

A COMMUNITY

UNITED

United Way



United Way of Central Ohio

2021 Annual Report

A CHALLENGING YEAR

For too many local nonprofits and the families they serve, the pandemic continues to take a toll. For those who were struggling prior to the crisis, the road to recovery will be particularly long. At the same time, nonprofits and their employees are working hard to deliver more services with far fewer resources.

Community Challenges:



- Increased trauma due to violence
- Surging housing costs causing instability
- Increase in complexity of issues
- Increase in addiction among youth and adults

Nonprofit Challenges:



- Increased labor costs
- Staffing shortages and difficulty hiring
- Empathy fatigue
- Loss of volunteers
- Higher stress among staff

“I certainly see the fatigue on all staff. The passion is still there, but everyone is tired and needs a rest. The risk of burnout for staff is huge.”

– Duane Casares
CEO of Directions for Youth & Families

2020-2021 School Year:



Over **60% of third graders**
in 5 Franklin County school districts
aren't reading at grade level



12 of 16 school districts
in Franklin County had third grade
proficiency rates under 75%



3 school districts had
third grade proficiency rates
drop 25% or more
from 2018-2019

Our community should be concerned.
These young learners are tomorrow's
workforce and leaders.

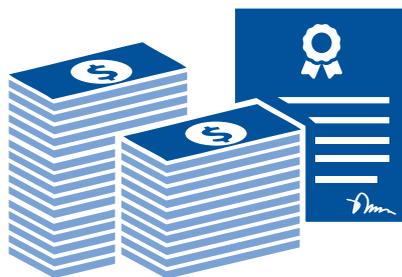
UNITED, OUR COMMUNITY IS STRONGER

With support from generous corporate partners, individual donors and volunteers, United Way of Central Ohio brings our community and resources together to tackle challenges that no one organization or person can solve alone.

Together, we:

Raised and invested more than \$9 million

through our Community Response Fund



provided **128 grants to 91 local nonprofits** helping families meet Basic Needs and youth achieve Student Success



Currently enrolled as a freshman at the University of Akron, Joy participated in Community for New Direction's FOCUS program throughout high school. At FOCUS, she and her friends learned from professional speakers, visited colleges and led service projects. Joy's mother, Linda, says the program gave Joy the tools necessary to be successful in high school, college and beyond.

Located in the heart of Franklinton, Gladden Community House has been serving families for more than a century. The organization's food pantry and early education center are just two of the stabilizing programs available to families. According to Nick, United Way is both a true partner and a vital funder to Gladden and the neighborhood it serves. Gladden is one of four traditional settlement houses supported by United Way's Community Response Fund.



NICK President & CEO of Gladden Community House

MEETING IMMEDIATE NEEDS AND CREATING LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS

Our nonprofit partners are some of the most effective local organizations working to ensure people in crisis can meet their basic needs and children have equal opportunities to achieve student success. We measure success by actual lives changed.

Student Success

Together, we make sure children are ready for school, stay on track and graduate on time prepared for college or a career.

 Over **\$3.7 million**
to 55 nonprofits

87%  of children increased evaluation scores

100% improved Get Ready to Read test scores

Directions for Youth and Families

 **94%** of children with mentors improved in areas such as school discipline and mental health

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Ohio

Basic Needs

Together, we help provide equitable access to food, shelter and assistance so families in crisis can meet their basic needs.

 Over **\$3.2 million**
to 53 nonprofits

23,500 people 
(7,500 families) received fresh, healthy food

Community Development for All People

 **819 youth** experiencing homelessness received food, clothing and a safe place to be

Star House

Helping Families Thrive

7,000+ people received free tax prep
\$9.3+ million returned in refunds



Tax Time - in partnership with corporate, city and nonprofit organizations



1,000+ families with school-age children received help to avoid housing crisis

Stable Families - in partnership with YMCA and Siemer Institute

CREATING A MORE **EQUITABLE** COMMUNITY

As a trusted organization in central Ohio for nearly 100 years, United Way actively involves our for-profit, nonprofit and individual partners in co-creating solutions that build and sustain equity.

United Way of Central Ohio Actions and Commitments:

- Most racially diverse pool of volunteers ever involved in reviewing and scoring funding applications
- Learn United series with events focused on highlighting inequities in our community
- Ongoing DEI focus across the organization, including educating staff on history and impact of racism
- Funded nonprofits selected that are diverse, reflective of our community and led by CEOs who are people of color
- Nonprofit partners must maintain or achieve racially diverse board of trustees by 2025
- Working with nonprofits to collect client-level disaggregated data to understand disparities

"United Way's board diversity plan has helped us to better align our board membership with the fabric of our community. As a result, our board is ready to meet the perplexing challenges that nonprofits face every day."

– Captain James Brennan
Area Coordinator for Salvation Army Central Ohio Area

Learn United

Our Learn United virtual series, launched in 2020, provided opportunities for discussion, learning and connecting throughout 2021. Sessions focused on community inequities and issues, and highlighted the cultures and concerns of underrepresented local populations.

Hispanic Heritage Month session with (from top left): Francisco Gomez-Bellenge, OSU Fisher College of Business; Val Gonzalez, Nationwide Insurance; Carolina Thacher, Ohio Bureau of Workers Compensation; and Krystal Rodriguez, Battelle.



You can find recorded Learn United discussions at liveunitedcentralohio.org/events.

OUR DONORS AND VOLUNTEERS CHANGE LIVES

When you join the thousands of United Way donors and volunteers in our community, you're UNITED with a passionate group of individuals who are committed to building a stronger, more equitable central Ohio.

Volunteer United

Our VolunteerUnitedCbus.org site provides local in person and virtual opportunities for groups, families and individuals. Whether reading to kids, hosting an online book drive or delivering meals to seniors, you'll be a powerful force for good while forming deep connections to our community.



2021 Highlights: _____



190 Volunteer
opportunities



1,086 New users
added to platform



1,535+ hours
logged by volunteers



592 gifts
for local families
from our Holiday Drive

“The Volunteer United platform has allowed us to grow our volunteer base and introduce our mission to more people in central Ohio through acts of service. Volunteers become part of our greater St. Stephen’s Community House family, coming back time and time again. It’s a true testament of the spirit of Columbus.”

– Natalie Atkins

Director of Marketing and Development, St. Stephen’s Community House

Thank you to our partners and their associates who contributed \$500,000+

AEP • Bath & Body Works • Franklin County Board of Commissioners • Grange Insurance
Huntington National Bank • Nationwide • The Ohio State University • Siemer Institute • State of Ohio

DEAR SUPPORTERS,

Dear Supporters,

When I think about the inspiring ways our community came together in 2021 to respond to the pandemic, I'm reminded of a quote by researcher and author Angela Duckworth. She said, "Enthusiasm is common. Endurance is rare." As we grapple with the ongoing impact this crisis has had on children, families and nonprofits, we must maintain our enthusiasm and endurance to reemerge as a stronger and more equitable central Ohio.

In 2021 we stood united—corporate partners, individual donors and volunteers—raising and investing more than \$24 million, of which the majority stayed in our community and \$9 million was invested in our nonprofit partners. Together, we issued 128 grants to 91 local nonprofits helping families meet basic needs and youth achieve student success. United Way of Central Ohio has the unique ability to bring our community and resources together to tackle challenges that no one organization or person can solve alone.

We are also committed to tackling the root causes of our community's most pressing issues. As such, we've launched the Success By Third Grade movement. Research confirms that when children can't read proficiently by third grade, they are four times more likely not to graduate high school, impacting their ability to succeed economically later in life. Together with school districts, community leaders and nonprofits, we are mobilizing all of central Ohio to help more children reach critical milestones, ensuring our community's future success.

In 2023, United Way of Central Ohio will celebrate 100 years of working together with our neighbors to create a community where everyone can thrive. Endurance may be rare, but there is nothing we can't do when we stand UNITED. Thank you for joining us.

Proud to serve our community,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lisa S. Courtice". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lisa S. Courtice, Ph.D.



Congratulations Designer Brands, winner of the 2021 Dale E. Heydlauff Legacy Award for Outstanding Philanthropic Leadership

We are grateful to Designer Brands for its commitment to working differently to give back, and for creating solutions that advance equity and social justice.

TOGETHER, WE'RE CREATING A STRONGER, MORE EQUITABLE CENTRAL OHIO.



SARAI Co-founder and board president of Student Success Stores

[▶ Watch Video](#)

As a passionate community volunteer, Sarai wants to see all students reach their full potential and succeed. The stores she helped create at central Ohio middle schools do just that by providing essential free items so all kids can start the school day healthy, confident and ready to learn. She's grateful for the vital funding, expertise and partnership the nonprofit receives from United Way.



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