

LIVE UNITED

United
Way



United Way of Portage County
uwportage.org

The Hand-Raiser Quarterly

E-NEWS FROM YOUR LOCAL UNITED WAY

*Our Vision: A Portage County where no resident is without food,
no child is without tools to learn, and no one is without access to care .*

May 2023

United Way of Portage County Second Quarter Updates

Join our \$10,000 Matching Grant Challenge!

Thanks to an anonymous donor,
your donation to United Way will
be increased up to \$10,000

**INCREASE YOUR
IMPACT!**

An anonymous donor has offered to donate up to \$10,000 to help United Way of Portage County fund its Community Impact partners and projects if we're able to raise \$20,000 in the month of May. With your help, UWPC and our Community Funded Partners will be able to assist vulnerable populations such as seniors, children, and those who need extra help meeting basic needs. Money



Give.



You can direct your contribution to one of the action areas- Education, Income and Health - or choose all three. As always, we will also process a restricted contribution to qualified 501(c)3 organizations. [Ways to Give](#)

Advocate.



You can make change happen. United Way needs people who are passionate about better education, income and health to stand up and make a difference. [Advocacy Information](#)

Volunteer.



United Way works with volunteers and local nonprofits to

raised in Portage County stays in Portage County. By working together, our neighbors and community members can access much-needed support 365 days a year.

Please donate today!

DONATE

News from the CEO, Bill Childers:

billc@uwportage.org - 330.297.1424 x5

May 4th at KSU

The tragic events of May 4, 1970, had a profound impact on Kent State University, the nation and the world. In the ensuing years, Kent State's learning community has honored the memories of Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer and William Schroeder



with an enduring dedication to scholarship that seeks to prevent violence and promote democratic values from public service to civil discourse.

Each year on May 4, Kent State University observes several important and meaningful events to remember and honor the students killed and wounded on May 4, 1970. One important aspect of the May 4 anniversary activities is the annual candlelight walk and vigil.

Learn more about the May 4th Annual Commemoration [here](#).



May is Mental Health Awareness Month!

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. With a growing number of Americans experiencing mental health symptoms, we need to join together to advocate for improving our community's mental health care system.

Together, with our community funded partners, volunteers, donors and neighbors, we can realize our shared vision of a nation where anyone affected by mental illness can get the support and quality of care to live healthy, fulfilling lives.

Here are some local agencies that help Portage County residents:

- United Way 211 Info Line - dial 211 from any phone
- Mental Health & Recovery Board - 330-678-HELP or 988
- Coleman Health Services - 1-877-796-3555
- Family & Community Services - 330-297-7027
- Townhall II - 330-678-3006 or 988

provide the best opportunities for youth, busy working adults and seniors.

[Volunteer Opportunities](#)

UWPC Events

6/23/23 - Day of Caring

Partner Events

05/13/2023 - Girls on the Run - 5k at Canal Park in Akron at 8 a.m.

05/17/2023 - Habitat for Humanity - Recycle Extravaganza @ The Habitat ReStore from 5 - 8 p.m.

06/5/2023 - Kidney Foundation of Ohio - Golf Outing in Memory of Dennis Kennedy at Sweetbriar Golf Club



All over the world, moms are dedicated to building a better future for their children. And United Way has their backs.

The community spirit that drives United Way's mission is inspired by the boundless love and hard work of mothers everywhere.

This Mother's Day, we want to not only show our appreciation for the hard work and personal sacrifice of mothers, grandmothers and mother figures around the world, but also reflect on how we can come together to support them.

- Children's Advantage - 330-296-5552
- Safer Futures - 330-673-2500 - 24-hour line

Resource Development

Heather Rainone - hrainone@uwportage.org - 330.297.1424 x3

Coming together for United Way of Portage County!

NCAA Watch Party @ Ray's Place Kent

More than 100 people joined us on Thursday, March 16 as we hosted an NCAA Tournament Watch Party to cheer on our favorite teams and raise funds for United Way.

People stopped by Ray's Place upstairs to have lunch with us, bid on raffle baskets and participate in \$5 and \$10 Championship Squares. Ray's Place graciously donated a portion of the food & drink sales during the event to United Way.



Second Annual Reverse Raffle

Our Second Annual Reverse Raffle was held on Thursday, April 13 was a great success thanks to our amazing donors, supporters and volunteers! The event was held at the Ravenna Elks Lodge where attendees enjoyed dinner from Guido's and drinks, many raffle baskets, a 50/50 raffle, side boards and a \$2,000 grand prize. We hope everyone enjoyed the evening and thank you for supporting your local United Way! Congratulations to our winners - the holders of the five final numbers who agreed to split the prize!

Thank you to the United Way Staff, Board Members and Campaign Committee Members who helped set up, sell raffle tickets, and attend the event.



UWPC supporters gathered for the Reverse Raffle on April 13 at the Ravenna Elks Club.



Five winners shared the \$2,000 Reverse Raffle grand prize to cap off a great night!

Thank you to our sponsors!

ALLEN AIRCRAFT PRODUCTS, INC.



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Community Health Centers

Family & COMMUNITY SERVICES, INC.
Counseling Services

Portage COUNTY
Commissioner Anthony Badalamenti

PORTAGE COMMUNITY BANK

HOPE TOWN
RECOVERY HOUSING

The Fowler Family
Julie Piccione Beach
Phil & Lisa Faluotico
Roderick Ingram

For more information about United Way of Portage County events or sponsorships, please contact Heather Rainone at hrainone@uwportage.org or call 330.297.1424, x3

2022-2023 Campaign

The United Way of Portage County 2022-2023 Workplace Campaign and individual giving efforts are in full swing! Thank you to all of the wonderful companies and individual donors who support our fundraising work as you are truly the difference makers in our community.

UWPC has reached 61% of our \$725,000 campaign goal!



Thank you to those who have donated through your workplace campaign, direct mail, UWPC events and more! Please help us reach our goal if you are able. Donate [HERE!](#)

Ways to Give to United Way of Portage County



Visit our website
www.uwportage.org



Scan this QR code

Community Impact

Maureen Gebhardt - maureng@uwportage.org - 330.297.1424 x4

Literacy Kits Benefit Portage County Youth

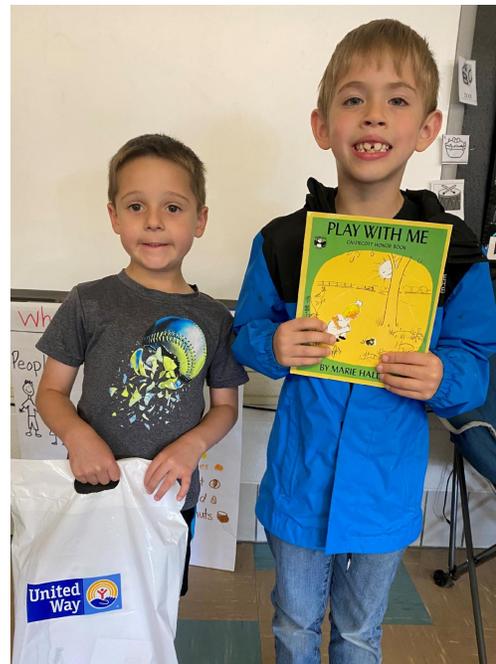


United Way of Portage County CEO and President Bill Childers delivered Literacy Kits to kindergarten teachers at Walls Elementary School in Kent including Kristen Molnar, Sierra Kale and Marisa Behringer.

[Text Link](#)

This school year our Reading Role Model volunteers have read to 600 kindergarten students for a total of 68 volunteer hours valued at \$2,163 per the national volunteer value of \$31.80 per hour. Throughout the school year our volunteers visit Rootstown, Suffield, Brimfield, Walls (Kent), Ravenna, Streetsboro and Windham elementary schools. **You can become a Reading Role Model by visiting uwportage.org and going to our [volunteer page](#).**

These 600 kindergarteners will also receive a Literacy Kit in May thanks to the partnership with Kent State University students, staff and alumni through the Community Engaged Learning program and various in-service events. The kits include a children's storybook paired with a hands-on activity created to follow the story and encourage the love of reading and generate long-term school success. The current kits are based on the children's book, "**Play With Me,**" a Caldecott Honor Book by Marie Hall Ets.



The purchase of the books for the literacy kits are made possible through your generous donations and sponsorships to "The Literacy Kit Program."

To sponsor our Literacy Kit Program, click [HERE](#).



Day Of Caring - June 23, 2023

We currently have 13 projects listed with approximately 70 volunteers registered with spots still available for projects and volunteers. If your agency would like to submit a project please email maureeng@uwportage.org. If you'd like to volunteer, visit our volunteer page at uwportage.org.

Day of Caring is a one-day community-wide event where volunteers are paired with project needs to benefit the community. Local businesses, city/county governments, social service agencies and residents from

all corners of the community come together to make a positive lasting impact. Volunteers tackle meaningful projects addressing community and agency needs.

If you'd like to sponsor this event, click [HERE](#).

National Volunteer Week Celebration

As you know United Way of Portage County is extremely grateful for its many volunteers, and we are always thinking of ways to show our appreciation for your dedication and generosity.

This year we celebrated National Volunteer Week by handing out popcorn from Popped! to all those volunteers who generously dedicate their time to us and help us make a difference in our community.

Thank you for making a difference!

Create a volunteer account and view opportunities on our volunteer page at uwportage.org.



Our Community Funded Partner Programs

Maureen Gebhardt - maureng@uwportage.org - 330.297.1424 x4

Hope Town Recovery Housing

Hope Town promotes long-term recovery, self-initiative, and increased independence by providing residents with access to the resources they need to make lifestyle changes. Hope Town Recovery Housing aims to remove common barriers to successful recovery by providing affordable housing in conjunction with other services to help residents and the recovery community at large sustain quality of life improvements.

Hope Town has opened a 15-bed female recovery house in Windham to go along with the 20-bed male house. They also purchased run Hope Town on Wheels, a transportation service to provide rides to medical appointments, treatment and recovery meetings! Many of the residents are getting jobs and successfully graduating treatment. [Read more at their website.](#)



Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity of Portage County continues to build houses for those in need throughout the community. The ReStore in Kent remains open during normal hours.

There are several volunteer opportunities at both the constructions sites in Ravenna and at the ReStore in Kent. Individuals and groups are both welcome to volunteer. For volunteer opportunities, please contact Kaleena, at volunteer@habitatofportage.org.

Girls on The Run

GOTR is a confidence-building program for girls in 3rd through 8th grade. The program has been adapted to ensure the health and safety of our volunteers and program participants. Activities have been modified to allow for social distancing and individual program materials, such as personal workbooks and markers, to ensure materials do not need to be shared. A virtual programming option has been added to allow girls to participate who prefer to not attend in-person programming. To learn more or volunteer your time, visit girlsontherun.org



The Girls on the Run 5k will take place on May 13th in Akron. Click the link above for more information.



Kidney Foundation of Ohio

The Kidney Foundation of Ohio provides direct financial assistance to patients suffering from renal (kidney) disease that enables them to receive their lifesaving medications and treatments. In 2021, the Foundation served over 1,000 patients.

The Foundation is experiencing an increase in requests for assistance for transportation, medication and emergency assistance. Patients suffering from kidney disease are particularly vulnerable to experiencing COVID-19. Dialysis patients who contract COVID-19 must go to an isolation unit, which can be a far distance from their regular dialysis unit. Patients can struggle to afford the extra expenses. For more information, visit the [website](#).



Big Brothers, Big Sisters

Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Eastern Ohio and Western PA provides children facing adversity with strong and enduring, one-on-one mentoring relationships. The program is looking for volunteers to join the community-based mentoring program. Volunteers must be able to spend 12 hours per month, for at least one year, with their match. Volunteers spend quality one-on-one time with

their match, participating in activities such as taking a walk in the park, listening to music, going to a football game, playing board games or going to a museum. If you're interested in becoming a Big Brother or Big Sister, visit their [website](#).

RSVP of Portage County

RSVP is one of the largest volunteer networks in the nation for people 55 and over. You can use the skills and talents you've learned over the years, or develop new ones while serving in a variety of volunteer activities within your community.



Opportunities for volunteering include: food pantry support, hot meal distribution, summer youth programs, friendly visitor with a homebound senior, transportation assistance to local medical appointments and needed errands to maintain independence and supporting our area senior centers.

For more information, visit their website [here](#).

