



COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

2024 - 2025

OUR LEADERSHIP

A WORD FROM OUR PRESIDENT

As we reflect on this past year, I am filled with immense gratitude for the unwavering support and generosity of our community. Your belief in our mission and your commitment to creating positive change have made all the difference.

Together, we've created opportunities for transformation, resilience, and hope. From partnering with new local agencies and initiatives, to deepening our outreach, to tackling the issues through a holistic approach, every step forward has been powered by your contributions - whether through time, talent, or resources. You have helped us turn ideas into impact.

This report is more than a summary of numbers or accomplishments; it is a celebration of the lives we've touched together. Behind every statistic is a story—of hope restored, of voices uplifted, of futures transformed. As we continue into 2025, we continue our efforts to understand the community's needs, and to respond effectively and efficiently.



DEBBIE ROTH

President

Our impact is a shared success. We are proud to stand alongside you as partners in this work, and we are excited for what lies ahead. Thank you for helping us build a brighter, more equitable future for all.

With appreciation,

Debbie Roth

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our leadership team embodies the broader collective spirit of United Way; only by bringing together individuals from all sectors of our community, we are able to create innovative solutions that address the most intricate needs our community is facing.

Steve Carignan, Board Chair

Nathan Miller, Vice-Chair

Heather Bishop, Secretary

Michelle Meaney, Treasurer

Dr. Lucas Cook, Past-Chair

Gwenne Berry

Anne Britson

Vincent Collis

Teresa Driscoll

Dana Grovo

Marty Hannig

Jaclyne Heller

Josh Horstman

Donna Kitrick

Quovadis Marshall

Jeremia Matz

Erica Parks

Dr. Andrew Richter

Amy Rousselow

Amy Schmidt

Sandi Sommerfelt

Gretchen Steuer

Cody Stoppel

Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center, UNI

Beecher, Field, Walker, Morris, Hoffman & Johnson

John Deere

Community Bank & Trust

Cedar Valley Eye Care

University of Northern Iowa (UNI)

Veridian Credit Union

Title Fight

PDCM Insurance

John Deere

John Deere

KWWL Television

Target Distribution

Waterloo Community Schools

Hope City Church

SCHEELS

CBE Companies

Christensen, Freese & Richter Orthodontics

Waterloo Public Library

Waterloo Community Schools

Grow Cedar Valley

US Bank

Banklows Insurance, LLC. / Vine Valley Real Estate

MISSION

Uniting our community to empower individuals and families to thrive.

VISION

To be the leader in building caring and vital relationships throughout the Cedar Valley that produce positive results, gather and disperse community resources, and yield measurable impact.

STAFF

Debbie Roth | President

Samantha Gutknecht | Senior Director of Marketing

Nilvia Reyes Rodriguez | Director of Community Impact and Engagement

Nicole Deerberg | Development Associate

Sarah Rahlf | Administrative and Development Associate

OUR INVESTMENTS

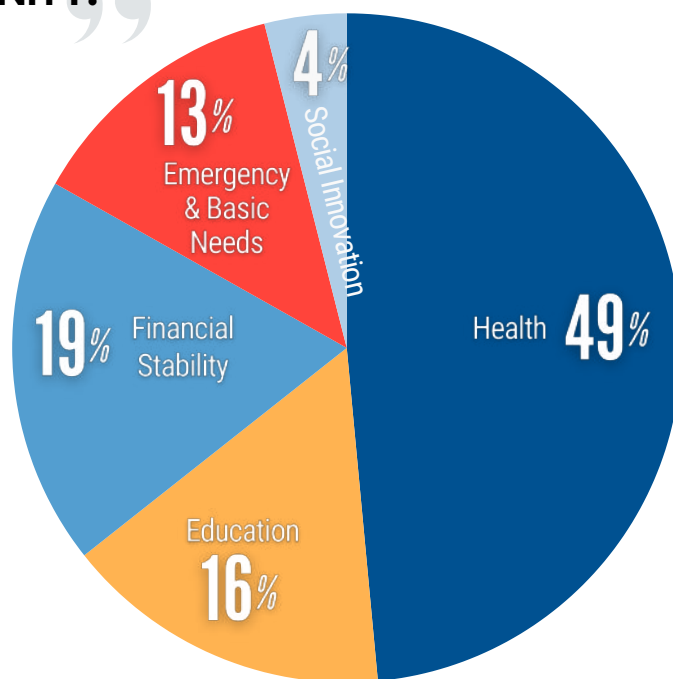


“WE ARE COMMITTED TO EMPOWERING THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN THE CEDAR VALLEY TO FLOURISH BY STRATEGICALLY INVESTING IN ROBUST COMMUNITY PROGRAMS AND INITIATIVES THROUGH OUR ANNUAL GRANTS. THESE INVESTMENTS FOSTER POSITIVE CHANGE, CONTRIBUTING TO A STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT COMMUNITY.”

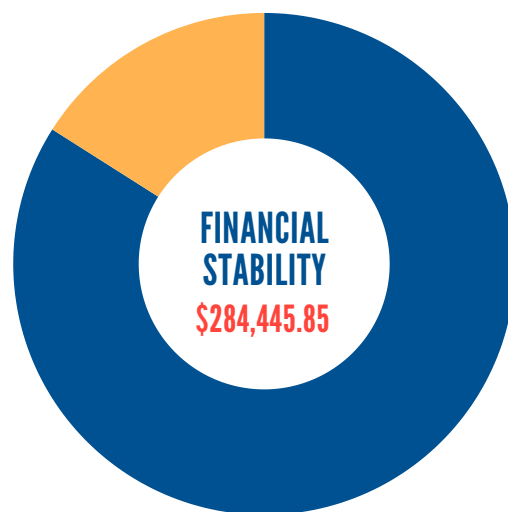
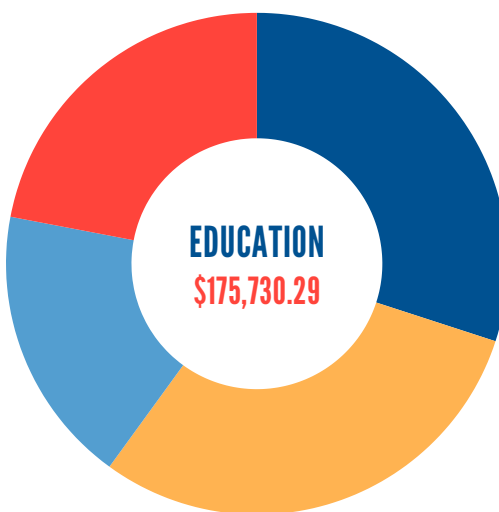
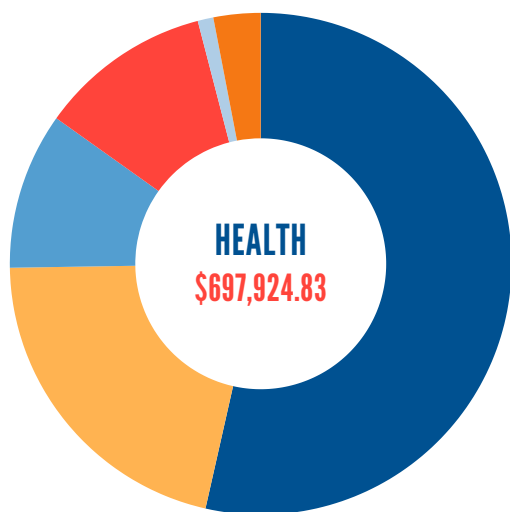
TOTAL INVESTMENTS: \$1,277,455.17

**Additional investments include:*

- 211 (free and confidential referral hotline for those in need of services to call 24/7) - \$20,600
- Donor Designations - \$114,745
- Community Data Management Project - \$25,000
- Books for Babies - \$10,000
- Social Innovation - \$55,000



- Access to Mental Healthcare
- Access to Physical Healthcare
- Maternal Health / Infant Well-Being
- Family Violence, Children & Elder Abuse
- Sexual Health
- Substance Abuse
- Early Education
- After-School and Summer Learning
- Parent and Mentor Support
- College and Career Preparation
- Achieving Financial Stability
- Workforce Development



PRIORITY AREAS

MENTAL HEALTH

SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH EPISODES COST OUR LOCAL ECONOMY \$1,000,000 ANNUALLY.

Funding from Cedar Valley United Way provides support across the spectrum of mental health needs. These include: care coordination, school-based mental health services, access to mental health services, support, crisis intervention, substance abuse and dual diagnosis, and more.

The Issues:

- Mental health matters. In our fast-paced world, 1 in 4 individuals faces a mental health challenge. In Black Hawk County, that's roughly 32,500 adults who will experience a mental health problem or illness in their lifetime. 60% of these individuals don't receive treatment for a variety of reasons including stigma, lack of health insurance, transportation barriers and a shortage of providers.
- According to the National Institute of Mental Illness, approximately 50% of students age 14 and older with a mental illness drop out of high school. This is one of the greatest risk factors for dropping out.
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (commonly called ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that occur during childhood (0-17 years). Examples include: experiencing violence, abuse (physical, emotional or sexual) or neglect; parental substance abuse; suicide or death; crime or imprisoned family; and more. Individuals with 4 or more ACEs as children are 2.3x more likely to report poor health as adults, 5x more likely to have clinical depression and 3x more likely to have heart disease.

How We Help:

Cedar Valley United Way has a holistic and all-encompassing approach to our fundraising. We do not help with one singular issue surrounding mental health, instead we focus on the issue as a whole, and all the factors that contribute to this issue.



89% OF PARTICIPANTS IN CEDAR VALLEY UNITED WAY-SUPPORTED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS DEMONSTRATED AN IMPROVEMENT IN POSITIVE COPING SKILLS.





GRADUATION RATES

THE CEDAR VALLEY WORKFORCE IS COMPRISED OF A DIVERSE RANGE OF INDIVIDUALS. THOSE WHO GRADUATE ON TIME SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY BY BRINGING SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND INNOVATION.

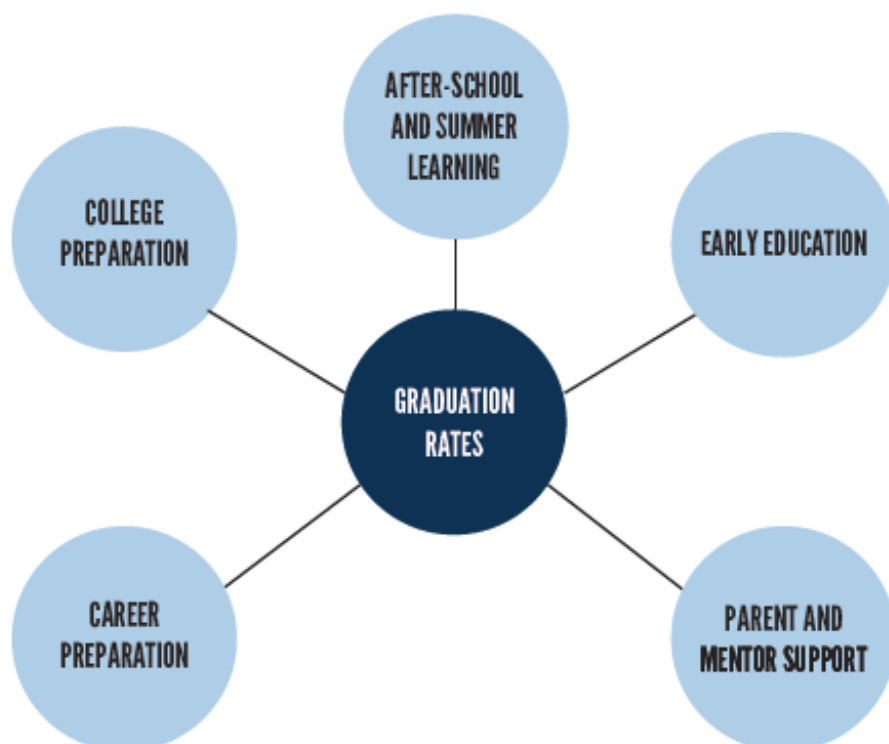
Cedar Valley United Way supports a variety of programs and initiatives to help equip students to graduate on time. Through collaboration, we work to foster a stronger, more resilient community.

The Issues:

- Education is a cornerstone of success, yet many students lack the resources they need to thrive. 68.7% of 4th graders in Black Hawk County read proficiently compared to 75.6% of 3rd grade students in Iowa. Children who can't read by the end of 3rd grade are 4x more likely to drop out of school.
- According to the United States Census Bureau, 8% of adults in Black Hawk County do not have a high school diploma or equivalent, such as a GED.
- The average high school graduation rate in Black Hawk County is 85.6%, according to the Iowa Department of Education. This is lower than the state average high school graduation rate of 89.9%.

How We Help:

Cedar Valley United Way has a holistic and all-encompassing approach to our fundraising. We do not help with one singular issue surrounding graduation rates, instead we focus on the issue as a whole, and all the factors that contribute to this issue.



93% OF CHILDREN ATTENDING CEDAR VALLEY UNITED WAY-SUPPORTED LITERACY PROGRAMS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN ACHIEVING THEIR 3RD GRADE READING PROFICIENCY MILESTONE.



PRIORITY AREAS

HOUSING

NOW, MORE THAN EVER, HOUSING IS EMERGING AS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL ISSUES OUR COMMUNITY IS FACING.

Cedar Valley United Way understands that safe and stable housing is a building block to becoming financially stable and self-sufficient, and to ultimately overcoming generational poverty.

The Issues:

- On a single night in 2023, 653,104 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States (a 12% increase from 2022). Six in ten (60%) were staying in sheltered locations (emergency shelters, safe havens or transitional housing programs) and four in ten (40%) were in unsheltered locations such as on the street, in abandoned buildings or in other places not suitable for habitation.
- In the Cedar Valley, one in five children live in poverty. Recent data shows that 30.2% of homeowners and 46% of renters in the Cedar Valley are cost-burdened, meaning they spend over 30% of their gross income on housing costs. Further, the number of affordable and available units to low-income households is not sufficient, resulting in ongoing housing problems.
- Cedar Valley United Way works to keep low-income individuals housed by impacting housing systems improvements, providing direct support to residents, and increasing the capacity of available services. Systems improvements are sought through policy changes, local collaborations and advancing economic mobility for low-income families and through a variety of funding strategies.

How We Help:

Cedar Valley United Way has a holistic and all-encompassing approach to our fundraising. We do not help with one singular issue surrounding housing, instead we focus on the issue as a whole, and all the factors that contribute to this issue.



97% OF RESIDENTS ACCESSING CEDAR VALLEY UNITED WAY-SUPPORTED HOUSING PROGRAMS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN ATTAINING, RETAINING, AND/OR IMPROVING HOUSING.





CEDAR VALLEY UNITED WAY SOCIAL INNOVATION FUNDS SUPPORT NEW, INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS THAT ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF HEALTH AND HUMAN NEEDS ISSUES THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE CYCLE OF POVERTY IN THE CEDAR VALLEY.

The Social Innovation funding category is intended as an impact accelerator, which invests money and resources in promising social ventures focused on solutions that address root causes of systemic poverty through collaborative efforts.

Social Innovation refers to new products, services and ways of working that meet social needs and strengthen our community.

While Cedar Valley United Way proudly supports established nonprofits that provide much needed products and services in our community, we realize it is not always feasible nor prudent for these organizations to change course or divert resources to explore a new initiative. With that in mind, Social Innovation investments are unique in three ways:

- **INNOVATION:** Social Innovation investments enable new or existing organizations that place social impact at the heart of their business model to apply for funding for groundbreaking ventures and/or research.
- **TIMEFRAME:** The open, flexible and competitive application process is completed quickly, saving valuable time and scarce resources for an early-stage venture.
- **COLLABORATION:** Social Innovation investments promote the leveraging of resources in our community through collaborative efforts that enable multi-disciplinary, holistic and larger-scale approaches.

These Social Innovation investments may take place outside our traditional two-year funding cycle for education, health and financial stability grants, with the intent to encourage holistic approaches to impacting the identified critical root issues.

Here is a brief history of our Social Innovation funding recipients:

FY 2025 - 1619 Freedom School

FY 2024 - The Road Home Re-Entry Program

FY 2023 - WeCan! Parent Partner Project

FY 2022 - WeCan! Parent Partner Project

FY 2021 - WeCan! Parent Partner Project

FY 2019 - Opening a Legal Clinic in the Waterloo Schools for At-Risk Children and Their Families

FY 2018 - EMBARC REACH

FY 2017 - Reach Out and Read, NSLA Research Project

FY 2015 - Low Birth-Weight Research, Books for Babies, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading

(Please note that the fiscal year runs from July to June, meaning FY 2025 spans from July 2024 to June 2025.)



A DIFFERENCE MADE

THEN VS. NOW: THE ROAD HOME

It is estimated between 70 million and 100 million—or as many as one in three Americans—have some type of criminal record. Even a minor criminal record, such as a misdemeanor or even an arrest without conviction, often results in lifelong barriers that stand in the way of successful re-entry. This has broad implications for individuals' and families' economic security, as well as for our local economy as a large portion of these neighbors are on supervised release (parole/probation).

The Department of Corrections reported that the overwhelming majority of Iowans on supervised release have at most a high school education. Across the nation, most people on probation are on the brink of or are currently experiencing poverty: about two-thirds of people on probation are estimated to make less than \$20,000 annually. This poverty hinders not only the ability to care for oneself but absent adequate income, people are more likely to rely on public assistance. Additionally, the need to pay fines and fees can result in a person having to choose between family necessities (such as a license), food and shelter.

Creating meaningful support programs and career opportunities for justice-involved neighbors increases the possibility of a successful re-entry,

assists with building Iowa's workforce and increases public safety in our communities. Road Home provides comprehensive resources for a successful re-entry to decrease income inequality and reduce recidivism. We believe all who want to actively engage in our workforce to earn a family-sustaining wage, should have the access and opportunity to do so. With evidence-based, comprehensive re-entry support and programming, we are creating transformative career development ecosystems.

The goal of Road Home's 16-step life skills program is to improve the lives of justice-impacted neighbors and their families through education, positive exposure, personal assessment, mentorship and a strong connection to community resources and wrap around support. Road Home aims to reduce cycles of recidivism with wholistic, equitable and evidence-informed re-entry services. Post incarceration programming was found to reduce recidivism by at least 30%.

Recent Social Innovation funding went to the Road Home project to assist those in our community. How did our dollars make a difference in the lives of those served through this project? Let's take a look:



Willie has elevated his credit score by more than 180 points since joining the Road Home re-entry program. Additionally, he is collaborating with the University of Northern Iowa's Educational Opportunity Center to enroll at Hawkeye Community College.

Other Statistics:

- Two other participants from Road Home are currently enrolled in Hawkeye Community College's WE Build Waterloo program.
- Out of nine participants, none have reoffended, and all but two are gainfully employed (one of whom is on disability).
- Road Home has successfully increased participants' time spent with their children by 34%.



Cedar Valley United Way is proud to partner with United Ways of Iowa and United for ALICE to drive research and action around financial hardship for ALICE households. **ALICE** is an acronym for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. ALICE families and individuals are those who make more than the federal poverty level, but less than the ALICE Threshold, which is what is needed to afford the basic necessities of food, housing, childcare, transportation and healthcare. We meet ALICE individuals each and every day. These hardworking individuals and families live paycheck to paycheck with no extra money to set aside for savings. One unexpected car repair bill or medical bill can push these financially burdened families over the edge. ALICE households span all races, ages, ethnicities, and abilities.

The future success of our communities is directly tied to the upward mobility of these fragile ALICE households. That is why Cedar Valley United Way is helping families become financially stable and independent by investing in programs with proven strategies to help families improve their economic well-being. Our approach is to build family well-being by working with children and adults across the spectrum of Health, Education, and Financial Stability needs to create multi-generational economic prosperity. To learn more about ALICE in Black Hawk County, visit <https://unitedforalice.org/the-cost-of-basics/iowa>.

\$59,707

ALICE Household Survival Budget for Family of 4

82%

Female-headed Single Parent households in Black Hawk County are ALICE

44%

of families in Black Hawk County live at or below the ALICE threshold

56%

Children age 3-4 in ALICE households are not enrolled in preschool



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

BOOKS FOR BABIES



Research shows that reading aloud with children is the single most important thing you can do to prepare a child for reading and learning. The ratio of age appropriate books per child in low-income neighborhoods is 1 book per 300 children. And, research shows that a child with more books in their home is more likely to graduate from high school and have a more successful transition to adulthood. Reading to infants from birth enhances vocabulary and communication skills and boosts brain development.

The Books for Babies program brings the books directly into the hands of the parents, for free, eliminating the barriers of cost and potentially transportation to purchase books.

This program ensures that every baby born in the Cedar Valley receives a free book right at the hospital. Thank you to our local hospitals, MercyOne and UnityPoint Health - Allen for distributing books to families. **Learn more at CedarValleyUnitedWay.org/Read.**

Thank you to our donors who make this program possible: Max and Helen Guernsey Charitable Foundation, Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors, SCHEELS, Larry Howard, Jill Mejia, and the Families of Luke Aronson and Hudson Howard.

COMMUNITY PARTNER FUND

The Community Partner Fund was established in 2006 to increase the capacity of collaborations, identify assets and gaps in our services, to focus on critical social needs and to maximize available resources. The key focuses are on collaboration (encouraging collaboration and cooperation among agencies in order to provide efficient and effective services), capacity (build capacity of agencies to improve their effectiveness), information (connect people and agencies to information about local needs and resources that benefit them and the community) and emergency funding for partner agencies.

Recent Community Partner Funding includes:

The River ARC Health Fair - Over 100 people from different countries attended the French Community Resources Health Fair in the summer of 2024. Health screenings and prevention resources were provided to participants. They also hosted family-friendly activities for children. This event coincided with National Immigrant Heritage Month and World Refugee Day.



Image courtesy of The RIVER ARC Facebook page



Image courtesy of The Waterloo Convention Center Facebook page

IMOM Dental Clinic - The Iowa Mission of Mercy is a large-scale, two-day community dental clinic (October 13 and 14 in Waterloo in 2023) where dental professionals and general volunteers donate their time to provide free oral health care to individuals who face barriers to receiving dental care. A full-service field dental clinic with 100 dental operatories is set up and patients are treated on a first-come/first-served basis. Since the first IMOM in 2008, over 18,583 patients from all areas of the state and beyond have received free dental care totaling nearly \$13.3 million.

STORIES OF IMPACT



This past year, through the United Way grant, one of our families has benefited greatly. As a single mom this parent struggled to afford childcare and her own grandma was having to help pay to keep her enrolled. She was pregnant and expenses were continuously being spread thinner and thinner. Through the gift of this grant, which provides supplemental scholarships through a sliding fee scale, her daughter and soon to be her son as well will be able to continue to come and mom will be able to keep working. Her daughter struggles with a speech delay and she didn't want to have to pull her from our care because of how far she has come while attending our school. The burden for Grandma to afford the childcare fees was becoming stressful too, this lifts a great burden for the entire family.

GROWING MINDS

Removing Childcare as a Barrier To Work For Low-Income Families



The Special Assistance program used United Way funds help a 76-year-old lady safely exit her home. The client lived in an area where other funding sources were not accessible to her. Her porch and steps were very unstable. Her porch had holes that were being covered up by a rug and the steps were cracked, bowed, and deteriorated over the years. She didn't have a railing to hang onto when trying to get down her steps and had to grab onto her garbage can in hopes that it would not move when she went down the steps. With the help of Cedar Valley United Way, we were able to utilize funding to replace the boards on the porch, steps that are wider and easier for her to get up and down and railings to hang onto. This allowed her to get in and out of her home safely and to prevent any future falls.

NORTHEAST IOWA AREA AGENCY ON AGING

NEI3A Special Assistance

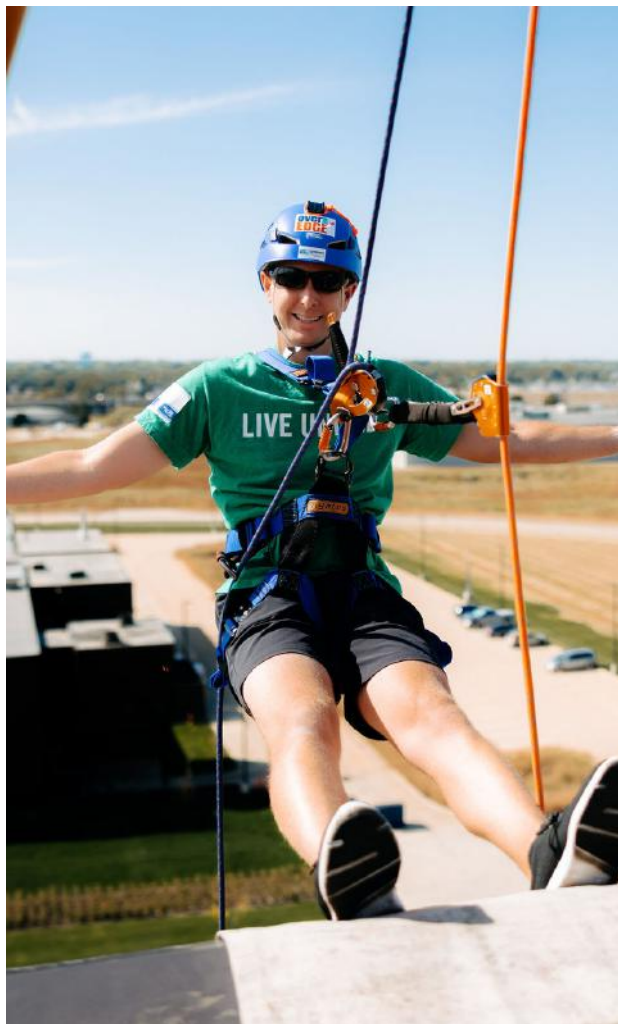
THANK YOU.

CEDAR VALLEY UNITED WAY BELIEVES IN BEING THE BEST STEWARDS OF OUR DONORS' DOLLARS, ENSURING THE BIGGEST IMPACT POSSIBLE IN THE CEDAR VALLEY.

Explore our initiatives, mission, and more by visiting our website at www.CedarValleyUnitedWay.org.

Whether you're interested in volunteering, donating, or simply gaining insight into our programs and initiatives, our website offers a wealth of information.

Additionally, find out how you can become a sponsor for one of our amazing events featured on the right. We would be thrilled to have you join us! Your support enables us to continue our vital work and make a meaningful impact in the lives of those in need. Together, we can cultivate a stronger, more united community. Thank you for your support!



SAVE THE DATE:

JUNE



Cedar Valley United Way Golf Classic
Friday, June 20, 2025 at South Hills
Shotgun start at noon

AUGUST



Rally for the Valley Campaign Kickoff
Wednesday, August 27, 2025 at Bien VenU
11 am to 1 pm

SEPTEMBER



Over the Edge
Friday, September 26, 2025
Approx. 9 am to 5 pm

APRIL



Breakfast of Champions Campaign Awards Breakfast
2026 Date TBD