

# WE FIGHT FOR LASTING CHANGE



**UNITED WAY**  
East Central  
Iowa

NEWSLETTER | NOVEMBER 2024

## A NOTE FROM OUR CEO

As we roll into fall and the start of winter and the holidays, our minds naturally turn to how to give back to our community through gifts of our time, dollars, and voice, or through volunteering, investing, and advocating.

This is also the time of year when a light is shined on supporting our community's safety net services. A key resource for people looking to volunteer during the Holiday Season is United Way of East Central Iowa's (UWECI's) Annual Holiday Giving Guide. Weather it's serving a meal for people or providing gifts for a family, there's so much to choose from. Investing your dollars in supporting our communities' safety net services is so very important as the weather turns cold and people's basic needs increase. You can also still find your voice by attending our Civic Circle cohort that helps you find your passions and place in our community.

At United Way we don't want one situation to put a family back for years. We want our community to have a strong base of safety net services to catch them when they fall and bounce them back to where they were. Your efforts of volunteering, investing and advocating for those strong supports is vital to our healthy community. Thank you for choosing to build community VIA United Way!



*Kristin Roberts*

**Kristin Roberts**  
President & CEO



ECONOMIC MOBILITY



CHILDHOOD SUCCESS



ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE



SAFETY NET SERVICES

## HOW WE SUPPORT SAFETY NET SERVICES

**10,000+**  
individuals supported  
through safety net services

**6,329**  
individuals  
contacted 211

**10 million+** pounds of food were distributed  
through our partners.

When we support Safety Net Services, we want to "catch" individuals and families and help them bounce back if they fall onto challenging times. Recently in our community, there has been an increase in the number of individuals served by local emergency shelters and transitional housing facilities, and more working families needing access to food pantries.

At United Way, we are addressing these issues through engaging and mobilizing community members to create a community where everyone feels secure. As a leader in the Alliance for Equitable Housing, we are a part of the homeless systems redesign, which is working to identify barriers and implement effective strategies for our community.

From this work, the Landlord Tenant Success Initiative aims to foster strong tenant-landlord relationships by successfully accommodating 30 housing-challenged tenants with private, for-profit landlords within Linn County. Additionally, we are supporting families and individuals by educating and promoting 211, a free service that helps you find a variety of resources. Through this combined effort, along with others, we are fostering a thriving Eastern Iowa.

## COLLEGIATE BOLD

Using our voices to advocate for what matters most is essential. Our Collegiate BOLD program provides college students in Linn County with the opportunity to develop the fundamental skills needed to serve on junior boards and student organizations, empowering them to advocate and make a difference in our community. What started at Kirkwood Community College, quickly expanded to Mount Mercy University, Coe College, and Our Future to encourage more students to be community driven individuals. Our Future is a paid fellowship program that equips emerging leaders with the tools they need to be valued and empowered advocates for justice, sustainability, and equity. Emily Grace, a Collegiate BOLD advisor, said she encourages students to join because it provides students an opportunity to get involved, step up, and lead.

Learn more about Collegiate BOLD at [uweci.org/collegiateBOLD](http://uweci.org/collegiateBOLD).



**“ I see so many student leaders who don't believe they are a leader. They don't realize that they have the interest, skills, and ability to be a leader, and BOLD helps them own their leadership skills!” –Emily Grace**



## HOLIDAY GIVING GUIDE

Here's your guide to holiday giving - a resource full of volunteer opportunities and details to connect you to organizations that need support the most this season.

Find an opportunity that fits your skillset and schedule here at [uweci.org/volunteernow](http://uweci.org/volunteernow).



## STAY CONNECTED, SHARE OUR IMPACT

We believe each one of us has the power to ignite change in our community VIA United Way.

By staying connected with us, you can learn about different volunteer opportunities, find areas of interest to invest in, and discover ways to use your voice to advocate. **Stay connected by subscribing to a newsletter that fits your interest by visiting [uweci.org/newsletters](http://uweci.org/newsletters).**

## INVEST IN A BETTER EASTERN IOWA

Through our Unite to Inspire strategy, we need your investment of dollars to build a community where everyone can thrive. We all have a stake in creating a healthy and equitable Eastern Iowa, and we are



counting on your contribution as community champions to help us create lasting impact.

Support growth in our community by donating to UWECI today at [uweci.org/donate](http://uweci.org/donate).

