



2023 IMPACT RESULTS

PUBLISHED 2024

# Our Community Impact



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### LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR IMPACT

In 2023, we showed up in new places and new ways to tackle the problems that nobody can solve alone.

# Right Where We Belong

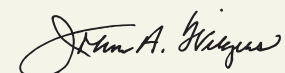
Dear community member,

In 2023, it felt good to belong – among friends, with colleagues and in community. **Your support for Greater Twin Cities United Way makes it possible for us to be where we belong: addressing the problems no one can solve alone.** These were some of our brightest moments of collective impact, which you can read more about throughout this report:


- **Growing our local 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline response** to answer 24,000 calls, providing hope for a brighter tomorrow through our partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health.
- **Launching our Pathways Home initiative** alongside partners across sectors, to prevent homelessness for those most vulnerable to experiencing it.
- **Uniting more Action Day volunteers than ever**, with 1,500 folks supporting more than 45,000 young people in partnership with corporations and nonprofits.
- **Celebrating our most consequential advocacy agenda ever**, with the coalitions, communities and supporters who work alongside us.

To truly belong means being able to turn to your community when you're struggling, and knowing you make a difference when you give back. Thank you for engaging with Greater Twin Cities United Way – as a partner, participant, donor, volunteer or staff. You've been here for us, and we'll be here for you long into the future.

With gratitude,

  
John A. Wilgers  
President & CEO



  
Shannon Smith Jones  
Senior Vice President,  
Community Impact



  
Al McFarlane  
Chair, Board of Directors



# 2023 Highlights



## January

Began meeting with legislators and advancing our 2023 policy and advocacy agenda – informed by 100 nonprofit partners and stakeholders – focused on educational success, housing stability and more



## February

Released our inaugural “Connecting the Dots” report highlighting challenges facing our state, including underinvestment in organizations led by and serving Communities of Color and Indigenous communities, with policy and funding recommendations for legislators



## March

Flavors of Our Community volunteers assembled over 13,000 food packs – including Afghan, East African, Karen, Latine, Indigenous and Southeast Asian staples – increasing access to culturally relevant foods and equaling over 50,000 meals

With the Start Early Funders Coalition, hosted Advocacy for Children Day at the Capitol, where over 400 young children, parents and educators urged legislators to prioritize early childhood education



## April

Welcomed Sherry Sanchez Tibbetts as our new Vice President of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

## May

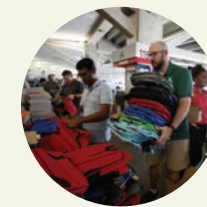
Celebrated legislative wins including a historic \$2B investment in early education, \$1B toward housing stability, and \$1M appropriation for our Career Academies initiative



## June

Deployed \$1.2M to 11 nonprofits through the launch of “Pathways Home,” our new initiative focused on preventing, rather than responding to, homelessness – specifically for youth transitioning from incarceration or foster care

Launched year two of Career Academies’ Purpose Driven Paychecks program, providing nearly 500 students with meaningful, paid job experiences



## July

Welcomed Shannon Smith Jones as our new Senior Vice President of Community Impact

## August

Our biggest Action Day to date united 1,500 volunteers, nearly 40 corporate partners and 100 nonprofits to provide backpacks full of school supplies for 45,000 young people



## September

In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Health, launched a public awareness campaign about the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, including billboards, TikTok, and other high-visibility media

## October

Launched new digital tools, including new constituent relationship management and email software, to improve our operational efficiency and better communicate with stakeholders



## November

Hosted our fifth Family Philanthropy Series session, where donors and community members learned about multigenerational philanthropy and estate planning

In partnership with Post Consumer Brands, raised over \$100,000 through Give to the Max Day



## December

Equipped 1,400 families transitioning from homelessness to stable housing with welcome home bins filled with towels, kitchen utensils and more, thanks to Home For Good volunteers and donors

“My lola cooked a lot of Filipino food, and a favorite was chicken adobo. She wanted to pass on those traditional recipes to me, so I would watch her - not only the methodical part, but her passion. Flavors of Our Community provides access to keep that connection going for families.”

– AILEEN NUNEZ,  
GLOBAL EDUCATION MANAGER,  
GREAT CLIPS

# Thank you Changemakers!

Our impact is only possible through our partnerships in community and is fueled by volunteers, donors and staff. Please celebrate with us!



“Philanthropy, with technology and other sources of disruption that we see in all aspects of our life, has changed. We always find ourselves coming back to United Way because they have their finger on the pulse of what’s really happening in our community and the ability to convene people.”

– JILL WYANT, PICTURED WITH HUSBAND AND FELLOW UNITED WAY SUPPORTER PAT WYANT



“3M is in community to thank and repay the ecosystem that built us. Our company and every member of our workforce grew from seeds planted by others; giving and volunteering is how we share the fruits back. We do this in partnership with Greater Twin Cities United Way to ensure our work is community-led and informed by vibrant and diverse perspectives.”

– RAEHELLE L. DRAKEFORD, 3MGIVES SPECIALIST



“Staff being seen and heard is a critical component of our culture that Abilities United provides. In addition, we can educate one another and influence how our organization supports staff with all levels of ability, and the mental health of all our colleagues.”

– MARTHA SMITH, WHO LEADS GREATER TWIN CITIES UNITED WAY’S ABILITIES UNITED EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP ALONGSIDE CO-CHAIR LIZ BIERMAN



“If you ask me why I give, it’s on a transformational basis. Is the giving going to lead to something that’s transformative in someone’s life? Are we instilling upward mobility? That for me is transformational.”

– TEDDY BEKELE (CENTER), CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, LAND O’LAKES, PICTURED WITH FAMILY



“I leapt into this leadership role as someone early in my career because I love being in a state of constant learning. Equity work can make me cry, but it’s also my source of joy. The reward is seeing the change we’ve made in our immediate environment.”

– OLIVIA CHRISTENSEN, WHO CO-CHAIRS GREATER TWIN CITIES UNITED WAY’S GENDER EQUITY EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP ALONGSIDE CO-CHAIR BETHANY CLINE

“Pride United members have been leading us from merely including to celebrating a diversity of queer identities. Centering joy and celebration emboldens us to do our best work in all areas of the organization. I’m fortunate to be able to hold a supportive space for these brilliant peers in the hard work of systems change.”

– SAREEN DUNLEAVY KEENAN, WHO LEADS GREATER TWIN CITIES UNITED WAY’S PRIDE UNITED EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP ALONGSIDE CO-CHAIR ERIN FLICKER



“Now with grandkids, I care a lot about the kind of world they’re going to inherit.”

– STEVE GATHJE



“My mission is for us to connect and use positivity to build a culture that is inclusive and understanding of difference. I’ve never felt so much synergy as when we work together across siloes.”

– JASMINE VEDUA, WHO LEADS GREATER TWIN CITIES UNITED WAY’S MULTICULTURAL BUSINESS NETWORK EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP WITH CO-CHAIRS ALAN BRANCH AND NORAN ALY



# We All Belong in a Thriving Future

Racial and economic inequities in the Greater Twin Cities create unequal access to opportunities, resulting in families experiencing hunger and homelessness. Your support fuels Greater Twin Cities United Way to meet urgent needs now while tackling deep disparities so our region can thrive.

**Our innovation initiatives invest deeply to overcome the most persistent barriers** in our food, housing, education and workforce systems. In 2023:

**Career Academies** expanded its reach statewide and continued to build partnerships between schools and businesses, so students have equitable access to wealth-building careers (see pages 19 and 21).

**80x3** deepened our collaboration with child care centers and the public and private systems that train educators - to expand trauma-informed care so all young children have the tools to overcome poverty's challenges (see page 17).

**Pathways Home** launched to prevent homelessness for those most vulnerable to experiencing it, by improving our housing, foster care and legal systems (see page 13).

**Full Lives** undertook a county-by-county analysis in preparation to scale its food-justice model for regional impact (see page 15).

Together with partners, we create a future where income, race and place no longer predict a person's ability to thrive in the Greater Twin Cities - and where urgent needs are far less frequent.

Callers to our 211 resource helpline and 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline receive information, referrals and support, and provide real-time insights into the most pressing community needs. See examples on page 10.

**Our nonprofit partners are deeply rooted** in communities across the 9-county metro. To advance equity and have the greatest impact, we prioritize partners that center the experiences of Black, Indigenous, Latine, Asian, Pacific Islander and other Communities of Color, and support those earning incomes below 200 percent of the poverty level.

These partners provide access to:

- Housing and food (see pages 12-15)
- Early childhood education and youth programs (see pages 16-19)
- Job training, entrepreneurship and wealth-building support (see pages 20-21)

**Coalition partners and individual community members join in our advocacy work** to magnify our impact statewide and bring solutions to scale. In 2023, our advocacy agenda was the most consequential ever. Look for examples in the **Advocacy Highlights** throughout this report.

**Generous volunteers help provide students with backpacks full of school supplies** so they can thrive in the classroom, families transitioning out of homelessness with household goods so they can make a house a home, and neighbors in need with culturally relevant food so they can make meals with familiar foods and flavors.



# United Way's 211 Resource Helpline

Every day, people seeking help paying bills, finding food and locating other resources contact 211. And every day, caring and resourceful 211 specialists respond, providing information and support for our neighbors.

**Last year, Greater Twin Cities United Way responded to over 342,000 requests to 211 from across Minnesota – a 10 percent increase over 2022.** This data reinforces what we already know: People across our state are facing significant challenges, from housing burdens to mental health challenges.

Requests focused on the essentials for stable lives. Housing continued to be the most requested 211 resource, followed by utilities and energy assistance. Food was the third most requested resource – and the fastest increasing – likely due to inflation.

## PARTNERSHIPS

Last year, United Way 211 launched a new partnership with Washington County's Family Homelessness Prevention and Assistance Program. Residents now call 211 to find out if they are eligible for rent assistance and complete the first step of the application over the phone. 211 serves a similar role in Carver, St. Louis and Scott counties, and in 2023, 211 conducted 3,400 screenings for rent assistance in these communities.

"Working with United Way 211 has been a game changer for Washington County's homelessness prevention program!" said Jenny Mason, Washington County Policy Analyst. "Residents now have easy access 24/7 to the available funding resources they need to stay housed. We've served a higher number of people than ever before and really value the expertise and ease of 211."

# 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline

When Minnesotans call 988, local, trained and caring crisis counselors answer, providing emotional support for people experiencing thoughts of suicide, substance use or other mental health crises. **In 2023, Greater Twin Cities United Way crisis counselors answered over 24,000 calls to 988 – a 36 percent increase over 2022.**

## Partnership: 988 Public Awareness Campaign

As the national 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline entered its second year, Greater Twin Cities United Way partnered with the Minnesota Department of Health to launch an awareness campaign. Featuring the message "You Belong Here," the campaign included highway billboards, digital advertising, social media and print ads. One TikTok ad was seen by more than 500,000 people, spurring vital conversations about the value of 988. The campaign, which had over 5.6 million impressions, focused on reaching communities with the highest rates of suicide, including Hmong, Indigenous, Latine, LGBTQ+ and Somali.

## Meeting callers' needs

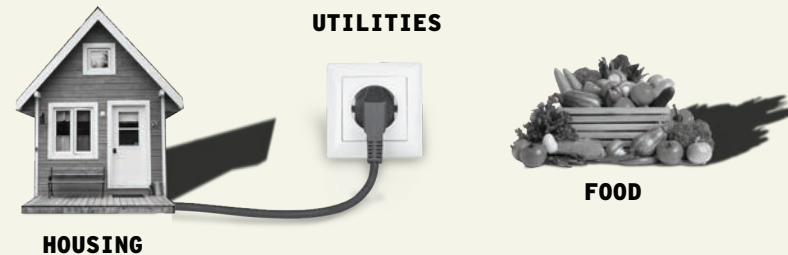
Callers reach out for a variety of reasons, including needing a listening ear, preventing a progression to suicidal thoughts, and imminent crisis



CALLS BY NATURE OF NEED:

LISTENING AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT	81%
INFORMATION AND REFERRAL	12%
SUICIDAL CRISIS	7%

## Most-Needed Resources



"Navigating the economic support system can be challenging – and finding critical help while experiencing a crisis compounds the feeling of hardship. Our 211 Community Resource Specialists help identify needs, provide information on eligibility, and empathically answer questions to connect people with resources – anywhere in Minnesota."

– NICOLE WEILER, 211 SENIOR PROGRAM MANAGER



"988 is more than just a number; it's a lifeline – a connection to hope, compassion and understanding. It's a testament to our collective commitment to saving lives, one call at a time."

– CAROLINA DE LOS RIOS, SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER, MENTAL HEALTH & SUICIDE PREVENTION

## Thank You from Grandma

All calls to 988 are confidential, so we don't often hear what happens to someone after their call ends. Last year, we received a thank you card from a grandmother, whose 11-year-old granddaughter had recently contacted 988:

"Just wanted to give a THANK you to Helen\* from your [988 Team]. My Grandbaby, who is 11 years young, called in last week or month. She has been in therapy for a year with no progress. After talking to Helen, she is kinder, she is improving in school, and she is saying this to everyone! I know I am not your sister/granddaughter/daughter, but I am proud of you. THANK you for planting good seeds for our Children of Color."

\*Call specialist's name has been changed.

# A PLACE TO LIVE, AND A PLACE TO BELONG

## Our Impact

HOUSING STABILITY

Data from our 211 resource helpline shows that stable and affordable housing is still one of the most widespread needs we face in the Twin Cities. Despite these challenges, the inspiring work of our community partners shows us the massive impact that's possible when a person has a safe place to live.

Across our portfolio of housing investments, we supported 33 organizations working at all levels of our housing system – from urgent needs like temporary shelter, to efforts in advocacy and policymaking that ensure our housing system works for everyone.

**These efforts paid off with a history-making \$1 billion new investment at the state legislature to support stable and affordable housing.** Our work also culminated in the launch of Pathways Home, our new initiative focused on preventing homelessness among young people who face the most significant risk. And through our Home For Good program, we continued to bring together local volunteers and housing organizations to provide a warm “welcome home” for families entering stable housing.



# 104,000

PEOPLE WHO ACCESSED SUPPORT THROUGH UNITED WAY HOUSING PARTNERS

UNITED WAY'S ARISE PROJECT SUPPORTED MORE THAN 700 LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS.

### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: THE LINK

Since its founding in North Minneapolis in 1991, The Link has worked with young people and families to help them overcome the impacts of poverty and social injustice. Today, The Link supports more than 2,000 young people and families annually, with programs and resources across the Twin Cities. One of their key areas of focus is housing.

Greater Twin Cities United Way partners with The Link to support stable housing in multiple ways. In 2023, targeted grants through United Way's Arise Project enabled The Link to grow their Project Live Out Loud initiative, providing rapid rehousing services for LGBTQ+ young people. The Link is also one of the first partners of our Pathways Home initiative, providing dollars and expert consultation to help The Link prevent homelessness among young people leaving the foster care system. Undergirding this vital work is our partnership via our multiyear community investments, which provide holistic funding to empower changemakers across the entire organization. Together, United Way and The Link are building a stronger housing system and ensuring that everyone has a safe place to call home.



### LEARN MORE

about the historic housing investments we helped achieve in 2023

## ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHT

Heading into the 2023 legislative session, housing was on everyone's agenda. Together with our advocacy coalition partners, we successfully advocated for new investments to promote stable and affordable housing – totaling more than \$1 billion, the largest single investment in housing in Minnesota history. These funds will help expand existing housing programs, as well as supporting new housing activities to ensure that more Minnesotans have a place to call home.



**AHMED SIRLEAF**  
PROGRAM OFFICER,  
PATHWAYS HOME



# 1,400

FAMILIES MOVING INTO STABLE HOUSING WHO RECEIVED WELCOME HOME BINS – FILLED WITH HOUSEHOLD ESSENTIALS LIKE CLEANING SUPPLIES AND COOKING UTENSILS – THANKS TO HOME FOR GOOD VOLUNTEERS

### INNOVATION IN ACTION: PATHWAYS HOME

Based on deep learning in community, we were proud to launch our Pathways Home initiative in 2023. Our first cohort of 11 nonprofit organizations received a total of \$1.2 million in grant funding.

Pathways Home is unique in its focus on preventing homelessness, rather than responding to it. Our partner nonprofits are working with young people who are exiting the foster care system and/or transitioning from incarceration – two groups that face a dramatically higher risk of homelessness. With a focus on lasting change, Pathways Home is also convening those who hold power in the foster care and corrections systems.



### HEAR FROM PATHWAYS HOME PARTNERS

and supporters on why homelessness prevention matters

# FUELING COMMUNITY AND BELONGING THROUGH FOOD

## Our Impact

FOOD SECURITY

With demand for food shelves and other food access programs reaching new heights in 2023, the urgency in our partnerships working toward food security has never been greater.

By providing food directly to communities and working to transform the policies and practices that lead to stronger community food resiliency, our food-security partnerships made a vital impact in 2023.

Alongside these significant partnerships, in 2023 we took important steps for the next generation of our Full Lives initiative – scaling up the impact of our first phase to transform food systems on a regional level. And our caring volunteers and corporate partners helped us deepen our impact with Flavors of Our Community, with our introduction in 2023 of two new culturally specific food packs for Indigenous and East African communities.



**HO NGUYEN**  
PROGRAM OFFICER,  
FOOD SECURITY



# 51,000

CULTURALLY SPECIFIC MEALS MADE  
POSSIBLE THANKS TO FLAVORS OF OUR  
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

Since 1897, Neighborhood House has worked with neighbors in St. Paul to meet their basic needs, in areas like food and housing, while connecting them with education and other opportunities to thrive. Today, the organization manages six Family Centers throughout St. Paul. As food insecurity and hunger continue to rise among local families, Neighborhood House's food shelves play an increasingly vital role in helping neighbors put food on the table.

In partnership with United Way, Neighborhood House is scaling up to tackle one of our biggest community challenges. Today, their food shelves serve more than 1,700 families per month – nearly double vs. early 2023. And beyond this critical day-to-day support, United Way and Neighborhood House are looking to the future. Last year, Neighborhood House made significant progress toward an overhaul of their Wellstone Center, which is expected to break ground in fall 2024. This includes expanding the Wellstone food shelf, adding walk-in refrigeration to extend the shelf-life of fresh produce and offer more meat and dairy products. With holistic, multiyear support from United Way, Neighborhood House's changemakers have a durable foundation on which they can continue to build.



FOOD WAS THE FASTEST-INCREASING  
REQUEST TO 211, LIKELY DUE  
TO INFLATION.

## ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHT

Our coalitions and partners at the Capitol saw several inspiring developments toward food security in 2023. By far the biggest win was the passage and implementation of free school meals, a policy which is already improving young people's access to breakfast and

lunch and translating to improved academic outcomes. At the same time, we were pleased to see additional investments to fund food shelves, and to expand the state's Farm to School grant program so learners get more Minnesota-grown foods.

### INNOVATION IN ACTION

2023 also saw the planting of new seeds – most notably in our work developing the next generation of our Full Lives initiative. Building on the local impact we achieved in our first phase, Full Lives is scaling up to take a truly regional approach toward cultivating food justice. The initiative will provide funding and technical assistance for three regional collaborations – weaving together nonprofit partners with city, county and state resources to advance more equitable food systems.

In 2023, we undertook a county-by-county analysis of the Greater Twin Cities, identifying critical gaps in the food security infrastructure throughout our region. We also established our Full Lives advisory board, bringing together leaders from the public sector and the nonprofit world to inform our development of Full Lives' next phase. Both of these steps were important precursors for the official launch of Full Lives in summer 2024.



**HEAR FROM**  
United Way partners on why  
Flavors of Our Community matters  
for local food shelves



# SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES WHERE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BELONG

## Our Impact

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Having a strong and healthy start in life matters. Rising costs of child care and household necessities, shortages in child care availability and ongoing systemic barriers have all increased the pressure on our community partners and the families they support – all during their children’s most developmentally critical years. This impacts not just children and families, but the continuing economic well-being of our region.

Despite these real challenges, we see tremendous resilience in our community partners and families who are working collaboratively to ensure our state’s youngest learners have a strong and healthy start. In 2023, we supported 20 child care organizations, all committed to equitable family-centered programs.

In addition, our 80x3 initiative continued to build momentum for trauma-sensitive child care throughout our region – expanding our network of partnerships and deepening our collaborations to help partners translate vision to reality. Our team at the state Capitol played an important role as well, amplifying the voices of our coalition partners to advance historic new investments in child care access and workforce stabilization.

**\$2 Billion**  
THE AMOUNT THE STATE OF MINNESOTA INVESTED IN CHILD CARE DURING THE 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHT

All in for our kids! 2023 saw the return of Advocacy for Children Day to the Minnesota State Capitol, for the first time in-person since 2019. Alongside our longstanding coalition partners at the Start Early Funders Coalition, we filled the Capitol rotunda with more than 400 supporters of early childhood education to remind lawmakers of the importance of investing in Minnesota’s youngest learners. The efforts of our coalition paid dividends for Minnesota’s families, resulting in a historic investment in our state’s child care system and workforce.

**CARRIE ZELIN JOHNSON**  
PROGRAM OFFICER,  
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
AND START EARLY FUNDERS  
COALITION COORDINATOR

## Innovation in Action: 80x3

Since our launch of 80x3 in summer 2022, we’ve made huge strides with our partners. In 2023, we extended our partnership with eight child care centers, helping them navigate staffing challenges and ensure safe environments for staff and children. 80x3 also launched a new Leadership Residency, in partnership with national experts in organizational transformation at Embracing Equity, bringing together public sector and nonprofit leaders to expand 80x3’s reach.

80x3 is making an impact! Center leaders and educators have reported that partnering with 80x3 has increased their ability to identify signs of trauma and offer more resources to support families. And trauma-sensitive practices are not only creating more equitable classrooms; they’re also making it easier for our partners to recruit and retain new staff.



**JAMIE BONCZYK**  
SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER,  
80X3: RESILIENT FROM  
THE START



### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: HALLIE Q. BROWN COMMUNITY CENTER

Hallie Q. Brown Community Center is based in the historic Rondo neighborhood, with a storied legacy of service within the Black community in St. Paul and throughout the wider metro. Since 1929, Hallie Q. Brown has worked to meet the essential needs of its communities – including out-of-school programs for young people, food access services and child care resources.

As a longstanding partner of Hallie Q. Brown, Greater Twin Cities United Way collaborates with the organization’s changemakers to ensure that their children and families have the great start they deserve. Hallie Q. Brown was an inaugural member of our first 80x3 cohort, through which we’ve closely partnered to embed trauma-sensitive practices within their child care center. Our work is already making an impact; as a result of 80x3’s first two years, educators at Hallie Q. Brown feel better equipped to mitigate the impacts of childhood trauma and help families navigate their children’s most developmentally critical years. We’re able to amplify this impact through a multiyear investment in Hallie Q. Brown’s food programs, including their food shelf – which partners closely with their child care center to ensure that children (and their families) have the nutritious food they need to thrive.

**500+**  
NUMBER OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
WHO ACCESSED TRAUMA-SENSITIVE CARE  
THROUGH 80X3

# BUILDING PATHWAYS TO PROSPERITY AND BELONGING

## Our Impact

CAREER AND FUTURE READINESS

The pandemic disrupted the learning and well-being of an entire generation of young people – the impacts of which continue to be felt throughout our communities. Our career and future readiness partners meet young people where they are, addressing their academic, psychological and physical needs; reconnecting them with their communities; and helping them realize their full potential.

**In 2023, Greater Twin Cities United Way supported 29 nonprofit organizations focused on young people's success – and continued partnering with 19 school districts to develop and implement robust career pathways.**

With our coalition partners at the Minnesota State Capitol, we successfully advocated for billions in new public investments in young people's success. Our Career Academies initiative continued to expand our network of partners as well – thanks in part to a \$1 million appropriation from the legislature. And at Action Day 2023, we brought together our largest-ever network of corporate partners, nonprofit organizations and volunteers to “level the playing field” and help prepare young people for a successful school year.

# 14,750

YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESSED YOUTH PROGRAMS THROUGH UNITED WAY'S HOLISTIC GRANTMAKING

### PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: NATIVE SKYWATCHERS

Since 2007, Native Skywatchers has worked to revitalize Indigenous star and earth knowledge through targeted youth programs – using topics like astronomy, geology and other scientific fields to inspire young people's sense of awe in the cosmos. The organization works to address inequities in education for Native young people, inspire increased cultural pride and promote community wellness.

As partners for educational equity, Greater Twin Cities United Way and Native Skywatchers are working hand-in-hand to ensure that all students have the opportunities they deserve. Through Career Academies' Purpose Driven Paychecks initiative, United Way's support allowed for Native Skywatchers to deepen their partnership with Mankato Area Public Schools, expanding the district's career pathways programs to combine science education with activities that help Native young people embrace their cultural traditions and heritage. This includes their “We Are Stardust” program, which uses Native science, culture and art to engage Mankato middle-schoolers with special needs.



**STEVE WALVIG**  
PROGRAM OFFICER,  
CAREER AND FUTURE  
READINESS

## ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHT

Building on our successful partnerships with 19 school districts around the state, Career Academies received a \$1 million appropriation from the state of Minnesota to deepen our community relationships. In collaboration with the Minnesota Chamber Foundation and the state Department of Employment and Economic Development, we developed the Future Ready Workforce Fund – providing grant funding to local Chambers of Commerce to support new career pathways in communities throughout Minnesota. We announced our new cohort of partners in January 2024.

At the same time, we supported more than \$4 billion in new investments in higher education at the legislature in 2023, helping make college attainable for more Minnesotans than ever before. Further priorities of our legislative coalition that passed in 2023 include \$30 million allocated toward new Afterschool Community Learning Grants for families, and \$7 million to support the Increase Teachers of Color Act.



### LEARN MORE

about how we're amplifying the impact of Career Academies with new resources for communities



**LIZ WILLIAMS**  
SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER,  
CAREER ACADEMIES

### INNOVATION IN ACTION:

Career Academies is building a movement! In 2023, we partnered with national career pathways experts at Jobs for the Future to develop a new toolkit for school districts and employers expanding their career pathways opportunities. Launched in early 2024, the resources at CareerAcademies.org enable educators, employers and advocates to easily access funding opportunities, training materials and more.

# 45,000

STUDENTS WENT BACK TO SCHOOL WITH BACKPACKS FULL OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOL SUPPLIES THANKS TO ACTION DAY VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS



# TRANSFORMING COMMUNITY SO ALL CAN BELONG

## Our Impact

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Economic opportunity is the engine of change for our communities. When neighbors have the skills they need to find and maintain living-wage jobs, and when entrepreneurs from under-resourced communities have the resources they need to bring their dreams into reality, the entire community benefits.

Our partners worked across the spectrum of economic impact – from support for individuals and families overcoming short-term financial hardship to long-term community development strategies focused on growing generational wealth and overcoming systemic racial inequity.

**In 2023, we supported 29 organizations providing job training, supporting new entrepreneurs and promoting financial literacy for nearly 12,000 adults.**



**JAY WAGNER**  
SENIOR PROGRAM OFFICER,  
HOLISTIC GRANTMAKING

# 85%

PERCENTAGE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY PARTNERS WHO REPORTED HAVING EXECUTIVE TEAMS WITH MAJORITY BILAPOC-IDENTIFYING LEADERS

### **PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: PARTNERSHIP IN PROPERTY COMMERCIAL LAND TRUST**

Based in Minneapolis, Partnership in Property Commercial Land Trust (PIPCLT) is a community organization and land trust that supports entrepreneurs and Small Business Owners of Color. PIPCLT aims to ensure that neighborhood real estate remains affordable for people who live in the community – and takes the novel approach of utilizing a land trust model to redevelop commercial properties for local Entrepreneurs of Color.

Greater Twin Cities United Way has been a key partner in helping PIPCLT put its innovative vision into practice. As a partner of our multiyear community investments since 2022, PIPCLT drew on United Way's support to add three mission-critical staff positions, including an operations manager to help navigate the complexities of commercial real estate development. With United Way's support, PIPCLT was also able to introduce a series of workshops offering financial education and other technical assistance to support BILAPOC aspiring entrepreneurs. Together in partnership, we've helped connect local Entrepreneurs of Color with opportunities for affordable property ownership and cultivated new networks of BILAPOC business owners and lenders.

# ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHT

## The Benefits Cliff

One of our major priorities at the Capitol is ensuring that state programs and resources are setting individuals and families on the path to success. When eligibility requirements or benefit cutoffs are too stringent, they can pose additional barriers for those seeking assistance – a circumstance commonly known as the “benefits cliff.”

In 2023, we made significant progress toward mitigating the benefits cliff. Through policy shifts to the Minnesota Family Investment Program to reduce applications from monthly to twice annually (reducing paperwork and helping families with variable income stabilize), Medical Assistance (to ensure consistent coverage for minors) and Housing Supports programs (to ease income restrictions), we were able to ensure that our public resources continue to serve those to whom they matter most.

### **INNOVATION IN ACTION:**

Our education system plays an integral part in promoting economic opportunity – but those opportunities have not been made available to all students.

In 2023, we launched the second year of our Purpose Driven Paychecks program, part of our Career Academies initiative, which invested in 12 partnerships between schools and businesses to support students who have been historically excluded from career pathways programs. Communities of focus for our partners include Students of Color, Indigenous students, students with a disability and students from low-income households.



### **LEARN MORE**

about our partnerships in year two of Purpose Driven Paychecks

**Partners funded by Greater Twin Cities United Way disbursed nearly \$27 million in entrepreneurship grants to Communities of Color and Indigenous communities throughout the Greater Twin Cities.**

# Board of Directors

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# Change-Makers Unite

## Our Mission

WE UNITE CHANGEMAKERS, ADVOCATE FOR SOCIAL GOOD AND DEVELOP SOLUTIONS TO THE CHALLENGES NO ONE CAN SOLVE ALONE.



[GTCUW.ORG](http://GTCUW.ORG)



Greater Twin Cities  
United Way