

UNITED WAY
Southwest Iowa

HEROES

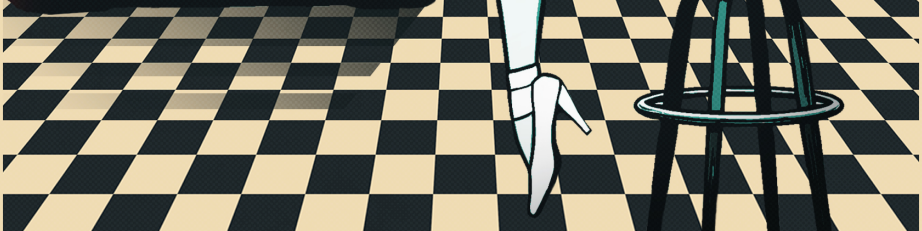
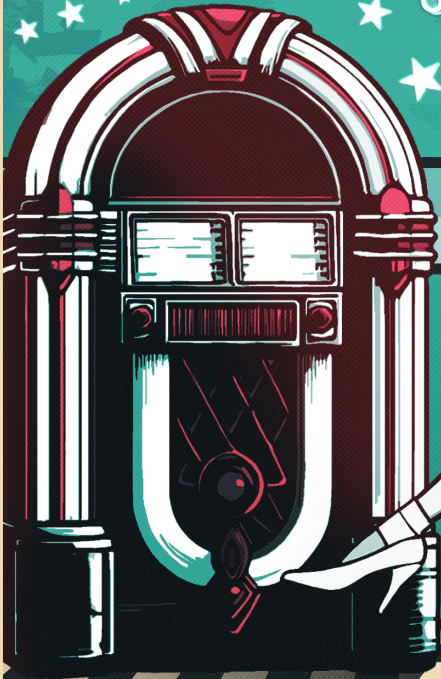
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MARCH 21, 2025

6PM - 8:30PM

300 S MAIN ST, BURLINGTON IA, 52601



United Way of Southeast Iowa 2025 Annual Meeting Address
Megan Brincks, Executive Director

Today we celebrate an incredible milestone—our 100th United Way campaign, which has brought in over \$350,000 to directly support the people of Southeast Iowa. This is not just a number; it represents food on tables, roofs over heads, educational opportunities, and a stronger, more resilient community. But as we recognize this achievement, we are equally excited to continue the festivities as we celebrate our centennial year—a century of impact, innovation, and unwavering commitment to those we serve.

Attending the United Way Great Rivers Conference earlier this year reinforced a powerful truth: uncertainty is the new constant. Nothing is promised, and there are no guarantees. However, uncertainty is not a roadblock; it is a catalyst for change. It is a push against complacency. We refuse to react in fear—we choose to respond with purpose.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning once said, “All heroes are essentially just men and women; meaning that all men and women are potential heroes.” Every one of us in this room has the potential to be a hero for Southeast Iowa. We need to continue showing up, shining light where there is darkness, and working together to create the biggest collective impact possible. Now, more than ever, we are needed.

This year, United Way of Southeast Iowa is embracing foundational changes, disrupting the status quo, and leaning into innovation. We understand that no organization has ever cut its way to prosperity and that the solution is not found in a catchy tagline promising a return to the prosperity of the past. We must embrace disruptive change, recognizing that the fear of failure is merely a stepping stone on the path to true success.

Moving forward, we are setting bold goals, prioritizing impact strategies, and focusing our efforts on two key areas: Healthy Families and Household Financial Stability. Within these priorities, we are dedicating resources and action toward:

- Addressing homelessness and affordable housing
- Preparing children to succeed through education and early childhood initiatives
- Strengthening families through financial stability and access to essential services

The needs of our community will always drive our funding priorities, and we are committed to not only supporting existing programs but also launching new, innovative initiatives to fill the gaps. One such success story is our Ride United Program in partnership with DoorDash, which has delivered nearly 500 food boxes to individuals and families in need across Southeast Iowa. This is just the beginning.

However, progress is not instantaneous. Progress moves at the speed of trust. Today, we ask you to place your trust in us as we take bold steps to make Southeast Iowa a safer, healthier, and happier place to live. We cannot do this alone. We need your partnership, your ideas, and your commitment to Live United with us.

We are not just looking to sustain—we are looking to transform. Join us. Innovate with us. Take this journey with us. It will not always be easy, but I can promise you—it will be worth it.

United is the way forward.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Megan Brincks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping underline.

Celebrating 100 Years of United Way: A Grateful Reflection

On behalf of the United Way of Southeast Iowa Board of Directors, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to every donor, volunteer, and community partner for your unwavering support and active participation in our mission throughout the past year. This year marks a monumental milestone—the 100th anniversary of United Way. We are deeply grateful for the steadfast support of our community, which has allowed us to continue making a meaningful impact for a century.

Thanks to your generosity, we have been able to provide critical funding to local agencies, addressing the most pressing needs of individuals and families across Southeast Iowa. Your contributions, whether in time, resources, or spirit, are the foundation of our ability to effect real and lasting change in our community.

United Ways across the nation operate as autonomous organizations, each led by dedicated community members who establish policies and oversee operations in response to local needs. Here in Southeast Iowa, our policies and bylaws reflect the voices of our supporters and volunteers, who are elected to leadership roles and actively participate in shaping our priorities.

Our Annual Meeting, held each March, provides an opportunity to share updates, celebrate accomplishments, and elect new board members and officers who will guide our work forward.

We are extremely grateful to our Board of Directors and Association Officers for their vision and leadership. We also extend our deep appreciation to the members of the Nominations Committee and Campaign Cabinet, as well as the Allocations Review Process volunteers. Through your collective efforts, we are able to distribute funds effectively and ensure that essential human service programs remain accessible to those who need them most.

As we commemorate 100 years of service, we are humbled by the opportunity to work alongside so many dedicated individuals. Together, we continue to build a stronger, more vibrant Southeast Iowa. We are united in the belief that by working collaboratively and harnessing the collective power of our community, we can achieve an even greater impact and create lasting change for the next century.

Thank you for your commitment, generosity, and belief in our shared mission. As we embark on this exciting year of celebration and progress, we look forward to reaching new milestones together and making an even greater difference in the lives of those we serve.

With deepest gratitude,

United Way of Southeast Iowa

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "C. A. King", is positioned below the typed name of the United Way of Southeast Iowa.

2024 Hall of Fame

Board of Directors

Dr. Michael Ash - SCC President
Aaron Baltisberger - Two Rivers Bank & Trust
Chad Bird - City of Burlington
Ryan Gerling - Cray Law Firm
Kailey Gibbs - Great River Health*
Shauna Freitag - SE IA Reg. Hospice
Patrick Haigh - Wal-mart Dist. Center
Robert Haines - IAAAP, Retired*
Jason Hutcheson - GRHS Foundation
Brian Isom - TD&T CPAs and Advisors PC
Alan Kleinkppf - F&M Bank & Trust
Natalie Freeman - Mt Pleasant HS *

Jade Ramiro - IAAAP - US Army
Rob Ritson - Two Rivers Bank , Retired*
Mikki Sands - F&M Bank
Joanna Schneden - Two Rivers Bank & Trust
Katherine Tansey - Student Mt Pleasant HS*
Meagan Vogel - Great River Health
Charlie Walsh - Farm Bureau Insurance
Andrea Walz- Hartman - MidWest One Bank
Taylor Wilkerson - First Interstate Bank
Heather Kienol-SE IA Reg. Hospice*
Andrea Lane-Western Smokehouse Partners*

*Exiting Board Members

* Entering Board Members

Executive Committee



Chad Bird
Board President



Meagan Vogel
Board Vice President



Robert Haines*
General Campaign Chair



Joanna Schneden
Treasurer/ Secretary



Shauna Freitag
Allocations Co- Chair



Kailey Gibbs*
Allocations Co- Chair

Your Impact in 2024

22,386 People served in our Counties



6,354 warm meals served
3,771 food boxes delivered

3,728 individuals received
counseling & mental health support

860 people received either legal,
domestic violence, housing assistance

1,658 shelter nights provided
food and security



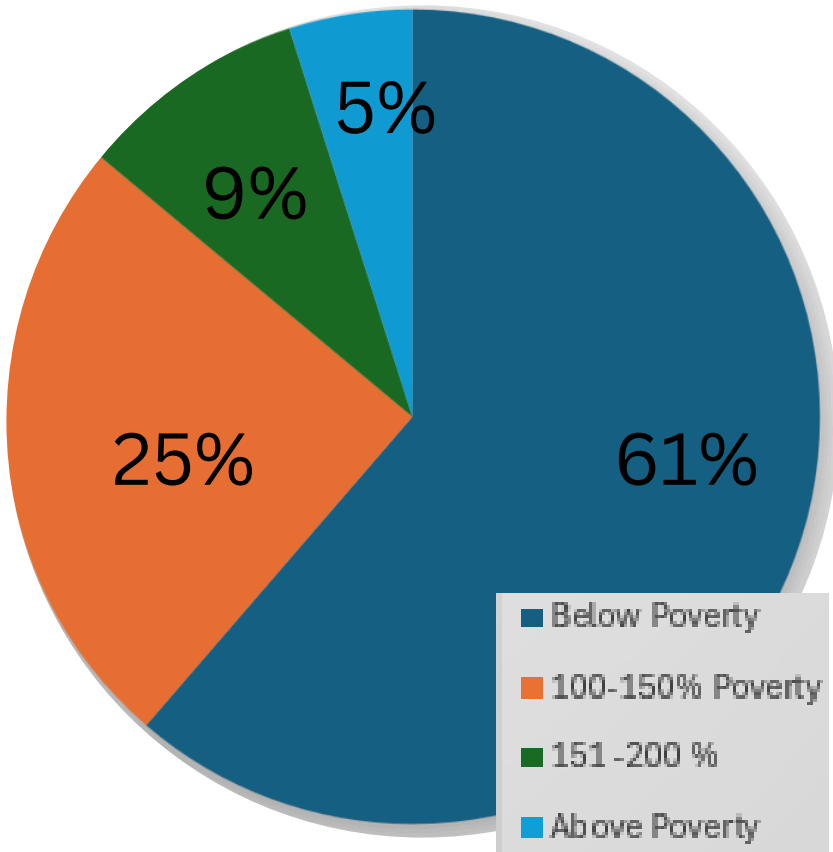
960 youth received wellness, STEM,
& summer camp programming

3,163 Advocacy services were provided or
companies opened to help individuals



75 disabled residents received employment,
community, & social support

5,804 materials were provided to support important
causes such as homeless bags or Red Ribbon Awareness



Over 2,500 SEIA children
will face food insecurity
this year.

38% of SEIA households
struggle to make ends meet.

United Way of Southeast Iowa Funded Agencies

2025

Alcohol & Drug Dependency Services	.....	\$ 10,000.00
Hope Haven Area Development Center	.....	\$ 30,000.00
Salvation Army	.....	\$ 45,000.00
Girl Scouts	.....	\$ 15,000.00
Young House Family Services	.....	\$ 18,000.00
Burlington Area YMCA	.....	\$ 30,500.00
Burlington Homeless Shelter	.....	\$ 40,000.00
Homestead 1839	.....	\$ 15,000.00
Community Action	.....	\$ 40,000.00
Partners	.....	\$ 4,300.00
Relay for Life	.....	\$ 5,000.00
Transitions DMC	.....	\$ 6,000.00
Total	.....	\$258,800

2024

Alcohol & Drug Dependency Services	.....	\$ 20,000.00
Hope Haven Area Development Center	.....	\$ 30,000.00
Salvation Army	.....	\$ 45,000.00
Girl Scouts	.....	\$ 15,000.00
Young House Family Services	.....	\$ 17,500.00
Burlington Area YMCA	.....	\$ 30,500.00
Burlington Homeless Shelter	.....	\$ 30,000.00
Homestead 1839	.....	\$ 15,000.00
Community Action	.....	\$ 10,000.00
Partners	.....	\$ 4,300.00
Relay for Life	.....	\$ 4,000.00
Boy Scouts	.....	\$ 7,500.00
Total	.....	\$228,800

2025 Annual Campaign Acknowledgements

Heros and Hand-Raisers (\$10,000+)

Harry & Virginia West Foundation

John H Witte Jr Foundation

F&M Bank & Trust

Two Rivers Bank & Trust

Great River Health

Champions (\$2,500+)

First Interstate Bank

Great River Entertainment

Alliant Energy

BNSF Foundation

Community Foundation

Southeastern Community College

Tenneco

Midwest One Bank

Advocates (\$1,000+)

Winegard

Modern Welding Co

ADDS

TD&T CPAs and Advisors PC

Greater Burlington Partnership

SG Construction Company

World

McCoy Group

Klingner & Associates

Flint Cliffs Manufacturing Company

Menke & Company

Burlington Trailways

Walmart Distribution Center

Brockway Mechanical & Roofing Co.

Leaders (\$500+)

Brockway Company

City of Burlington

Walgreens

Lunning Chapel

Carl A Nelson & Co

Graystone Construction

Hope Haven Development

Standard of Beaverdale Inc.

Prugh-Thielen Funeral Services

GP Associates

The Drake

Diamond Vogel Paint Co.

Big River Resources

Burlington Area YMCA

Eastern Iowa Light and Power

Small Buisness Big Impact (\$50)

ABC Fire Extinguisher

Bickle's Cycling & Fitness

O'Reilly Auto Parts

Carl A Nelson Company

Luckenbill Appraisal

Graystone Construction

D.M County Auditor

Laws Antiques & Jewelry

New York Life Insurance Co.

Mike Campbell's Body Shop

Sunrise West Inc.

Valley Distribution Corp

Clowning Around with Buckwheat

Burlington by the Book

Burlington Community School District

Happy Joe's Pizza & Ice Cream

Goodwill of Heartland

Young House Family Services

Casebine Community Credit

Mailboxes & Parcel Depot

Grinstead & Associates, LLC

Hope Haven Development Center

Rheinschmidt's Flooring America

Pritchard Broadcasting

River Basin Publications

Musicians Pro Shop

Target

Cut- ups

Aspen Financial Service

Gypsi on Jefferson

Kitchen Solvers

Century 21

Iowa Legal Aid

Roberts Tire Center

Subway

Ploeger Recruiting

United Way of Southeast Iowa



Annual Campaign

100th Year Edition : 2025

Commercial

	17,706.25	
Downtown:	.....	\$ 2,435.00
Central:	.....	\$ 490.42
North:	.....	\$ 975.30
South:	.....	\$ 1,489.34
West Burlington:	.....	\$ 1,180.26

Education

	4,520.00	
College:	.....	\$ 4,328.00
Public:	.....	\$ 150.00
West Burlington:	.....	\$ 42.00

Fire

	168,294.38	
Financial Institutions:	.....	\$ 163,164.65
Insurance:	.....	\$ 1,179.73
Misc:	.....	\$ 3,600.00
Real Estate:	.....	\$ 350.00

Gov't / Comm. Service

	47,136.76	
Agencies:	.....	\$ 6,923.86
City:	.....	\$ 2,142.00
County:	.....	\$ 2,070.90
Hospital:	.....	\$ 36,000.00
Miscellaneous:	.....	\$ 1,180.26

Professional

	44,315	
Attorneys:	.....	\$ 4,000.00
Dentists:	.....	\$ 700.00
Medical:	.....	\$ 39,590.00
Chiropractors:	.....	\$ 1,489.34

Other

Construction:	.....	\$ 8,722.50
Residential:	.....	\$ 34,895.30
Transportation /Utilities/ Communications	.....	\$ 10,618.09
Special Gifts / Bequests	.....	\$ 527.10

Honoring Chris Murphy, Owner of Burlington By The Book

Impact is often measured in quiet, consistent actions that ripple outward—and Chris Murphy’s commitment to this community is a shining example.

When United Way launched its Small Business, Big Impact Initiative, Chris didn’t hesitate. He was the first to sign on, and when asked why, he humbly replied, “Well, I thought it was common sense to help people.”

That simple mindset has led to extraordinary impact. Through his self-started Book Program, Chris has committed to donating one brand-new book every week for a year to the Burlington Public Library. At a time when the library faces painful budget cuts, Chris’s actions are not only boosting access to literature—they’re inspiring others to give, too. His leadership has sparked a wave of generosity that is helping fill shelves and expand opportunities for readers of all ages.

Chris’s consistent, thoughtful efforts uplift the fabric of Burlington in meaningful ways—quiet, steady, and profound. For leading with heart, sparking change, and making a tangible difference, we are proud to honor Chris Murphy with the United in Impact Award.



Honoring Lt. Bailey Sawka & The Salvation Army

Action is about stepping up—especially when it’s hard. And no one embodies that more than Lt. Bailey Sawka of The Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army already serves thousands of hot meals and distributes essential food boxes and household items every day. But when United Way launched the Ride United DoorDash program, designed to deliver food to those unable to travel due to mobility or transportation issues, Bailey didn’t wait—she said yes first.

And when that program hit bumps along the way, Bailey pivoted immediately, adapting her own operations to make sure food kept reaching doorsteps. That would be enough on its own—but just one week ago, tragedy struck. A fire destroyed The Salvation Army’s storage shed, wiping out blankets, appliances, clothing, and supplies—everything given freely to families in crisis.

Still, Bailey was back the very next day, making sure meal service and outreach didn’t skip a beat. While navigating insurance claims and the long road to rebuilding, she continues to lead with grace, urgency, and an unwavering commitment to those in need.

The United in Action Award honors those who step up first, adapt quickly, and lead with courage. Lt. Bailey Sawka is all of that and more—and we are honored to recognize her extraordinary heart and leadership.



2025 Changemaker Award

Awardee Profile: Jim H. Olson

Jim grew up in Hartwick, Iowa – a small town off of I-80. He was the fifth of eight children and the pickiest eater of the bunch. A teacher once told his mother, Ann, he had a “winning personality”. He looked up to his father, Howard, who began work at the Hartwick State Bank as a cashier and retired 33 years later as President. Growing up, he enjoyed hunting pheasants and learned many of life’s lessons on annual fishing trips with his dad and brothers.

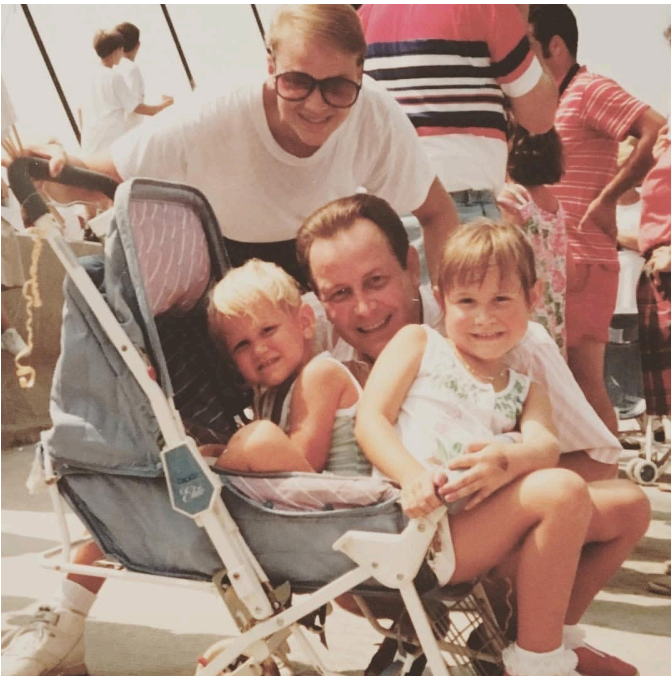
Jim moved to Burlington with his wife Mary and two daughters, Hannah and Addie, in 1990 after being named President of Burlington Bank & Trust (BB&T). A 1978 graduate of Iowa State University, Jim had previously worked for the Iowa Division of Banking, Banks of Iowa, and Henry County Savings Bank. Under his leadership BB&T grew to become one of the largest financial service organizations in the state – Two Rivers Financial Group. Jim joined Great Western Bank, now First Interstate Bank, as a Senior VP of Business Development in 2014 and was promoted to Market President in 2016. When asked about the most meaningful part of his work Jim cites the relationships he’s been able to build with his customers and their successes.

Outside of work, Jim has spent countless hours giving back to the community. In 1992, after seeing the need community members had for assistance with their homes’ up-keep, Jim partnered with Diamond Vogel to launch the annual Paint-a-Thon. Over the past 32 years, hundreds of low income and elderly residents have received much needed help through this program. Jim led United Way’s annual campaign in 1994/1995 meeting a lofty goal of \$650,000 and then serving as president in 1996. He said of this work:

“The main purpose of the annual United Way Campaign... is to increase the organized capacity of people to care for one another.”

Burlington/West Burlington Chamber of Commerce; Community Foundation of Des Moines County; Great River Entertainment Board; Southeast Iowa Revolving Loan Fund Committee; Highway 61 Coalition Committee; Mississippi Valley Boy Scouts; Hope Haven; Great River Health Systems; Southeast Iowa Community Healthcare Center; Burlington Steamboat Days; Notre Dame’s Pot of Blue and Gold; Rotarian

Jim’s legacy can be seen in projects he’s raised funds for including the YMCA, Burlington Public Library, Burlington Regional Rec Plex, and the Southeastern Community College Foundation. It can be seen in the work and community involvement of his daughters – Hannah and Addie of Des Moines. And thankfully, he can count on his nephew, Kyle McWilliams, to keep his ego in check – in both fantasy baseball and life.



Success Stories

A Fresh Start for a Family in Crisis (Transitions DMC)

A family of four arrived in Burlington after fleeing hardship, only to find themselves sleeping in their car in a parking lot. Despite the challenges, one parent had already secured a job, and the other was determined to find work. When DHS contacted Transitions, staff quickly rearranged accommodations to provide the family with a safe place to stay.

Within days, both parents were employed, and with the help of DHS and Harmony Bible Church, the children were enrolled in school and transportation was arranged. Over the next four weeks, the family worked tirelessly, saving money for a security deposit and rent. Transitions supported them with free lodging, meals, and laundry facilities, allowing them to focus on rebuilding their lives.

By the end of their stay, the family moved into their own apartment near their children's school and continued to thrive in their jobs. Seven months later, they remain self-sufficient, a testament to their resilience and the critical role of support systems in stabilizing families in crisis.

A Journey of Hope and Healing (YMCA)

A 50-year-old Burlington woman found refuge at a local shelter after enduring years of physical, emotional, and financial abuse. Her journey to recovery faced significant barriers, including drug addiction, sporadic homelessness, unemployment, and untreated mental health challenges. With the compassionate support of shelter advocates, she embarked on a transformative path toward independence.

By February, she graduated from the Bridges Out of Poverty program, secured full-time employment, and took control of her finances. Advocates guided her in opening a checking and savings account, and soon after, she achieved a major milestone: securing her own one-bedroom apartment.

This story reflects not only her incredible resilience but also the power of collaboration and advocacy. Today, she stands as a beacon of hope for others facing similar hardships, proving that with the right support, healing and independence are within reach.

Overcoming 30 Years of Gambling Addiction (ADDS)

After battling gambling addiction for 30 years, a client has achieved a remarkable seven months of abstinence. This victory has transformed every aspect of his life—he has improved his mental health, repaired his marriage, and stabilized his finances.

With newfound clarity, he has reduced his debt and even begun to enjoy activities he once lost to gambling, such as traveling. He's also reconnected with his community by attending church, support groups, and social events. With guidance, he learned skills to manage his cravings, correct harmful thinking patterns, and overcome financial pitfalls.

The road to recovery hasn't been easy, but this individual now sees the brighter future that lies ahead. His success highlights the life-changing impact of accessible treatment, funded in part by United Way, which removes financial barriers to care for those struggling with addiction.

Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness (Homeless Shelter)

A single father and his two-year-old child sought shelter after escaping a domestic abuse situation. With physical and emotional scars, and no support network, he faced incredible challenges. After moving from another shelter where safety was an issue, the family found a secure and welcoming environment at BAHS.

The shelter provided a private, safe room where the father could begin rebuilding his life. Despite struggling to find a job that aligned with daycare hours, he persevered and eventually secured stable employment. Soon after, he moved into his own apartment and began planning to purchase a home.

This story demonstrates the life-changing impact of safe, supportive housing and compassionate advocacy. From crisis to stability, this father's determination and the shelter's support paved the way for a brighter future for his family.