

# LIVE UNITED NEWSLETTER

**CHANGE BEGINS WITH YOU**

\$2.5 MILLION  
90%

GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.  
OTTAWAUNITEDWAY.ORG

**\$2,235,057 RAISED!**

## ADVOCATE

This year, **44 nonprofit organizations that run 59 programs** in Ottawa County applied for funding from Greater Ottawa County United Way during year one of the two-year **Community Investment (CI) process**. The CI process brings together community volunteers from across the county to review and evaluate these programs for their effectiveness and efficiency. The programs are divided among 11 panels within United Way's four impact areas of **Education, Financial Stability, Health** and **Basic Needs**.



Even a snow storm couldn't stop these Community Investment Panel members from touring the local nonprofits their panel reviewed.

*Community Investment Panel members listed below were honored at this year's LIVE UNITED Celebration for their service:*

### 3-YEAR AWARDS

- Brad Burrows**, Automatic Spring Products Corp.
- Deborah Erickson**, Fifth Third Bank
- Mary Keeton**, MSU Extension
- Mary Lawrence**, Haworth, Inc.
- Chris Streng**, Izzy Plus
- Barbara Van Heest**, Chase Bank

### 5-YEAR AWARDS

- Anna Bednarek**, Community Mental Health of Ottawa County
- Stacey Calmes**, Big Dutchman
- Brent Gawlik**, Michigan West Coast Chamber of Commerce
- David Huisman**, West Michigan Community Bank
- Kathy Kremer**, Lewis University
- Angelo Marasco**, ODL
- Marguerite Stephens**, Black River Public Schools
- Jeff Tayler**, Community Member
- Nick Van Zanten**, Community Member
- Daniel Zona**, Haworth, Inc.

### 10-YEAR AWARDS

- Peg Buehler**, Shape Corp.
- Lyndsie Post**, Davenport University
- Connie Shingledecker**, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District
- Amy Stringham**, Grand Haven Area Public Schools
- Jim Wemple**, Community Member
- Scott Wolters**, PADNOS
- Sheryl Zajechowski**, Brilliance Publishing

## THANK YOU

### 2015-2016 CAMPAIGN SPONSORS

**PINNACLE**

**PLATINUM**

**GOLD**

**SILVER**

The panel members attend a training session in January to prepare for the process. Then, during February and March, the CI volunteers review and evaluate program applications within their panel, hear a 20-minute presentation from our program partners, tour many of the program facilities, and make their funding recommendations.

Once funding recommendations are finalized by the panel leaders, Director of Community Impact **Liz DeLaLuz** presents the recommendations to United Way's Board of Directors. The Board reviews the numbers at the April board meeting, and within a couple of weeks, the agencies are notified about their allocated funding for the next year.

"The Community Investment process is a great way to learn about the resources in our community and the impact that the programs have on our community as a whole," said DeLaLuz. She continued, "We are so grateful for our dedicated volunteers."

**To learn more about the CI process visit: [www.ottawaunitedway.org/community-investment](http://www.ottawaunitedway.org/community-investment).**

## OTTAWA HOUSING NEXT: COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

More than 100 people from around the region attended the April 19 Community Conversation at Boatwerks Event Center in Holland to discuss progress made in increasing affordable housing in Ottawa County.

The keynote speaker, former Grand Rapids Mayor **George Heartwell**, encouraged the community to continue with its cutting-edge efforts to bring all sectors together to solve this complex problem. Attendees also listened as **Quincy Byrd** spoke of the personal challenges he faced finding employment and permanent housing in the Holland area while trying to provide for his growing family. He is now an active member of the community – a Habitat for Humanity homeowner and board member and a member of the Holland City Council – and thrilled to be able to give back.

Bruns Leadership Consulting



President of Greater Ottawa County United Way **Patrick Moran** presented an overview of the process thus far, focusing on the progress of each work group. Progress can be reviewed in the updated Ottawa Housing Next document ([www.ottawaunitedway.org/ottawa-housing-next](http://www.ottawaunitedway.org/ottawa-housing-next)). Attendees provided input through roundtable discussions and breakout sessions on the direction of the initiative and the work groups.

### Two recommendations stood out:

1. More actively engage the members of the community most affected by the lack of affordable housing.
2. Invite business leaders to be more involved in the discussions and process.

If you are interested in joining a work group, please contact **Lyn Raymond** at [lraymond@ottawaunitedway.org](mailto:lraymond@ottawaunitedway.org).



Participants engaging in a roundtable discussion about the lack of affordable housing in Ottawa County during the Community Conversation on April 19



Attendees gathered to brainstorm about a variety of solutions to increase affordable housing - this group discussed the idea of having a Housing Trust Fund

## ANNUAL POINT IN TIME COUNT

Over the course of three years, the Lakeshore Housing Alliance (LHA) has seen a steady decrease in the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless persons in Ottawa County. On one night in January 2014, 387 men, women and children were experiencing homelessness. In January 2016 that number had dropped to 261, including 46 households with 101 children under age 18 and 110 adults in households without children. This represents a 33% decrease from 2014. The LHA attributes the decline to increased resources for permanent housing and an improved economic climate.

## HOUSING MATTERS UPDATE

More than \$2,800 was raised for homelessness prevention during this year's Housing Matters event, which took place from April 17-23. Thank you to our generous community; to this year's participating restaurants, The Biscuit, New Holland Brewing Co., and deBoer Bakkerij; and to our sponsors, Gentex, Hooker DeJong, and Realtors Who Care of West Michigan Lakeshore Association of Realtors. We would also like to thank Bodhi Tree Wellness and Yoga Studio for hosting Housing Matters as their charity of the month for April.

# VOLUNTEER

## 2015-2016 VOLUNTEER STATS

VOLUNTEERS	8,228
VOLUNTEER HOURS	373,612
VALUE	\$8,578,132

### DARCY KOMEJAN NAMED VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Darcy Komejan

At United Way's Celebration event on Thursday, March 24, **Darcy Komejan** was awarded the 2016 Volunteer of the Year.

Darcy has been part of United Way's speaker's bureau since 2005, a United Way account manager since 2009 and was chair of

the nonprofit division for United Way in 2007-2008.

She has also served the following organizations: Holland Exchange Club, Lakeshore Nonprofit Alliance, Lakeshore Alliance Against Domestic and Sexual Violence, and Project Ponytails. Her regional collaborations include: Michigan Victim Assistance Advisory Board, Advanced Leadership Academy, Governors Task Force on Children's Justice, and was named one of the 50 women of influence in West Michigan by *I* magazine in 2006.

Thank you, Darcy, for your dedication to improving children's lives in our community.

## CONGRATULATIONS, SLU SENIORS!

Each spring, we are proud to recognize seniors who have volunteered through **Students LIVE UNITED**. Students who complete 100 hours receive an award from United Way, and students who complete 400 hours also receive an award from the Governor of Michigan and the Volunteer Centers of Michigan medallion. *The following seniors are receiving awards this year:*

### Black River High School

Jillian Youker	123 hrs
Megan Youngerman	226 hrs
Andrea Gerrits	497.5 hrs
Sean Boysen	1,080 hrs
Emily Bloss	1,176 hrs

### Coopersville High School

Kendall Austin	109.5 hrs
Mikayla Rush	166 hrs
Jenna Hoyer	425 hrs
Haley Abbas	454 hrs
Emily Oswald	454.5 hrs

### Grand Haven High School

Lukas Steffel	149 hrs
Emily Stringham	310 hrs
Malea Teerman	401 hrs
Ryan Montgomery	415 hrs
Hannah Kenny	1,004 hrs

## LIVE UNITED 2016 JUNIOR DAYS OF CARING



White Pines Middle School students helped remove invasive species and picked up trash at Hemlock Crossings during Junior Day of Caring

From April 18-22, nearly 500 sixth graders from **White Pines Middle School** volunteered at county parks as part of Greater Ottawa County United Way's fifth annual **Junior Days of Caring**, the largest volunteer event in Ottawa County.

On Friday, May 6, a group of eighth grade students from **Lakeshore Middle School** volunteered in the community for their Junior Day of Caring. 500 students volunteered at more than 25 local nonprofit organizations and parks.

*Support for the Junior Day of Caring student transportation was provided by a grant from the Friends of Ottawa County Parks.*



Sixth graders from White Pines Middle School volunteering during Jr. DOC



Lakeshore Middle School eighth graders picked up trash on the beach at Rosy Mound for their Junior Day of Caring on Friday, May 6

# GIVE » LIVE UNITED CELEBRATION 2016

## CAMPAIGN FINISHES STRONG

Greater Ottawa County United Way wrapped up its annual community campaign at its **LIVE UNITED Celebration** event on March 24 at Trillium Catering and Events Center in Spring Lake. During the evening, United Way President **Patrick Moran** announced that **90% of the multi-year \$2.5 million campaign goal was reached**, with the total amount given and pledged during the 2015-2016 campaign coming in at \$2,235,057. Moran said, "This is an aggressive, multi-year goal. We finished strong, reaching 90% this year, and we are confident that we will reach this goal soon. We are thankful to our generous community for their support of our important work in Ottawa County."



Campaign Chairs John (l) and Martha (r) Gork with Director of Annual Campaign Tracy Plummer (center) at Celebration

Moran continued, "More than 200 workplace campaigns took place in Ottawa County this year, with over 7,500 employees giving to United Way. We also received nearly 250 donations from individuals throughout Ottawa County outside of the company campaigns. Now these funds can be invested in the areas of education, financial stability, health and meeting people's basic needs, the building blocks for a better life for the residents of Ottawa County."

## LEADERSHIP GIVING UPDATE



This campaign season, anonymous donors committed \$60,000 in challenge grants to match new and increased leadership gifts (\$500+). A \$30,000 challenge was made to residents of the Tri-Cities and another \$30,000 to those who live in southern/southeastern Ottawa County. A total of **686 leadership gifts** were received throughout the campaign, totaling **\$838,537**. In the Tri-Cities (Grand Haven, Spring Lake, Ferrysburg and surrounding townships), \$52,596 came from new and increased leadership gifts, and in southern and southeastern Ottawa County, \$67,890 came from new and increased gifts, both handily meeting—and exceeding—the challenge.

To read more about campaign results, visit [www.ottawaunitedway.org/united-way-celebrates-successes-2015-2016-annual-community-campaign](http://www.ottawaunitedway.org/united-way-celebrates-successes-2015-2016-annual-community-campaign).



Tony and Monica Verplank (l) and Kyle and Samantha Verplank (r) accepted the G.W. Haworth Strength of the Community Award on behalf of The Verplank Family. Brothers Gary and Midge Verplank, founders of Shape Corp., were unable to attend, but accepted the honor with a video recorded in advance.

## LIVE UNITED AWARD WINNERS ANNOUNCED...

**The Verplank Family** received the...

### **G.W. HAWORTH STRENGTH OF THE COMMUNITY AWARD**

This "Lifetime Achievement Award" recognizes the company and/or individual who most embodies United Way's leadership, spirit of volunteering, philanthropy, and decision-making in the allocation of philanthropic resources to our community.

**Automatic Spring Products Corp.** received the first ever...

### **LYNNE SHERWOOD LIGHTHOUSE LEADERSHIP AWARD**

This award is bestowed upon a United Way campaign company that demonstrates the greatest increase in leadership giving, or to an individual, couple or family whose community leadership generosity sets an example for others to follow.

**Ottawa County Parks & Recreation** received the...

### **PINNACLE OF PARTNERSHIP AWARD**

The recipient of this award exemplifies a commitment to improve the quality of life for Ottawa County residents through leadership in service and education as well as a year-round partnership with Greater Ottawa County United Way.

**Myssi Griffin of West Michigan Molding** received the...

### **JOE MARTELLA ABOVE AND BEYOND AWARD**

This person goes above and beyond what is expected of a campaign coordinator. He or she is constantly looking to add excitement to the campaign, help others realize the importance of United Way and encourage volunteering.

**Herrick District Library** received the...

### **OUT OF THE BOX AWARD**

This award recognizes the organization that took the box, shook it up, and ran the most creative, fun and interactive campaign.

For more details, and all award winners, visit [www.ottawaunitedway.org/awards-recognition](http://www.ottawaunitedway.org/awards-recognition).



The 2016 Community Builder Award recipients display their organizations' awards

## 2016 COMMUNITY BUILDER AWARD WINNERS

Nine workplace campaigns were honored with the **Community Builder Award**. These companies all met five criteria for giving, advocating and volunteering in the community:

- A.D. BOS VENDING SERVICES**
- CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER**
- DR. PEPPER SNAPPLE GROUP**
- FIFTH THIRD BANK**
- GRAND HAVEN CUSTOM MOLDING**
- GREATER OTTAWA COUNTY UNITED WAY**
- MACATAWA BANK**
- PADNOS**
- WEST MICHIGAN MOLDING**



Students from Grand Haven High School's Pay it Forward class received a check from United Way to pursue the project they presented to the Celebration attendees



Pat DeShaw from Automatic Spring Products Corp. accepted the first-ever Lynne Sherwood Lighthouse Leadership Award from United Way's Louann Werksma on behalf of his company.

## PRIZE DRAWING WINNER ANNOUNCED



Steve and Kerry Barkel

The campaign prize drawing winner was announced during the LIVE UNITED Celebration on March 24. **Kerry Barkel** from Spectrum Health Zeeland Community Hospital and her husband Steve are planning to take a trip to Puerto Vallarta, Mexico for an all-inclusive 5-Night Stay at Hyatt Ziva. *Thank you to our campaign sponsors for providing this trip!*

Kerry shared with United Way staff, "Thank you for this wonderful opportunity. I decided to give to the United Way a year ago as a new employee of Spectrum Health Zeeland Community Hospital. I did not know much about United Way at the time, but what is most impressive was what we saw at the Celebration dinner – many people, young and older giving of their time to improve the situations of many in our community. **Thank you, United Way, for all you do!**"

## CORPORATE CORNER



We would like to recognize our top two workplace campaigns – **Shape Corp.** and **Haworth** for their dedication to United Way and to the people of Ottawa County:

- **Together, they raised close to half a million dollars or 20% of the campaign total**
- **More than 50% of employees at each company participate in the campaign**
- **Both companies give of their time and talent by participating in numerous volunteer opportunities, including Day of Caring**

GIVE. ADVOCATE.  
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LIVE UNITED

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## PRESIDENT'S PEN

The novelist/poet and social activist James Baldwin said “We are responsible for the world in which we find ourselves, if only because we are the only sentient force which can change it.” When I read this quote I like to imagine him wearing a LIVE UNITED t-shirt as he says it. It is up to us, both as individuals and as part of a larger group, to reach out a hand to strengthen our community. **At our recent annual LIVE UNITED Celebration, I was reminded of just how powerful a force for positive change we can be when we work together using our passions, expertise and resources to build brighter futures for the people of Ottawa County.**



Every day, United Way and its tens of thousands of donors, advocates, volunteers and partners strives to provide opportunities for anyone to be a part of the changes we are making in our community. We invite you to join us as a change-maker, and to empower others in your circles to do the same. **It is as simple as asking a friend to join you in your next LIVE UNITED opportunity.** Whether it is a volunteer event, a fundraiser at work or an advocacy opportunity, bring a friend along and open up a world of possibility and potential for them.

Underneath everything we are, underneath everything we do, we are all connected, interdependent, united. And when we reach out a hand to one, we influence the condition of all. **Do good. Fight evil. LIVE UNITED!**

  
Patrick Moran, United Way President