

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Greater Mankato Area  
United Way



Serving communities in Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet & Waseca Counties



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# OUR MISSION

Greater Mankato Area United Way's mission is to unite the community to secure and invest resources to improve people's lives by focusing on the impact areas of Basic Needs, Health and Education. All of our programs must fall into at least one of these areas. By keeping these three pillars strong and balanced, we can continue to build a better tomorrow for all in our region.

## OUR IMPACT

We make every effort to ensure donor dollars are being used efficiently by utilizing volunteer resources, sponsorships and in-kind donations.

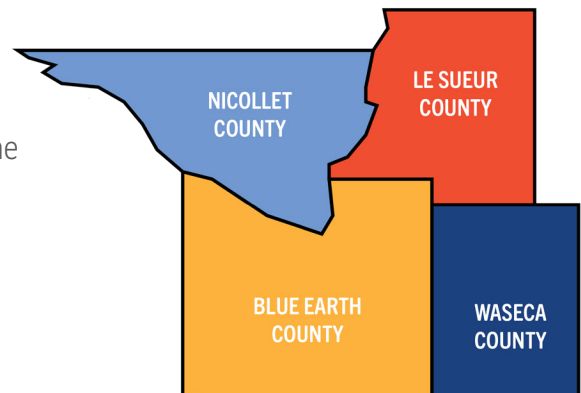
### IN 2024:

- More than **1,700 VOLUNTEERS** donated over **14,500 HOURS** of service.
- Approximately **5,000 INDIVIDUALS** contributed **FINANCIAL DONATIONS** toward the campaign.
- Over **160 GENEROUS REGIONAL BUSINESSES** and other community partners offered **SPONSORSHIPS** for events, supplies and more.
- Corporate and community supporters gave **IN-KIND DONATIONS** valued at more than **\$980,000**.

## OUR REGION

Greater Mankato Area United Way serves communities in the following four counties:

- >> **BLUE EARTH COUNTY**
- >> **LE SUEUR COUNTY**
- >> **NICOLLET COUNTY**
- >> **WASECA COUNTY**



# A LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

## **Be the Light.**

In 2024, the region answered Greater Mankato Area United Way's call to action to be a spark for change, stepping forward to support through fundraising, volunteering, donating, in-kind gifts, and any way they could. Our work was made possible by dedicated community members, businesses, nonprofits, and partners.


As part of our mission, Greater Mankato Area United Way remained committed to identifying and addressing urgent issues in our region, including youth mental health, suicide prevention, substance use disorder advocacy, sex trafficking prevention, literacy, and more. We continued to lead the way in convening and connecting the community around these issues. For example, the Youth Mental Health Navigator program based in all 13 school districts in our service area continued seeing increased numbers served. It had powerful outcomes getting children and families connected to the services they need. This program has become a model for others throughout the country.

Our impactful literacy programming continued to make a difference in the lives of children. With the generous support of Capstone, we launched a new initiative with the publication of our own picture book, "The Kindness Booth." As part of the project, we visited all first-grade classrooms to deliver a copy of the book donated by Capstone and led discussions on the importance of kindness.

It was a milestone year for our events. We held the first-ever Flight Event at the Mankato Airport, which was a transformative evening. The Men's Event, the Human Foosball Tournament, and Fire & Ice celebrated 10 years of making a difference. The impact of these events is far reaching, and we are grateful to all who have been involved over the years.

Our campaign continued to grow, and we met our largest-ever goal of \$2,250,000. The region stepped up to support our programs through basic needs, health, and education.

Thank you for your support to improve and save lives in our region. When we live united, our light doesn't just brighten the present. It shines toward a brighter tomorrow full of hope and opportunity.

A portrait of Barb Kaus, the CEO, smiling. She has dark, shoulder-length hair and is wearing a black turtleneck under a grey vest, with a long, silver chain necklace. The background is white.

*Barb Kaus*

Barb Kaus

# BETHE LIGHT

*The region stepped up to support our programs through basic needs, health, and education.*

As of December 31, 2024

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## OFFICERS

**Chris Austin**, Taylor Corporation – *Board Chair*

**Matthew Atwood**, Atwood Companies – *Vice Chair*

**Alissa Brekke**, Pioneer Bank – *Past Campaign Chair*

**Maria Brown**, Exclusively Diamonds - *2025 Campaign Chair*

**Jess Blais**, APX Construction Group - *Community Impact Chair*

**Wendy Keenan**, Abdo – *Finance Chair*

## BOARD MEMBERS

**Dr. John Benson**, Mankato Clinic

**Eric Boelter**, Community Bank

**Heidi Boyum**, Retired

**Scott Bradley**, Business Consultant

**Angela Casteel**, Federated Insurance

**Silas Danielson**, Blethen Berens

**Laura Elvebak**, Blue Earth County

**Erik Hagedorn**, West Bank

**Andy Hennis**, Consolidated Communications

**Tonya Hobbie**, Bolton & Menk

**Eric Hudspith**, Waseca Public Schools

**Bob Ihrig**, Retired

**Sarah Kerich**, Amanicare Services, Inc.

**Justin Neumann**, Mankato Department of Public Safety

**Kayla Olsen**, Stifel

**Dr. Annette Parker**, South Central College

**Paul Peterson**, Mankato Area Public Schools

**Shane Van Engen**, Frandsen Bank & Trust

**Steve Weisbecker**, Lloyd Management

As of December 31, 2024

## OUR STAFF

**Barb Kaus**, CEO

**Janice Berndt**, Finance

**Marvel Bruno**, Director of Finance

**Sarah Buesing**, Community Impact Director

**Jill Cusick**, Resource & Donor Development Director

**Laura Murray**, COO

**Emily Schanbacher**, Marketing Coordinator

**Jack Simota**, Data Systems Manager

**Abby Svien**, Events & Fundraising Director

**Karli Swearingen**, Office & Programming Manager

# 2024 PARTNER AGENCIES

## **ACHIEVING DREAMS FOR DISABILITIES**

### **AGING SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES**

Senior Citizen Support

### **AMERICAN RED CROSS**

Disaster Services

### **THE ARC MN SOUTHWEST**

Self-Advocacy

### **BETHLEHEM INN OF WASECA**

Emergency Shelter

### **BEYOND BRINK**

Harm Reduction Team  
Recovery Housing  
Youth Supportive Services\*

### **BLUE EARTH COUNTY**

First Steps

### **BOY SCOUTS TWIN VALLEY COUNCIL**

Youth Development

### **CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF SOUTHERN MN**

Active Aging Programs\*

### **COMMITTEE AGAINST DOMESTIC ABUSE (CADA)**

Emergency Shelter Staffing Support\*

### **COMMONBOND COMMUNITIES**

Advantage Services

### **CONNECTING KIDS**

Youth Scholarships

### **GOOD COUNSEL LEARNING CENTER**

Adult Scholarship Program

### **GREATER MANKATO AREA UNITED WAY**

Books for Kids

### **GREATER MANKATO DIVERSITY COUNCIL**

Promoting Respect Workshops

### **GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE**

Big Partner Little Partner  
Gustie Buddies

### **HABITAT FOR HUMANITY**

Aging in Place

### **LAKE CRYSTAL AREA RECREATION CENTER**

Membership Scholarships

### **LAKE CRYSTAL COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

Little Knights Preschool

### **LEISURE EDUCATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE (LEEP)**

Recreation

### **LET'S SMILE**

Clinical Preventive Dental Services

### **LIFE-WORK PLANNING CENTER**

Women in Transition

### **LUTHERAN SOCIAL SERVICE OF MINNESOTA**

Crisis Nursery  
Financial Counseling  
Meals  
Sex Trafficking Prevention

### **MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY EDUCATION & RECREATION**

Lincoln Logs Learning Center  
MAPS Preschool

### **MANKATO AREA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Hope Squad +  
Youth Mental Health Navigator

### **MN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

Community Navigator Services

### **NRHEG COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

Panther Preschool

### **OPEN DOOR HEALTH CENTER**

Integrated Clinic Operations

### **PARTNERS FOR HOUSING**

Mankato/St. Peter Emergency Shelters  
Welcome Home Transitional Housing

### **PROJECT FOR TEENS**

Peer Education

### **THE SALVATION ARMY**

Emergency Social Services  
Noon Lunch Program

### **SEMCAC**

Volunteer Driver Program

### **SERVEMINNESOTA**

MN Reading Corps

### **SMILES CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

Assistive Technology/Ramps

### **SOUTH CENTRAL SERVICE COOPERATIVE**

Youth Mental Health Navigator +  
[Cleveland, JWP, Lake Crystal, Le Sueur-Henderson, Maple River, Nicollet, NRHEG, St. Clair, St. Peter, TCU, Waseca, WEM]

### **SOUTHERN MN REGIONAL LEGAL SERVICES**

Lawyers Advancing Wellness

### **ST. PETER AREA FOOD SHELF**

Children's Weekend Food Program  
Food Pantry\*

### **ST. PETER COMMUNITY & FAMILY EDUCATION**

School Readiness

### **TRI-CITY UNITED COMMUNITY EDUCATION**

Little Titans Preschool

### **VINE FAITH IN ACTION**

Aging Well at Home  
Aging Well at the VACC  
Door2Door Transportation

### **WASECA AREA NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE CENTER**

Backpack Program  
Fresh Foods Initiative\*  
In a Pinch

### **WASECA AREA SENIOR CITIZENS CENTER**

### **WASECA PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

Hope Squad +  
Junior Jays Preschool

### **WELLSHARE INTERNATIONAL**

Nuer Youth Community Initiative\*

### **YMCA**

Brother/Sister Program  
Chesley Skate Park  
Financial Assistance  
ForeverWell  
School-Based Mentoring  
STRIDE for All

### **YWCA**

New American Families  
Youth Programming

\* Newly funded program

+ Initiative

# FINANCIAL REPORT

## STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

FROM AUDITED FINANCIAL REPORT

TOTAL PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES	\$4,646,957
Program Services Expenses	\$2,053,522
Community and Agency Services	\$1,028,700
PROVIDED BY UNITED WAY	
Management and General	\$283,871
Fundraising	\$1,187,770
Total Expenses	\$4,553,863
Net Income	\$93,094

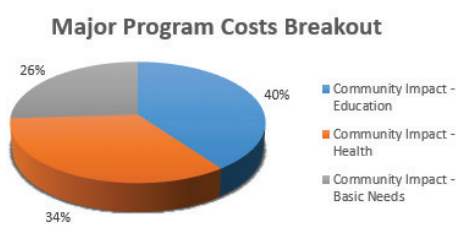
*\*Of fundraising expenses, this includes \$690,606 of in-kind expenses, which was of no cost to United Way.*

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

Current Assets	\$4,289,730
Fixed Assets	\$10,438
Other Assets	\$251,148
Total Assets	\$4,551,316
Current Liabilities	\$152,865
NET ASSETS	
Unrestricted	\$1,862,149
Temporarily Restricted	\$2,536,302
Total Net Assets	\$4,398,451
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$4,551,316

Audited financial statements and IRS Form 990 available upon request.

### MAJOR PROGRAM COST BREAKDOWN



# CORE COMMITMENTS

Greater Mankato Area United Way's core commitments are to secure resources, convene the community, and connect people and organizations to resources. United Way secures resources by soliciting individuals and businesses throughout the region during the annual campaign. In 2024, approximately 5,000 individuals donated through workplace campaigns or other personal giving, while more than 160 companies pledged a corporate gift. By receiving a total of \$2,593,756.05 in donation pledges, United Way provided funding to 62 programs across 43 nonprofit agencies in 2024. Of these programs, 39 received additional "one-time funding" allocations in Fall 2024.

## BASIC NEEDS

United Way stabilizes families in need and gives them tools for success. The focus of Basic Needs supports advancing the common good by providing basic needs like food, clothing, shelter, and emergency services. This focus area also supports programs to increase self-sufficiency through building systems of support for individuals and families. These programs served about 5,880 people in 2024. In addition, the 2-1-1 help network served 1,168 individuals and the Get Connected platform and Week of Action connected hundreds of volunteers to needs.



## HEALTH

United Way helps people live healthy, independent lives. The focus of Health supports increased independence through building systems of support for older individuals, support for individuals with disabilities to live their lives fully engaged in our communities, and supporting vulnerable families and individuals by providing them tools to maintain all aspects of healthy living. These programs served about 20,224 people in 2024. In addition, the collaborative Project Community Connect resource event served more than 680.



## EDUCATION

The focus area of Education is structured to building systems of support for parents and young children to ensure that all children are ready for kindergarten, ensure youth have healthy growth and development opportunities and that youth have access to quality youth development programs that foster positive experiences. These programs served about 16,347 youth in 2024. Examples of other educational initiatives include the United Way Fourth-Grade Book Project, which served about 1,600 children; "The Kindness Booth" Book Project, which served approximately 2,000 children; and the annual Reading Festival, which served more than 350 children and families.



# CONVENING & CONNECTING

Since 1931, Greater Mankato Area United Way has served as the trusted connector for organizations, volunteers, businesses, community members, donors, local leaders, media, and others to improve the lives of all ages. United Way convenes the community to identify needs, bring awareness to topics, and facilitate action around community issues.

In 2024, Greater Mankato Area United Way brought together community members, organizations, and leaders of all levels for discussion, awareness, and action. United Way addressed urgent issues, including youth mental health, suicide prevention, substance use disorder advocacy, and more.

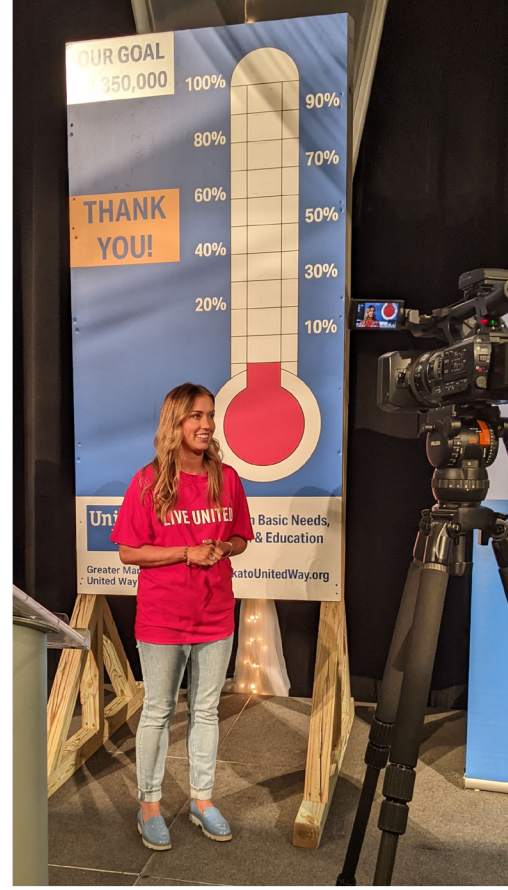
Impactful programs continued, including the Hope Squad peer-to-peer suicide prevention program in schools, as well as the Youth Mental Health Navigator program in Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet and Waseca counties. In 2024, United Way spearheaded a free community education event on the Opioid/Fentanyl Crisis and its local impact. This event was held in partnership with other community organizations through the collaborative Substance Use Disorder Advocacy Committee created several years ago by United Way.

Literacy continued to be a cornerstone of Greater Mankato Area United Way's work. Ongoing projects included the Books for Kids program, which provides free books to children ages 0 through 4 in our United Way's service area. Capstone provided over 28,000 books to this program. In partnership with the Olseth Family Foundation, Greater Mankato Area United Way's Fourth-Grade Book Project continued for the ninth year, providing 1,600 free Shel Silverstein books to fourth-grade students. In 2024, Greater Mankato Area United Way partnered with Capstone on a new literacy project as it published its own children's picture book called "The Kindness Booth." Capstone donated 2,000 copies for all first-graders in Greater Mankato Area United Way's four-county region, and the organizations coordinated with schools and volunteers to lead discussions on kindness and literacy.

Greater Mankato Area United Way also connected people and organizations to resources through tools such as Get Connected, an online volunteer management system utilized by regional organizations and volunteers, as well as 2-1-1, a community helpline. United Way played a key role in collaborative initiatives such as coat drives, school supply drives, Week of Action service projects, and more. United Way serves as the fiscal agent for Project Community Connect, an annual free resource expo for community members.

United Way had great community participation in signature events such as the Men's Event, Women with Heart, Fire & Ice, and other activities. Community involvement and support made these events possible. Greater Mankato Area United Way community groups and committees focused on making a difference, including: Always United (older adults/retirees), Grow United (rural/ag families), Engaged Leaders United (givers age 50 and under), United Circle (givers of \$2,500+ annually), and Tocqueville Society (givers of \$10,000+ annually).





**Greater Mankato Area  
United Way**



Serving communities in Blue Earth, Le Sueur, Nicollet & Waseca Counties

**LIVE UNITED**

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Mankato, MN 56001

**[MankatoUnitedWay.org](http://MankatoUnitedWay.org)**