

# UNITED IS THE WAY

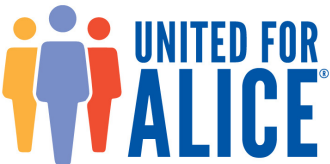
2025 IMPACT REPORT



Rice County Area  
**UNITED WAY**

# UNITED IS THE WAY WE THRIVE

Right now, our neighbors need our support more than ever. In Rice County, 40% of households struggle to afford basic essentials. This includes ALICE households—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed—people who earn too much to qualify for help but not enough to cover the county’s basic cost of living.



Somewhere in our community:

- A young family is seeking reliable early learning opportunities to help their children succeed in school.
- An adult with a disability is looking for opportunities to socialize, learn new skills, and build friendships in Rice County.
- A young person in Rice County is experiencing homelessness and looking for safe housing, guidance, and support to build a stable future.

But they’re not alone.

Together with our partner agencies and supporters like you, we can each play a powerful role in supporting our neighbors in Rice County. When those of us who are able contribute what we can—it might be \$10 a month—we create a network of combined giving that creates positive change right here where we live.

I hope you will join me today by visiting [www.ricecountyunitedway.org/donate](http://www.ricecountyunitedway.org/donate) to be part of this powerful movement for the greater good. Our neighbors are counting on us.

*Laura*

Laura Riehle-Merrill  
Executive Director  
Rice County Area United Way

Tory & Laura at the Pickle Paddle



# 2024-2025 DOLLAR COUNT

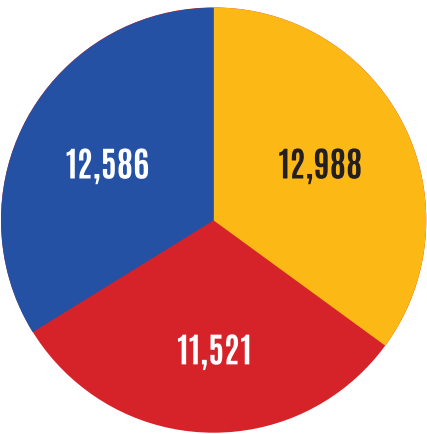
Donations, Sponsorships & Grants: \$430,000  
Books on Central Revenue: \$35,000  
United Way Volunteers: \$203,000  
In-kind donations: \$197,000

**VALUE TOTAL: \$865,000**



# 2024-2025 IMPACT COUNT

These numbers capture individual instances in which local United Way Partner Agencies provided support in the areas of Financial Security and Basic Needs, Healthy Community, and Youth Opportunity between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.



**TOTAL: 37,095**

- FINANCIAL SECURITY & BASIC NEEDS
- YOUTH OPPORTUNITY
- HEALTHY COMMUNITY

*This count is necessarily duplicated at times. For example, a person needing basic needs for food or shelter may be in this situation because of a health issue or loss of a job. A child needing extra help in school may be experiencing anxiety or depression. United Way agencies offer wrap-around services in several areas to help a person achieve stability.*

“United Way’s generous support of our transitional shelter program helps us provide a safe, supportive, and healing environment where women and families can find stability and strength on their way to a new beginning.”

– Suzzanne Fox, Executive Director, Ruth’s House

“United Way is a vital partner for the Healthy Community Initiative because we’re both fighting for the same things - improved health, education and economic outcomes. United Way’s support means more children, youth and families have a brighter future.”

– Tom Steinmetz, Executive Director, Healthy Community Initiative

## UNITED WAY PARTNER AGENCIES

Funding decisions are guided by local community members for two-year grants. These are the current United Way Partner Agencies:

- Aging Services for Communities
- Chamber Trust – Faribault Cradle to Career
- Community Action Center
- Exchange Club for Family Unity
- Faribault Parks and Recreation
- Faribault Public Schools’ PRIMETIME
- HCI (Healthy Community Initiative)
- Healthfinders
- HOPE Center
- IRIS (Infants Remembered in Silence)
- Northfield Public Schools’ PRIMETIME
- Northfield Union of Youth
- Project ABLE
- Project Friendship
- Rice County Neighbors United
- River Bend Nature Center
- Ruth’s House of Hope
- Salvation Army of Rice County
- ServeMN’s Reading Corps
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Three Rivers Community Action’s Meals on Wheels
- TORCH (Tackling Obstacles, Raising College Hopes)
- Tri-City United Preschool

**42,738**

free after-school  
and summer meals  
served to kids

– Faribault  
PRIMETIME

**7,004**

individuals  
accessed clothing

– Society of St.  
Vincent de Paul

**4,649**

households  
gained access to 2  
million pounds of  
food

– CAC

**3,500**

attendances at  
recovery support  
group meetings

– HealthFinders

**1,484**

clients received  
Safety, Services and  
Care from our staff

– HOPE Center

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT  
PARTNER AGENCIES, VISIT  
**RICECOUNTYUNITEDWAY.ORG**

# PARTNER AGENCY **IMPACT STORIES**

## **HEALTHY COMMUNITY INITIATIVE**

Healthy Community Initiative (HCI) helped make possible the grand opening of a second location of Little Scholars Academy in Faribault. The center will serve up to 77 children, providing families with safe, high-quality childcare and strengthening the local workforce. The expansion was the result of a collaboration between Faribault Cares, HCI, and the Faribault Area Chamber of Commerce, whose leadership helped spotlight how expanded childcare access creates broader economic impact for businesses as well as families.



## **PROJECT ABLE**



Project ABLE gives adults with disabilities opportunities to learn, grow, and build friendships. With United Way’s support, registrations more than doubled, rising from 1,046 to 2,773. Events like Pizza Bingo, community dinners, dances, and outings to the Paradise Center for the Arts, the Minnesota Twins, and the Sea Life Aquarium offered participants vital connection, joy, and belonging.

## **THE KEY**

For many young people, The Key—operated by Northfield Union of Youth—is more than a drop-in space; it’s where they find stability, connection, and hope. The Key’s art programming, weekly meals at Youth Board meetings, bonfires, and events like the Hot Wing Challenge give young people safe opportunities to express themselves, build friendships, and gain the confidence to take the next step toward a stronger future. This past year, NUY’s Wallflower Project and Wallflower House supported youth experiencing homelessness.





# UNITED WAY HIGHLIGHTS

## DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

United Way proudly sponsors the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, a program which sends a free book every month to Rice County area children from birth through age 5. The 2025 Dolly Book Bash raised enough funds to provide free books to 1,700 local children.



### Save The Date!

Dolly Parton  
Book Bash  
January 30, 2026  
Faribault American  
Legion

## UNITED WAY REBOUND PARTNERS MICROGRANTS

Microgrants give up to \$1,000 to address urgent, community-based challenges or new initiatives supporting underserved populations. Recent grantees include Faribault's Future Class of 2025, Clean River Partners, Rice County Neighbors United, and Ruth's House.

## PICKLE PADDLE

United Way's first ever Pickle Paddle, a pickleball tournament, raised over \$8,000. All proceeds will support Rice County Healthy Community partner agencies. These agencies support Rice County's most vulnerable neighbors by providing direct mental and physical healthcare, prevention education, in-home care for older adults, and transportation to medical appointments.



## 2-1-1 UNITED WAY HOTLINE

United Way 211 provides **free and confidential** health and human services information for people in Rice County 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In 2024, 479 local people made 810 requests to ask 211 for help. The top areas of support 211 provided were Housing, Utilities, Legal/Public Safety, and Mental Health.



## BOOKS ON CENTRAL

United Way's all-volunteer bookstore, Books on Central, has flourished since opening in October 2023 at 227 Central Avenue in Faribault. Our dedicated volunteers contributed over 4,000 hours this year, curating and selling more than 11,000 books annually, with 30% focused on children and young adult literature—directly supporting United Way's literacy focus while making reading accessible to families throughout our community.



This year, Books on Central raised over \$35,000 in net sales—a 75% increase from our first nine months – with every dollar flowing directly to United Way's Partner Agencies. Through literary events featuring local authors, poets, and historians, we're fostering a vibrant reading culture that strengthens community literacy. Books on Central demonstrates how volunteer passion and community generosity create sustainable impact for local families and nonprofits.

**"Books on Central proceeds go directly to United Way partner agencies—when you buy books at the bookstore, you are helping to support others in our community. If you haven't visited Books on Central yet, make it a destination stop next time you're in downtown Faribault."**

*– Linda Laughlin, volunteer, Books on Central*



## PARTNERS IN GIVING

### CORPORATE GIFTS

**\$10,000 +**

Daikin Applied

**\$5,000 - \$9,999**

All Flex Solutions  
Allina Health  
Community Resource Bank  
Mayo Foundation for Medical Education & Research  
Merchants Bank  
Post Consumer Brands  
Xcel Energy

**\$1,000 TO \$4,999**

Earthwood  
Faribault Rotary Youth Services Inc.  
Just Food Co-op  
KGPCo  
Labor Arbitration Institute  
Mercury Minnesota Inc  
Northfield Hospital Auxiliary  
Power Business Group MN, INC  
Reese, Winter & Associates, LTD.  
Schmidt Homes  
Thomson Reuters  
Tru Vue, Inc.

**\$100 TO \$999**

American Association of University  
Women (Faribault Branch)  
Capital Construction LLC  
College City Beverage, Inc.  
Delta Airlines  
DuFour Cleaners Inc.  
Edward Jones  
Faribault Elks Club

Faribault Public Schools  
Friends of Buckham Memorial Library Inc  
Great River Energy  
Hogan Brothers  
Holden Farms  
HomeTown Credit Union  
Illinois Tool Works  
Inisfail, Inc.  
Internal Medicine Clinic - Faribault Mayo Clinic  
Johnson House Creative  
Land O'Lakes  
Marco  
Northfield Lions Club  
O'Reilly Auto Parts  
Open Door Preschool  
P.E.O. Sisterhood Chapter A.R.  
Premier Bank  
Pro ASL Interpreting  
Reliance Bank  
Rotary Club of Northfield  
Sertoma Club of Faribault

### WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN

All Flex Solutions  
Carleton College  
Community Action Center  
Community Resource Bank  
Crown Cork & Seal  
Daikin Applied  
Faribault Public Schools  
Hometown Credit Union  
KGPCo  
Merchants Bank  
Northfield Public Schools  
Reliance Bank  
Rice County  
Shattuck-St. Mary's  
St. Olaf College  
Target  
Tru-Vue, Inc



“Whether it’s food, housing, or financial assistance, United Way enables us to provide customized support to individuals and families across Rice County.”

– Becky Ford, Community Resource Manager, Community Action Center

## INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

### SUPER HEROES (\$5,000 TO \$9,999)

Alison Byerly and Steve Jensen  
James C. Fredrickson Fund  
Michael and Mary Richie  
Jack and Brenda Sielaff

### PRESIDENTS CIRCLE (\$1000 - \$4999)

Barb and Dennis Altstaetter  
Marie Benson  
Jamie Bente  
Joan Berg  
Dennis and Beth Berry  
Cindy Blaha and Keith Goetz  
Enoch Blazis  
David and Martha Brown  
Bill and Char Carlson  
Greg and Nancy Carlson  
Joe Chihade and Daniela Kohen  
Greg and Patty Closser  
Bill and Laurie Cowles  
Richard and Barbara Crouter  
Henry Doyle  
Barbara and Kenneth J. Dubbels  
Troy and Tara Dunn  
Lauren and Tom Feiler  
Robert and Rebecca Foley  
Blake Howald and Catherine Fortin  
Sherry and Mike Foster  
Barbara Gentling  
Jack Goldfeather and Christie Clarke  
Amy Gragg  
Daniel Groll and Emily Carroll  
Mary Lewis Grow  
Richard Hagenson and Elizabeth Child  
David and Patricia Halsor  
Marshall and Carla Hansen  
Karl and Dao Hella  
Mindy and Thomas Hoban  
Gary and Andrea Iseminger  
Anthony and Susan Jandro  
Barbara Jenkins  
Helena and Kevin Kaufman  
Richard and JoAnn Kleber  
Ruth and Perry Kruse  
Ronald Linde  
Perry and Judith Mason  
Steve McKelvey and Barb Matz  
Elizabeth McKinsey and Thomas Clough  
Steve and Abbie Meierbachtol  
Dave and Rhea Miller  
Kari Nelson and Steve Meyer  
Ann Nicholson  
Richard and Raymonde Noer

William North and Victoria Morse  
Margaret Otten  
Sam Patterson and Christine Lac  
Tricia and Ted Peterson  
Samiha and Dan Peterson  
Peggy Prowe  
Zach Pruitt  
Joel and Jeanne Pumper  
Laura and Dan Riehle-Merrill  
Dennis and Jane Rinehart  
Frederick Rogers and Jeanette Hartley  
Mary Savina  
Linda and James Sawyer  
Lori and Steven Schmidt  
David Schodt and Elizabeth Ciner  
Marvin and Sara Schrader  
Glen and Darlene Scott  
Kathleen Shea  
Jan Shoger  
George Shuffelton and Michelle Martin  
Gregory Smith and Laura Goering  
Jon and Stephanie Snodgrass  
Linda and Dan Stadler  
Mary Steen  
Dana and Stephen Strand  
Daniel and Ann Sullivan  
Curtis Swenson  
Bruce and Alice Thomas  
Alison Unger  
Robert and Donna Mae Vanderhoof  
Mija Van Der Wege and Kevin Chapman  
Timothy and Jean Vick  
Anne Walter  
Brad and Veronica Wille  
Katie Ziegler-Graham and Tom Ziegler  
Rebecca and Phil Zrimsek

### LEADERSHIP CIRCLE (\$500 - \$999)

Stephen Albers and Catherine Larson  
Alan and Debbie Anderson  
Erin and Casey Bailey  
Paul and Maribeth Beck  
Greg and Bonnie Becker  
Bruce and Carol Benson  
Marty Benson and Jean Callister-Benson  
Robert and Barbara Bonner  
Laurel Bradley and Sam Demas  
Bob and Lin Bruce  
Susan E Canon  
Faye and Carl Caskey  
William and Nancy Child  
Rod and Deborah Christensen  
Keith and Judy Covey  
Patrick and Mary Douglass  
Darwin Dumonceaux

## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE CONTD.

E. Duane Engstrom  
Elise Eslinger and Don Perkins  
Adriana Estill  
James and Shirley Evans  
Buford and Deborah Faust  
Jill and Ben Fisher  
Mary Fransen and Jim Johnson  
Maureen Gale  
Tracy Goodwin  
Anne Groton  
Paul and Barbara Hanson  
George and Gretchen Hardgrove  
Clara and Rob Hardy  
Eldon and Doris Hill  
Jonathan Hill  
Susan Jaret McKinstry  
Susannah Shmurak and Baird Jarman  
Jacqueline and Jerry Jarvis  
Jayne Hager Dee  
Georgene Johnson  
Nancy Johnson-Maloney  
Lisa and Daniel Krueger Robb  
Edward and Lois Langerak  
Kevin and Lori Larson  
Steve and Judy Lewis  
William and Lullo Lindstrom  
James and Debra Loe  
Jeremy L. Loebach  
Bridget and Brock Lund  
Irene Montenegro and Neil Lutsky  
Paul Marschall  
James and Donna May  
Donna McMillan and Steven Bayne  
Todd and Sue Middleton  
Bruce and Audrey Moe  
Jerry and Adrienne Mohrig  
Greg Muth and Janet Lewis Muth  
Renee Neirby  
Jeanette S. Nelson  
Arnold and Connie Nelson  
David and Debby Nitz  
John and Jean Noack  
Meg Ojala  
Arjendu Pattanayak and Stephanie Cox  
Bobbie Peterson  
Janet Petri and Paul Zorn  
Liz and Nikos Raleigh  
Michael and Patricia Remes  
Lee and Kitty Runzheimer  
Brian Rykhus  
Donald Sahling  
Mel and Mary Sanborn  
Jennifer Sawyer  
Peter and Donna Rae Scheffert  
Deb and Rick Scheil  
Julieta Schwartz  
Charles and Lorraine Sewich  
Bill and Nadine Steele  
Amy and Michael Stowe  
Lois and Noel Stratmoen



Paul Thiboutot and Diana Postlethwaite  
Julie Thorsheim  
Jo Ann Polley and Mark Ulmer  
Gary and Bonnie Van Erp  
Larry Van Roekel  
A DeWayne and Theo Wee  
Jon and Karla Weng  
Marilyn Will  
Roger and Janice Willems  
Lynne Wilmot and John P Haberman  
Melissa Eblen-Zayas and Roberto Zayas

## EVERYDAY HEROES (\$365 - \$499)

Carolynn Allen-Evans  
Amy and Kevin Allin  
Ameeta Sony and Craig Rice  
Lucy Archibald  
Shane Baier  
John D Barbour  
Ms. Sybil Betsinger  
Evelyn M. Burry  
Jacqueline Dorsey  
Kenneth and Jill Ewald  
Becky Faust  
Susan and Mervin Floodman  
Kathy and Mike Glampe  
Carolyn Jennings  
George and Virginia Kinney  
Rolf D. Kragseth  
Dale and Linda Ness  
Patricia A. Quilling  
Suzanne Rook  
Brad and Elaine Schaffner  
Tom and Nancy Sheldon  
Molly and Karl Viesselman  
Faye M. Vork  
Chris and Deanne Weber

*This list represents those who contributed to Rice County Area United Way during its 2024-25 fiscal year, which ended on June 30. Every effort has been made to accurately list all leadership contributions. If we have made an error or omission, please accept our sincerest apologies and contact us with any corrections.*

# DONATE TODAY!

[RICECOUNTYUNITEDWAY.ORG/DONATE](http://RICECOUNTYUNITEDWAY.ORG/DONATE)



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Megan Maschoff, Chair  
*Shattuck-St. Mary's*

Rachel Matney, Vice Chair  
*Seed Partners*

Peter Scheffert, Treasurer  
*Community Resource Bank*

Annie Demas, student board member  
*Northfield Schools*

Kathy Glampe  
*St. Olaf College*

Danette Marquardt  
*Faribault Schools*

Gordon Liu  
*Hourglass Consulting*

Dave Campbell  
*Bookstore Liaison*

**Apply to Join  
the Board!**



## STAFF

Laura Riehle-Merrill, Executive Director  
[laura@ricecountyunitedway.org](mailto:laura@ricecountyunitedway.org)

Tory Borovsky, Office Manager  
[tory@ricecountyunitedway.org](mailto:tory@ricecountyunitedway.org)

Office: 507-664-3510  
Website: [www.ricecountyunitedway.org](http://www.ricecountyunitedway.org)

1651 Jefferson Parkway, HS122  
Northfield, MN, 55057

"United Way has made possible early education/daycare opportunities, dozens of volunteer reading partners, and an amazing 330% increase in students earning GEDs and diplomas. These outcomes contribute to enhanced economic benefits for the students and the community."

– Nort Johnson, Director, Faribault Chamber of Commerce



**UNITED IS THE WAY**  
**GIVE TODAY**



Rice County Area United Way  
PO Box 56  
Northfield, MN 55057

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage PAID  
Faribault, MN  
Permit #21