to invest in our community.

# Circle of Excellence

## Top Company and Employee Campaigns

### Gold Award

Aspirus, Inc.  
Greenheck Fan Corp.



### Silver Award

BMO Harris Bank  
Crystal Finishing Systems  
EO Johnson  
Business Technologies  
Footlocker.com/Eastbay  
Liberty Mutual  
Linetec  
Marathon Cheese Corporation  
Marshfield Clinic  
Nationwide  
Regal/Marathon Electric  
United Health Group



### Bronze Award

Associated Bank  
Connexus Credit Union  
DC Everest School District  
Domtar Paper Co., LLC  
Expera Specialty Solutions, LLC.  
Graphic Packaging Intl, Inc.  
Green Bay Packaging Inc.  
J & D Tube Benders Inc.  
L&S Electric  
Marathon County Government  
Merrill Iron and Steel  
Mid-Wisconsin Beverage, Inc.  
Ministry  
North Central Health Care  
Northcentral Technical College  
Peoples State Bank  
River Valley

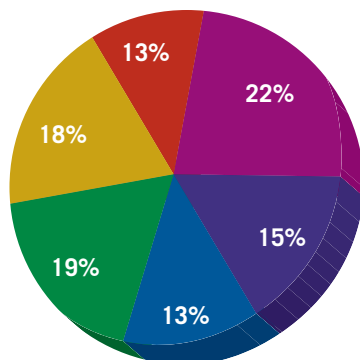


Ruder Ware, L.L.S.C.  
Siemens Energy Inc.  
United Parcel Service  
United Way of Marathon County  
US Bank  
Wausau Chemical Corporation  
WAUSAU Financial Systems  
Wausau Paper Corporate  
Wausau School District  
Wausau Window and Wall Systems  
Wipfli LLP  
Wisconsin Public Service Corporation  
WPS Health Insurance

## Investing in Our Community

As local businesses and the community changes, so does United Way's resource and program mix. Not included in the income described at the right, is the value of additional in kind and leveraged resources that benefit the community – food, books, clothing, volunteer time, and matching grants, for example—are estimated at well over \$1.5 million.

Our United Way also received a 4 star rating (highest available) from Charity Navigator, an independent charity monitoring organization. While Charity Navigator evaluates more than 8000 charities annually, only 29% are awarded 4 stars. The ratings are based on how efficiently a charity uses donations and how well it has sustained programming and services over time. They also rate our commitment to being accountable and transparent in sharing our financial information.



### 2015 REVENUE

Net Campaign	\$2,663,701
Restricted Grants for Special Projects	\$527,773
Other (interest, match, endow, misc.)	\$19,006
Use of Reserves	\$156,858
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$3,367,338</b>

### 2015 COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS

Kindergarten Readiness (15%)	\$403,019
Success in School (13%)	\$359,473
Financial Stability, Housing, Food (19%)	\$524,639
Health & Safety (18%)	\$499,259
2-1-1/Volunteer Connection (13%)	\$372,375
Mission-Focused Community Service Work/Restricted Grant Service Projects (22%)	\$618,185
<b>TOTAL COMMUNITY INVESTMENTS</b>	<b>\$2,776,950</b>
Campaign, communications, & administration	\$590,388
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>\$3,367,338</b>

\*Plus over \$1.5 million in estimated In-Kind & leveraged donations

To learn how you can  
**LIVE UNITED**  
visit us online at  
[www.UnitedWayMC.org](http://www.UnitedWayMC.org)

**LIVE UNITED**



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## OUR VISION: ASPIRATION FOR OUR FUTURE

Marathon County is a safe and caring community where everyone achieves success in school, is financially secure and has good health.