

NEWS RELEASE



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PROGRAMS WITH POSITIVE COMMUNITY IMPACT RECEIVE \$1.25 MILLION IN UNITED WAY INVESTMENTS

Early Grade Reading, Financial Stability, Drug Prevention Among 27 Programs Funded

JACKSON, MI [Oct. 9, 2014] – Twenty-seven community programs that will deliver positive outcomes in education, financial stability, health and capacity-building are receiving \$1.25 million from United Way of Jackson County.

“With the generous support of Jackson County residents, United Way is able to make these investments that help address the most critical needs and most promising opportunities to change lives in meaningful ways,” said Ken Toll, President and CEO of United Way of Jackson County (UWJC).

The investments are the result of a volunteer-led review of proposals from agencies serving Jackson County. “We value the trust that our community places in us to make the right investments in the right way. That’s why we have a thorough, volunteer-driven process for vetting organizations, reviewing proposals and identified outcomes to ensure those investments are having impact,” Toll explained.

Here is a summary of the investments being made:

- **Education:** The goal is to align with Cradle2Career and ensure all Jackson County students meet state education requirements and graduate college- or career-ready. Special emphasis is placed on programs that promote early grade reading and math proficiency. Examples include Energizing Education, an early grade reading initiative; and Attendance Connection, a partnership addressing chronic truancy. Total investment: Six programs, \$360,000.
- **Financial Stability:** The goal is to promote financial stability and independence across Jackson County’s population. Examples include the Financial Stability Program,

promoting debt reduction and home ownership education; and Legal Services for Very Low Income Individuals and Families focused on domestic violence cases, eviction diversion and other needs. Total investment: 10 programs, \$360,000.

- **Health:** The goal is to partner with organizations that improve or sustain community health. Examples include the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative and the school-based Breakout Drug Education program. Total investment: Nine programs, \$360,000.
- **Capacity-Building:** The goal is to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and availability of services through Jackson County nonprofit agencies. Examples include technical and leadership training and volunteer resources through the Nonprofit Network; and support for information and referral through 2-1-1 of Central Michigan. Total investment: Two programs, \$170,000.

A complete list of funded programs is attached to this news release.

“These are high quality programs that are all about creating real, meaningful change,” said Toll. “We’re working with many long-time community partners as well as supporting some new initiatives—from a partnership tackling chronic truancy to an effort to promote healthier lifestyles for young people through dance.”

The need in the community remains great, with requests for support exceeding available funds by 84 percent this year. According to Toll, community members who volunteered to review proposals and make recommendations said the process was challenging but effective, allowing them to recommend the programs that aligned best with United Way’s priorities and had measurable objectives to receive support.

In addition to the investments announced today, United Way continues to manage donor-designated contributions, which are gifts earmarked for specific programs and agencies.

“These investments share a common trait, and that is to transform our community. United Way is proud to partner with people and agencies committed to making that happen,” Toll said.

About United Way of Jackson County

United Way of Jackson County mobilizes the caring power of the community to provide opportunities for a better life for all Jackson County residents by focusing on helping children succeed in school, making sure families are financially stable, and helping people achieve and maintain good health.

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2014-15 UNITED WAY INVESTMENTS

EDUCATION		GOAL: All Jackson County Students meet state education requirements and are college and/or career ready. Emphasis on programs that promote early grade reading and math proficiency. AMOUNT: \$360,000
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
Site Based Mentoring	In school, one-to-one mentoring program consisting of the Bigs In Schools Program and the Learn & Serve Teen Mentoring Classroom-to-Classroom Program. Students are paired with a caring mentor who focuses on creating social, academic, and emotional successes.	Big Brothers Big Sisters
FIRST	Provides scholarships for low-income families giving low-income children the opportunity for high quality child care programs. The program includes in-depth case management to families, targeting areas identified by the parent(s).	Child Care Network
Girl Scouts Outreach	Offers the opportunity for all girls to be a part of Girl Scouting programs. The program targets areas that are under-served with volunteer leaders, often being lower socioeconomic areas in the county. The program focuses on building character and skills needed for success in life.	Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan
Attendance Connection	A community partnership to thoroughly analyze student attendance data in hopes of creating county-wide protocols addressing absenteeism in elementary aged students.	Jackson County Intermediate School District
After School Program	After school programming that allows students to fulfill school requirements, increase state testing scores, and participate in life-building opportunities such as community service and physical activity in a safe environment.	Lily Missions Center
Energizing Education	An early childhood literacy/mentoring program supervised by a literacy specialist and aiming to have all Jackson County students reading at or above grade level by 3rd grade.	United Way of Jackson County

FINANCIAL STABILITY		
GOAL: Promote financial stability and independence in our community. AMOUNT: \$360,000		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
Domestic Violence Shelter	An emergency shelter that provides safe, temporary housing for women and their children who have experienced domestic violence.	AWARE
Financial Stability Program	Various financial stability programs including debt reduction and homeownership education that promote financial independence and self-sufficiency.	Community Action Agency
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program	An IRS sponsored program providing free income tax preparation to low-to-mid income tax payers.	Community Action Agency
Jackson County Adult Guardian Services	Guardian and conservator services to incapacitated adults that are vulnerable to exploitation and are unable to protect their own interests.	Family Service and Children's Aid
Juvenile Diversion Program	Provides at-risk juveniles with services promoting school attendance, improved decision-making, prevention of recidivism, and improve the family relationship.	Family Service and Children's Aid
Assisted Living for Senior Women	Offers low-income housing for elderly women.	Jackson Friendly Home
Assisted Living for Elderly Gentlemen	Provides low-income housing for elderly men.	John George Home
Legal Services for Very Low Income Individuals and Families	Provides free civil legal services to low-income individuals. Emphasis placed on homelessness prevention, domestic violence, and assistance in accessing food, healthcare, and basic needs cases.	Legal Services of South Central Michigan
Jackson County Mediation/Eviction Diversion Program	A collaboration of Jackson County nonprofit agencies seeking to prevent homelessness and promoting family relationships and financial stability.	Legal Services of South Central Michigan
Basic Needs	Provides food, energy, and housing assistance to low to moderate income residents.	Salvation Army
HEALTH		
GOAL: Partnering to increase opportunities to improve and sustain community health. AMOUNT: \$360,000		
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
Sexual Assault Program	Providing community education striving to eliminate sexual violence. Initial medical attention to assault victims, and counseling referrals for women and children who have experienced sexual assault or violence.	AWARE
Trauma Counseling	Individual and group counseling to women and children who have been victims of	AWARE

	domestic violence or sexual assault.	
Community Based Mentoring	One-to-one mentoring program focusing on fostering healthy choices, emotional well-being, and academic success of young people through positive role-modeling relationships.	Big Brothers Big Sisters
Outpatient Counseling	Wide range of mental health and substance abuse services for children, families, and adults with an emphasis on creating strong family relationships and maintaining good mental health.	Catholic Charities
Breakout Drug Education	School-based drug prevention education for middle and high school students.	Family Service and Children's Aid
Family Counseling	Accredited, comprehensive mental and behavioral health counseling program aiming to alleviate personal and interpersonal problems that create dysfunction in the family.	Family Service and Children's Aid
Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiative	Community initiative to reduce teen pregnancy rates in Jackson County and address contributing factors.	Jackson County Health Department
Dance 4 a Healthier Jackson	Offers dance classes lead by trained professionals to low income, at-risk children.	Jackson School of the Arts
Project Access	Provides health care to those that cannot afford medical services and do not have insurance or do not qualify for public healthcare insurance.	LifeWays
CAPACITY BUILDING	GOAL: Improve the efficiency, efficacy and availability of services provided by nonprofit organizations. AMOUNT: \$170,000	
PROGRAM	DESCRIPTION	AGENCY RESPONSIBLE
Capacity Building	Offers technical assistance, volunteer resources, and consulting and training programs to United Way partner agencies aiming to build stronger governing boards and financially sustainable organizations.	Nonprofit Network
Central Michigan 2-1-1	Free telephone and internet service that provides non-emergency referrals to individuals seeking health and human service assistance.	Central Michigan 2-1-1 via United Way of Jackson County