



United Way
of East Central Iowa

WE FIGHT FOR *those in need*

From the CEO



A new year is upon us and I am hopeful we're all keeping our resolutions! Although most of us are ready to be done with winter and looking forward to spring, humor me for a moment and let's think back to the holidays for a little reflection.

Were you a Secret Santa this year? You know, the fun activity

where you draw a name and secretly give gifts to another until they guess correctly who their Secret Santa is? I grew up with a slightly different version. My family would find a person in need, someone we knew could use some extra holiday cheer, and we would secretly shovel their driveway, drop off baked goods and maybe a small gift or two. They never knew who did it and that is what made it so special to us. In the years that followed, I carried that tradition forward for my children. And now that my children are grown and married and having children of their own, I'm confident soon people they know will wake up to shoveled sidewalks, a basket of goodies, or something needed. This secret, yet sincere, way of giving always moves me to tears. You see the impact of your generosity, and that is enough. As they say, "It's about the cause, not the applause."

In many respects, this is similar to your contribution to United Way. The person who has a safe place to sleep tonight, the family with food on their table, and the parent who knows their child will get the help needed to grow up healthy may not know you had a part in helping them, but you do. Your role in fighting for the education, financial stability, and health of every person in our community is important and so very appreciated.

As we continue to reflect on the memories of good times spent with family and friends, it is also a time to be mindful of those in need, to show generosity and compassion, and set goals. In this spirit, all of us at United Way of East Central Iowa want to thank you for your support. Your generous contributions of time and money back the important work of local agencies and United Way. We do not take this trust and dedication lightly. It is our promise and "resolution" to work together and make 2019 another United, successful year—thanks to you.

With sincere gratitude,

Tim Stiles
President & CEO

Game Changers: A Year in Review

Thursday, March 7, Doors open at 7:30 a.m.
Cedar Rapids Marriott

Join us for a buffet breakfast as we recognize companies and individuals who have gone above and beyond in the fight for our community. We will present four awards to local volunteer and philanthropic leaders.

[Register at uweci.org/game-changers](http://uweci.org/game-changers) by February 28.





Youth Today, Leaders Tomorrow

The investment we make in our youth is critical for our community. In our newly-released Condition of Youth Report, we share what researchers have identified as the key building blocks to a child's success and how we are partnering with local nonprofits to make sure the youth in our community are supported.

[Read about the Condition of Youth in our Community under Education Reports at uweci.org/reports.](http://uweci.org/reports)



Family Volunteer Day 2018

Despite being the first snow of winter, more than 90 people joined us for Family Volunteer Day in November to put together literacy kits for families in our community. The kits were based around the book *Hi! Fly Guy*, and not only did each kit include a copy of the book, but also supplies for re-usable activities at a variety of skill levels that tie to the story. In just two hours, the group was able to surpass our goal of 100 volunteer kits which were handed off to our Volunteers in Proficiency Program!

[Learn more about the event at blog.uweci.org/family.](http://blog.uweci.org/family)



Recognize Volunteers, Celebrate Art

In honor of National Volunteer Month, our Young Leaders Society (YLS) will host Time for Art: A Celebration of Volunteers on Friday, April 5. Join us at Eastbank Venue + Lounge for a unique evening including a silent art auction—bid only with volunteer hours!—and an award ceremony celebrating volunteers in our community.

[Learn more and register at uweci.org/timeforart.](http://uweci.org/timeforart)



Breaking the Cycle of Poverty

We're working to break the cycle of poverty in our community, but what exactly does that mean? In our new blog series, *Breaking the Cycle of Poverty*, we're highlighting the work and dedication of our partner agencies and programs to share an inside-look at what we do and how it's making a difference in our community.

[Explore this new series today at blog.uweci.org/series.](http://blog.uweci.org/series)