Heart of Missouri UNITED WAY

September 2026

A Note from our President and CEO



Hello Friends of HMUW,

As we move through another campaign season, our team is focused on sharing impact stories, meeting with workplace partners, and engaging donors across our region. (And be sure to keep reading because later in the newsletter, we share an update on the success of this year's campaign!) Yet amid the busyness, I've found myself reflecting on a bigger question: **What is United Way?**

For many people, United Way is a workplace campaign, a fundraiser, or an organization that supports local nonprofits. While all of those things are true, United Way is also part of something much larger. **We are a network of local organizations connected by a shared mission to strengthen communities and improve lives.**

Earlier this week, I participated in a United Way Worldwide update and was reminded of the incredible role local United Ways play in communities across the country. As disasters have impacted regions throughout the United States this year, including floods, tornadoes, earthquakes, and wildfires, local United Ways have been among the organizations helping communities respond, recover, and rebuild. While every community's needs are different, the ability to mobilize resources, convene partners, and connect people with support remains at the heart of what United Way does.

September is National Disaster Preparedness Month, making it especially fitting that Heart of Missouri United Way recently announced a **partnership with the Boone County Office of Emergency Management to launch the Boone County Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD)**. This collaborative network will bring together nonprofits, government agencies, faith-based organizations, businesses, and community partners to strengthen disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts across Boone County.

Later this week, we will host our first full membership meeting of the COAD, and I look forward to sharing more about this important work in next month's newsletter.

Listening to the United Way Worldwide update made me proud to be part of an organization that can harness the strength of a worldwide network while remaining deeply rooted in local needs. Every day, Heart of Missouri United Way works alongside partners and supporters who make our community stronger, and together we are helping ensure that when needs arise, our community is prepared to respond.

Thank you for being part of that work.

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President & CEO

Campaign Update:
Momentum Builds During Campaign Season



As we continue our 2026-27 campaign season, we are excited to share that we have **reached $1.75 million toward our $2.8 million campaign goal.**

This progress reflects the generosity and commitment of individuals, businesses, and organizations across our region who believe in creating a stronger community for everyone. Every gift helps support programs and partnerships that strengthen community resiliency, improve health and well-being, advance financial security, and ensure young people have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

To those who have already made a gift, thank you. Your investment is making a real difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout the Heart of Missouri.

Whether you've contributed through a workplace campaign, corporate gift, sponsorship, or individual donation, your support helps ensure that local families have access to the resources they need to thrive.

While we're encouraged by our progress, there is still important work ahead. Reaching our campaign goal will require continued support from community members who have not yet had an opportunity to give this year. If you are considering making a gift, now is the perfect time to join us. Every contribution, regardless of size, helps strengthen our community and expand opportunities for our neighbors.

As we celebrate 80 years of impact, we are reminded that lasting change happens when people come together around a shared purpose. With your continued support, we can finish this campaign strong and continue investing in the programs and partnerships that make the Heart of Missouri a better place for all.

United, we're already making incredible progress. United, we'll reach the finish line.

DONATE

Champions Spotlight:
Thank You to Our Campaign Champions



Each year, Heart of Missouri United Way is fortunate to welcome a dedicated group of community leaders who lend their time, talents, and expertise to support our annual campaign. Formerly known as Loaned Executives, these passionate advocates are now proudly called **Heart of Missouri United Way Champions**, and they truly live up to the name.

Our Champions serve as an extension of the Heart of Missouri United Way team throughout campaign season. From delivering presentations and training volunteers to building relationships and sharing the impact of United Way across our region, they help bring our mission to life in communities, workplaces, and organizations throughout our service area.

We are excited to welcome **Lorraine Gustavis (Community Volunteer), Trevor Burge (Commerce Bank), and Brady Lademann (Shelter Insurance)** as our 2026 Champions. Their energy, enthusiasm, and commitment are helping us build momentum for another successful campaign year.

The success of our annual campaign depends on people who are willing to step forward as ambassadors for our mission, and our Champions play a vital role in connecting donors, volunteers, and community partners to the work happening every day through Heart of Missouri United Way.

We extend our sincere thanks to Lorraine, Trevor, and Brady for sharing their time and talents with us this campaign season. Their dedication helps strengthen our impact and advance our mission of improving lives throughout the Heart of Missouri.

We also offer our appreciation to the leadership teams at **Commerce Bank** and **Shelter Insurance** for investing in community impact through this partnership. Their support demonstrates the power of community collaboration and helps ensure the continued success of the United Way Champion program.

Together, these outstanding volunteers and partner organizations are helping create meaningful change across our region, and we are grateful for their leadership and service.

Volunteer Opportunity: Join the Advisory Council to Help Shape Community Investment Decisions

Each year, Heart of Missouri United Way brings together a diverse group of community volunteers to serve on our **Advisory Council**, helping determine how community investment funds can achieve the greatest impact.

The Advisory Council increases transparency in the investment process and plays a critical role by making funding recommendations to the Heart of Missouri United Way Board of Directors.

What Volunteers Do
Council members participate in:

- Training sessions
- Grant proposal review

- Nonprofit presentations
- Virtual Q&A opportunities
- Funding discussions and recommendations

Volunteers help ensure community investments align with local needs and advance equitable opportunities for all residents.

Who Should Apply?
We are seeking individuals from diverse backgrounds who are passionate about strengthening our community and willing to thoughtfully evaluate funding opportunities.

Time Commitment
The active review process occurs annually from **September through late October**, with meetings and review activities scheduled throughout that period.

Interested in serving?
Join a dedicated group of community leaders and help guide investments that strengthen lives across the Heart of Missouri region.

SUBMIT YOUR INTEREST FORM

Call 2-1-1 for Local Community Resources



Get Connected. Get Help.™

Heart of Missouri United Way works collaboratively with other United Way organizations across Missouri to provide local community connection services for those in need across our state. The 211 community resource connection service provides those in need with a centralized contact point to identify local resources that may be able to provide assistance.

Should you, a loved one, or someone you know ever be in need of support, please dial 2-1-1 anytime or send a text to 1-800-427-4626 between 9am and 5pm Monday through Friday to be connected with a trained specialist that may be of assistance. You may also access an online directory of services at www.211helps.org.

Heart of Missouri United Way brings people, resources, and partners together to create lasting, measurable change across Boone, Cooper, and Howard counties. Guided by our mission to positively impact lives by empowering people and organizations through strategic resource investments, we mobilize community action to advance Community Resiliency, Healthy Community, Financial Security, and Youth Opportunity. Through strategic investments, community partnerships, volunteer engagement, and initiatives that connect people to critical resources, Heart of Missouri United Way helps build a stronger, more resilient Heart of Missouri.

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