

# United Way of Story County 2020-2025 Community Impact Goals

## A Collective Impact Strategy

YEAR TWO (FY 20-21) UPDATE

Dear Story County community:

We have now completed two years of programming since we announced our five-year Community Impact Goals in 2020:

- Health: Improve community healthy by serving 4,500 more people
- Education: Decrease the achievement gap by reaching 30% more underserved learners
- Financial Stability: Strengthen financial stability by increasing the number of people served by 25%

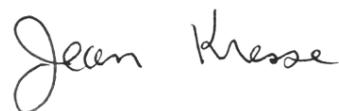
We are thrilled to report that we are making significant impact in all areas. In fact, in both Health and Education we have not only met but exceeded our overall targets for FY20-21. Although we saw decreases in the area of Financial Stability, there were still positive stories to share: Many families did not have to visit emergency food pantries because they had access to new food resources (such as free meals through every school district and increased food assistance benefits) and financial resources from governmental pandemic benefits (such as stimulus checks). In other words, many Story County households had the necessary supports to keep them from hunger!

In addition to overall wins, we are happy to report a strengthening of our collective data skills. To help agencies tell their story, United Way launched data capacity-building workshops in spring 2021 and continued to offer one-on-one supports. The result has been an increase in our ability to measure and share United Way's impact in our community.

As we continue to reimagine what's next for human services, we are emerging stronger and positioned to deal with whatever challenges lie ahead. For example, many of our mental health and education providers continue to offer tele-health and virtual platforms for support groups, awareness-raising, etc., in addition to traditional in-person services. Similarly, many of our county's emergency food programs continue to offer the curbside and/or doorstep delivery that they initiated in the height of the pandemic. We are learning new ways to make an impact.

Thank you for your continued support of United Way of Story County. Your gifts are ensuring that we are able to make a difference in Story County every day. Please take some time to learn more about the impact we are making, together.

LIVE UNITED,



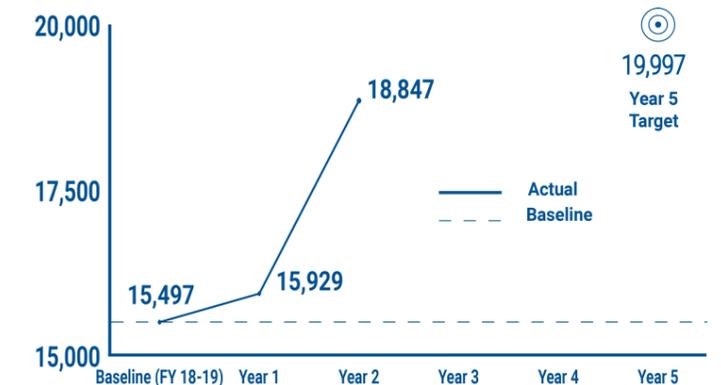
Jean Kresse  
President and CEO

Year Two reports on FY20-21 (July 1, 2020 thru June 30, 2021). This data represents a full year of programs operating under pandemic realities.

## HEALTH

Improve community health by serving 4,500 more people by 2025.

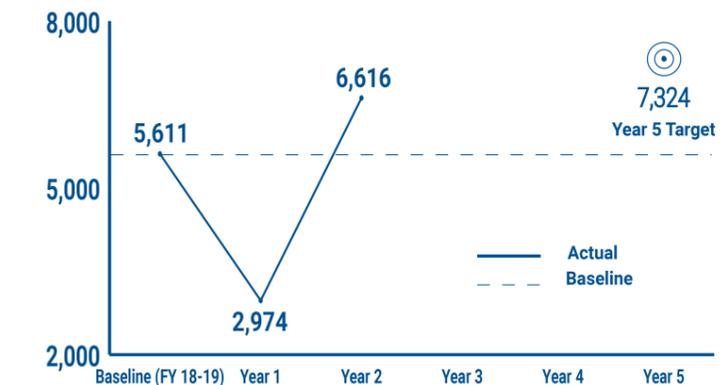
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## EDUCATION

Decrease the achievement gap by reaching 30% more underserved learners.

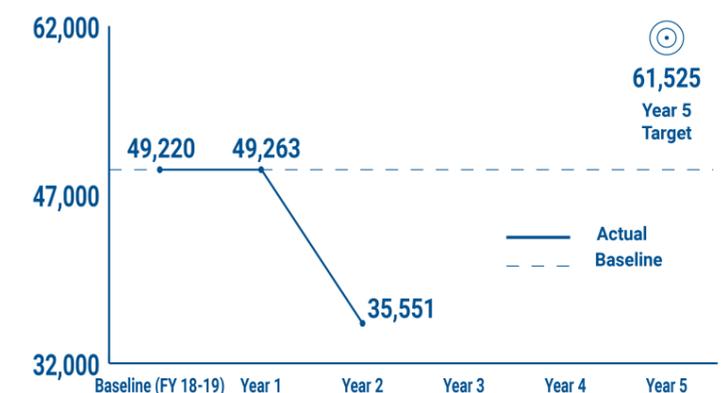
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## FINANCIAL STABILITY

Strengthen financial stability by increasing the number of people served by 25%.

(view details on page 8 of report)



# HEALTH

## Improve community health by serving 4,500 more people by 2025

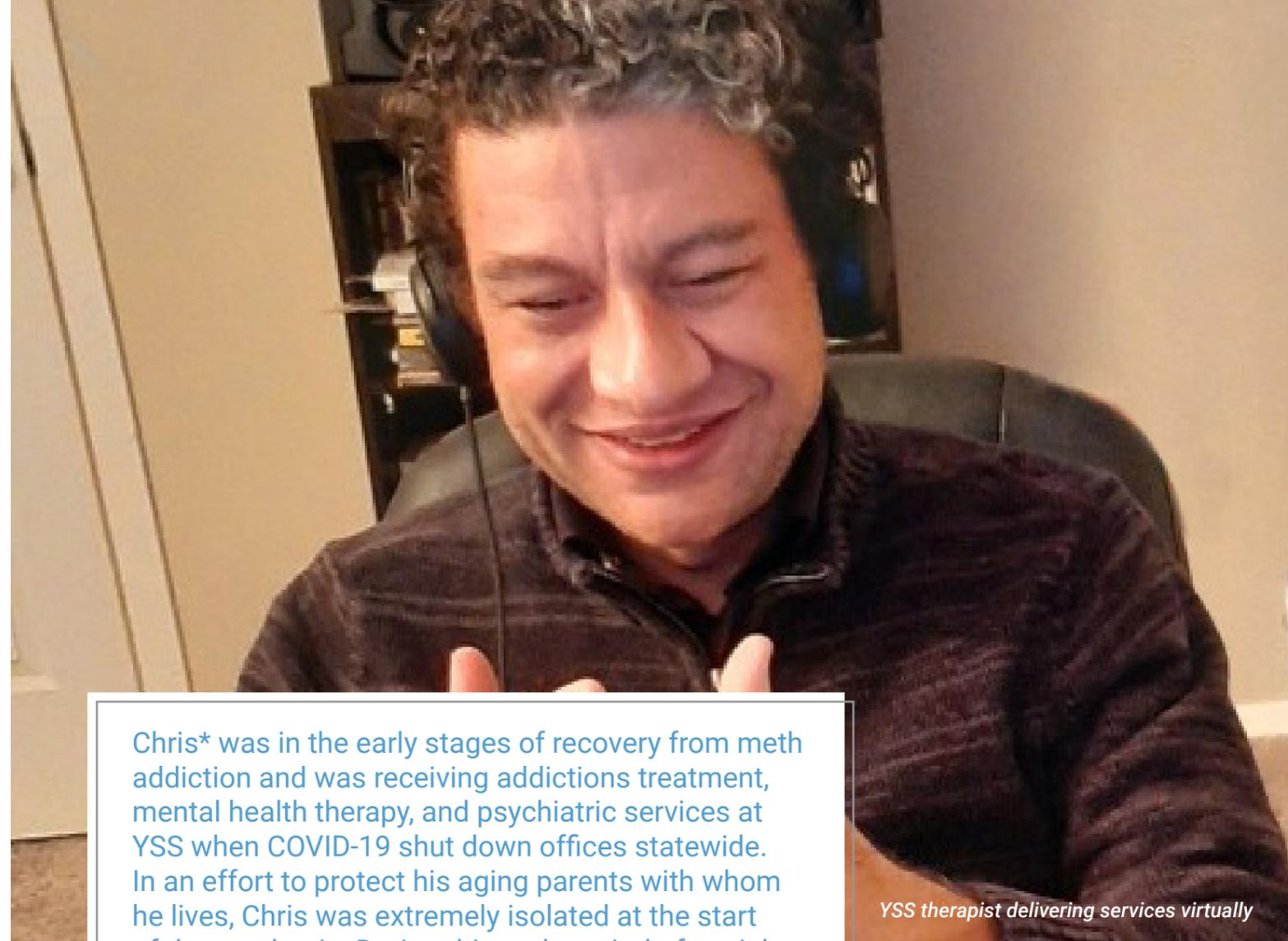
During FY20-21, 18,847 people were served to improve community health in the 4 areas we are spotlighting. That represents a 22% increase over our baseline year.

**648 individuals participated in 7 healthy food access/nutrition programs.** This was a decline from last year, as multiple programs had to close their doors for most of FY20-21 for the safety of their high-risk populations.<sup>i</sup> Yet, the Meals on Wheels program grew significantly to ensure seniors could access food all the same, with 420 individuals served! And, United Way funded the distribution of 6,510 Backpack Program™ bags in 8 elementary schools, so Story County children would have food to eat on the weekends.

**16,060 individuals participated in mental health awareness programming.** This represents an increase of 39% over baseline and far exceeds our targets for the year. Why? Our partners pivoted and found innovative ways to offer their awareness programming, including through well-attended online formats. In addition, a new, wide-spread Human Trafficking Awareness program was launched at YSS, reaching 4,039 youth.<sup>ii</sup>

**2,035 individuals provided with mental health services such as counseling and care coordination.** This was a decrease over the previous two years<sup>iii</sup> and is a metric we are monitoring. Our partners are still having a significant positive impact on our community: 216 individuals, representing 93% of those surveyed, said they had improved access to social or emotional supports due to our programs. This is no small matter in an era of increased social isolation and anxiety.

**83% of 127 surveyed said they had improved their quality of life due to programming.**<sup>iv</sup> RSVP's Volunteer Management for Disasters partnered with MGMC's Public Health to staff COVID-19 vaccine clinics. The collaborative efforts of these two partners not only increased our local vaccination rates, but also reduced social isolation of the seniors who were volunteering – a win-win!



*YSS therapist delivering services virtually*

Chris\* was in the early stages of recovery from meth addiction and was receiving addictions treatment, mental health therapy, and psychiatric services at YSS when COVID-19 shut down offices statewide. In an effort to protect his aging parents with whom he lives, Chris was extremely isolated at the start of the pandemic. During this early period of social distancing, Chris, who suffers from anxiety and has a history of trauma, was in a panic and at the highest reported risk of relapse since he began working with the YSS team. Chris' anxiety worsened and he functioned poorly.

Thankfully, all behavioral health services moved quickly to telehealth, which allowed Chris to maintain appointments with his treatment team online via Skype. The continuity of care has proven to be critical to Chris's success. Not only has he not experienced a relapse, but Chris has been proactive in managing his physical and mental health over the last few weeks. He has taken better care of himself by engaging in yoga and meditation, and has even made progress towards securing employment. With support, Chris has a bright future.

\*Clients name has been changed for privacy

Over the past 20 months, our healthcare providers have been incredibly creative and figured out ways to provide critical care. This story shared from YSS exemplifies this. United Way is proud to fund the 3 programs in which Chris participates.



# EDUCATION

## Decrease the achievement gap by reaching 30% more underserved learners

Our education programs rebounded this year after sudden school and program closures caused significant declines in numbers last year. 6,616 underserved learners were reached in year 2 in the 5 areas we are spotlighting. That represents an 18% increase over our baseline year and a 65% increase over last year!

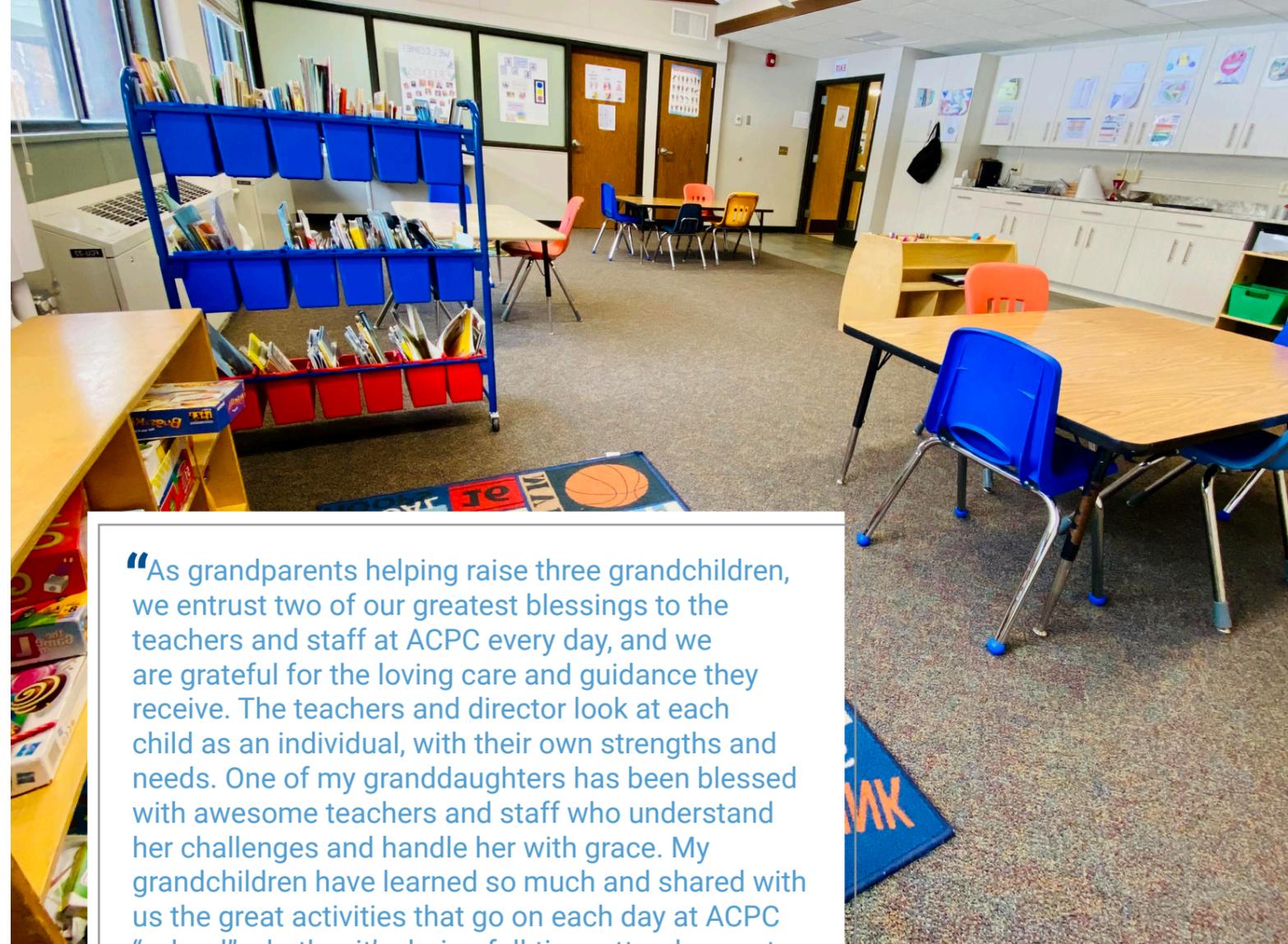
**156** children from underserved populations were enrolled in 4 high-quality early childhood programs in Story County. While this represents a decline from last year, 3 out of 4 programs actually saw increases in underserved children enrolled.<sup>v</sup> Impressively, 95% of children assessed in these programs and YSS' parenting programs met or exceeded widely-held child development expectations. These include social-emotional abilities, motor skills, and more.

**774** underserved youth, ages K-8<sup>th</sup> grade, participated in summer enrichment programs.<sup>vi</sup> This represents an increase of 17% over baseline. This year, both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts started reporting camp and membership scholarship data. This helps UWSC provide a fuller accounting of our impact on those with greatest need in our county.

**290** surveyed parents/caregivers reported they had increased their parenting knowledge and skills. This increase is notable in a year of major program changes.<sup>vii</sup> Additionally, 194 surveyed caregivers from 7 United Way-funded programs said they read the recommended daily amount to their children. We know early and frequent reading creates opportunities for academic success – and happy kids!

**617** children in UWSC funded programs improved or maintained their reading level. This is a metric to be proud of in a year in which we know many children struggled academically. These programs include not only early-childhood programs but also out-of-school programming. One such program, the Harrison Barnes Reading Academy, served 211 children through their Summer Reading Buddies program this year, with 89% of those assessed maintaining or improving! UWSC continues to provide significant financial support for the Iowa Reading Corps program. In SY20-21, this ensured that 154 struggling readers throughout the county's elementary schools got the evidence-based reading interventions they need to succeed.

**4,779** participants in community-based education programs said they had a better understanding than before. With 13 funded programs surveying participants and reporting on this metric, this is a robust data point.<sup>viii</sup> At United Way, our goal is to ensure individuals and families are better off due to our programming. As such, we work with our partners to gain qualitative data such as this. Surveys are one great tool to see if the programs we fund are actually helping move the needle – and the evidence suggests they are!



“As grandparents helping raise three grandchildren, we entrust two of our greatest blessings to the teachers and staff at ACPC every day, and we are grateful for the loving care and guidance they receive. The teachers and director look at each child as an individual, with their own strengths and needs. One of my granddaughters has been blessed with awesome teachers and staff who understand her challenges and handle her with grace. My grandchildren have learned so much and shared with us the great activities that go on each day at ACPC “school” whether it’s during full-time attendance at the Center or during the Before and After School program at their Ames Community School District elementary building.

During the pandemic of COVID-19, extra steps were taken to allow for social distancing, and masks were worn by the children and staff, just two of the many ways they strived to keep everyone safe. At the end of each day, our grandchildren came home with smiles and stories of how their day went.

Funding from UWSC helped our grandchildren be able to attend the full-time learning program because we were able to utilize the sliding scale for tuition. Without this support from UWSC, I am sure it would have been much more difficult for many families to send their children and grandchildren to ACPC. ”

All of the education programs and initiatives we support had to modify their programming during the past 20 months, and they did so in exemplary fashion. Here's one first-hand account of how the UWSC-funded sliding fee scale at ACPC made quality care possible for one family.



# FINANCIAL STABILITY

## Strengthen financial stability by increasing the number of people served by 25%

In Year 2, United Way's partners served 35,561 individuals in our financial stability focus areas. Generally, we might think that "more is better!" Yet this year, we saw that less is actually better. Why? The decrease in individuals served – a drop of 28% from baseline – was entirely attributable to a drop in visitors at emergency food programs. Pandemic support programs, such as increased food assistance (SNAP) benefits, stimulus checks, etc., meant more families were able to buy their own food. Their financial stability was improved, at least temporarily.

**33,173** individuals were served through emergency food programs. This represents a significant decline both from Year 1 and from baseline. Yet, already in the first few months of Year 3, we are seeing rising numbers once again. Interestingly, while food insecurity declined at least temporarily for a number of families during the timeframe of this report, anecdotal evidence suggests many singles and childless households still faced significant hunger. Housing insecurity also grew. In fact, both ACCESS and The Bridge Home served more individuals at their shelters in FY20-21 than in the previous 2 years and, therefore, provided more meals.

**1,625** households received emergency rent and utility assistance to help with housing cost burdens and prevent homelessness. This increase of 13% over baseline was possible in large part due to the generosity of our donors who provided additional dollars through United Way's special emergency Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund.

It is important to note that this metric pulls data from just 2 funded programs, Good Neighbor Emergency Assistance and The Salvation Army. In FY20-21, many others allocated hundreds of thousands of dollars to ensure our neighbors could stay housed. These included our local governments, faith-based organizations, new initiatives such as the Covid-19 Immigrant Fund that United Way convened with St. Cecilia, our partner agencies, and beyond. At the start of Year 3, housing insecurity continues to be a real and pressing concern in Story County.

**593** adults were able to obtain or retain their job or start or stay in post-secondary schooling. This is 348 more adults than in our Year 1 report, in large part thanks to Center for Creative Justice's data.<sup>ix</sup>

During Year 2, recognizing the pandemic's impact on employment, UWSC wrote and received an \$87,868 grant from Iowa Workforce Development for the collaborative "Story County Workforce Innovation Project.." This resulted in 26 graduates, with 42% employed in their new field just 3-months after graduation. Seven saw a wage increase with an average increase of \$2.75 / hour!

**170** surveyed individuals reported an improvement in their financial situation. This represents an increase of 66 individuals or 63% over the baseline year.

The individuals surveyed included those helped through a range of funded programs, from the Red Cross' disaster services to Legal Aid's civil assistance to financial literacy supports provided by Able Up



Wheels for Work recipients, 2021

The Wheels for Work program has been offered in Story County since early 2015. It was initiated by Ames Ford Lincoln owners, Casey and Nick Johnson, and is a favorite collaborative project of United Way of Story County. Why? Wheels for Work is a creative solution to persistent transportation barriers for working families. Further, it demonstrates that community change requires all of us: individuals, business, philanthropy, and non-profits!

In Year 2 (FY20-21), in spite of it being a full pandemic year, Wheels for Work hit its all-time record: 15 vehicles given away in a year. Fifteen families not only received transportation to get to work and contribute to their household's financial well-being, but also experienced other benefits:

*"I just wanted to say that we are very grateful and blessed with the car. It has been very helpful. We managed to go to the grocery, to church, immunization appointment for my daughters, Ames Public Library, Ada Hayden Park, free meals pick up at Sawyer elementary school, etc. We are very thankful to the donor and Wheels for Work for that!"*

*"It has led us to doing family activities, doctor appointments, being able to keep a job."*

*"It's been good for the family. It's helped out as far as my older boys, feeling confident [so they can participate in after-school activities]."*



# AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN YEAR TWO

Some of the accolades for our work in Year 2 are as follows. We also received numerous invitations to present our work at local, state, and national levels. We are grateful for each recognition and opportunity – and for your support that makes this good work possible.

## 2022 Ames Humanitarian Award Winner, 2021 Honorable Mention (Ames Human Relations Commission)

Anneke Mundel, Community Impact Director, was honored for her work convening the Covid-19 Emergency Fund for Story County Immigrants (at St. Cecilia). This largely volunteer-run Fund raised over \$374,000 to help immigrant households with rent and utilities during the pandemic, with 1,028 payments made.

## Campaign for Grade Level Reading “Bright Spot” award, Story County Reads

Story County Reads was recognized for our education initiatives’ COVID-19 response

## Campaign for Grade Level Reading Pacesetter Community, Story County Reads

This honor was achieved by less than 10% of the network! Our category for recognition was “Big Tent Collaboration”.

## ClearImpact Scorecard 2021 Feature

United Way of Story County was selected as a “Client Case Study” and featured in the national Turning Curves newsletter for our work using the Results-Based Accountability framework.

## Iowa Council of Foundations Grant Award

This award was used to help a partner agency with purchasing electronic devices for their literacy program.

## Iowa Department of Public Health Covid-19 Vaccine Outreach Funds

Governor Reynolds’ office reached out to United Ways of Iowa to request help statewide with vaccine outreach. United Way of Story County is assisting with this effort locally, in partnership with Story County Public Health.

## Iowa Workforce Development “2020 Coronavirus Relief Employer Innovation Fund” Awardee

This grant provided \$87,868 to launch three high-demand certification programs with wrap-around supports here in Story County. This project had great results: 26 individuals graduated and, of the graduates newly employed in their field of certification, 7 saw a wage increase with an average increase of \$2.75 / hour.

## Local College Access Network grant from Iowa College Aid, Year III funding for SCCAN

Story County College Access Network (SCCAN) is a multi-sector collaborative project for which United Way of Story County serves as the backbone entity to increase access and opportunity after high school graduation.

## Mid-Iowa Health Foundation Fellowship Cohort Year 2 Award

Malai Amfahr, Story County Reads director, was included in the fellowship cohort for a 2nd year. This award came with financial support of \$3,300 to move the work forward.

## United Way Worldwide “Change Management Network Champion”

Allie Prusa, Marketing Director, is part of a cohort to implement work in Digital Services through UWW.

## United Way Worldwide “Network Decision Making Workstream”

Kristin Pates, Campaign Director, is part of a national cohort to strengthen leadership and collaboration throughout the UWW network.

## Guidestar Platinum Level Seal of Transparency



UWSC earned the Platinum GuideStar Nonprofit Profile Seal of Transparency, the highest level of recognition offered by GuideStar, the world’s largest source of nonprofit information

## Charity Navigator - 100/100 Four Star Charity



UWSC earned a 4-star rating by Charity Navigator. This states that UWSC “exceeds industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause.”

# YOUR PARTNERSHIP, YOUR IMPACT

United Way of Story County’s vision is to improve the quality of life in our community for individuals and families – and we know that shared vision is why you entrust us with your dollars. We take your trust seriously.



To ensure we are addressing pressing community needs, we use the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework. We monitor county-level indicator data in health, education, and financial stability. This tells us things like how many people are considered “poor” per the federal poverty guidelines, how many households struggle with housing costs, what is happening with suicide rates, how many children are reaching educational benchmarks, and much more. We then also monitor our funded programs’ work. Our programs share a wide variety of data, with United Way then aggregating and publicizing data on 95 performance measures (see [www.uwstory.org/our-impact](http://www.uwstory.org/our-impact) and check each pillar’s Scorecard)!

Put simply, we consider:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it?
- Is anyone better off?

In other words, we care not only about the quantity of services provided but also about their quality: has our work made a positive impact in the lives of individuals and our community? To measure this, we gather not only numbers but also stories, narrative survey responses, and much more qualitative data.

This report, then, is a small snapshot of the work we do to ensure that your investments are leading to actual, positive community change. Thanks for caring and for helping us strengthen Story County!

# ENDNOTES

Report update is based on fiscal year 20-21 spanning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021.

<sup>i</sup> Among the programs that were unable to safely serve clients were Heartland Senior Services' Adult Day Center and Congregate Meals ("Friendly Lunch Bunch") and The Arc's Active Lifestyles (cooking component).

<sup>ii</sup> This year, in addition to YSS Human Trafficking program data, we were able to include additional YSS public education and awareness programming (such as Child Safety which added 223 individuals served in FY20-21 and Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention which added 1,366 individuals). In FY21-22/Year 3, we anticipate being able to report these programs' data again, as well as data from a new YSS Suicide Prevention program.

<sup>iii</sup> One of our largest partners, YSS, changed client management systems. This has improved their ability to pull data by program and county, but also resulted in a discharge of inactive clients that were previously counted in program totals.

<sup>iv</sup> Due to pandemic-related program closures and/or limited offerings, only 127 total surveys were conducted by our partners in FY20-21. 104 respondents noted our programs improved their quality of life.

<sup>v</sup> One childcare facility had significantly reduced enrollment due to social-distancing requirements and staffing challenges.

<sup>vi</sup> An estimate was utilized for YSS Summer Enrichment "underserved" learners given difficulty obtaining Free-and-Reduced Price Lunch numbers this fiscal year. Utilizing an average of 34%, an estimate of 88 youth was arrived at.

<sup>vii</sup> In FY20-21, MICA discontinued its Steps-to-Success family development program in Story County and YSS ended a parenting program formerly associated with its Transitional Living Program. In addition, 3 programs saw significant declines in numbers served due to the pandemic as both in-home visiting and in-person parent support groups had to shift to virtual and hybrid formats. This resulted in significantly lower survey response rates than typical. Thankfully, Raising Readers was able to conduct and report robust survey data for their family literacy programming, Step Into Storybooks and Advocacy for Social Development; this was data that we included for the first time in FY20-21.

<sup>viii</sup> The Year 2 data on "better understanding" reflects a 20% increase over baseline. Part of the increase is due to our partners' successful implementation of e-surveys, one way of determining impact including for virtual public education and awareness events. YSS' new Human Trafficking program, for example, was able to collect more than 4,000 survey responses in FY20-21, significantly increasing the reportable data. Similarly, ACCESS' education and awareness programming about domestic violence and sexual assault surveyed 224 individuals, a 578% increase over their baseline survey numbers (33).

<sup>ix</sup> Indeed, food pantries countywide and throughout Iowa saw a decline for much of the past year which, at first, seemed puzzling. Our pantries quickly adapted and offered curbside delivery and even doorstep delivery. They were packing larger bags and boxes of food to make sure no one went hungry. So, how could we explain this aggregate decrease in visitors? Over time, we realized that the pandemic support programs were making a significant, positive impact. This was mirrored by data from throughout the state.

<sup>x</sup> This Year 2 data was collected by programs offering childcare sliding fee scales, transitional living (housing), and newly, probation.\* Our goal is to determine whether our funding for financial stability is in fact translating into employment and/or postsecondary. \*Center for Creative Justice, a nonprofit probation provider, added this performance measure to their United Way Scorecard in FY19-20. Interestingly, some of CCJ's data, including this particular metric, is reported by the clients' probation officers. With 2 years of reporting under their belt, we see this as a reliable source of data and have now included it here alongside that of 10 other funded programs or agencies. In FY20-21, 279 CCJ clients were able to obtain or retain their job or schooling. In FY19-20, that number was 174 – lower, but still commendable. We look forward to including CCJ's data as we move forward.

<sup>xi</sup> In Year 2, The Salvation Army's Bill Payer Program was not operational. In its place, we have included data from The Salvation Army's Representative Payee Program, a program which is appointed by the Social Security Administration to receive Social Security benefits for individuals who cannot manage or direct the management of their own benefits. This program fits neatly into United Way's desired result of "increased financial capability": this program helps clients pay off past debts as individuals finances allow and also, where possible, creates a savings to help with unforeseen expenses or emergencies.

<sup>xii</sup> In Wheels for Work, donated vehicles are given a safety inspection and needed repairs before being given to a worthy household. To be eligible, the household must have a child under 18 living in the home, need the vehicle to get to work or adult education, have an income under 150% of the federal poverty guideline, and have a valid driver's license. To learn more, please visit [www.uwstory.org/wheels-for-work](http://www.uwstory.org/wheels-for-work)



**United Way of Story County**