



United Way  
of Union County

# Contributor

United  
Way



Vol. 8, No. 1

[www.unitedwayofunioncounty.org](http://www.unitedwayofunioncounty.org)

Winter 2010

## North Star Center provides direction for Richwood youth Your continued support of United Way makes vision a reality

**“I can’t say that each of the kids who come to the center would be out causing trouble if they didn’t have the center. But I can tell you they’re out of harm’s way when they are here.”**

— Kathryn Steineman, North Star Center



One year ago, a plan to open a much-needed youth center in Richwood wasn’t even on the radar.

But if you stop by the refurbished office and upstairs apartment at 21 1/2 North Franklin Street today, you’ll find a dozen or more teens using computers with high-speed internet access. Study tables. Youth-led art projects. Supervised activities that are keeping kids off the area streets and out of trouble.

The North Star Center, operated by Consolidated Care, a United Way Member Agency, is open four days a week after school for students to drop-in, hang out, and safely engage in positive activities.

“These kids do not have any other place they could go for free, in Richwood, where they can be supervised and yet free to enjoy luxuries they may not even have at home,” said Kathryn Steineman, a Prevention Specialist and Supervisor at the Center. “We offer computer services, a big screen TV with Wii and Playstation games, and other resources that kids enjoy using.”



**George “Soapy” Showalter, Richwood Village Councilman, volunteers at the North Star Center, assisting youth with homework.**

Steineman says that prior to the opening of the North Star Center, there were numerous reports of vandalism at the local park, problems with drugs, and other issues related to juvenile behavior. Located in a more remote area of Union County, the lack of transportation adds even more to the idea that there is nothing for local youth to do.

“It would be naïve to say that our project has caused all of these problems to cease,” Steineman said. “I can’t say that each of the kids who come to the center would be out causing trouble if they didn’t have the center. But I can tell you they’re out of harm’s way when they are here.”

How the North Star Center became reality and an immediate success is a story of much collaboration. The idea was born last spring out of a project for United Way’s annual Community Care Day. It was the vision of Consolidated Care’s Executive Director, Charlene Nevil-English, who hoped to convert a seldom-used office in uptown Richwood into a vibrant gathering place for adolescents.

With United Way’s coordination, volunteers from Lowe’s in Marysville, students from North Union High School, and officials from the Mental Health & Recovery Board of Union County joined forces for the big clean-up.



**Volunteers from Lowe’s rip out old carpet from the office at 21 1/2 North Franklin Street on United Way’s Community Care Day 2009. The refurbishing paved the way for the opening of the North Star Center.**

*Please see RICHWOOD on Page 2*

## Number crunching, dollar stretching

More than \$634,000 in community support allocated

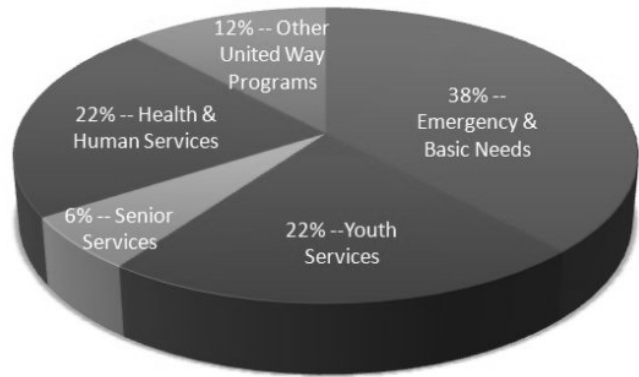


Volunteers on United Way's Community Investment Committee are stewards of your donor dollars, determining how to responsibly split the money raised during the fall campaign among area programs. From left to right: Joyce Garard, Dave Gleeson, Derric Brown, Kathy Klug, Diane Hutson, George Finn, Jeannete Bury, and Barb Nicol.

40 specific community programs of 26 local agencies will receive United Way funding in 2010, totaling \$560,946.87. Total community support from United Way will exceed \$634,000 this year. That is within \$3,500 of 2009 totals despite a recession-plagued fundraising campaign that still managed to come within 2 percent of last year's record-setting collection.

"We were able to spend donor dollars in ways that give the best return on the donors' investment, choosing the services that do the 'most' at the 'best price,'" said Barb Nicol, volunteer co-Chair of United Way's 14-member Community

## 2010 United Way Allocations



**"These donor dollars must be allocated appropriately or we have failed in our commitment to this community."**

**— Brian O'Kane, Community Investment Committee**

Investment Committee. "This year especially, I saw agency staff doing more and more with dwindling resources - because they understand the need."

Volunteers had to decide how to divide donor dollars among program requests that were \$149,086 higher than the amount available and 24% higher than what United Way provided a year ago. Visit [www.unitedwayofunioncounty.org](http://www.unitedwayofunioncounty.org) for a line item-by-line item report of complete program funding.

## Richwood youth center earns community's support in less than a year



North Star Center youth took a field trip to Wright Patterson Air Force Base.

*Continued from Page 1*

By June, CCI staff had opened the center! Over the summer, the youth group took field trips to Wright Patterson Air Force Base and did service projects such as collecting trash around the uptown Richwood area.

During the festive months of October, November, and December, youth participated in a range of activities including door decorating and mummy wrapping contests. The first North Star Election recently took place.

Youth elected three presidents, one from each level of school (elementary, middle, and high school) who weekly meet to plan future field trips and service projects. In addition to promoting safe and drug-free fun, the North Star Center even provides nutritious meals to youth who need them.

Attendance shot up when the school year began in the fall and since it opened in June, 126 different youth have used the center.

"We had one youth who was new to town and had reportedly gotten into a fight at school on one of his first days," Steineman said. "He came to the center and began to make friends. The same kids who reported that this youth was 'bad' soon got to know him and befriended him. His attitude changed. He recognized that he didn't need to act out to get attention."

But the North Star Center has gotten its share of attention. Since opening, many Richwood community leaders have



North Star Center Prevention Specialist Michael Garey (right) takes on a challenger in a Wii game.

offered their support by volunteering at the facility. The North Star Center has also received the official endorsement of the Richwood Village Council, Police Chief, Mayor, Business Association, and North Union Schools.

United Way donated money for high-speed internet access last summer. And in 2010, the Center will receive \$20,000 in United Way support.

For more information about the North Star Center, please contact Consolidated Care at (937) 642-1254 or become a fan on Facebook.

# What YOU helped us accomplish in 2009.

United Way  
of Union County



## May: Community Care Day grows to record proportions



430 volunteers came out for Union County's signature volunteer event. They completed 195 service projects on a single day!

## September: Krenzel appears at Union County's largest 5K



An appearance by former Ohio State quarterback and 2002 National Champion Craig Krenzel highlights the annual Game Day 5K. Krenzel runs the 5K and signs autographs for participants. Union County's largest 5K grows to 229 participants.

## October: The Readers' Choice



United Way is voted Union County's Favorite Non-Profit Organization in the *Journal-Tribune's* Readers Choice Awards.

## April: United Way admits three new Member Agencies

The North Union Local School District Personal Needs Pantry serves families with items that cannot be purchased with food stamps. The Plain City Free Clinic offers medical care to uninsured residents on Saturdays at the Adams Family Medical Center. United Way provides funding for prescription medication. The Community and Seasoned Citizens conducts numerous recreational and educational activities for area seniors each week.

## Summer: Project North Star opens in Richwood



Born as the result of a Community Care Day project, a new after-school youth center opens in Richwood. The building was refurbished for use on Community Care Day and is operated by Consolidated Care. More than 126 youth have visited the North Star Center since it opened in June.

## September: Pillar Society makes history and "bridges" gap

Pillar Society members make history by attending the first event ever held by an organization ON one of Union County's historic covered bridges. The Pillar Society Reception helped kick off the annual campaign among United Way's leadership givers, who generously donated more than \$250,000 this year!



women with a mission

## Women's group organized

The Women with a Mission Committee is formally recognized as an official volunteer committee of United Way. The newly-formed group provides a forum for concerned women to discuss current community needs that are important to women and to see potential solutions. The committee is initially charged with the oversight of the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, United Way's early childhood literacy program.

## Campaign raises \$825,000



Working to raise money in the worst recession of our lifetime, United Way volunteers raise \$825,000 during the annual campaign. The effort concludes with the grassroots 50 from 50 Campaign that raised more than \$23,000 in December.



## United Way saves residents \$83,779 on medicine in 2009

Over 5,000 claims were made using the free FamilyWise Prescription Drug Discount Cards United Way provided throughout Union County in 2009.

## January: United Way issues more than \$630,000 in total community support for 2010

Volunteers allocate \$634,323 in total community support to 40 programs of 26 local social service agencies. United Way will impact more than 22,000 Union County residents this year.



**Thank you for being a loyal donor!  
Inside your Contributor...**

**Page 1** The meteoric rise of the North Star Center shines brightly in Richwood. Read about how this new youth center has made such an immediate impact in the Village.

**Page 3** Recession Repression! How your United Way contributions made a difference throughout Union County in the 2009 Year in Review.

**Online** Volunteers allocated more than \$634,000 in community support for 2010. See how we're spending your donor dollars, line item-by-line item.

The *Contributor* is the quarterly newsletter of the United Way of Union County.  
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## Census 2010 is coming



## IT'S IN OUR HANDS

We Need Your Help! Support Union County by completing the 2010 Census Form that will be delivered to your home in March. All forms are due by April 1.

Why? Because Census information is only collected every 10 years and is used to determine locations for schools, roads, hospitals, child-care, senior centers and more! In addition, the census determines how many seats each state has in U.S. Congress.

## Billiards for Books set for March 20

“Country Club of Billiards” to host tournament for literacy program

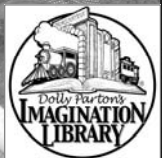
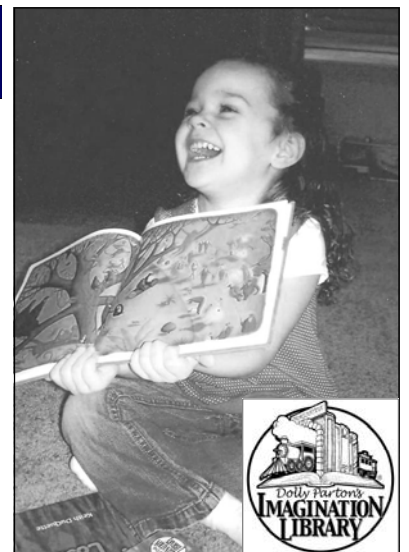


The Cue Stick Café in Marysville will be the site of the inaugural Billiards for Books Tournament, benefiting United Way’s Dolly Parton Imagination Library. On Saturday March 20, pool sharks and beginners alike will take their shots in a double elimination event.

Teams of two can register to compete for prizes and bragging rights. Entry fees are just \$60 (pays for two children to receive a book a month for an entire year). Corporate sponsorship packages are also available and begin at just \$50.

Since its inception in late 2008, more than 900 Union County children under the age of 5 have been enrolled in the program that provides free books each month mailed directly to the home.

Contact Shari Marsh at United Way at (937) 644-8381 for more information.



Mallory, of Marysville, shows off one of her favorite books. Mallory is one of more than 900 Union County children receiving a free book every month through United Way’s Dolly Parton Imagination Library.