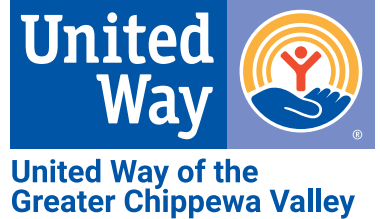


IMPACT IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY

United Way Newsletter



LIVE UNITED



Oct. 2018 Issue

Committed to Making the Chippewa Valley Stronger

\$1 million to be invested per year for the next 3 years

At United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley (UWGCV), our vision is to make an impact on complex problems by reducing need and increasing quality of life for Chippewa Valley residents. UWGCV believes it takes collective community actions sustained over time to achieve outcomes and make a lasting impact. We invest in a foundation of strong, viable programs, mobilize volunteers to address community needs, and fight each day for the health, education, and financial stability of Chippewa Valley residents.

One way in which UWGCV invests in the community is through grant allocations. As part of the grant cycle, fifty programs submitted grant applications requesting a cumulative total of over \$2,000,000 of funding per year. Local volunteers spent hundreds of hours reviewing applications to determine how best to serve the nearly 40% of the population that live at or below the ALICE threshold (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) in Chippewa and Eau Claire counties.

In January, the UWGCV board of directors voted to approve grant

allocations totalling \$1 million dollars per year for the next three years. The 21 programs receiving funding closely align with United Way's four priority areas of focus:

Health- *emphasizing prevention and intervention programs to improve the mental health of Chippewa Valley residents.*

Education- *focusing on early childhood development to ensure school readiness.*

Financial Stability- *addressing financial literacy, debt management, and career mobility.*

Basic Needs- *ensuring access to food, shelter/housing, and medical services.*

UWGCV's impact goes beyond grant funding. Board members and advisory councils look broadly at our work and help create, inform, and evaluate action plans. These plans outline how we invest staff time, volunteer mobilization, and money for strategic initiatives.

Thank you! Your investment in UWGCV makes the Chippewa Valley Stronger.

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Visit our website to learn more about United Way's impact work and view a full list of program partners.

GUEST WRITER: PAST BOARD CHAIR

Dear United Way Partner,

If you've had your eye on The United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley over the past few years, you have probably concluded a thing or two about our changed approach. The authentic application of an impact model requires much time and attention. The process is full of struggle and purpose, risk and disappointment, desire and distraction – and meaningful, sustainable change.

The investment is worth it. Your United Way is growing increasingly able to make an impact on key, complex problems and increase quality of life. Keep your eye on us. Ask us what change we are expecting. Ask us why. Ask us how we will know we have made an impact. Ask us what's behind the stories. Ask us who is behind the stories. Your engagement will strengthen our impact.

United Way is motivated to offer a hand up in the most effective way – at the most effective time. United with our non-profit partners, donors and volunteer leaders, we seek to prepare our children so they are ready to succeed in school, strengthen our neighbors so they can benefit from financial stability, and improve our fellow residents' mental health. We want to be sure that everyone finds a hand outstretched

when shelter, nutrition, and safety is beyond one's grasp.

During this United Way year we will host a variety of Community Conversations designed to include you in shaping your United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley. These conversations will inform our strategic planning and inspire our next round of three-year granting that begins July, 2020. We will plan and work so that generous donors will feel proud of the impact they make by being part of The United Way.

Yesterday has its influence and tomorrow its hope. But today – this day that matters most - United Way will be responsible, collaborative, trustworthy and solutions-oriented. We are determined to work together wisely, measure the impact of the effort, and tell you all about it. We are grateful to you – we cannot do it without you.

It has been a distinct pleasure to serve as United Way's Board Chair. My respect for how United Way can serve and lead has grown – as has my sense of our significant responsibilities.

Yours,



Karen Hebert- Immediate Past Board Chair-
Spectrum Insurance Group

IN BRIEF:

- A **Chippewa County Community Forum** will take place on Monday, October 15 from 6:30-8:00 pm at the First Presbyterian Church in Chippewa Falls. All community members are invited to come for a conversation on income insecurity in Chippewa County.

- **United Way's 24th annual Day of Caring** rallied the power of 900+ volunteers to help out with over 60 projects at 42 different nonprofit organizations. UWGCV and **UnitedHealthcare** once again partnered to provide meals to community members in need. Over 60,000 meals were packed to be distributed through **Feed My People Food Bank**.

- United Way's **Book Month** is coming to a neighborhood near you! Throughout the month of November, United Way will be hosting 12 literacy events held in communities across Chippewa and Eau Claire counties. Be sure to check out UWGCV's website or Facebook page for more information.



2018-2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers & Executive Committee:

Bruce Ommen- Board Chair
Ayres Associates

Karen Hebert- Immediate Past Board Chair
Spectrum Insurance Group

Zach Schmidtkecht- 2018 Campaign Chair
Great Northern Corporation

Board Members:

Andrew Martin- 2019 Campaign Chair
Goldridge Companies

Mike Tzanakis- 2020 Campaign Chair
Fries Financial Group

Julie Thoney- At-Large
Xcel Energy

Heather Hunt- At-Large
Wiley Law S.C.

Jason Craig- At-Large
Mayo Clinic Health System

Rob Ganschow- Treasurer
Wipfli

Angie Weideman- Community Impact Chair
Chippewa County

Jan Porath- Secretary- Non- Voting
United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

Dick Leinenkugel- At-Large
Jacob Leinenkugel Brewing Co.

Dale Peters- At-Large
City of Eau Claire

Miriam Gehler- At-Large
Marshfield Clinic Health System

Heidi Liedl- At-Large
McMahon, Schleifer, & Wood, LLC

Monica Frederick- At-Large
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Kristin Schmidt- Ex officio
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EAU CLAIRE LOCATIONS

4106 State Rd 93
328 Water Street (Drive Up)
301 Water Street

CHIPPEWA FALLS LOCATIONS

411 N. Bridge Street



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**PROUD TO SUPPORT
UNITED WAY
IN THE CHIPPEWA VALLEY**

United Way Microgrant Program is Making a Measurable Impact for Chippewa Valley Residents and Employers

You're not just making a donation, you're changing lives

Each year, there are local residents who choose to forgo continuing their education due to unmet financial needs. Students in good academic standing make the choice to drop out because they cannot afford groceries, transportation, daycare, or books. This prevents them from gaining new skills, pursuing different employment opportunities, and many times creating a more stable life.

During the 2015-2016 academic year, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley (UWGCV) created the Microgrant Program in partnership with the Chippewa Valley Technical College Foundation. The partnership is a way to help students working to complete degrees in high-demand fields overcome financial barriers and have a higher likelihood of finishing their degree program.

"The Microgrant Program is a fantastic tool for improving the financial stability of participants, while also improving our community's economic health," shared Scott Hodek, Economist and Chief of the Office of Economic Advisors, Department of Workforce Development and Chair of UWGCV's Financial Stability Advisory Council. "This

program intersects community needs at multiple points. Participants gain good jobs that move them above the living wage threshold, which frees up the community's limited support resources to be reallocated. Businesses get employees in skilled positions that are difficult to fill, allowing them to capture market share and bring those profits home to our region."

After just 2 full academic years, results are already showing that students who are a part of the Microgrant Program have higher retention rates than their peers and the majority are staying in the Chippewa Valley after graduation filling jobs and improving our local economy.

The Microgrant Program is just one of the strategic initiatives invested in by UWGCV's Financial Stability Partnership. UWGCV's Financial Stability Partnership is overseen by local leaders in a variety of sectors. The Partnership assists individuals and families in achieving self-sufficiency through employment training and personal money management thanks to the support of generous contributions from the community.

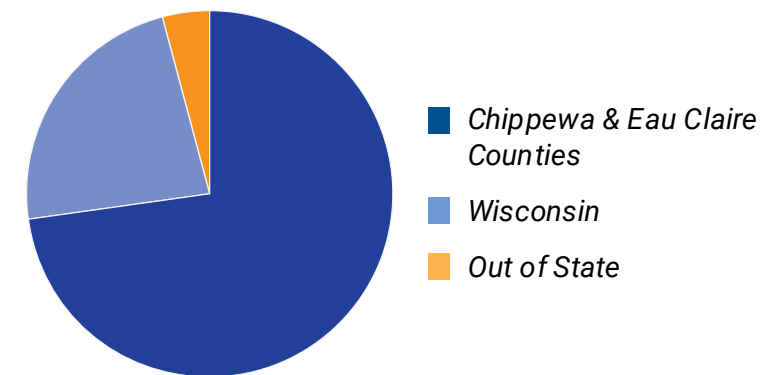
CVTC Students Share

- "I come from a family of five, including two younger siblings. My family has always struggled with money. The past four summers I have been working in a factory trying to save as much as I can for school. Going into nursing classes this fall, I know it will be tougher to work a lot of hours to pay for my own bills and expenses. This grant will help me immensely, so I can focus more of my time and energy on my classes and be successful."
- "The microgrant helped me focus on school. Finances were an issue. I graduated with a 3.9 GPA and got a great paying job right out of college."
- "The financial stability allowed me to work less, making it much easier to focus on my studies and graduate with a 3.8 GPA. Thanks to the grant, I did not accumulate any student loan debt while attending CVTC."

Impact After 2 Academic Years

Graduates Stayed Local

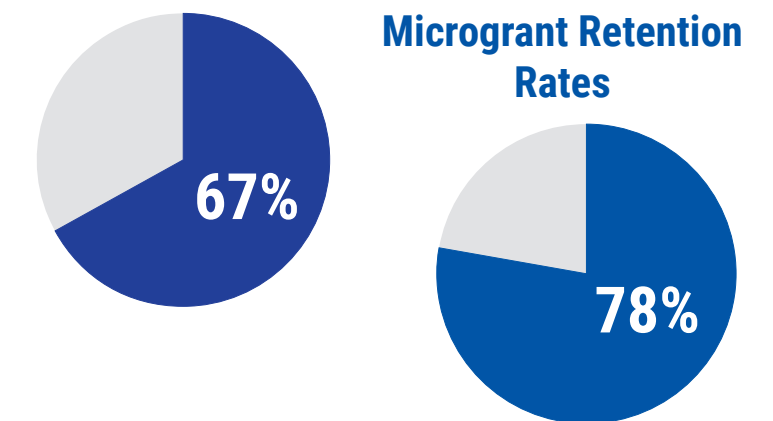
73% of graduates who received a Microgrant and responded to the survey are now employed in Chippewa or Eau Claire County.



Higher Retention Rates

78% of Microgrant recipients remained in or completed their programs

Average Retention Rates



Increased Skilled-Workforce for Local Employers

33+ Participants hired in hard-to-fill positions thanks to the investment in Microgrants.

\$232,295 the average annual impact on businesses in Chippewa or Eau Claire Counties per student hired in a hard-to-fill position, based on an increase to productivity & business to business spending.



Income Gain for Chippewa Valley Individuals and Families

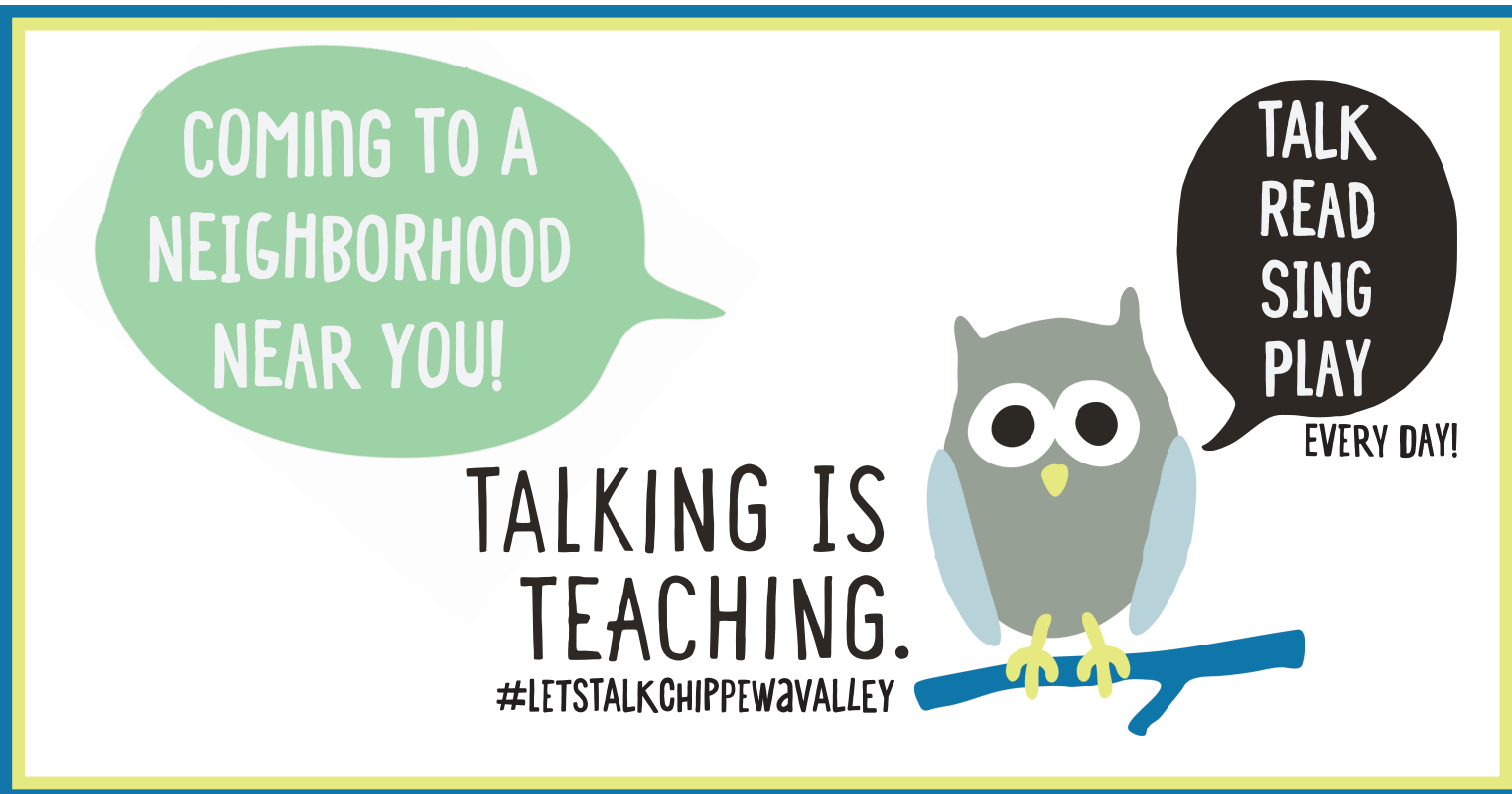
\$785,760 combined annual income gain reported by surveyed students.

\$23,811 the average annual income gain per student.

UWGCV invested in 165 students that graduated or stayed in their program. It is expected that 137 (83%) were employed in their field of study post-graduation.

*Data were collected through surveys conducted of Microgrant Recipients and impacts were modeled using IMPLAN. IMPLAN software allows users to input scenarios and measure the impacts on a community through in-depth modeling of spending patterns between industries, government and households.

Learn more about the Microgrant Program by visiting:
www.uwgc.org



Let's Talk Chippewa Valley!

Talking is Teaching: Talk, Read, Sing, Play

Kari Stroede, Director of the Successful Children's Network, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

Research has shown that a child from a low-income home hears 30 million less words by the age of 3 years old than his or her peers – this is called Word Gap. Because 80% of the brain is hardwired by age 3, Word Gap has a direct link to school readiness and ultimately to the Achievement Gap. By supporting parents, guardians, and caregivers with the tools to talk, read, sing, and play every day – we can help to focus on the importance of early literacy and brain development.

United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley is proud to be a trusted community partner in the Talking is Teaching Campaign. We stand shoulder to shoulder with the public libraries, school systems, child care programs, home visiting programs, local health care, and other strong advocates for early literacy. The Talking is Teaching campaign has a direct focus on reducing the Word Gap

by providing encouraging messages in the community to talk, read, sing, and play every day. We are also proud to be one of the first 20 campaigns to receive national recognition in this endeavor.

Throughout the Chippewa Valley, this messaging will be popping up. You may notice it in the form of a "I Spy" yard sign. At the Eau Claire Children's Museum market, you may see kids playing store with a market bag that encourages, "Let's talk about food." At a Back-to-School event in Bloomer or Augusta, you will find a table with a friendly owl encouraging families to "Talk, Read, Sing, Play." In this way, families, caregivers, and the community will receive a gentle reminder of the importance of early literacy and brain development. Closing the Word Gap can be achieved one word at a time. This is indeed what the Talking is Teaching Campaign is all about – trusted community partners coming together with a simple message that can last a lifetime. Let's Talk Chippewa Valley!

Discover more at:

#LETSTALKCHIPPEWAVALLEY talkingisteaching.org facebook.com/cvtalkingisteaching

MENTAL HEALTH IDENTIFIED AS TOP PRIORITY AREA

Nicole Clements, Director of Community Health Initiative, United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others and make choices. An estimated 20-25% of Americans are affected by mental illness each year. Communities across the nation are taking notice to the challenges many are facing and so is United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley (UWGCV). In Chippewa and Eau Claire counties, the average number of poor mental health days is increasing and the ratio of population to mental health providers is decreasing. According to the 2018 Community Health Assessment for Chippewa and Eau Claire counties, residents identified mental health as the top priority area. UWGCV cares about the priority needs in our community, which is why we are focused on improving mental health.

We use prevention measures to care for our physical health by visiting our dentist or receiving an annual flu shot, so why don't we check-up on our mental health? Just as it takes work to care for our physical health, such as eating right, getting enough sleep, and exercising, it also takes work to care for our mental health. Your mental health can

help you cope with stresses of life, be physically healthy, have positive relationships, and work productively. When you are stressed, anxious, or upset, your body may react to tell you that something is not right. A stressful event, such as the death of a loved one, may cause a person to develop high blood pressure or a stomach ulcer. Likewise, many people living with chronic illnesses such as diabetes or heart disease experience depression and anxiety. This is your mind-body connection.

Some things in life cannot be controlled; however, resilience is the process of adapting well to life's challenges. Resilience is the capacity to face and overcome adversity, to bounce back from difficulties or challenges, to cope and adapt to change. Resilience is a quality that can be learned and strengthened with different strategies, including having social support and accepting change. People with resilience are able to cope with stress in a healthy way.

UWGCV is proud to collaborate with community partners to improve the mental health of residents and build a resilient community. Funding through the United Way Community Health Initiative supports programs where youth and adults will increase protective factors and/or effectively manage life challenges to improve their overall mental wellbeing helping to make the Chippewa Valley Stronger!



We're proud to support United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley—a glowing example of how hard work and dedication can improve a community. Thanks to all the volunteers who make the place we live a little brighter.



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UNITED WAY NEWSLETTER

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