

REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

2020-2021 FISCAL YEAR



United Way of
Greater Mercer County



Dear Community Partners and Supporters:

“To whom much is given, much will be expected.” If you have heard this proverb, you know it means we are held responsible for what we have. United Way of Greater Mercer County (UWGMC) is fortunate to have individuals and businesses support our work as well as talented staff and passionate board members. It’s with these elements, we respond to community needs – whether it’s through natural disasters, recession, or a global pandemic.

During a uniquely challenging year bought on by COVID-19, new and expanded partnerships allowed us to care for more than 8,000 of our neighbors, friends, and colleagues. We were able to get fresh produce and packaged meals into the hands of those who need it, enroll individuals and families in health insurance, distribute new books to schools and community youth programs, and help those struggling to make ends meet keep more of their hard-earned dollars via our free tax preparation services, financial coaching, and discounted prescription savings program. We also responded to emergencies and promoted free rides to vaccine appointments through NJ 2-1-1.

Mercer County residents needed us, and we were there! This is not new – we have been serving the community for more than eight decades. Every person who is helped by UWGMC has a story. And there are thousands of stories. Every story of progress and success demonstrates our impact. Our work is important and continues, getting people to recover in 2022.

The renowned poet Maya Angelou once shared “I’ve learned that no matter what happens, or how bad it seems today, life does go on, and it will be better tomorrow.” At United Way, we are committed to making it possible for the people of Mercer County to have a better tomorrow. Thank you for supporting our mission.

Sincerely,



Sandra Toussaint

Sandra Toussaint
President & CEO



JR Woods

Jennifer Woods
President, Board of Directors

A VITAL RESOURCE FOR MERCER COUNTY RESIDENTS

Free Tax Preparation Program (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program – VITA)

Nearly **1,100** taxpayers received free tax preparation in Mercer County.

Rising costs in food, housing, and essentials leave families struggling to make ends meet. The savings from tax preparation fees, tax credits and refunds received are used for basic needs like food, housing, healthcare, childcare, transportation to their place of employment and much more!

The Individuals and Families We Serve

- Average Gross Income (AGI) **\$26,276**
- Average age of taxpayer **55**
- Most have completed High School
- Most identify as African American, Hispanic and White Caucasian
- Most reside in East Windsor, Ewing, Hamilton, Lawrenceville, and Trenton

Saves Hard-working Struggling Families Money

\$422,400 in taxpayer fees saved to through the free tax program (VITA) to help individuals and families keep more money in their pockets.

Volunteer Driven

62 volunteers trained to become IRS certified volunteers to provide free tax preparation services at 3 sites: Latin American Legal Defense & Education Fund (LALDEF), Salvation Army Trenton, and at our office in Lawrenceville.

The volunteers committed **1,650+ hours** to the 2020 Tax Year.

Money Received for Basic Needs

\$1,424

AVERAGE EARNED INCOME
TAX CREDIT (EITC)

\$1,288

AVERAGE CHILD
TAX CREDIT (CTC)

\$1,241

AVERAGE REFUND
AMOUNT

Why Our Work Matters

To qualify for Federal and community resources like food assistance (including school lunch and breakfast), health insurance (including Medicaid), college financial aid, and other programs proof of income is required. The IRS supplemental assistance during the pandemic was contingent upon a tax return filing therefore, it was crucial for individuals and families to have their tax returns up to date. We made sure of that. In addition to qualifying for resources, failure to file may result in back taxes and more debt for families that are already struggling to make ends meet.

Connection Beyond Free Tax Returns

Families and individuals that benefit from our free tax service are often referred to our benefits program, or other community resources to help them get additional assistance.

Together we are making this vital resource available for free and ensuring the financial success of families and individuals in our community.



“I was just sharing with a retired Accountant friend how fulfilling it was to work with Bill and the VITA team. Since I am a nerd who loves numbers, it was fun for me and a way to help others. This work helped all of us feel valued. It was fun meeting people by phone, encouraging them and of course getting them nice refunds. ‘Helping one person might not change the world.... but it could change the world for one person.’”

*- Diane J. Brooks,
Excellence Center Transformation
Leader at Solvay Princeton.*

A YEAR OF COLLABORATION

We are truly grateful to have been able to support our community during these exceptionally challenging times. Throughout the year, we stepped up our efforts to address immediate unmet needs related to the pandemic – distributing masks and sanitizer to frontline workers while continuing to provide families with access to basic needs.

As the need for food continued to surge, we answered the call by rallying our community partners, volunteers, and donors. **We were everywhere making the case for food security and to ensure access to food.** Together, we made a difference by filling the gaps.

While United Way of Greater Mercer County isn't a food bank or food pantry, **what we do exceptionally well is drive collaboration** by leveraging the strength of our relationships for greater community impact.



JULY- Together Everyone Achieves More

Giving a new dimension to Strike Out Hunger, the Committee decided it was time to step up our food drive efforts. Our partners at Investors, Northfield, and M&T banks, as well as Grounds for Sculpture, set up **donation boxes across 12 sites, collecting more than 815 pounds of canned and boxed goods throughout the month.** Our friends at the Starbucks Community Store in Trenton also participated by hosting their own food drive which was supported by local frontline workers.



AUGUST- NOVEMBER

Leave no stone unturned...or weed not pulled
As part of our ongoing commitment to making fresh produce available, Strike Out Hunger officially went green! **United Way staff, Strike Out Hunger Committee members and their colleagues volunteered with Rolling Harvest at Gravity Hill Farm in Ewing to get the fields ready for fall planting and to glean peppers!** We also prepared boxes of fresh produce including lettuces and other late summer crops that were sent to support our local homeless shelters.



Strike Out Hunger is a perfect example. What was once a one-day food security initiative, has become a year-long effort of boots on the ground to reduce hunger:

Many under resourced families rely on school breakfasts and lunches to close the food gap. In fact, our **Strike Out Hunger event brings groups together to make sure area families have access to food when schools are closed.** For this reason, Strike Out Hunger is held in June and it's all hands-on deck. In just two hours, more than **100 volunteers gathered under outdoor tents to pack 31,928 six-serving bags of rice and beans.** Through our partnership with Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, we were able to make sure these meals are culturally responsive and physically accessible to anyone in need.

Our Strike Out Hunger event doesn't happen in a vacuum. The event is championed by 12 volunteer committee members representing small businesses, corporations, and community organizations. Every year they challenge themselves along with UWGMC staff to do better and to do more for the community.



SEPTEMBER- Sukkah Village

Much of what we do around food security is driven by our very own Denise Daniels, Director of Outreach and Volunteer Services. **During the month of September, United Way could be found participating on multiple panel discussions about food insecurity in Greater Mercer County and encouraging involvement in impactful solutions.** A highlight of the month was participation in Sukkah Village Princeton 2021 which featured a walking tour of 11 Sukkahs, a traditional Judaic shelter, on public sites around Downtown Princeton. The event also included panel discussions on food insecurity, homelessness, sustainability, and the struggle of refugees worldwide. It was a great display of community unity in action.



NOVEMBER – PositiveNRG

Strike Out Hunger sponsor NRG hosted its own food security event as part of the company's annual positivNRG week. United Way staff collaborated with NRG's Jennifer Brunelle and Scott Gillenwater to organize the week-long event which included roughly 100 NRG employees across New Jersey gathering in service of food security. **In all, over 31,570 pounds of food for 1,000 Mercer County families were packed. Each bag was filled with all the trimmings needed for a Thanksgiving dinner for a family of four.** United Way of Greater Mercer County rallied the troops by bringing in Mercer Street Friends Food Bank, Jewish Family and Children's Services, South Brunswick School District, and Salvation Army of Trenton to distribute bags across their networks.

United Way of Greater Mercer County continues to work towards the day when the basic needs of every household in our community are being met. We believe that we make the greatest difference by filling the gaps.

Together, we're making a difference through a community of collaboration.

ASSISTING STRUGGLING FAMILIES: HOW WE DO IT

Access to basic needs and resources are FREE to individuals and families



205 HOUSEHOLDS

Connected to federal and state programs for basic needs like health care, food, and housing programs.



12 INDIVIDUALS

Connected to a financial coach to budget, reduce debt and define financial goals through our partnership with Greenpath. Most individuals were able to increase their credit score and reduce their debt amount.



85 EDUCATION KITS

Children at elementary schools and community programs in Mercer County gained educational experiences in literacy, science, math, fine arts, and creative thinking with a hands-on project.



2,735 INDIVIDUALS

Saved money on their mental health, diabetes, asthma, heart disease and other prescribed medications through our partner, SingleCare (formerly FamilyWize). Providing nearly \$300,000 in total savings to the community.



44 STUDENTS

Participated in college financial aid assistance and college admission essay workshops. Students received help to navigate the college process and save money on tuition to make higher education accessible.



\$404,465 FEDERAL FUNDS

Distributed to Mercer County nonprofits. As the chair of the local Emergency Food and Shelter Program Board, our goal is to ensure existing food and shelter services are supplemented and expanded.

2-1-1

New Jersey

14,493 MERCER COUNTY RESIDENTS

Connected to our partner NJ 211, a free, multilingual, and confidential community helpline available 24-hours a day, 7 days a week, for basic needs like financial assistance, housing, medical and mental health services and more.

LAUNCHED COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER PLATFORM TO BUILD NONPROFIT CAPACITY

United Way of Greater Mercer County (UWGMC) continues to ensure valuable tools and resources are available to the community. UWGMC made Galaxy Digital, a volunteer management software, available to make area organizations' volunteer recruitment strategies easier. As non-profits began to open back up for in-person activity, UWGMC anticipated the increased demand for volunteers.

The platform provides the community with a one-stop tool to volunteer and gives non-profits an easier way to promote opportunities. Among the many benefits of nonprofits using the platform is the ability to organize and schedule volunteers, track participation, and generate reports for grants.

UWGMC provides the volunteer platform for free through an operating support grant from the NJ Commission on National and Community Service/Volunteer Generation Fund, within the NJ Department of State. UWGMC is making sure we are doing our part to connect needs with community engagement.

285

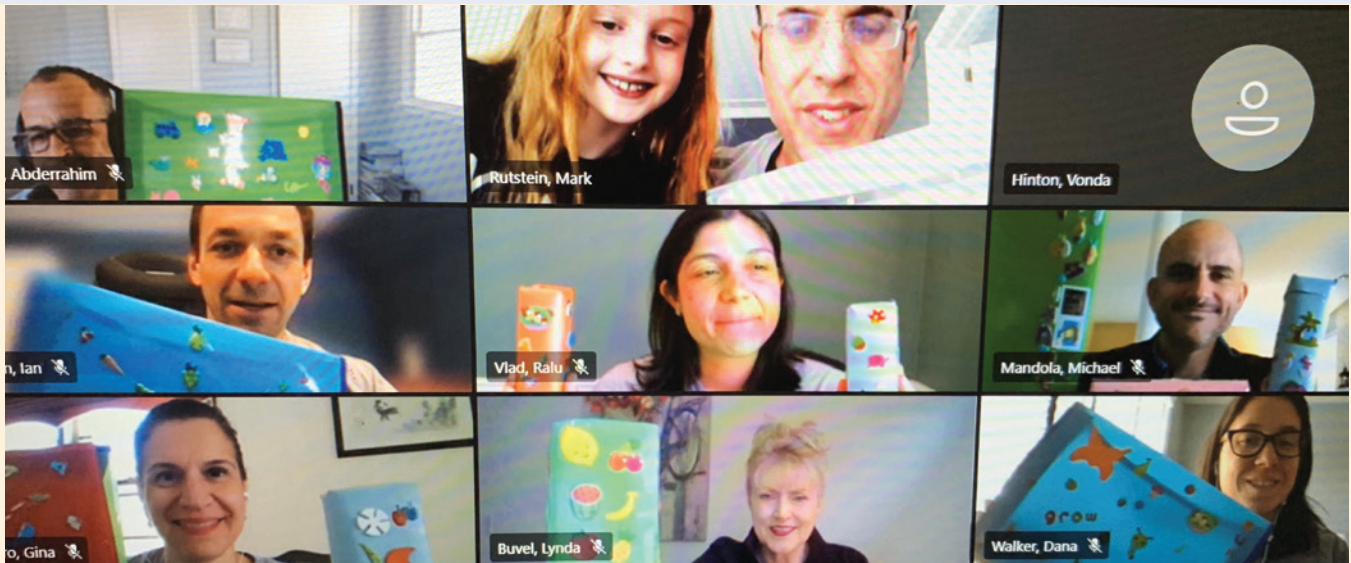
NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS

18

NUMBER OF SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE BUSINESSES

598

NUMBER OF HOURS



Together with our business partners and volunteers we are impacting the community.

FIRST CELEBRATION OF THE UNITED IN IMPACT AWARDS

United Way of Greater Mercer County held its first United in Impact Awards to celebrate community champions who give their all to better Mercer County and beyond.

We proudly celebrated:

- Michael Van Wagner, VP of Public Affairs at NJM Insurance Group & NJM Insurance Group - Live United Award
- Frank J. Lucchesi, Senior Regional Public Affairs Manager at PSE&G - Community Quarterback Award
- Diane Grillo, VP of Health Promotions at Robert Wood Johnson Hamilton - Advocate Award

The Eugene Marsh Community Impact Award was given posthumously to former Board Member, Eugene Marsh, and was accepted by his wife, Elaine Walker Marsh.



CONNECTING MERCER COUNTY TO RESOURCES AND BASIC NEEDS FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS.



WAYS TO GIVE

Below are some ways you can donate to support United Way of Greater Mercer County's mission. Every donation counts!

MATCHING GIFTS

Many companies have demonstrated their support for United Way by matching their employees' contributions. Before you contribute, ask whether your employer participates in a matching gift program, as certain restrictions may apply.

PLANNED GIVING

Name United Way of Greater Mercer County, as a beneficiary of your will. United Way has partnered with FreeWill to give you a free, easy way to write your legally valid will. The service is 100% free and it takes 20 minutes to complete. Go to www.freewill.com.

LEADERSHIP GIVING

Individuals or couples who contribute \$1,000-\$9,999 annually to United Way of Greater Mercer County become members of the Leaders' Giving Circle. Members are eligible for benefits.

Donate online today: www.uwgmc.org/give

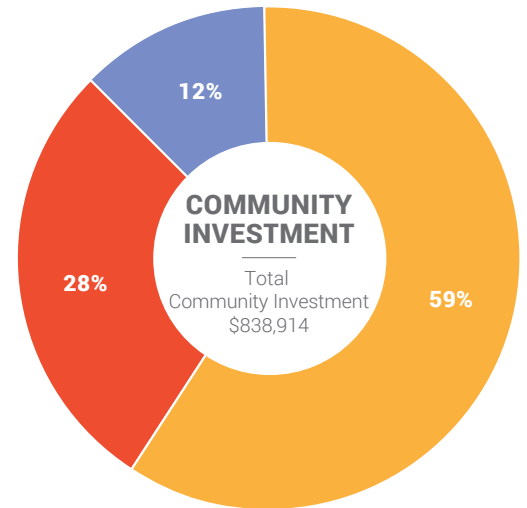
For more information on giving opportunities and benefits, please contact 609-896-1912 ext. 4904.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

FINANCIALS

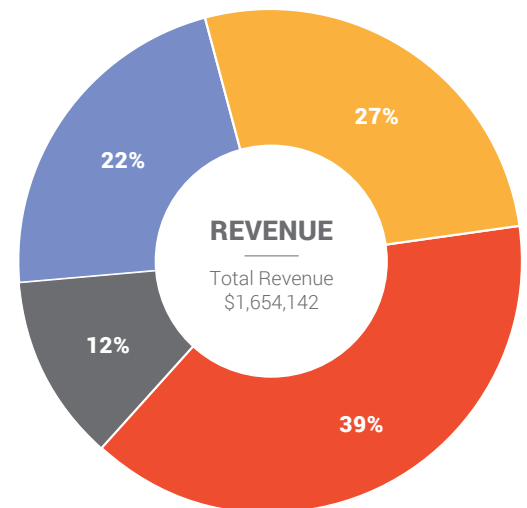
COMMUNITY INVESTMENT

Basic Needs and Other Direct Service Programs	\$497,795
Financial Security	237,438
Donor Designations and Service Provider Fees ¹	103,681
Total Community Investment	\$838,914



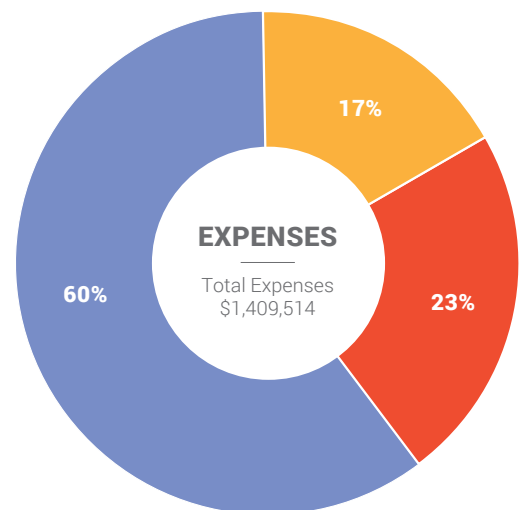
REVENUE

Annual Workplace Campaign (Net of Designations) ²	\$442,088
Fee for Service, Grants, Bequests	648,415
Investment Income (Net)	197,963
Other Revenue	365,676
Total Revenue	1,654,142



FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES

Administration	243,800
Fundraising	326,800
Community Investment (Including Designations) ³	838,914
Total Expenses	1,409,514
Change in Net Income	\$(244,628)



¹ Our annual workplace campaigns provide funds to local non-profits who we have evaluated and determined to be fiscally responsible.

² United Way campaign unites employees in all offices or branches of a company, and gives them an opportunity to donate and volunteer through their local United Way.

³ Designations: Many of our donors designate their donations to local non-profits.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

We partner with nonprofits throughout Mercer County to strengthen the capacity of the great work they are already doing. We are working together to build a stronger, equitable, thriving community – particularly for struggling families.

- Arm In Arm
- Boys and Girls Club of Mercer County
- Capital Area YMCA
- Catholic Charities Diocese of Trenton
- Center for Non-Profits
- CYO (Catholic Youth Organization)
- Jewish Family and Children's Service of Greater Mercer County
- Labyrinth Books
- LALDEF (Latin American Legal Defense Fund)
- Mercer Street Friends
- Millhill Child and Family Development
- Mt. Carmel Guild
- Rolling Harvest Food Rescue
- Salvation Army Trenton Citadel
- Smith Family Foundation
- TASK (Trenton Area Soup Kitchen)
- TDI Connect
- The Father Center of New Jersey
- The Workwell Partnership
- W.E.B. DuBois Scholars Institute
- YWCA Princeton



CARING CORPORATIONS & FOUNDATIONS

The resources, commitment, and passion of our corporate and foundation partners make it possible to build a stronger, equitable and thriving community. Whether it's through a workplace campaign, program funding, event sponsorship, volunteer efforts, or all of the above, they are joining us to assist struggling families.

CORPORATE AND FOUNDATION SUPPORT

TOCQUEVILLE SOCIETY \$10,000+

Bristol Myers Squibb
Educational Testing Service (ETS)
George and Estelle Sands Foundation
Janssen
Mary Owen Borden Foundation
NJ Governor's Office of Volunteerism
NJM Insurance Group
NRG Energy Inc
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Santander Bank
State of NJ - CRF
Starbucks
Wells Fargo

VISIONARY CIRCLE \$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous
Investors Bank
Josephine Peiser Charitable
Foundation
Novo Nordisk

PACESETTER CIRCLE \$1,000-\$2,499

Comcast/NBC Universal
Mercadien
Roma Bank
Rotary Club of the Princeton Corridor
Thomas Edison State University

GATEWAY CIRCLE \$2,500-\$4,999

Berkshire Bank
M&T Bank
PNC Bank
PNC Foundation
Provident Bank
PSEG
Robert Half
Stark & Stark
Taiho
WaWa
Wegmans

LIVE UNITED PARTNER UP TO \$999

Friends of Venice Gateway
First Baptist Church of Princeton
High Hotels
Holman Group
One Limo
Spiritual Assembly of Baha'is

WORKPLACE CAMPAIGNS

AAA Mid-Atlantic
Abbott Labs
Anderson
Aqua America
AT&T
Bank of America
Best Buy
Blank Rome LLP
CB&I
Cenlar FSB
Child Care Connection
Comcast/NBC Universal
Costco
Customers Bank
Delaware River Basin Commission
Deloitte
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Educational Testing Service
FedEx

FMC Ag
Ford
Fulton Bank
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Greenwood House
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NEC Laboratories
NJ Employee Charitable
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New Jersey Education Association
(NJEA)
PerformCare
Pfizer
PNC
Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory
Princeton University
Raymond James
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Rue Insurance
Stop & Shop
Target
TD Bank
TJX
UPS
Walmart
Wegmans
Wells Fargo
Williams
Zoetis

This report acknowledges partners and supporters from July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021. United Way of Greater Mercer County has worked carefully to ensure the accuracy of this information. *If we have made an error, please accept our apologies and notify us by calling 609-896-1912.*

THANK YOU FOR YOUR INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY

TOCQUEVILLE SOCIETY \$10,000+

Michael Rowe

VISIONARY CIRCLE \$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous
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Norman Goldschmidt

GATEWAY CIRCLE \$2,500-\$4,999

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Matthew Murphy
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LIVE UNITED PARTNER UP TO \$999

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REMEMBERING EUGENE MARSH

Eugene Marsh served on the United Way of Greater Mercer County Board of Directors for over 25 years. He was consistently driven by his own experiences and his commitment rested in assisting vulnerable populations. He was a continuous advocate for the Veteran community.

We will hold Eugene forever in our hearts and his legacy will live in the work UWGMC does every day.



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Eugene Marsh

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PARTNERING FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS






**United Way of
Greater Mercer County**

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