



MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.

Merrill Area United Way, Inc.

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Merrill Area United Way
Dee Olsen, Executive Director

Our lives are built around certain expectations. During the winter we expect the highways and the street roads to be plowed. We expect the utilities to provide energy for heat in the winter, and cool in the summer. We expect our refuse to be picked up at curbside, or by a private provider. If we are sick, we expect doctors to help us. This list goes on forever. But not all people can have such expectations. There are people in our community that have no expectations, or limited expectations. Sometimes it is because they are unable to cover the costs of some of the most basic needs in their lives. Others, because of life choices they have made.

The community cannot be held responsible to ensure that everyone's expectations are met, but we certainly can get engaged to help improve those expectations for others. We have all fallen short of our own expectations at one point or another. The Merrill Area United Way felt that pang a little during this recent fall campaign. Although multiple efforts were made to try to reach our goal, we didn't meet our expectations. The ripple effects of all that has an impact on our local organizations and the 20 agencies we serve and assist with their funding needs.

Twenty-one incredible people serve on the Merrill Area United Way Board. They are strong and determined to do the best they can to seek positive, meaningful impact and outcomes in our primary areas of health, education, and basic needs. Intent on trying to meet the 2024 funding allocation requests of our agencies, the Board agreed to apply every single dollar raised from the campaign to this year's allocations funding. In addition, they supported providing yet another \$10,000 to aid in meeting that need. Clearly by doing this, there were ZERO funds applied for administration or operations. It will be a tighter budget for 2024 as reserve funds will have to support operations for 2024. We are driven to try to expand the campaign for 2024-25 by engaging in additional workplace campaigns.

Around the corner for United Way is the development and unveiling of a new website in early 2024. The United Way Annual meeting will be held on Monday, February 5th, 2024, at 5 p.m. The public is welcome to attend. This meeting will be at Incredible Bank, lower-level conference room, 3210 East Main Street, Merrill. For further information send us an e-mail. WJMT will host United Way and a chosen agency on their "Our Town" radio program on January 29th.

The 2023-2024 United Way campaign has concluded, but donations can be given all year. If you wish to support ongoing community efforts, please send your check to Merrill Area United Way today to P.O. Box 813, Merrill, WI 54452. All dollars stay local and support our twenty funded agencies and programs. For more information about the MAUW visit our website at merrillareaunitedway.org or email delores.olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org. Or, call 715-536-2016. Let's make 2024 great!