

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER

United
Way



United Way of
the Crossroads

*Serving Victoria, Goliad, DeWitt &
Lavaca Counties and the City of Gonzales*

Advancing the Common Good

JANUARY, 25, 2021

We believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to have a good life: a quality education that leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, and good health.

OUR VISION - A united and resilient community where everyone belongs and everyone thrives.

OUR MISSION - We mobilize and support a vibrant local network of people, partners, and resources to create opportunities for every person in our community to live free from poverty and other challenges to our vision.

OUR FOCUS - We provide an organizing framework for elevating student success, supporting families, and engaging our communities throughout the Crossroads region.



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UNITED WAY OF THE CROSSROADS



Jill Blucher

Brooke Garcia

Samantha Kinsey

NEW NAME, SAME GREAT PURPOSE

JANUARY 25, 2021

The year 2020 saw many changes for Victoria County United Way, but none as great as our new name: United Way of the Crossroads. We are very proud of this change as it better communicates our areas of service. We proudly serve Victoria, Goliad, DeWitt and Lavaca Counties as well as the City of Gonzales.

United Way of the Crossroads has established partnerships with non-profits in these areas, and we plan to continue building stronger community connections.

Our new name expresses our vision for all communities to work together and create a better Crossroads community.

Welcoming New Staff

With expansion on the horizon, we had to imagine what it would take to get there. On the top of that list was a dynamic team of people who believe in the vision and who are willing to work hard to get us there. The first was to add a new position dedicated to action marketing.

The Community Engagement Coordinator is tasked with keeping United Way visible through volunteer events, projects (ie Tiny Libraries), and equity work.

The next step was to look at the overall needs of a growing organization's back office and bring on an Administrative Assistant with a mixed background to be able to revamp our day-to-day systems while also taking a key role in new database systems, marketing, and website. Please welcome to the team Jill Blucher and Samantha Kinsey!



2020 INITIATIVES

JANUARY 25, 2021

While 2020 was definitely a year of profound obstacles and challenges, United Way of the Crossroads not only wanted to show support to our communities, but we also wanted to infuse joy and hope when we could. Let's explore 2020.

Tiny Libraries

The Tiny Library program partners with businesses, volunteers, and local libraries to bring reading nooks stocked with books to area daycares. This program seeks to place books in the hands of little ones and ensure every child is kindergarten ready. <https://www.unitedwaycrossroads.org/tiny-libraries>

Week of Caring

The United Way of the Crossroads hosted the Week of Caring. We hosted 17 volunteer events across the Crossroads from May 16th - 22nd. In one week, 54 volunteers gave 148 hours, packed or distributed 850 meals, packed more than 600 rescue grocery boxes, cleaned and organized a furniture warehouse, sorted 52 boxes of donations, built 10 desks, and made a flower bed. Check it out here. <https://www.crossroadstoday.com/victoria-county-united-way-takes-on-a-new-approach/>

Equity Work

In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, the United Way of the Crossroads felt it was important to use our platform to foster conversations and promote activities that will promote racial equity in the Crossroads. We partnered with Be Well Victoria and Center For Peace Victoria. We hosted our first 7 day Equity Challenge July 20th - 27th and had 53 participants. We repeated that Challenge in August with nearly 200 participants.

Our first CommUNITY book club convened in October and explored Ibram Kendi's *How to be an Anti-Racist*. We plan to expand our view of equity in 2021, covering gender equality and gender identity in 7-day Challenges and CommUNITY book clubs.

Be a Santa for a Senior

The United Way of the Crossroads partnered with Meals on Wheels Victoria, Community Action Coalition, Community Connections of Lavaca County, and The Gonzales Senior Citizens Association to bring holiday gifts to nearly 800 homebound seniors in 2020.

"Once you choose hope, anything is possible."

— CHRISTOPHER REEVE

Covid-19 Relief Fund

When the pandemic hit, we immediately stepped forward and created the COVID-19 Relief Fund for the Golden Crescent area. We raised **\$112,300** within the first few months. **\$80,100** has been granted out to vital service organizations with **32%** to Rent Assistance; **53%** to Food-Related programs and services; AND **5%** to Agency pivots (technology to train volunteers remotely; hotel vouchers for the quarantine period).

The remaining has been designated for assistance through reimbursement contracts or as outlined below:

- **Gift Cards** - to distribute at food distribution sites in towns throughout our service region.
- **Unmet Needs** - Helping individuals and families registered with Community Action Committee Victoria and Victoria Christian Assistance Ministries with needs that are not normally covered by that organization.



Ongoing Hurricane Harvey Relief

In 2017 when Hurricane Harvey devastated our area, the Victoria County United Way was on the front lines of response and recovery, creating the Long-Term Recovery Group and helping all disaster response organizations with much-needed funding and support.

Overall, we have provided **\$993,547** to the effort since 2017. We continue to assist as much as we can, providing **\$69,793** in FY19/20 to help Hurricane Harvey survivors continue the recovery process.

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give."

— WINSTON CHURCHILL

Impact Initiatives

A Modern United Way shows up differently in our community by celebrating past achievements, evolving to adapt to the current needs, leaving behind what no longer works, and embracing shared opportunities.

We must adapt and change to continue the vital work of our organization all the while staying true to the mission.

We have always funded nonprofit agencies that provide health, education, and financial stability programs in our service area.

Now, we will also lead Impact Initiatives that bring strategic partners together to jump start solutions to fill critical needs in the Crossroads community we serve.

Census Response & Voter Registration

In the midst of the pandemic, the United Way of the Crossroads worked to increase census response and voter registration in typically underrepresented populations located in our rural areas. While most of our planned events were canceled, we did partner with schools and other groups during meal distributions. We created and provided flyers on census response to be placed at grocery stores, and gas stations. Restaurants also included these flyers in their to-go orders.

We conducted our voter registrations during meal pick-ups at Christ's Kitchen in Victoria. [Click here](#) to see an article written about this initiative.



Funded Agencies

Billy T. Cattan Recovery Outreach
 Golden Crescent CASA
 Hope of South Texas
 Mid Coast Family Services
 STARS Clinic
 Community Action Committee of Victoria
 American Red Cross
 Food Bank of the Golden Crescent
 Golden Crescent Habitat for Humanity
 Perpetual Help Home
 Victoria Christian Assistance Ministry
 Meals On Wheels Victoria
 Boys & Girls Club of Victoria
 Boys & Girls Club of DeWitt County
 Communities in Schools of the GC
 Gulf Bend Center
 Barber Bauer Briggs Family YMCA

Top Workplace Campaigns

(in alphabetical order)

AEP
 Caterpillar Inc.
 Citizens Medical Center
 Devon Energy
 Dillard's
 DOW Seadrift Operations
 Formosa Plastics
 H.E.B.
 Holt Cat
 INEOS Nitriles
 Intoplast Group
 INVISTA
 LyondellBasell
 Prosperity Bank
 O'Conner Hewitt Foundation
 Seadrift Coke
 UPS
 Victoria College
 Victoria I.S.D
 Wells Fargo Bank
 Zachry Industrial

The Art of Giving

January 25, 2021

New Fundraising Platform

Our new focus on community involvement brought with it the need to make donating easier for individuals and small businesses. We began using a more agile giving platform that features text-to-give functionality, allows donors to give monthly, one time, or to donate by rounding up the change on their purchases. It has allowed us to better communicate with donors and volunteers and has garnered more than **\$3,000** in new support since July 2020! See for yourself by texting **United361** to **26989** or go to www.unitedwaycrossroads.org and click the **Donate** button.

New "Workplace Campaign"

Recognizing that even before the pandemic, new business owners may have not been attracted to the traditional workplace campaign. So, we created a suite of 'products' aimed at giving the donor options. *The Workplace Campaign* has been revamped to include an alternative Direct Give option as well as a menu of add-ons.

Event Sponsorships have been placed into one package for all 2021 events with different levels and Local Impact Initiatives give donors the option of choosing their county or even town to bring opportunities to their communities. Check out our new business packet here: <https://www.unitedwaycrossroads.org/campaign>

New Grant Process

We began restructuring our Allocations process with the intent of creating a streamlined and automated system for the nonprofits requesting funding and for our Volunteer Reviewers vetting and processing applications. We are collecting data more regularly so that we can focus on assessing the needs of our community. The data will also create a roadmap as to where our funding is needed the most. If funding permits, we will invest in a system used by LUWs nationwide in 2021!

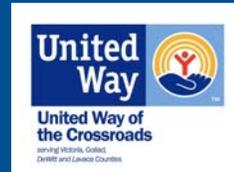
“

Giving is not just about making a donation. It is about making a difference."

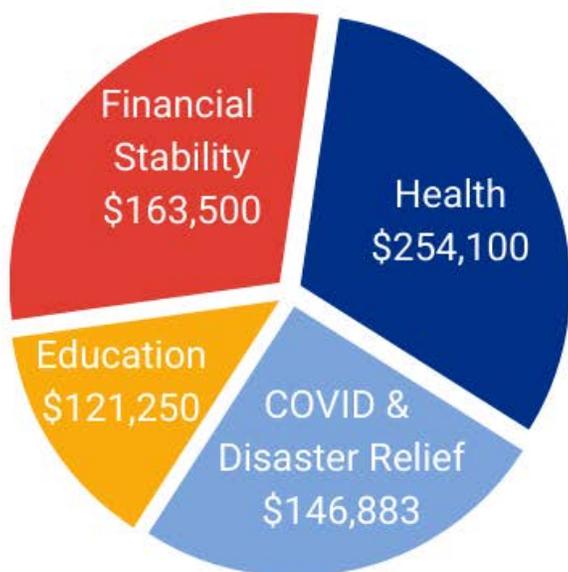
- Kathy Calvin

Allocations & Expenses

OVERVIEW



At United Way of the Crossroads, we strive for better health, education, and financial stability for every person in all of our communities. Check out the graphs below to see how teaming up with individuals, businesses, and local agencies help us to create long-lasting changes that improve lives and create possibilities for the future.



20/21 Allocations Relief FY19/20



Expenses FY19/20

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