



Big Pals ~ Little Pals

From Shy to Confident

When Alissa joined the program, she was shy but with her big pal, Tammi, she blossomed into a confident, community-minded leader. Alissa has volunteered across countless local events, maintained a 4.0 GPA, and was active in sports, music, and leadership clubs throughout high school. Now studying to become a 2nd-grade teacher, Alissa continues to give back as an intern for our program, helping shape the next generation of youth leaders.

Through United Way funded agencies and programs, 96% individuals reported meaningful relationships with adults and/or peers.



CASA

A New Beginning

Three young girls were removed from their mother's care due to substance abuse and mental health challenges. With their CASA advocate's support, they reunited with their biological father, caught up in school, and began participating in activities for the first time. Thanks to strong advocacy and court support, the girls were permanently placed with their father where they're now safe, happy, and thriving.

Through United Way funded agencies and programs, 575 youth reported strong connections to family, friends and/or community support.



Center for Survivors

Aisha's Story: Rebuilding Hope

After fleeing an abusive partner, Aisha and her two daughters came to Nebraska seeking safety. But when her abuser found them, the danger returned. Speaking only Sundanese, Aisha turned to The Center for Survivors where the advocates used interpreters and creative tools to communicate and coordinate support. With help from United Way-funded partnerships, Aisha and her daughters accessed necessary resources and found shelter in another city, and a chance to start over safely.

\$1,300 can help a victim by meeting emotional and physical needs and assist in providing resources for a safe environment.



Community Family Partnership Community Prevention

Finding Stability for a Young Family

In January 2025, a young father reached out while living in a camper with his wife, toddler, and newborn during freezing temperatures. After relocating to Nebraska for a job that didn't work out, his priority was finding housing. With guidance from Central Navigation, the family accessed health and benefit resources and was referred to CNCAP's Rental Unit Housing Program. Just weeks later, they moved into a small home, and the father secured a new job, bringing long-needed stability to their lives.

In the last year, there has been 1,487 individuals and/or households provided basic needs of food and/or shelter through United Way funded programs and agencies.



Imagination Library

From Storytime to Strong Readers

The Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program has donated books to both of my boys and were such huge assets in developing our bedtime routine. My boys are now close to 7 and 5, they continue to ask for a bedtime story before bed. I can truly note their imagination and creativity has grown due to the time we have spent in stories. Their foundational reading skills were laid and worked on through the accessibility and opportunity of having these books on hand. Thank you so much! We are truly grateful!

In 2024, 99% of children reported improved social/emotional skills through United Way funded programs and agencies.



Student Health

Every Child Deserves Access to Care

A family coach supported a local family whose child needed surgery but faced multiple barriers. She helped cover medical costs, secured a required exam, and used Student Health funds to pay for prescriptions. Thanks to this support, the child was able to receive the necessary surgery in Omaha. Care that wouldn't have been possible otherwise.

Over 175,400 health clients were helped in 2024 through United Way funded agencies and programs.



Columbus Emergency Relief

Helping People Stay Housed

A senior struggled to pay rent after a failed hip surgery, and it left him unable to work his part-time job. Living on Social Security, he quickly used up his savings. Thanks to support from Columbus Emergency Relief and Simon House, he received the assistance he needed to stay in his home.

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Faith Regional Child Advocacy Center

Collaboration That Keeps Kids Safe

A family was located in the CAUW service area thanks to strong coordination between the CAC and school partners. With support from law enforcement, DHHS, and local educators, the family accessed in-home services, substance abuse treatment, and safety planning. This allowed the children to remain safely with their parents. Today, both parents are in recovery and receiving ongoing therapy.

From October to March, 28 multidisciplinary team meetings reviewed the cases of 566 local children, leading to successful child abuse and assault prosecutions.



Girl Scouts

A Lesson in Service

While partnering with Columbus Area United Way to stock the Little Free Food Pantry, the Girl Scouts Outreach group deepened their understanding of community needs. In addition to restocking food, the girls collected toiletries, cleaned up local neighborhoods, and raised awareness about poverty and food insecurity. One member shared that her own family relies on food pantries, making the project especially meaningful. This initiative inspired empathy, education, and real impact across the community.

99% of children reported improved social/emotional skills that have been served through funded United Way programs and agencies.



Habitat For Humanity

A Home and Future

After years of living in an overcrowded, doorless basement, Jordan and his two kids finally have a place to call their own through Habitat for Humanity. Now, his children have privacy, sleepovers, and even a new puppy. With stable housing, Jordan says he feels “lucky all the time.” He’s become a stronger employee, is financially stable, and has even started savings accounts for his kids. Giving his family a true path forward.

94% of participants served through United Way funded programs and agencies can identify additional client community resources.



Platte Valley Literacy Association

Adult Literacy Services

Determined to Succeed: Kayla arrived from Peru in 2022 with a healthcare background and a determination to succeed. Despite limited English, she committed to ESL classes in Schuyler and Columbus, studying hard outside of class. Her dedication paid off, she nearly tested out of ESL and scored 94% in a CNA course. Karla is now working toward her GED and plans to pursue a nursing degree. She also supports her mother, who is making strong progress in ESL classes as well.

20 individuals served earned job-relevant licenses, certificates and/or credentials through United Way funded programs.



Platte Valley Literacy Association

Family Learning

More Than a Teacher: Since joining as a Family Learning instructor in August 2024, Lana has gone above and beyond to support her students, both in and out of the classroom. From creating meaningful lessons to teaching students how to make lasagna, Lana fosters connection and confidence. She's committed to helping newcomers feel welcome as they adjust to a new community, language, and culture, saying, "My goal is to create a welcoming atmosphere through our classes."

155 individuals completed an adult education classes through United Way funded programs.



Royal Family Kids

Serving Families, Not Just Campers

A father of two former RFK campers shared how the camp helped keep his family connected while his kids were in kinship foster care. Now grown, one runs a business and the other is in college.

At the latest camp, a young child's anxiety about staying overnight was met with loving support from campers, staff, and family. Her grandmother trusted RFK enough to leave, knowing her grandchild would be cared for "in the most royal way." RFK's commitment extends beyond campers to their entire families, building lasting relationships.

575 youth served through United Way funded programs reported strong connections to family, friends and/or community support.



TeamMates of Columbus

It's More Than Being A Mentor

In a heartfelt letter written this January, a graduating mentee reflected on his four-year journey with his TeamMates mentor. Initially hesitant to join the program, he soon realized the impact of having a consistent, caring adult in his life. Weekly visits helped him navigate the challenges of high school, offering stability, support, and even some unforgettable basketball games. As he wrote, "You were a constant in my life that was much needed."

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The Arc of Platte County

Finding Their Place and Purpose

After relocating to Columbus, a young adult and his family sought connection outside of the school setting. They found it through the Arc of Platte County. Since joining, he's participated in every program and trip, growing from a shy newcomer into a caring, funny, and engaged member of the community.

While navigating long waitlists for services, the Arc stepped in with essential support by creating a sense of belonging for both him and his family. Now active volunteers and advocates, they continue to give back and help other families find their place, just as they did.

1,683 individuals participated in physical activity and/or healthy food access/nutrition through United Way funded programs.



Youth & Families For Christ

After-School Drop-Ins & Crisis/Preventive Classes

One student at our alternative school is working hard to make up for lost time after missing several years of high school. With a dangerous and unstable home life, she often stays after hours not just to catch up on credits, but to find peace, quiet, and safety. Providing structure, support, and people who truly care. For her, it's more than a building... it's the only place that gives her peace of mind.

1,336 individuals have a plan for safety because of United Way funded programs.



Youth & Families For Christ

C.O.R.E. Crisis and Suicide Prevention

Diagnosed with leukemia in middle school, while her mother also battled cancer, one young woman faced years of emotional struggle and hopelessness. After becoming a teen mom in high school, she joined our teen mom program, where she found support, friendship, and a reason to hope again. With help from her peers, family, and community, she embraced life, graduated in December, and now works in health care. She's a devoted mother, driven to give back the same support she once received.

608 youth attended suicide prevention presentations and/or support groups through United Way funded programs.



Youth & Families For Christ

Healthy Hearts & Souls Exercise and Cooking Classes

This year, local restaurant owners volunteered to lead cooking classes for our youth by bringing ingredients, equipment, and a passion to give back. One class, held during an alternative school's lunch break, made a lasting impression. That evening, a senior student reached out to share how much it meant to feel seen beyond academics. Grateful for the life skills and care he received, he looked forward to recreating the meal for his younger siblings at home.

38,000 individuals were educated on healthier lifestyle choices through United Way funded programs.



TeamMates of Fullerton

25 Years, 25 Matches, Countless Memories

The Fullerton TeamMates Program has proudly maintained 25 mentoring matches for 25 years, meeting the unique needs of their school and community. With strong support from Fullerton Public Schools, mentors meet regularly in the school building and participate in outings, fundraisers, and special events. This year, the program enhanced match meetings with a custom activity cart filled with games, crafts, and snacks thanks to feedback from mentors and mentees. The highlight of the year was a trip to Lincoln to see the Broadway show Annie at the Lied Center, giving mentees a rare and memorable cultural experience.

907 youth served through United Way funded programs have been educated about healthy relationships.