



Rio Chantel Photography



Annual Report 2019

United Way of
Missoula County



Letter to the Community

In 2019, United Way of Missoula County continued our historic tradition of taking care of our neighbors, while continuing to evolve to best strengthen the fabric of our community.

In partnership with the business, philanthropic, public-sector, faith, nonprofit, educational, and healthcare communities, United Way programs and initiatives are decreasing childhood obesity, reducing suicide, starting children on the path to lifelong learning, ending homelessness, strengthening local nonprofits, improving outcomes for children 0-5, and helping our community better prepare for and recover from disasters.

While growing and sustaining existing programs in education, financial stability, and health, United Way launched two new community programs that illustrate the breadth of our work. First, Zero to Five Missoula County launched Montana's first-ever Kindergarten Entry Assessment, exploring what services and supports are most helpful to our youngest citizens and their families. Also, as part of our Emergency and Disaster Assistance efforts, we received a federal grant to pilot a Home Ignition Zone initiative to improve wildfire preparedness in the wildland-urban interface.

This spring, as the release of this report coincides with the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, we are especially grateful to the thousands of supporters and partners who are keeping our United Way resilient, responsive, and effective.

We are proud to share the results of United Way's 2019 work in these pages. For more details, and to join us, please visit MissoulaUnitedWay.org.

Sincerely,



Susan Hay Patrick
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



Melissa Matassa-Stone
PRESIDENT

United Way of
Missoula County



EDUCATION

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

In December, our Imagination Library delivered its 150,000th book. Each month, United Way sends a high-quality, age-appropriate new book to more than 3,000 area children under age 5, at no cost to their families. Over the past five years, 2,755 five-year-olds in Missoula and Mineral counties have graduated from Imagination Library, moving on to kindergarten better equipped to start on a path of lifelong learning.

Lead sponsor:  First Security Bank



We were excited to celebrate with Tallis and Luna Parkey as they received the 150,000th book from our Imagination Library.



EDUCATION

Zero to Five Missoula County

Zero to Five is working to make sure ALL kids in Missoula County enter school ready to learn and thrive.

In the initiative's first year, we engaged with more than 80 community organizations and 7 public school districts across the county to learn how kids and families are doing—and what they really need.

We piloted Montana's first systematic Kindergarten Entry Assessment (available at ZeroToFive.org/Missoula) planned for innovative new leadership opportunities for parents of young children, and built a network of community leaders working to make sure families can find and afford great child care.

For more information on the Kindergarten Entry Assessment, visit MissoulaUnitedWay.org/ZerotoFive.



Engaged

80 community organizations

+ **7** public school districts

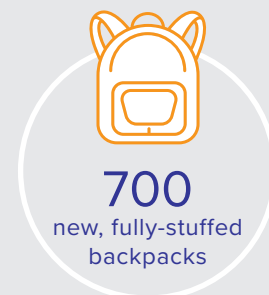
across Missoula County.



EDUCATION

Back-to-School Backpack Program

This year, our traditional school-supply program partnered with the Family Resource Centers inside Missoula County Public Schools. The result: more than 700 new, fully-stuffed backpacks distributed by neighborhood school staff who know each family, ensuring that kids most in need received the backpacks, while also connecting families to other important resources.



HEALTH

5-2-1-0 Let's Move! Missoula

5-2-1-0 Let's Move! Missoula continued to encourage active, healthy families through a monthly calendar of free/low-cost activities, and through Morning Move! where trained volunteers engage an average of 60 kids at Franklin, Lowell and Russell elementary schools in active play each morning before school starts. The kids then eat a healthy breakfast in their classrooms. When kids' brains are "jump-started" by activity and breakfast, teachers report fewer disciplinary infractions and greater levels of concentration.

In June, we also partnered with Sunday Streets Missoula to kick off Unplug And Play Week, offering families easy, free ways to reduce screen time and stay active. Missoula continues to hold the line on childhood obesity by supporting and communicating strategies to encourage families to eat healthily and be active.



Lead sponsor:  **clearwater**
CREDIT UNION



COMMUNITY

Wildfire Preparedness: Reducing Wildfire Risk on Private Property

As part of our emergency and disaster assistance work, United Way teamed up with Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) and Missoula County's Office of Emergency Management to focus on reducing wildfire risk and preventing catastrophic losses on private land throughout the county. During our Summer 2019 Home Ignition Zone pilot project, 30 homeowners paid the cost of MCC's abatement and clearing/clean-up work, and, upon inspection of the completed work, were then reimbursed 50% of the labor costs. This innovative partnership is viewed as a national model.



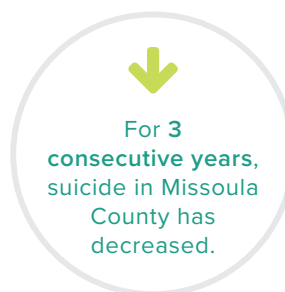
HEALTH

Project Tomorrow Montana

For three consecutive years, suicide in Missoula County has decreased. Project Tomorrow Montana's efforts to spread a message of hope and help through education, training, outreach, and support are having a positive, measurable impact. We're still working hard, but proud to be making progress.

A highlight of Suicide Prevention Week in September was the one-actor play *Every Brilliant Thing*, performed over two evenings in Missoula as part of a 50-city tour throughout Montana. This poignant, humorous play shines a light on suicide and mental health issues. Each performance was followed by a panel discussion, helping communities come together to find policy solutions and expand resources to address suicide.

ProjectTomorrowMT.org



Lead sponsor:



FINANCIAL

Reaching Home: Missoula's 10-Year-Plan to End Homelessness

Reaching Home continues to make progress on its principal goals of giving all Missoulians rapid access to safe, long-term, sustainable housing; and creating a system to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and one-time only.

Highlights of 2019 included:

- expanding capacity through staffing and structure
- creation of an Outreach Grid to better collect and store information about people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, with a goal of quickly and effectively connecting them to housing and supportive services
- advancing work to create supportive housing, a proven, highly effective—and cost-effective—strategy that combines stable housing with intensive coordinated services to address the issues faced by chronically homeless people.

Lead sponsor:



COMMUNITY

Missoula Nonprofit Center Comes to Life

The Missoula Nonprofit Center (MNC), launched in 2019, is a training, networking, and information-sharing hub that fosters the success of Missoula-area nonprofits. In 2019, MNC recruited 100 nonprofit members, hosted multiple free trainings and networking events, and facilitated collaboration through a popular weekly newsletter. The MNC website (MissoulaNonprofitCenter.org) was created by a team of students in a 2019 University of Montana College of Business Systems Analysis and Design course.

Membership in MNC also includes access to VolunteerMissoula.org, a user-friendly website and recruitment tool that connects volunteers with nonprofit service opportunities.



Members networking at the MNC launch event in May.

Day of Action Expands Volunteer Power

In June, United Way's annual Day of Action galvanized more than 130 volunteers to use their muscles on behalf of our community. Starting with a breakfast in Bonner Park, 15 volunteer teams accomplished 15 hands-on projects across Missoula and Lolo, including yard work, weeding, wildfire land restoration, and cleaning.



COMMUNITY

University United Food Friday Volunteers Help Hungry Neighbors

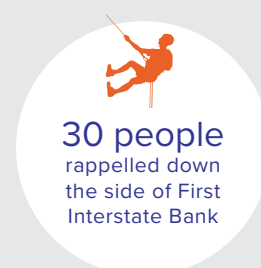
In September, United Way again partnered with the University of Montana and Missoula Food Bank for an innovative volunteer event: 400 volunteers packed more than 100,000 servings of non-perishable meals—double the meals prepared in 2018—to be shared with local families relying on the food bank.



FUNDRAISER

Over the Edge

On a Saturday in June, more than 30 courageous people rappelled down the side of First Interstate Bank's downtown headquarters during United Way's second "Over the Edge" fundraiser. This unique, fun event raised needed resources for United Way programs that strengthen Missoula.



**United Way also supported the following programs and projects this year
by supporting fundraising events and other opportunities:**

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Missoula

Boy Scouts of America
Montana Council

CASA of Missoula

Child Care Resources

Community Food and Agriculture
Coalition, Double SNAP Dollars

EmpowerMT,
Youth Leadership Summer Camp

The Flagship Program

Garden City Harvest

Homeward

Jeanette Rankin Peace Center

Living Art of Montana

Missoula Aging Services

Missoula Gives

Missoula Interfaith Collaborative

Missoula Salvation Army

Montana Food Bank Network

Montana Natural History Center

Montana Nonprofit Association

Mountain Home Montana

Poverello Center

Project Community Connect

Ronald MacDonald House

Soft Landing Missoula

St. Paul Lutheran Church
Clothing Drive

Tamarack Grief Resource Center

The Learning Center at Red Willow

UM Food Pantry

Watson Children's Shelter

Western Montana
Fund Raisers Association

Youth Homes

YWCA of Missoula

Zootown Arts Community Center
(ZACC)

**United Way of
Missoula County**



412 W. Alder St. | Missoula

MissoulaUnitedWay.org | [f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [y](#)

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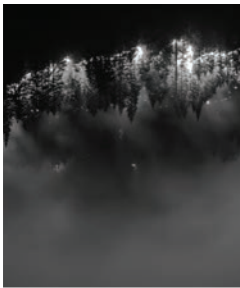
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Together, there's a **way.**

United Way of
Missoula County



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Missoula County



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