



UNITED IS THE WAY

2026 IMPACT REPORT



Rice County Area
UNITED WAY

CLOSING THE GAP BY HONORING LEGACY

In Rice County, 41% of households can't afford the basics – housing, child care, food, transportation, health care. That's 31% of our neighbors working hard but still falling short (ALICE households), plus another 10% living in poverty.

This spring, 34 local organizations requested over half a million dollars from Rice County Area United Way – more than double what we could award. Even so, thanks to donors like you, we're investing \$250,000 a year over the next two years in 25 partner agencies across Faribault, Northfield, Lonsdale, and the townships in between. These agencies do the hard, hands-on work of caring for our neighbors – but that work depends on United Way funding.

This year, we also want to honor the legacy of two women who changed Rice County for good.

Dolly Parton created the Imagination Library, providing a free book a month to children 0-5. She hoped to be remembered, as she put it, “not for looks but for books” – and that's exactly how nearly 6,000 local children will remember her.



Marcia Morris-Beck lived that same spirit right here at home, serving as Director of United Way from 2007 through 2011. She lived modestly, caring for herself and her mother, and quietly setting aside what she could for neighbors she'd never meet. Marcia passed away this past March – and through her planned gift, she left Rice County Area United Way the largest single gift in our history.

In her honor, we're introducing the **Morris-Beck Founder Society**, recognizing donors who make a planned gift or a gift of \$20,000 or more. If you've already named Rice County Area United Way in your estate plans, we'd love to hear from you – your vision inspires us.

If you've given before, thank you. Please consider deepening your impact this year – a gift that grows alongside the need helps us say yes to more of our neighbors.

Make your gift today at www.ricecountyunitedway.org/donate and help make sure fewer of our neighbors are left waiting.



Laura

Laura Riehle-Merrill
Executive Director
Rice County Area United Way

2025-2026 DOLLAR COUNT

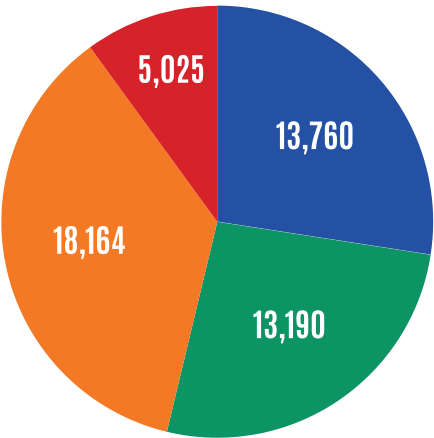
Donations & Sponsorships: \$482,000
Books on Central Revenue: \$41,000
United Way Volunteers: \$157,000
In-Kind Donations: \$209,000

VALUE TOTAL: \$889,000



2025-2026 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, 2025, and June 30, 2026.



TOTAL: 50,139

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

Some individuals received more than one service. 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 is a powerful lifeline for small non-profits. So often grants are focused on new ideas, when really what we need is the ability to sustain the programs that have proven themselves to be effective in meeting clients’ needs and serving the community. United Way amplifies the voices of smaller non-profits. We are better together.”

– Erica Staab, Executive Director, HOPE Center

UNITED WAY PARTNER AGENCIES

Funding decisions are guided by local community members for two-year grants. Community members chose to fund these United Way Partner Agencies:

- A Great Day Farm
- Aging Services for Communities
- Community Action Center
- Faribault Community Schools
- HealthFinders Collaborative, Inc.
- Healthy Community Initiative (HCI)
- HOPE Center
- Lonsdale Food Shelf
- Lonsdale Public Library
- Minnesota Medication Repository Program DBA RoundtableRx
- Northfield Public Schools
- Northfield Union of Youth
- Project ABLE
- Project Friendship
- RAMP (Restorative and Mediation Practices)
- Rice County Neighbors United
- Ruth's House of Hope, Inc.
- Salvation Army of Rice County
- ServeMinnesota
- Society of St. Vincent de Paul
- Somali Community Resettlement Services
- Surad Academy
- Tackling Obstacles & Raising College Hopes (TORCH)
- Three Rivers Community Action, Inc.
- Tri-City United School District
- Workforce Development Inc.

5,700

people accessed
health care

- *HealthFinders*

692

mentors &
mentees found
each other and built
relationships

- *Project
Friendship*

500

youth participated in
Friday open gym

- *Faribault Parks &
Recreation*

3,541

social, educational
and recreational
engagements were
enjoyed

- *Project ABLE*

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

PARTNER AGENCY IMPACT STORIES



RUTH'S HOUSE OF HOPE

When Lily arrived at Ruth's House, she carried little more than a few belongings and the weight of being turned away by her own mother, with a baby on the way. Staff welcomed her into a community that helped her learn to budget, manage her health, and heal with mental health support. Six months later, Lily left Ruth's House not just with a plan, but with confidence—ready to give her baby the stable, loving home she'd always wanted for herself. "If you need help, ask," she says now. "Don't be ashamed." Your gift to United Way helps make that possible. **Ruth's House provided 7,000 nights of safe housing last year – operating at full capacity.**

THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY ACTION

When Mary's Medicare plan left the market, she felt the quiet panic that comes with aging alone. She called Three Rivers Community Action. Staff sat with Mary and her daughter and found a plan that covered her providers, her medications, and her fixed income. It's the kind of moment Older Adult Advocate Sarah creates again and again, across rural Rice County.

Your gift to United Way ensures no older adult faces these decisions alone. **122 Seniors received age well support last year.**



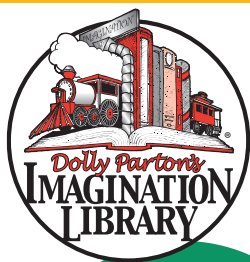
PRIMETIME

When Bridgewater Elementary's principal saw students falling behind in math, she called Community School. Together they built an afterschool intervention through PRIMETIME that gave struggling kids exactly what they needed. That same spirit fills schools across Northfield – college students teaching piano, events packing gyms with laughing families, quiet moments where a trusted adult notices a child who needs someone in their corner. For Northfield's youth, PRIMETIME isn't just a place to go after school – it's a place to belong. Your gift to United Way helps make sure every child has that. **1,311 students participated in PRIMETIME.**

"In a world where coordinated services often drop off after high school, building community spaces & infrastructure that recognize disability from the start is critical. We are incredibly grateful for the United Way's belief in our mission to foster recreation and true belonging for adults with disabilities."

– Haley Teopaco, Executive Director, A Great Day Farm

UNITED WAY HIGHLIGHTS



DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

United Way honors Dolly Parton's legacy by proudly sponsoring 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 2026 Dolly Book Bash raised enough funds to provide free books to over 2,200 local children this year.

**Save The
Date!**

Dolly Parton
Book Bash
January 29, 2027
Northfield Armory



PICKLE PADDLE

United Way's 2nd annual Pickle Paddle, a pickleball tournament, raised over \$8,700 this July to support Rice County Healthy Community partner agencies, who provide everything from healthcare access to support for survivors of violence for some of the county's most vulnerable neighbors.



"United Way's support of Faribault's School Supplies for All initiative will help ensure that all preK through 8th grade students have the school supplies they need to feel prepared, confident, and ready to learn on the first day of school. We are incredibly grateful for your continued partnership and commitment to supporting our students and families."

*- Cassie Riopelle, Director of Community Education & Engagement
Faribault Public Schools*

“The stability and flexibility of United Way funding provides critical backbone support to organizations like the Community Action Center. In addition, United Way support helps organizations like ours demonstrate community commitment when we compete for competitive state and federal grants. United Way funding helps leverage additional financial resources into our community.”

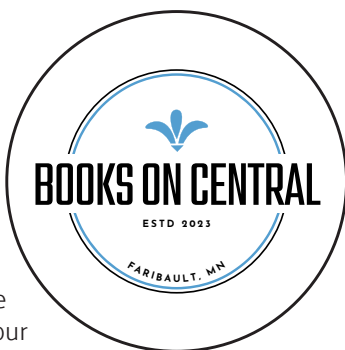
– Zach Pruitt, Executive Director, Community Action Center

2-1-1 UNITED WAY HOTLINE

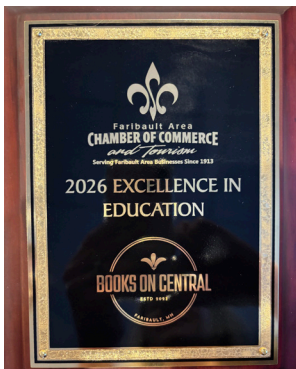
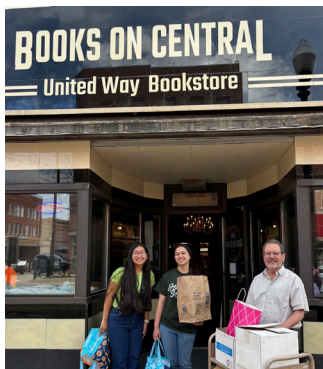
United Way 211 provides free and confidential health and human services information for people in Rice County 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Last year 375 community members made 715 requests to ask 211 for help. 51% of 211 callers sought help with Housing, followed by Utilities, Legal/Public Safety, and Food/Meals.

BOOKS ON CENTRAL

United Way’s all-volunteer bookstore, Books on Central, has flourished since opening in October 2023. Our dedicated volunteers contributed over 4,200 hours this year, curating and selling more than 11,000 books annually, with 40% 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 \$41,000 in net sales—with every dollar flowing directly to United Way’s Partner Agencies—and was honored to receive the Faribault Chamber of Commerce’s Excellence in Education Award.





PARTNERS IN GIVING

CORPORATE GIFTS

\$10,000 +

All Flex Solutions

\$5,000 - \$9,999

Community Resource Bank

Daikin Applied

Post Consumer Brands

\$1,000 TO \$4,999

Carleton College

Crown Cork & Seal

First Merchant

G. Comer and Ida May Bates Charitable Fund

Illinois Tool Works

Just Food Co-op

KGPCo

Matejcek's

Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research

Merchants Bank

Mercury Minnesota Inc

Northfield Hospital Auxiliary

Our Saviors Lutheran Church

Richie Eye Clinic

Rotary Club of Northfield

Schmidt Homes

Southern Heights Dental Group PA

Supply Our Children

Tareen Dermatology

The Bahl Foundation

Tru Vue, Inc.

Xcel Energy

\$100 TO \$999

Allina Health

Boldt Funeral Home

Combined Charities

Degrood Acres, LLC

Edward Jones Jon Snodgrass

Enterprise/Taylor Entities

Epic Wealth Partners, LLC (Grinney & Davis)

Faribault Chamber Trust

Faribault Elks Lodge #1166

Great River Energy

Harry Brown's Family Automotive

Holden Farms

HomeTown Credit Union

IBM

Jefferson PTO

La Canne's Marine, Inc

Land O'Lakes

Met Con Companies - Faribault Division

MN State DKG

Northfield Lions Club

Old National Bank

Parker Kohl Funeral Home

Premier Bank

Professional Dental Group

Reliance Bank

Roosevelt PTO

Schieck Orthodontics

Sertoma Club of Faribault

Sheldon Theatre Brass Band

State Bank of Faribault

Target Corporation

Thomson Reuters

United Health Group

Veritas Advisors

WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN

Carleton College

Community Action Center

Community Resource Bank

Crown Cork & Seal

Daikin Applied

Faribault Public Schools

KGPCo

Merchants Bank

Northfield Public Schools

Reliance Bank

Rice County

Shattuck St. Mary's

St. Olaf College

Target

Tru-Vue, Inc

INDIVIDUAL GIFTS

MORRIS-BECK FOUNDERS' SOCIETY

Marcia Morris-Beck

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

Alison Byerly and Steve Jensen

James Fredrickson Fund

Jack Sielaff

PRESIDENTS CIRCLE (\$1000 - \$4999)

Stephen Albers and Catherine Larson

Jamie Bente

Joan Berg

Dennis and Beth Berry

Cindy Blaha and Keith Goetz

Enoch Blazis

David and Martha Brown

Jim Bull

David and Jeanne Campbell

Joe Campbell

Mary Carlsen and Peter Dahlen

Greg and Nancy Carlson

William and Char Carlson

Greg and Patty Closser

Bill Cowles

Richard and Barbara Crouter

Jim DeCoux

Henry Doyle

Darwin Dumonceaux

Troy and Tara Dunn

Buford and Deborah Faust

Lauren and Tom Feiler

Robert and Rebecca Foley

Catherine Fortin and Blake Howald

Barbara Gentling

Jack Goldfeather and Christie Clarke

Amy Gragg

Daniel Groll and Emily Carroll

Richard Hagenson and Elizabeth Child

David and Patricia Halsor

Marshall and Carla Hansen

Karl and Dao Hella

Jonathan Hill

Doris and Eldon Hill

Andrea Iseminger

Marilyn Jacobson

Anthony and Susan Jandro

Jayne Hager Dee

Barbara Jenkins

Helena and Kevin Kaufman

Paula Knutson

Ronald Linde

William and Lullo Lindstrom

Perry and Judith Mason

Steve McKelvey and Barb Matz

Elizabeth McKinsey and Thomas Clough

Steve and Abbie Meierbachtol

Dave and Rhea Miller

Janet Mitchell

Richard and Raymonde Noer

William North and Victoria Morse

Margaret Otten

David Otterness

Sam Patterson and Christine Lac

Samiha and Dan Peterson

Michael Provancha

Peggy Prowe

Zach Pruitt

Joel and Jeanne Pumper

Dan and Laura Riehle-Merrill

Dennis and Jane Rinehart

Frederick Rogers and Jeanette Hartley

Susan Rundell Singer and Gary Singer

Lee and Kitty Runzheimer

Mary Savina

Linda and James Sawyer

Peter and Donna Rae Scheffert

Lori and Steven Schmidt

David Schodt and Elizabeth Ciner

Glen and Darlene Scott

Charles and Lorraine Sewich

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

Curtis Swenson

Bruce and Alice Thomas

Jo Ann Polley and Mark Ulmer

Alison Unger

Robert and Donna Mae Vanderhoof

Timothy and Jean Vick

Logan Vincent

Anne Walter

George Wickstrom Jr.

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE (\$500 - \$999)

Barb Altstaetter

Ameeta Sony and Craig Rice

Alan and Debbie Anderson

David and Joey Appleyard

Mari and Bo Aylin

Erin and Casey Bailey

Paul and Maribeth Beck

Greg and Bonnie Becker

Rebecca Benedict and Gary Miessler

Marie Benson

Bruce and Carol Benson

Marty Benson and Jean Callister-Benson

Melissa and Mike Berthelsen

Kevin and Patty Betterly

Laurel Bradley and Sam Demas

Bob and Lin Bruce

Evelyn M. Burry

Susan E Canon

Faye and Carl Caskey

William and Nancy Child

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE CONTD.

Rod and Deborah Christensen
Keith and Judy Covey
Patrick and Mary Douglass
Dan F. Dressen
Melissa Eblen-Zayas and Roberto Zayas
Elise Eslinger and Don Perkins
Adriana Estill
James and Shirley Evans
Becky Faust
Steve Fenster
Susan and Mervin Floodman
Mary Fransen and Jim Johnson
Maureen Gale
Kendall George
Kathy and Mike Glampe
Tracy Goodwin
Dylan Graves
Anne Groton
Paul and Barbara Hanson
Carol Hong
Baird Jarman and Susannah Shmurak
Georgene Johnson
Virginia Jordon
Rolf D. Kragseth
Lisa and Daniel Krueger Robb
Judy Kutulas and Michael Fitzgerald
Edward and Lois Langerak
Loren Larson
Kevin and Lori Larson
Steve and Judy Lewis
James and Debra Loe
Neil Lutsky and Irene Montenegro
Angela and David Mathews
James and Donna May
Todd and Sue Middleton
Bruce and Audrey Moe
Jerry and Adrienne Mohrig
Greg Muth and Janet Lewis Muth
Jeanette S. Nelson
Kari Nelson and Steve Meyer
Ann Nicholson
David and Debby Nitz
John and Jean Noack
Meg Ojala
Arjendu Pattanayak and Stephanie Cox

Bobbie Peterson
Tricia and Ted Peterson
Janet Petri and Paul Zorn
Liz and Nikos Raleigh
Connie Ryberg and Craig Forsgren
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Katy J. Schuerman
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Paul Thiboutot and Diana Postlethwaite
Julie Thorsheim
Anne and Milton Ulmer
Mija Van Der Wege and R. Kevin Chapman
Gary and Bonnie Van Erp
Chris and Deanne Weber
A DeWayne and Theo Wee
Jon and Karla Weng
Janice and Roger Willems
Lynne Wilmot and John P Haberman
Dina Zavala-Petherbridge and Steven Petherbridge

EVERYDAY HEROES (\$365 - \$499)

John D Barbour
Sybil Betsinger
Bruce Dalgaard and Carol Korda
Beth Dienst
Eric and Anna Runestad
Adam Hoffmann and Rachel Egeberg
George and Virginia Kinney
Becky Krogh
Dale and Linda Ness
Tom and Sara Nielsen
Elisa and Joel Olson
Tom and Nancy Sheldon
Xuping Sun and Xuan Li
Rae Trcka
Larry Van Roekel
Paul Wise



This list represents those who contributed to Rice County Area United Way during its 2025-26 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.

“Rice County Area United Way’s allocations panels are a unique approach to grant making, because they bring in community members—their personal experiences and expertise—to help us identify our community’s greatest needs.”

– Gordon Liu, Co-Founder,
Hourglass Consulting Co. and United
Way volunteer

DONATE TODAY!

RICECOUNTYUNITEDWAY.ORG/DONATE



“During Car Cruise Night, Books on Central was filled with kids curled up with books, returning customers, and people discovering us for the first time. I loved watching people slow down, connect, and find a little something that brought them joy. It reminded me how much Books on Central means to our community—and how grateful I am to be part of it, thanks to United Way.”

– Karen Ginter, volunteer, Books on Central

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Megan Maschoff, Chair
Shattuck St. Mary's

Rachel Matney, Vice Chair
Seed Partners

Peter Scheffert, Treasurer
Community Resource Bank

Tanya Bakken
Shattuck St. Mary's

Dave Campbell
Bookstore Liaison

Annie Demas, student board member
Northfield Schools

Matt Forster
Carpathian Capital Management

Beret Froehle
The Rare Pair

Danette Marquardt
Faribault Schools

Michelle Sylvester
Carleton College

Anne Walter
Emerita, St. Olaf College

Katie Warren
St. Olaf College

Apply to Join
the Board!



STAFF

Laura Riehle-Merrill, Executive Director
laura@ricecountyunitedway.org

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Website: www.ricecountyunitedway.org

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Northfield, MN, 55057



UNITED IS THE WAY
GIVE TODAY



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