

Impact Stories for...

United Way of Greater Milwaukee & Waukesha County:



Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast – Clare is a proud, lifelong Girl Scout. In first grade, Clare joined her elementary school’s Girl Scout Troop. She loved getting to play with other girls her age, sell cookies, and go to Girl Scout camp.

“Girl Scouts taught me to be more confident,” said Clare. “As a kid I was very shy. Being in Girl Scouts built my confidence to step up and say, ‘follow me!’”

As she grew, Clare remained active in Girl Scouts, progressively taking on more leadership roles. As a junior in high school, Clare and three other Scouts decided to complete a project to earn their Silver Award.

Inspired by the work of a fellow Girl Scouts mom, a nurse at a local hospital, Clare and her teammates developed a project called “Girl Scouts Help to Stop the Bleed.” The project focused on educating community members on what to do when someone is experiencing uncontrolled bleeding. The team created a kit with materials for people to practice on, including prosthetic legs they built themselves.

Clare and her teammates travelled to local schools and community centers to hold education sessions. At the end of the project, Clare and her teammates donated the materials they had created to Froedtert Hospital.

Donations to United Way’s Community Fund support the Leadership & Critical Life Skills Development for Girls program at Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast. Last year, more than 70,000 local young people received support through United Way–funded Youth Development programs.



American Red Cross of Southeastern Wisconsin – Beth and Scott had less than an hour to evacuate their home. They piled what they could into bins and boxes before heading out into an uncertain future.

On December 2, 2021, the city of Waukesha called for an emergency evacuation of a four–story condo building in the downtown area. The building had been experiencing foundation issues, but Beth, Scott, and the other residents were shocked to learn that it was no longer safe to live there.

“Homelessness really can happen to anybody, at any time, for any reason. We are anybody,” said Beth. “One day you think things are stable and then literally the ground beneath you is not there anymore.”

Beth, Scott, and many other evacuees did not have family or friends nearby to stay with or insurance to cover a hotel stay. That’s when the American Red Cross stepped in.

For more than 80 years, United Way has supported the disaster recovery and relief efforts of American Red Cross of Southeastern Wisconsin. Your donation to United Way’s Community Fund allows Red Cross to help 886 families just like Beth and Scott’s recover from home fires, natural disasters, and other crises last year.



YMCA – Growing up in Milwaukee, YMCA Camp Director Diego knows firsthand the experience of the kids he works with.

“My mom was always putting me and my siblings in programs like YMCA Day Camp,” recalled Diego. “It was a positive outlet and great exposure for us.”

At 16, Diego became a YMCA Leader in Training and discovered his passion for youth development. Flash forward to today and Diego gets to help young people like JB find their passions too.

“The core of what I do is provide a safe and welcoming environment for the kids and teens,” said Diego. “JB is a great example of someone who has become a leader in our program.”

Fourteen-year-old JB is a helper. During the pandemic, JB attended the YMCA Extended Learning Academy for youth whose parents were essential workers. There, he always jumped in to help Diego serve lunch and keep the younger kids entertained.

“JB naturally took on a leadership role,” said Diego. “A lot of the younger kids really looked up to him.”

Donations to United Way supported the YMCA Extended Learning Academies during the pandemic. United Way support also allows JB and other youth to attend the YMCA Summer Day Camps for free.

United Performing Arts Fund:



Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra – One local student positively impacted by the arts is high school junior Zindzi Frederick, who is involved with UPAF Member Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO). Zindzi started in the MYSO Progressions Program, aimed at increasing access to the arts for youth that face barriers of access and equity in music study. Now, Zindzi plays violin with MYSO’s Senior Symphony and plays in MYSO’s Steel Pan groups. Plus, Zindzi is in her school orchestra and is working on a musical at school too.

“I think the performing arts have always been a place of refuge where music can fill all of my senses and there’s nothing else to worry about,” Zindzi said.

“I love seeing other people my age who have a common and genuine love for music or the arts in general,” Zindzi said. “It’s very empowering to be surrounded by a large community of people who are all intent on achieving a common goal.”

Your donation to UPAF supports programming for youth like Zindzi. Please donate today.



First Stage – “We started reading books and learning and acting the book. Then Ms. Liz told us to bring the story to life and it was fun doing that. Real life makes the book meaningful and helps me remember it better.”

–Third Grade Participant in First Stage’s Big Stories for Little Actors

Hunger Relief Fund:

Open Door Cafe – Alan has been eating at the Open Door Café meal site for six years. He has had trouble getting FoodShare (food stamps) in the past and is so thankful that the community can provide places where he can enjoy a hot meal. “A lot of people are chronically homeless and chronically hungry. Many of them have no money,” Alan said. “I don’t think people realize how important it is for people to have something like this.”

The Gathering – Bob is a senior who eats at The Gathering meal site. He owns his own home and works, but he owes so much in taxes and debt that he relies on meal sites to eat. He used

to have FoodShare but gave up on the process because it was so hard to keep up for what you'd get. That's one reason why his meal at The Gathering is so important to him.

Waukesha County Food Pantry – James is 71 years old and does all the cooking in his house. “So far, I’ve loved the chicken and the grapes the best,” he says of the food he received through the Stockbox program. Your donation helps provide a variety of fresh, healthy foods to local seniors

EarthShare:

Door County Land Trust – This past November, Door County Land Trust announced the permanent protection of one mile of stream bank along Stony Creek in southern Door County. This is the first time a conservation organization has purchased land within the 13-mile Stony Creek stream corridor, the largest stream system in southern Door County, for the purpose of permanent conservation. Protection of this Stony Creek watershed and stream corridor may improve fish spawning habitat and ultimately improve the water quality flowing into Lake Michigan.

The 43-acre newly preserved property contains a high-quality forest filled with native white cedar, black ash, and white birch. The area near the creek is blanketed by ferns, including sensitive, cinnamon, and ostrich fern, which reach 6 feet tall in places. The creek itself provides important spawning habitat for fish.

Door County Land Trust plans to restore a small portion of the property, that was formerly in agriculture, to create a buffer of native plants that will help to lessen soil erosion and sedimentation in the creek, which can positively impact fish that may be found here.



Northwoods Land Trust – Just over a year ago, the Northwoods Land Trust (NWLTL) began its largest-ever capital campaign to protect the Beaver Creek Hemlocks in southern Iron County. This past October, NWLTL concluded the campaign with \$411,700 raised, exceeding its original expectations of raising up to \$365,000. Thirty donor families and seven foundations generously provided gifts and grants to allow NWLTL to purchase the two properties that now make up the Beaver Creek Hemlocks Conservation Area. The additional funds will support the development of recreational amenities and educational programs. Providing

safe and welcoming public access will require the construction of a driveway and parking area, an informational kiosk, several long boardwalks and approximately two miles of defined foot paths. The trails, to be built in the summer of 2022, will accommodate low-impact public

recreation, including hiking, snowshoeing, backcountry cross country skiing and nature observation. Traditional uses including fishing and hunting will be allowed according to established guidelines. The trails will also serve as conduits for NWLT's educational programs to showcase the need for the protection of mature and old-growth forest and other ecological habitats.



RENEW Wisconsin – Tim McComish in many ways is the epitome of a Wisconsin farmer. He's friendly, smart, and practical. His farm sits on 2000 acres in Lafayette County in the Township of Seymour, where he is also the Town Board Chairman. He has 250 dairy cows, grows crops, and now hosts a wind turbine that is part of the Quilt Block Wind Farm.

His great, great grandfather purchased the land in 1848. Now, Tim, his sons, and his brother are farming the land. They are also shepherding in the next generation of farmers, his grandkids. The McComish Family Farm is a seven-generation operation.

While Tim only hosts one turbine, his property is right in the middle of the 49-turbine Quilt Block Wind Farm covering a 6 square miles radius. Given the McComish history with the land and his leadership in the town, hosting the Quilt Block Wind Farm was not a decision that Tim took lightly. Tim's support of renewable energy goes hand in hand with his stewardship to the land and his investment in energy efficiency on the farm.

"What's the difference between power lines, wind turbines and grain bins and silos. I mean if you live in the city, you have skyscrapers. People think they are beautiful. And guess what, I think these are beautiful. These are my skyscrapers."

Creating Healthier Communities:



Prevent Blindness Wisconsin – Meet Charles, a bright and high-spirited 6-year-old who always radiates positive energy. He is the biggest fan of baseball and, more specifically, the Milwaukee Brewers. In addition, he loves trains, reading books, taking theatre classes, and spending time with his family – including his younger sister, Vivian, and family dog, Lucy. Charles did not show any signs of a vision problem and never said he struggled to see until the summer of 2020. However, Charles' parents started to notice that he would stand close to the TV. Not only that, but they also noticed that his attitude began to change as well. When it came to coloring, reading, or art

projects, he seemed less interested and more irritable. Charles' parents' suspicions were confirmed; he did not pass his screening and was referred for a complete eye exam. Charles' mom, Lisa, took him to the eye doctor, where he was diagnosed with an astigmatism and refractive amblyopia (lazy eye) and prescribed glasses.

A certified vision screening from Prevent Blindness Wisconsin community volunteers changed Charles' life. If not for his preschool vision screening, his vision problems may have gone undetected and resulted in permanent vision loss. Charles' parents are grateful for the work done by community volunteers from Prevent Blindness Wisconsin and say, "We would absolutely recommend a Children's Vision Screening. Having his eye problem diagnosed early on has been a game-changer. Before this, Charles had moments throughout the day when he would become so irritable and easily distracted. We are very grateful for Prevent Blindness Wisconsin and all they have done for our family."



V Foundation – Meet Jacob Morse, who – after finishing graduate school at Gonzaga – was ready to start his new career when he was diagnosed with stage 4 Hodgkin's Lymphoma at just 23 years old.

The shocking news came after months of unexplained weight loss, stomach issues, and a strange cough. At a routine appointment, Jacob's doctor noticed his heart was speeding at 140 beats per minute while he sat calmly in a chair. Jacob was immediately admitted to the hospital.

Next came a CAT scan, which lit up like a Christmas tree, followed by a biopsy confirming the cancer diagnosis. By the time he started chemotherapy, Jacob had already lost 75 pounds.

Shortly after beginning treatment, Jacob moved to Denver to start his new job. "I was determined not to let cancer put a pause on my life," said Jacob. "I could not have done it without the full support of my company, my friends and family, and my amazing girlfriend, who is now my wife!" Fortunately, Jacob received a clean scan after six months, just a few days after his 24th birthday.



Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin – Meet Anayeli. "I found a lump in my breast, and I was really afraid. At Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, I found answers and help. They helped me navigate my treatment every step of the way. And when the medical bills began to pile up, they helped me navigate those too."