ADVANCING THE COMMON GOOD: CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

United Way is working to advance the common good by focusing on the three specific areas of education, income and health. The goal of United Way is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. Together, communities can inspire hope and create opportunities for a better tomorrow.

United Way believes everyone deserves the opportunity to have a good life. This includes a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health (United Way Worldwide, 2012). This is why United Way of the Bluegrass, alongside community members, has focused efforts on three core building blocks:

- **Health** – Improving people’s physical wellbeing
- **Income** – Promoting financial stability and independence
- **Education** – Helping children and youth achieve their potential

Advancing the common good, utilizing this impact agenda, is less about helping one person at a time and more about changing systems to help everyone. We are all connected, interdependent and we need one another grow and prosper. Everyone wins when a child succeeds in school, when families are financially stable, and when people are healthy (United Way Worldwide, 2012). Living united means being a part of the change. It takes everyone in the community working together to create a brighter future. Give. Advocate. Volunteer. LIVE UNITED.

EDUCATION

Education is the foundation upon which individual, community and societal successes are built. Over the course of next three years, across nine Kentucky counties, United Way of the Bluegrass will invest financial resources into 31 programs that directly impact issues and concerns in the field of youth education. These programs aim to improve early childhood education, increase parental involvement in the education process, and raise high school
graduation rates – just to name a few. These programs will work together towards the common goal of strengthening education and produce educated citizens that go on to achieve great successes for themselves and their families.

As of this printing, 29% of all children ages 5 and younger that reside in the UWBG service area live below the poverty line. Other community conditions of note:

- Annually, more than 700 students drop out of school in the nine counties served by United Way of the Bluegrass.
- On average, 31% of fourth graders read below proficient levels.
- 79%, or 353, early childhood development centers do not participate in the quality learning program STARS for Kids Now.
- An estimated 6,766 children under the age of 5 live in defined poverty with an additional 4,977 in “working poor” families.

This means, more than 11,000 young children are at an increased risk of not receiving quality early childhood education services every year. Early childhood education establishes a good foundation that plays a role in a child’s future academic achievement and economic productivity.

The primary goal of quality early childhood education programs is to ensure all young learners are prepared to succeed in school. In addition, a recent study from the University of Minnesota found that, many years later, participants in a high-quality preschool program had increased high school graduation rates, increased employment earnings, and decreased arrest rates. The societal and cultural improvement derived from education has not only been shown to reduce incarceration rates, but children who attend these programs are also less likely to become teenage parents or become dependent on welfare.

"The best way to improve the American workforce in the 21st century is to invest in early childhood education, to ensure that even the most disadvantaged children have the opportunity to succeed alongside their more advantaged peers."

~ James Heckman, Nobel Laureate Economics

| Each year, $1 Million will be invested X ($8 to $13 return) | $8 – 13 Million Saved in future costs | Every $1 invested in early childhood programs saves $8-$13 in future expenses related to education, crime, welfare and tax savings | $8 MILLION COULD FUND: 794 full scholarships to the University of Kentucky, or 177 more Police Officers, Or 200 additional High School Teachers |
INCOME

When it comes to describing financial security, thousands of families struggle daily to secure resources necessary for basic survival, let alone to invest and accumulate wealth. Over the course of the next three years, across nine Kentucky counties, United Way of the Bluegrass will invest community resources into 39 programs that directly impact financial stability. Nineteen programs will focus on providing essential services that directly impact low-income earners, while others explore the areas of financial education and increasing personal affluence. These programs are all working towards the common goal of increasing stability and self-sufficiency in the Bluegrass Region.

The primary goal of being financially stable is to earn enough money to meet basic needs while also maintaining some monetary cushion or rainy day fund. For families struggling to make ends meet, this is easier said than done; leaving them unable to save for college, a home, medical leave, or retirement. Increasing the availability and access to basic services, while connecting low-income families with appropriate education, lends itself to improving financial literacy. Having the knowledge and resources to manage expenses will make it possible for families to earn more, avoid unnecessary debt, and increase their savings for their future.

Currently 16%, or 75,743 people in the UWBG service area are living in poverty. Additionally,

- 11,424 eligible for work are unemployed.
- An estimated 21,224 individuals are eligible but not receiving earned income tax credits.
- For 27,912 households rent comprises more than 30% of their income.
- 121% increase in Fayette County bank foreclosures in the past year.

Securing resources and financial knowledge will move families in the right direction—towards stability and prosperity. As a result of the work of United Way of the Bluegrass, over 28,000 impacts will be made in the areas of increasing food security, providing emergency services, and aiding in debt management, over the next three years.

“And what I am interested in, is investing in people.”
~Arthur Rock, American Venture Capitalist

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| Each year, $1 Million will be invested | Every $1 invested in financial stability programs saves $2* in future expenses | $2 MILLION COULD FUND: |
| X (2 return) | *this dollar amount is based on internal CKEEP data | Tax preparation services for 15,500 people |
| $2 Million | or | or |
| Saved in future costs | Help 10,000 people pay for heat during the winter |
HEALTH

According to the Institute of Medicine in Washington D.C., “children with health coverage are better prepared to learn in school and succeed in life,” (2000). Health affects everyone, but it has the most negative impacts on the poverty stricken, those without insurance, and low-income children. Whether it is a child without health insurance, a parent that cannot afford healthy food choices or a person struggling with addiction, United Way of the Bluegrass is working to ensure everyone has access to a healthy way of life.

Currently, 16% of those residing in the nine county service area—65,200 adults and 11,296 children under age 18—are without health insurance. Additionally,

- On average, over 1,000 Central Kentuckians die from heart disease annually, the leading cause of death for the region.
- Over 355,000 emergency room visits in Central Kentucky hospitals annually.
- 29% of Central Kentuckians are considered obese.
- Due to this obesity, 28,000 children and 146,000 adults are twice as likely to develop serious medical conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, breathing problems, and/or high blood pressure.

Over the course of next three years, across nine Kentucky counties, United Way of the Bluegrass will invest its resources into 34 programs that directly impact issues related to health, 24 of which focus on providing essential healthcare services. This provision, coupled with encouragement of healthy lifestyles and promotion of preventative services, help us achieve the common goal of strengthening the health of people living in central Kentucky. Because of the efforts of UWBG, over the next three years, this region will witness more than 11,000 impacts made in the areas of exercise and diet alone. As a result of these health intensive efforts, we will see a greater number of healthy people in these communities.

**INVESTING $1 IN PREVENTION SAVES $4-$6 IN FUTURE HEALTH CARE COSTS**

**THIS MEANS.....Annually**

$280,000 Invested in Prevention X

$4 to $6 return = $1.12 – $1.68 Million

saved in future expenses

“Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.”

~Winston Churchill