



# UNITED WAY

## Missoula County

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



# UNITED WE THRIVE: A NEW CHAPTER

Dear Friends and Partners,

Twenty years ago, our CEO Susan Hay Patrick began a journey with United Way of Missoula County that transformed our organization, while staying true to our mission of mobilizing the caring power of our community to build a better, stronger, healthier western Montana for everyone.

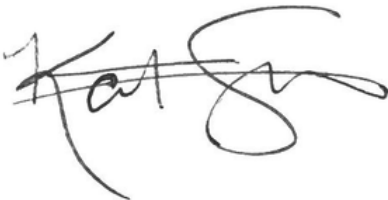
As we look back on the accomplishments and challenges of this past year, and celebrate United Way's 95th anniversary, we are also entering a new chapter as Susan's 20-year tenure draws to a close at the end of 2026. We are grateful to Susan for her leadership and dedication, and for leading the transformation of our United Way from a "pass-through" organization to a nationally respected collective-impact leader. As this annual report demonstrates, your support of our work, and the deep relationships we value with so many diverse partners, enable our United Way to make a difference every day in our community, especially in the lives of our most vulnerable neighbors.

Our community, our partners, and the people we serve have relied on the solid foundation built over the last 95 years. While it is hard to say goodbye to Susan, we are prepared for this transition. Our board of directors has named a search committee of board members and community stakeholders to select another outstanding United Way leader, ensuring that we will not miss a beat.

Susan often says that "at United Way, the answer to 'how' is 'yes,'" a philosophy that will continue to guide us as we work alongside our partners every day to realize a vision of a western Montana that offers safety, health, hope, and opportunity for everyone.

We are deeply grateful for your support and partnership. We invite you to explore this annual report to see the profound impact you have made possible.

Gratefully,



Katie Stevens

President, United Way of Missoula County Board of Directors



# YOUTH OPPORTUNITY



## ZERO TO FIVE

What makes a child “Kindergarten ready”? Five years of Kindergarten Entry Assessment (KEA) data, spanning pre- and post-COVID, are helping paint a clearer picture of what factors support kindergarten readiness in Missoula County. This data is now being shared more broadly with partners, strengthening collaborations and informing action. A new listening session protocol is also helping uncover the “why” behind the data to guide more targeted interventions.

The fifth cohort of Early Learning Fellows continues to build a connected network of professionals supporting children and families. This group is developing Early Learning Language Opportunities (ELLO), a campaign promoting caregiver-child conversations to reduce the word gap, with placement guided by KEA data across Missoula, Seeley, and Superior. Zero to Five also launched a Child Care Task Force comprising cross-sector leaders to address local child care challenges and improve access to affordable care.

## MISSOULA CHILD CARE ADVANTAGE

Early in 2025, Missoula Child Care Advantage (MCCA) celebrated its first birthday, marking a year of progress toward stabilizing access to high-quality child care in Missoula County through strong partnerships with providers and business members.

In November, MCCA faced an unprecedented challenge when sudden structural damage near the classrooms at Cold Springs Elementary required child care businesses to vacate the space immediately.

Despite the uncertainty, resilience and community support quickly emerged, with partners across sectors stepping in to help. Thanks to the dedication of providers, parents, Clearwater Credit Union, Missoula County Public Schools, and many others, within just 10 days, all five MCCA child care businesses secured temporary locations and reopened their doors.



# PARENT LEADERSHIP TRAINING INSTITUTE

In 2025, our fourth cohort of Missoula Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI) participants completed the transformative 20-week civics training, strengthening their ability to create positive change for children and families. **PLTI has now graduated 41 leaders**, who are having a growing impact on the community: alumni are championing student safety and belonging in local schools, serving on school and nonprofit boards, organizing mutual aid efforts, and supporting one another in everyday ways – from apartment hunting to last-minute childcare. Meanwhile, our Civic Design Team led a strong outreach and recruitment effort for 2026, resulting in nearly 50 applications for our fifth year.

2025 PLTI Graduation

## DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY

United Way of Missoula County continued to champion early literacy in 2025 through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library (DPIL), ensuring thousands of local children received high-quality, age-appropriate books delivered directly to their homes. **This year,**

**United Way and DPIL enrolled 674 new children and delivered more than 33,400 books to over 3,550 children across Missoula County**, helping families build home libraries and establish lifelong reading habits.

33,400

books distributed  
in 2025



# BACK TO SCHOOL BACKPACK PROGRAM

Last fall, elementary, middle, and high school students throughout Missoula and Mineral counties received brand new, fully stocked backpacks from United Way's Back to School Backpack program, setting kids up for a strong start to the school year.

Through partnerships with Missoula County Public Schools, Mineral County School Districts, Youth Homes, Soft Landing Missoula, and the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center, backpacks were delivered directly to students and families facing financial barriers at the start of the school year. This vital program was made possible through the generous support of Missoula Motor Company, ensuring students had the supplies they needed to begin the school year confident, prepared, and ready to learn.



distributed

**920**

fully stocked  
backpacks

backpack event  
at Missoula  
Motor Company



# FINANCIAL SECURITY

## HOUSING SOLUTIONS FUND



The 2025–26 Housing Solutions Fund (HSF) cycle opened in November, and **in its first six weeks of operation distributed approximately \$80,000 to 59 households** – more than 100 people – helping Missoulians remain safely housed during times of financial hardship. Program sustainability was further strengthened by securing full-year funding for the coordinator position from the Llewellyn Foundation, positioning HSF for continued impact in the year ahead.

Last fall, United Way of Missoula County was grateful to partner with Tremper Shopping Center for the Give Real Change campaign – encouraging folks shopping at the center and in Midtown to support our Housing Solutions Fund. More than \$16,000 was raised, thanks to a generous match from the Tremper family!

## TEMPORARY SAFE OUTDOOR SPACE

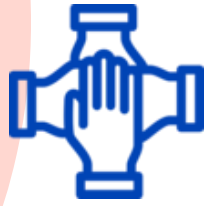
In 2025, Missoula’s Temporary Safe Outdoor Space (TSOS) continued to provide safe, supportive shelter and pathways toward stability for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. TSOS served 103 residents, including 92 adults and 11 youth. Approximately 51% exited successfully to permanent housing or long-term treatment. This is an impressive accomplishment, given the number of barriers to housing that many TSOS residents face.

The program strengthened partnerships with local organizations and public agencies, enhancing coordinated care and improving outcomes for clients. TSOS also hosted guided tours for Montana legislators and justice-system partners, helping policymakers better understand local needs and solutions.



# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

## WILDFIRE READY MISSOULA COUNTY



In 2025, collective wildfire-resilience work grew in Missoula, reducing the risk of catastrophic fire damage in our community. Wildfire Ready Missoula County, a public-private partnership between United Way and the county, completed **32 wildfire mitigation projects across 219 acres, conducted free wildfire risk assessments for more than 200 households, and engaged 150 homeowners** through community Chip Day events, helping residents take meaningful action to reduce wildfire risk.

The program also distributed more than 700 wildfire preparedness guides, supported prescribed and pile burning across 10 acres in Marshall Woods, and contributed to Missoula County’s successful receipt of a \$1.5 million Community Wildfire Defense Grant, further strengthening long-term wildfire mitigation and response efforts countywide.

## MISSOULA NONPROFIT CENTER

In 2025, the Missoula Nonprofit Center (MNC) continued to serve as a hub for connection, learning, and shared capacity-building across the nonprofit sector. **Membership grew to 135 organizations**, surpassing participation levels from previous years and reflecting strong community demand for collaboration and support. MNC maintained a weekly newsletter, keeping members informed and engaged with timely resources and opportunities.

MNC also hosted Philanthropy Day, recognizing six outstanding community award recipients. Additionally, MNC supported Montana Food Bank Network and Partners in Home Care in receiving free new websites through UM’s MIS program, helping strengthen their digital presence and organizational capacity.



# HEALTHY COMMUNITY

## HARM REDUCTION KIOSKS



In 2025, United Way of Missoula County continued to save lives through our Harm Reduction Kiosks, increasing access to life-saving overdose prevention tools for community members most at risk. Between January and November, the kiosks distributed **1,354 naloxone kits and 1,052 fentanyl test kits, while an additional \$60,000 in in-kind naloxone was provided to United Way for distribution throughout Missoula.**

As the Dose of Hope program adjusted to the closure of the Johnson Street emergency shelter and ongoing concerns about long-term distribution capacity, distribution sites were intentionally streamlined to focus on high-demand, accessible locations, including the Missoula Food Bank & Community Center and the Mountain Line Downtown Transfer Center.

## 5-2-1-0 LET'S MOVE! MISSOULA

In 2025, 5-2-1-0 Let's Move! Missoula strengthened its foundation and expanded community reach to support youth health and wellness across Missoula County. The program updated its three-year strategic plan, aligning goals with long-term sustainability and deeper impact, and raised \$11,000 in sponsorship support for the 2025-26 Midday Move program year. In partnership with Missoula County Public Schools, Midday Move is working to increase physical activity in middle schools, supporting improved wellness, stronger academic outcomes, reduced absenteeism, enhanced attention, lower stress and anxiety, and improved sleep quality.

Through ongoing community engagement, 5-2-1-0 Let's Move! Missoula distributed calendars of free and low-cost activities to approximately 1,000 residents each month. The program also hosted public screenings of the documentary "Screenagers: Next Chapter" at select MCPS schools, sparking important conversations about youth health and screen use.

# PROJECT TOMORROW MONTANA

Missoula County's suicide rate has declined for three consecutive years. While Montana continues to rank among the states with the highest suicide rates, the Missoula suicide rate was the lowest since 2019. In 2025, Project Tomorrow Montana (PTMT) built on this progress by completing a three-year strategic plan to guide future direction and sustainability. PTMT strengthened community capacity through evidence-based suicide prevention trainings, expanding the number of residents prepared to respond to crises.

PTMT also hosted two Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Trainings (ASIST) and expanded community engagement during Suicide Prevention Month and Week, the Western Montana Fair, and Missoula Pride. Recognizing that firearms account for approximately 70% of suicides in Missoula County, PTMT prioritized lethal-means safety by **distributing 840 gun locks, as well as 223 prescription disposal bags, and 56 medication lock boxes.** Together with dedicated community partners, PTMT is helping build a safer, more informed, and more connected Missoula community.

**840**  
gun locks  
distributed

*PTMT staff tabling at the Western MT fair*



# LAUGH UNITED 2

Laugh United, our annual comedy show fundraiser, returned for its second year in 2025! The evening showcased the talents of local actors, whose original skits kept the audience laughing while highlighting the power of storytelling to connect and inspire. In between the skits, short videos featured United Way staff, partners, and supporters sharing personal reflections on why this work matters and the real impact it has across Missoula. Laugh United continues to grow as a unique and engaging way to bring people together. Thank you to our sponsors for making this event possible: Blackfoot Communications, First Security Bank, Stockman Bank, First Interstate Bank, NorthWestern Energy, The Village Health & Rehabilitation, Missoula Scheels, and individual donors.

# UNITED WAY DAY OF ACTION

On June 13, **more than 100 volunteers** fanned out across Missoula, dedicating their time and energy to helping local nonprofits and improving our community. After breakfast at Cambie, sponsored by D.A. Davidson and First Interstate Bank, volunteer groups helped with gardening and landscaping at The Parenting Place as well as three different Garden City Harvest community gardens. Additional projects included packing and sorting food at the Montana Food Bank Network, cleaning up Bancroft Pond, and having all sorts of building-related fun at HomeResource, Homeword, and the Missoula Urban Demonstration Project. Volunteers also helped with projects at Travelers Rest State Park. A huge thank you to our sponsor, NorthWestern Energy, for helping make this day of hands-on volunteering a success!



# FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

We continue to proudly serve as the fiscal sponsor for TransVisible Montana, the Montana Black Collective Missoula, the Montana Organization of New Americans (MONA) and Kaleidoscope Kids Developmental Center.

Learn more about our fiscal sponsor organizations!



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

United Way also supported the following programs and projects through fundraising events and other opportunities:

Arts Missoula - CASA of Missoula - Downtown Missoula Partnership - Front Step Community Land Trust - Habitat for Humanity - Homeward - Montana Boy Scouts - Mountain Home - MT Natural History Center - SpectrUM Discovery Center - Stepping Stones - Summit Independent Living - Tamarack Grief Resource Center - The Center - The Parenting Place - Open AIR - YWCA Missoula - Youth Homes - Zootown Arts Community Center

# GRANTS

Capital Emergency Fund Grant: Missoula Interfaith Collaborative  
Emergency & Disaster Fund Grant: Missoula Food Bank & Community Center  
Opportunity Fund Grant: Families First

# UNITED WAY OF MISSOULA COUNTY BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## Officers:

President: **Katie Stevens**, Stevens & Co.

Vice President: **Todd Rahr**, NorthWestern Energy

Treasurer: **Zane Weber**, First Interstate Bank

Immediate Past President: **Randy Riley**, Wells Fargo

## Members:

**Damian Chase-Begay**, University of Montana

**Deborah Colby**, Clearwater Credit Union

**Carey Conover**, Community Volunteer

**Liz Davies**, LCSW, Montana Healthcare Foundation

**Mike Fisher**, University of Montana

**Robert Hamilton**, Lifepoint Health

**Janelle Morehouse**, Missoula Motors

**Matt Muhsam**, Worden's Market

**Jordan Pallesi**, Kris A McLean Law Firm

**Murray Pierce**, Missoula County

**Amy Shattuck**, Missoula County Public Schools

To view our full financials and support our work, scan  
the QR code or visit [missoulaunitedway.org/donate](https://missoulaunitedway.org/donate)



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# UNITED WAY

## Missoula County