

### ***What is United Way?***

United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha & Pierce Counties (UWGWP) is a nonprofit organization that creates pathways out of poverty to improve the quality of life for all in Goodhue, and Wabasha Counties in Minnesota and Western Pierce County in Wisconsin. We are part of a national movement that includes over 1,300 community-based United Way organizations. Each is independent, separately incorporated, and governed by a local, volunteer Board of Directors. Because of the unique conditions in diverse communities, the issues United Ways address are determined locally. When you give to United Way GWP, your dollars stay local.

### ***What does United Way do?***

At UWGWP, we assess community conditions, invest in focused community impact goals and measure results to create long-term change for generations to come. Our work ensures that children are ready to learn when they enter school and read at grade-level, which has a direct correlation to higher graduation rates, families have access to nutritious food, and seniors stay safe and healthy in their own homes. We focus our investments on the root causes and not just the symptoms to build a stronger, healthier community.

### ***Does United Way provide funding to individuals or families?***

No, instead we provide funding to agencies that provide direct service to individuals. We do provide resources through the 211 resource hotline and in print through our People's Pamphlets.

### ***Is United Way different from other nonprofits?***

Yes. United Way GWP is unique in the way it makes an impact in the community. We no longer simply raise and distribute money to nonprofits. Today's complex problems require proactive, permanent solutions. Our history of leadership enables us to spearhead comprehensive, community-wide change. Our work brings people together to determine the root causes of our community's most challenging problems and to do whatever it takes to achieve measurable and long-lasting results. No other organization enables a donor's gift to make such a broad impact across the community, and no other organization promotes giving to other organizations as part of our mission.

### ***Is United Way just a fundraiser?***

NO! We do far more than just fundraising. United Way is a partner in change, working with a broad range of people and organizations to identify pressing community issues and develop long-term solutions. Our fundraising efforts are one way we bring about positive change in community conditions because the campaign gives us the ability to fund needed services, programs and initiatives. United Way also works to:

- Identify community needs and priorities
- Invest in and lead community wide initiatives
- Facilitate the efforts of those who can help bring about needed positive changes
- Monitor funded partners to ensure donor's investments are used efficiently
- Promote volunteerism
- Advocate on behalf of our community's most critical issues

### ***Why should I give to United Way and not directly to an agency of my choice?***

No other single organization has the scope, expertise, or influence to bring dozens of human service agencies, government, education partners, and dedicated volunteers around a common vision of achieving long lasting results for a stronger, healthier Mississippi River Valley. When you give to a specific charity, you support a cause. When you give to

UWGWP, your gift becomes part of a collective effort to strengthen our entire region. Your gift to United Way allows you to accomplish more than you can alone or through a single charity.

***Why should I be concerned about the poverty crisis?***

Poverty threatens the success of our businesses, our economy and the future of our community. Many people find themselves trapped in low-wage jobs, leading to a lower tax and revenue base. Businesses struggle to find qualified workers and the growth in homelessness and working poverty leads to community instability and a diminished quality of life for all of us.

***Why is UW-GWP involved in advocacy work?***

Real and sustained change requires more than money. By focusing our efforts on local and state public policy, we are able to treat many of the root causes of poverty by changing the systems behind them. For example, a solid high school education will lead to better jobs and post secondary education that results in higher wages.

***How much of my donation will go back to the community in which I live?***

Our goal is to focus our efforts on the areas that are in greatest need and where we are able to do the most effective job. We have programs in place throughout our service area and we place a greater emphasis on the neighborhoods with the highest levels of need.

***What is the benefit of combining all my charitable giving through UWGWP?***

We provide you with a convenient service by directing your gifts to a number of charities and deducting a small amount of money from your paycheck at a time – allowing you to contribute more than you might be able to in a one-time gift and giving you a chance to make a bigger difference for people in need. By combining all your giving through the United Way campaign, you have the convenience of making one gift per year while we handle the administrative details of your charitable giving. By contributing to your company's United Way campaign, you are also helping your company realize its charitable goals and philanthropic leadership in the community.

***How much of my contribution goes to help people?***

According to our most recent IRS assessment, approximately 75 cents of every dollar received by United Way goes directly to the programs/services we support to help strengthen our community. United Way GWP is always striving to make the most efficient and effective use of your contributions to the annual campaign.

***How do UW-GWP operating costs compare to other similar organizations?***

According to the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, a nonprofit's overhead should not exceed 35%. United Way of Goodhue, Wabasha & Pierce Counties is well below that with an overhead of 14%. Other similar nonprofits average approximately 18% (American Red Cross is 22%).

***Does UWGWP charge administrative fees?***

When you donate to one of our partner agencies or one of our internal programs, (Packing for the Weekend or Imagination Library), there is no administration fee, allowing your gift to reach more people in need. A fee will be charged for designated donations to any specific 501©3 Non-Profit Agency other than United Way or one of our partner agencies.

### ***How does UWGWP keep overhead costs so low?***

Our Corporate Cornerstone partners have designated donations for United Way GWP's administrative expenses. These corporate gifts cover our low overhead of 14% and allow 100 percent of the donor's contribution to create lasting change in the community. Less than one percent of our overhead goes to our national association, which funds necessary research and resources.

### ***How do I receive documentation of my gift for tax purposes?***

All Nonprofit organizations are required to provide receipts for all gifts of \$250 or more. If you make a gift United Way of GWP automatically sends a confirmation of your gift to your home or work address, as long as you or your company has provided that information. (Not all companies share donor information with us so we are not able to thank all donors).

### ***What financial safeguards/ checks and balances are in place at United Way?***

UWGWP is committed to the highest standards of accountability and transparency in our stewardship of donor dollars. By utilizing interdependent internal processes and controls, any irregularities and questionable activities are prevented. As a matter of practice all checks must be signed by two authorized signers. The Finance Committee reviews monthly financial statements, the Board of Directors reviews them quarterly to ensure adherence to budget. An independent accounting firm audits UWGWP annually. The Board of Directors must review and approve each audit.

Donor information is never sold or shared.

### ***Who determines how my donation is spent?***

Volunteers. Individuals like you, who represent a broad spectrum of our three-county region, serve on the United Way Board of Directors and Community Investment Panels. United Way GWP is a local organization making local decisions on how funds are raised and are spent. From internal programs like Packing for The Weekend to services like 2-1-1, to investments in partner agency programs focused on Education, Basic Needs/Financial Stability and Health, and a campaign that distributes funding to a large variety of local nonprofits, your investments truly make a difference.

### ***How do I know my dollars are helping the people who really need help?***

Organizations applying for funds from the United Way are required to meet strict financial and program guidelines. Local United Way volunteers who recommend allocation amounts to a volunteer board of directors review organization budgets and program services annually. In addition, each organization must answer to their volunteer board of directors who is responsible for ensuring that the organization is fulfilling its mission.

### ***How does an organization qualify to be one of your partners?***

The organization must be a local 501c3 nonprofit organization. In November 2015, we will open up our next 3-year cycle funding process to all local 501c3 nonprofits working to meet our Education goals. Additional funding opportunities are sometimes available through our Community Initiatives Grants. Our Board of Directors will evaluate proposals.

### ***How does supporting United Way benefit my business and employees?***

Supporting United Way gives your business visibility as a good corporate citizen and provides recognition of your organization as a leader in building a better community. Employee campaigns help bring employees together to share in a common cause and promote team spirit among employees and generate pride.

### ***What is United Way Worldwide?***

United Way Worldwide is the leadership organization for a network of local, community-based United Ways in 46 countries and territories. It is the integration of United Way of America and United Way International using United Way of America's corporate entity. All members of United Way of America are automatically members of United Way Worldwide. Each United Way is autonomous, governed by its own board of directors. United Way Worldwide is headquartered in Alexandria, Virginia. United Way Worldwide does not set policies, nor does it govern local United Ways.

### ***Is the email about charities that is circulated every year factual?***

When deciding which charities to donate to, many people consider an important factor to be the "efficiency" of these organizations — that is, what percentage of the monies taken in by a given charity goes to funding its mission rather than being eaten up by costs such as fundraising activities, salaries, and other administrative overhead.

The e-mail mentioned above, which began circulating in 2005 and has been re-circulated every year since then around Christmas time, attempts to steer potential donors away from inefficient charities. Unfortunately, much of the information it presents was inaccurate back in 2005, and it has grown only more so in the years since then, resulting in a misleading and outdated view of various charities. We attempt to present accurate and up-to-date information below.

The following efficiency information is derived from the Charity Navigator web site, the GuideStar web site and Forbes magazine's November 2009 special report on the 200 Largest U.S. Charities. In the context of this article, the term "efficiency" refers to the percentage of total budget/expenses that each listed organization spends on providing charitable programs and services.

United Way: The United Way is a charitable organization that operates on both global and local levels. Charity Navigator rates this organization's efficiency at 89%, while Forbes rates it at 85%, both much higher than the 51% efficiency claimed in the e-mail.