UNITED WAY
Central Ohio

UNITED IS THE WAY

to strengthen families so every child can reach their full potential

When students have the opportunities and resources they need, there's no limit to what they can achieve. But rising household costs and decreasing support systems have made it more difficult for families to afford basic needs and get ahead.

United is the Way we bring our community together. With help from our partners and supporters like you, United Way of Central Ohio eliminates barriers outside of the classroom – such as food insecurity, housing instability and interrupted learning – that impact progress inside the classroom.

In 2025,

our donors and volunteers joined us to:

Provide 4.2 million meals
to families who work hard to make ends meet.

Invest in 16 quality programs
that helped 98% of families maintain or improve their housing stability.

Ensure more than 1 million snacks
reached students so they could focus on learning.

SUCCESS BY THIRD GRADE

At United Way, we believe every student in central Ohio deserves the opportunity to read, learn and succeed. Through our Success by Third Grade movement, we mobilize the caring power of our community to put every child on a pathway to success by the time they leave third grade.

Reading proficiently by the end of third grade is a powerful indicator of later success in school and in life. But there are significant gaps in third grade reading scores between children who have access to resources and opportunities, and those who don't.

UNITED IS THE WAY

to build a stronger future for our community

Our Success by Third Grade network directors are coordinating ground-level strategies by working closely with five school districts (Columbus, Groveport Madison, Reynoldsburg, South Western and Whitehall) and numerous community partners to address barriers outside the classroom that impact student success. These barriers include lack of access to quality early education, chronic absenteeism, interrupted learning, housing issues and mobility, and lack of access to basic needs.

By bringing our entire community together and aligning districts, community leaders, corporations and nonprofits around a shared goal, we ensure more families thrive and their children can reach their full potential. These young learners are tomorrow's leaders and innovators.

Your gift to our Community Response Fund supporting **Success by Third Grade** stays local to benefit central Ohio today and strengthen it for tomorrow.

Watch the **SUCCESS BY THIRD GRADE** Video

In central Ohio, a family of four with two children under age 5 pays roughly $2,000 to $2,500 a month for child care. That's more than the cost of housing or food and is out of reach for many parents working two of Ohio's most common jobs, such as cook and bank teller. When a family's budget is stretched thin, having access to high-quality, affordable early learning helps parents keep working while meeting the basic needs that help their households thrive.

That's why United Way invests in the early learning programs run by our long-time partner YMCA of Central Ohio. **While fewer than 40% of children in Ohio start kindergarten with the skills they need to learn, more than 93% of children in YMCA programs arrive ready to learn on day one.**

"Fifty-five percent of families in central Ohio are in a desert when it comes to affordable, accessible high-quality child care opportunities," says Tony Collins, president & CEO of YMCA of Central Ohio. "We wouldn't be able to provide that access to those families without the support and partnership with United Way."

Watch the Video

Robert Brown's story begins in Linden, where the Greater Columbus Community House (GCCH, formerly St. Stephen's Community House) was part of his own childhood. A retired Columbus City Schools employee, Robert serves as GCCH's summer STEAM camp site coordinator and is a trusted role model and steady, caring presence to the kids each summer.

GCCH's summer STEAM camp keeps kids engaged, prevents interrupted learning and gives working families peace of mind. With caring leaders like Robert, children not only stay on track academically, they also build confidence, curiosity and a love of learning that carries into the school year.

Through Success by Third Grade, our investment in GCCH's early learning center, Out of School Time programs and food pantry strengthen families and builds a strong foundation for student success.

Watch the Video

UNITED IS THE WAY

to build a stronger, more resilient central Ohio

GIVE to our Community Response Fund to support Success by Third Grade through your workplace giving campaign or online at liveunitedcentralohio.org/donate.

See the impact of your gift by texting UWCO to 26989 and following us on social media.

Get involved and meet others who share your passion for a stronger community.

Learn more:
liveunitedcentralohio.org/leadership/leadersunited

YOUR GIFT CHANGES LIVES.

$3 per week
provides 50 children witha warm meal during an after-school program.

$5 per week
provides a child with six weeksof after-school tutoring

$10 per week
covers summer programming fees for five children.

$20 per week
one night in a shelter for five families experiencing a housing crisis.

UNITED WAY Central Ohio

liveunitedcentralohio.org

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