

**MERRILL AREA UNITED WAY, INC.**

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P.O. Box 813

Merrill, WI 54452

715-536-2016

**Delores.Olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org**

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Merrill Area United Way

Dee Olsen, Executive Director

Every toe was tapping to the lively music of Leslie Blasing at the recent “Concert for A Cause” held to benefit Merrill Area United Way and get our fall fundraising campaign off to a good start. One hundred people attended the United Way fundraiser, and all had a fun time. A preliminary estimate of $5,700 was raised to support the 20 United Way agencies.

This week is the Lincoln County Fair and as summer dwindles, families gear up for the school year. United Way prepares for its annual fall campaign, September 5th through mid-November 2023. The Campaign goal is set at $230,000. This community is strong, supportive, caring, and certainly capable of helping us reach this goal. Giving by everyone can help us surpass that goal. When you receive your mailer, please give generously, and help your neighbors, family, and friends. If this is not a time you can give, remember United Way accepts donations year-round and donations stay local.

Watch your mailbox in mid-September for the Merrill Area United Way flyer, your invitation to donate to United Way. We only campaign once a year for your donation. It is our annual appeal to the entire public with our direct mail piece. We realize there are many mail requests, but this one is local and serves great needs in our Lincoln County area. Watch for the flyer. The Lincoln County Courthouse is pictured on this four-color flyer.

Church Mutual Insurance Company, our largest corporate and employee supporter, will run their company campaign in September. United Way funding comes from individuals, families, retirees, and companies who have management support to internalize a campaign, which is always appreciated. Once the campaign wraps up, and donations are tallied, the United Way Board of Directors determines the level at which we can help each funded agency. As always, we hope to surpass our goal. For 2023 we added three new agencies that need our support to meet needs and serve people.

United Way supports three major target areas – health, education, and basic needs/income. *We need your support* to help fund programs in these three impact areas. The basic needs area includes getting a job, shelter, heat-electric-water utilities, food, clothing, transportation to get to a job, childcare so a parent can work. Also, mental health and AODA counseling are important to addressing financial needs and keeping a job. Ensuring that children are cared for and prepared to learn and have every opportunity to grow individually is critical also.

Additionally, volunteers keep our agencies running effectively. Sometimes a volunteer is packing kids’ meals, loading food into a car for at the Food Pantry, helping get a person to an appointment. But usually, it is the person who monetarily supports these impactful services too. Can we count on you in 2023-2024? LIVE UNITED and make the difference. If you want to donate, please send your check to Merrill Area United Way, P O Box 813, Merrill, WI 54452. For more information about Merrill Area United Way visit our website at merrillareaunitedway.org or email Delores.Olsen@merrillareaunitedway.org .