

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER. LIVE UNITED.**

**MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.**

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**2021 ANNUAL REPORT**  
(Presented February 2022)

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**2021 – Strengthening Merrill Every Day – Living United**

2021 marked another year of change, adaptation and acute attention to the Corona Virus and Omicron, the new variant. While vaccines and distancing help, the virus continues to disrupt our daily activities and topple the norm as we knew it. United Way continues to see the various needs of the community and we are so thankful for supporters that help address those needs and reduce tomorrow's impending needs.

Sometimes it seems United Way flies under the radar, but certainly not to those who receive assistance because of the strong financial support United Way provides to our agencies and ultimately the several thousand people who are served by United Way dollars.

Times have changed and we are now presented with some unique ways of operating in 2020 and 2021. Nonetheless, United Way has worked hard and is stronger today than at the onset of the pandemic. People have made that difference, understanding, giving, and seeing a new perspective to life and helping their fellow mankind. Yes, we are a stronger community, and we are certainly Living United. This year again we were challenged.

- We did our annual fundraising campaign mostly virtual, and working with our company campaigns, i.e., Church Mutual Insurance Company, to run their employee campaign virtually, which met with great success. CMIC, including the company match, raised \$250,464.

- Given the many uncertainties of our changing lives, job stability, economy, and other outside influences, the efforts for our annual campaign were enhanced this year. Not knowing what to anticipate, MAUW closed the year with an incredible campaign.
- Christmas Spirit Appeal was able to go back into operation in 2021. The prior year United Way organized and ran the Children's Christmas Project. MAUW covered the costs of the project and had a surplus of \$9,600. As donors supported this to make "Christmas wonderful," the dollars were earmarked for "Christmas Spirit Appeal." Half, or \$4,800 was disbursed to Christmas Spirit Appeal in September for 2021 gifts. The remaining half will be disbursed in September of 2022.

**2021 Impact Increased 23.3%**

Our 19 funded programs/agencies were provided allocations in the amount of **\$214,050**, making a large impact for our community. This past year's dollar amount represents an **increase of 23%** in allocations for community impact. The previous year the amount was \$174,055. In addition, funds were sent to 17 outside agencies based on donor designation requests which totaled **\$8,919**. Yet, another **\$6,655** was spent through the Community Fund used to support the 2-1-1 service to Lincoln County and other small Merrill community requests and needs. The MAUW Disaster Relief fund paid out **\$3,000** to fire victims. *All totaled, United Way spent **\$232,629** to support our community and the people served by our agencies.*

Following the Merrill tornado of 2011, the United Way Board established and maintains a Disaster Relief Fund with dollars available to support local major disasters. That fund's year-end balance is \$17,238. \$3,000 was used in 2021 to support two separate families after a fire destroyed their homes. By the time this report goes to print, we will spend yet another \$2,000 to help two additional, separate fire victims.

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- In compliance with United Way Worldwide directives, our three major impact areas are: Health, Education, Basic Needs/Income.
- Once again, the Board designated \$6,000 for the 2-1-1 Call Center to service Lincoln County for 2021. This call center is a key referral service connecting people with services they need.
- The United Way held its annual Board Planning Session, and continues to focus on prior year organizational goals, while looking at changing trends and addressing a few new goals. These prioritized goals include:
  - *Recruit new companies for the 2021-2022 campaign.*
  - *Public outreach and education to increase community knowledge of the Merrill Area United Way.*
  - *Establish a Childcare Coalition, facilitate conversations, and support activities to increase childcare availability in the Merrill Area, particularly for summer care for working parents and infant care.*
  - *Collect and communicate impact stories from agencies.*
  - *Build relationships with our community agencies.*
- During our Board's spring planning meeting there was an in-depth discussion about the difficulties families have in finding daycare during the summer school break months. That evolved to identifying the lack of infant care in the Merrill area. A Childcare Coalition was organized to look at these issues. Research and discussion demonstrated the issues and answers to meeting childcare needs are very complicated and costly. The Coalition met regularly throughout 2021.
- We brought on additional business donors and worked hard to maintain our individual giving.
- The Board of Directors (either in person or virtually) visited our funded agencies to increase their understanding of the agency programs. This relationship is beneficial to both the Board and our agency representatives.
- Through the Community Fund we supported several requests.

- Allocation Teams met in November. The teams reviewed mid-year progress reports of all impact programs and evaluated the 19 submitted agency allocation applications for 2022 funding.
- Regular monthly articles ran in the Foto News to highlight United Way and the services supported.
- Media releases and interviews were done throughout the year.
- Two volunteers, Pat Burg and Joe Breaman II continue to enhance the United Way Facebook page and our website at [merrillareaunderway.org](http://merrillareaunderway.org). Donors can contribute through PayPal on our site year-round.
- All United Way funded agencies provided a mid-year report demonstrating how they impact their clients through services offered.
- In December, concluding a very successful campaign, the Board approved allocations to the agencies. This year the amount didn't include the Church Mutual Insurance Company campaign match: as Church Mutual is sending that corporate match directly to the agencies.

### **2021 OPERATIONS**

- Merrill Area United Way has complied with all United Way Worldwide compliance measures, filing all required documents and the very vigorous reporting. These included the annual Membership Certification and the Data Base II reports. ***United Way Worldwide has annually acknowledged and credentialed our organization for meeting the standards of excellence.***
- The United Way 2020 finances were audited by Kerber Rose CPA's. MAUW met with acceptable accounting standards.
- All appropriate federal and state tax reporting were completed.
- Additionally, the Board ensures that all insurances are carried.
- Full oversight of all related employee records, tax reporting and filings are also accounted for.
- The Wisconsin Department of Finance Annual Report, our audited financial statements, our 990 Tax Forms and the Wisconsin Form 1952, and other State Credentials were filed by deadlines.

- Executive Director Olsen actively participated in organizational development programs through United Way Wisconsin and the Central WI United Way Director meetings. Olsen concluded her service on the Wisconsin United Way Board of Directors.
- Reminding everyone that changes with our internet service provider caused an email address change. It is now [Delores.Olsen@merrillareunitedway.org](mailto:Delores.Olsen@merrillareunitedway.org).

### **2021 AGENCY INFORMATION**

- United Way funds programs that impact people's health; education; and meeting their basic needs of food, shelter, electricity, and heat. Each agency/program brings important, necessary services to our local people in need.  
*Here is a brief glimpse of a few services:*  
*EDUCATION: Parkside Preschool Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Merrill Safety Patrol, Family Resource Center, and Childcaring, Inc.*  
*HEALTH AGENCIES: Healthy Minds for Lincoln County, Peaceful Solutions, Epilepsy Foundation, and Alzheimer's Association.*  
*INCOME-BASIC NEEDS: St. Vincent De Paul Outreach, Merrill Community Food Pantry, North Central Community Action Program, Merrill Community Homeless Center aka MAC Home, HAVEN, Salvation Army, Our Sisters House, and Christmas Spirit Appeal.*
- Healthy Minds for Lincoln County is a coalition supporting healthy choices regarding alcohol, drugs, and vaping and the effects these vices have on the social and emotional well-being of teens and others. Services are available to all Lincoln County residents. United Way dollars fund 1) Parent Pact 2) Promotion of Know (parent information and resources) 3) Mock Teen Bedroom and 4) Social Norms Project.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters has two Merrill programs, school-based and community-based. They match adult and/or high school

students (bigs) with younger kids (littles) to give them a reliable person to talk to, interact with, and do special activities with. Another program called Bigs with Badges, matches police and fire department officers with kids. Several kids are served in Merrill.

- Peaceful Solutions Counseling provides counseling for families struggling with AODA. This year their new Executive Director shared information saying starting this past May, Telehealth became covered by insurance. This opened another avenue for individuals to seek treatment. Some even found they preferred telephone visits to in person meetings. They do goal setting and twice a year assess the progress of the individual clients. They counseled and support more than 50 Lincoln County clients the first half of 2021.
- MAC Home opened in March of 2019. Merrill's Homeless Center, now open almost three years has now provided over 4,000 safe stay nights for clients – impacting almost 300 people, of which about 19% are children. With trained staff on premises 24/7/365 days, they can counsel and guide clients toward independent living. MAUW also funds another homeless shelter called Our Sister Place in Tomahawk, which has demonstrated great services and assistance to homeless as well.
- HAVEN provides a wide range of services, including shelter, to individuals and families affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. HAVEN can house up to 24 individuals in 6 rooms. HAVEN provides unduplicated services to an estimated 300 plus people a year, about 30% children.
- So many agencies, 1,000's of successful stories!
- With many of the United Way funded agencies, volunteer opportunities are available. Visit their websites for more information.

### **2021 INITIATIVES**

- Continue MAUW marketing momentum including ongoing development of the United Way website and Face Book page to increase usage, value, links, and focus on user ease.

- Recruit additional success stories about improving and changing lives of those receiving United Way support.
- CMIC worked with United Way to develop a great campaign video, bringing the United Way organization and its funded agencies to life. This video was virtually sent to all employees and can be viewed on the MAUW website.
- MAUW hosted the Annual Appreciation Picnic to acknowledge the great work done by our supported agencies.

**2021 APPRECIATION**

- The United Way gives a heartfelt Thank You to Reindl Printing for assisting MAUW with our marketing and campaign pieces.
- The Merrill Foto News and BlueJay 730 AM have been wonderful media partners.
- Special thanks to Pat Burg and Joe Breaman II for maintaining and managing our website and Facebook.

*The Merrill Area United Way Board of Directors continues to seek improvements for the organization to better meet the needs of the Merrill community and our area people. The Board of Directors deserves a debt of gratitude for their ongoing work and dedicated service. The Board recognizes the importance of being exemplary stewards of the funds provided and ensures great accountability. The ongoing development of investment resources to support the funded agencies is imperative.*

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**A HUGE DEBT OF GRATITUDE TO ALL UNITED WAY DONORS!**

*MAUW's success depends on the financial support provided by our participating companies and our generous, civic-minded community members who support United Way with their annual donations. For each donor whether an individual, retired person, employee, or corporate gift – we are so very grateful.*

**OCTOBER 27, 2022 MARKS THE 75<sup>h</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY. LET'S CELEBRATE!**

**UNITED WAY'S MISSION AND PURPOSE!**

*“To mobilize our community so the health, welfare, and education needs of all people are met with the ultimate goal being to improve their quality of life.”*

**2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*Becca Klessig, President  
Maria Brickner, First Vice President  
Mike Ravn, Second Vice President  
Kelly Zagrzebski, Immediate Past President  
Jane Dehnel, Secretary  
Brian Richards, Treasurer  
Leah Burbach  
Clyde Nelson  
Joe Breaman II  
Laura Forester  
David Johnson  
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Jamie Koch  
Debbe Kinsey  
Amy Krueger  
Nancy Kwiesielewicz  
Shannon Murray  
Susan Ryman  
Stacy Stevens  
Tom Zentner  
Dee Olsen, Executive Director*

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