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**MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.**

**Merrill Area United Way, Inc.**

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Merrill Area United Way

Dee Olsen, Executive Director

United Way is a month away from the tough decisions. Depending on how the annual campaign closes out, these decisions may be tougher than in recent years. The campaign wraps up the first week in November; we should then have a good sense of how much money is available to support our funded agencies.

These agencies rely heavily on United Way to help them meet their budget and to be able to provide the services and support they give to people. What makes it really hard is knowing that every agency, and every service they provide, makes a big difference in the lives of our citizens. It’s like the old saying – you don’t know what you have until it is gone. Let’s all work together to keep what we have strong. Every day we see the value these agencies bring to our community.

Our agencies are not-for-profit 501-c3 organizations. Each year they make application to United Way for funding based on the programs and services they are providing. United Way’s entire focus is to support impact programs for the areas of ***health*** (physical, mental, and dental), ***basic needs/income*** (housing, utility assistance, food, meeting children’s needs) and ***education*** (subsidize needs, safety, and more), ensuring opportunities for all children. Thus, the agencies work to address these impact areas in their funding requests.

In mid-November, after reviewing the applications, United Way team members evaluate the funding requests to align the programs with our impact areas. The amount of money we can award to the agencies is based on what we receive during campaign. If we do experience a soft campaign and do not reach our goal of $230,000 then we must cut the amount of funding in the allocation process. In the end it is basic budgeting – we can’t spend more than we can take in. So, to sustain this incredible level of work United Way needs a successful fall campaign.

So where do the funds go? These are the 2023-2024 Organization/Programs supported by United Way:

Salvation Army, North Central Community Action Program, Merrill Community Food Pantry, Peaceful Solutions, Inc., Merrill Community Homeless Center aka MAC Home, Our Sisters House for homeless (Tomahawk), Boys and Girls Club-Merrill, The Nest, Parkside Preschool Center, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Samoset Council Boy Scouts-Merrill, Girl Scouts, Family Resource Center, Merrill Safety Patrol, St. Vincent De Paul Outreach, Childcaring, Inc., HAVEN, Food For Kids, Christmas Spirit Appeal, 2-1-1 Help Line, and other interim special requests.

For more information on United Way visit our website is [www.merrillareaunitedway.org](http://www.merrillareaunitedway.org) . Consider a donation check to Merrill Area United Way, at P. O. Box 813, Merrill 54452. For further information email us at [delores.olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org](mailto:delores.olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org) ; or call our part-time office at 715-536-2016.