



UNITED WAY

Mat-Su

ORDINARY PEOPLE DOING EXTRAORDINARY THINGS

UNITED IS THE WAY



2024
ANNUAL REPORT

A MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

At United Way of Mat-Su, we believe in the power of connection and collaboration. Our promise is simple yet profound: United Way mobilizes communities to action so all can thrive.

This year, we've worked to ensure that our efforts bring people together, address immediate needs, and create sustainable change for generations to come.

Through our impact areas, we've seen incredible growth:

- **Healthy Community:** We've improved spaces and created opportunities that inspire physical activity and foster wellness and rejuvenation.
- **Youth Opportunity:** Youth 360 and Thrive have empowered young people to lead healthier, more connected lives.
- **Financial Security:** Initiatives such as Project Homeless Connect and Stuff the Bus have strengthened stability for families.
- **Community Resiliency:** With a focus on disaster preparedness and recovery, we've helped our community prepare for future challenges.

Your support fuels this important work, and together, we're making a difference. Thank you for joining us on this journey. Let's continue to make the Mat-Su Borough a place where everyone can thrive.

With gratitude,
Stephanie Allen

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We believe that each and every person has the potential to live their best life. We believe that each of us giving what we can has the power to transform the world around us. We can do amazing things when we Live United!



MISSION

United Way of Mat-Su works to advance the common good in the Mat-Su by focusing on the building blocks for a good life: quality education that leads to stable jobs, income to support a family, and good health. We are moving people from poverty to possibility, helping kids be all that they can be, and building strong and healthy communities. United Way of Mat-Su works to advance the common good in the Mat-Su by focusing on the building blocks for a good life: quality education that leads to stable jobs, income to support a family, and good health. We are moving people from poverty to possibility, helping kids be all that they can be, and building strong and healthy communities.

HEALTHY COMMUNITY

Physical activity is vital to overall well-being, and in 2024, United Way Mat-Su made significant strides toward creating safe, inclusive, and active environments where everyone can thrive. Recognizing the value Alaskans place on outdoor spaces, we collaborated with community members and partners to **enhance parks and trails** across the Valley, ensuring they remain accessible and enjoyable for all. Spending time outdoors while being physically active not only improves physical health but also supports emotional well-being by reducing stress, boosting mood, and enhancing cognitive function. By fostering opportunities for outdoor recreation, we are helping individuals build resilience, find relaxation, and strengthen their connection to nature and community.

This year, we partnered with Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation to revitalize four parks and playgrounds, stretching from Sutton to Meadow Lakes. These improvements included **updating play structures, enhancing trail access, and creating safer, more welcoming environments for families and outdoor enthusiasts**. To further empower community-led projects, we established a tool library, providing groups and individuals access to hand tools for community-based initiatives.

In addition to improving outdoor spaces to promote physical activity, United Way Mat-Su launched a senior outreach program in 2024, focusing on the **unique needs of older residents**. By visiting local senior centers, we provided critical resource information, fostering connections and ensuring seniors have access to what they need to maintain their health and independence. Expanded printing and distribution of our Mat-Su Valley Resource Guide and Pocket Guides, with special sections for older adults, as well as targeted outreach, have enhanced resource availability and knowledge for Mat-Su seniors.

Our commitment to building a healthy community was showcased during the annual Week of Caring. With 12 impactful projects completed, over 50 dedicated volunteers contributed more than 300 hours of service. From trail cleanups to park beautification, these efforts ensured that vital work was accomplished for our fellow nonprofits, completing projects that may otherwise go unfinished. Together, we are creating opportunities for health, activity, and connection that will benefit our region for years to come.





YOUTH OPPORTUNITY

At United Way of Mat-Su, we believe that every young person deserves the opportunity to thrive. We are committed to helping children get off to a strong start and empowering youth to reach their full potential by breaking down barriers to success. Our approach focuses on creating pathways for young people to build healthy relationships with peers and caring adults, which we believe is essential for their growth and success. A cornerstone of this effort is providing access to high-quality out-of-school programming, offering safe, supportive spaces where youth can explore their interests, develop critical life skills, and engage in fun activities that help them make positive choices.



Our **Youth 360** after-school and summer programs are prime examples of these efforts in action. Youth 360 provides enriching activities, mentorship, and resources for middle and high school students, ensuring they have a place to belong outside of school hours. By offering exciting opportunities like arts, sports, leadership development, and community projects, these programs help keep youth engaged in healthy, positive experiences that reduce the risks of substance use during their critical teen years. Youth 360 has seen tremendous growth this year, with hundreds of youth participating in activities that foster positive development. To meet the increasing demand, we're excited to announce that a fourth Youth 360 club will open in January 2025 further extending our reach and impact in the Mat-Su community.



Additionally, our **Thrive** events have experienced remarkable expansion this year, creating even more opportunities for youth to connect and grow. These events bring together young people and community partners to promote mental and physical wellness, and encourage creative expression. Thrive events are designed to give youth not just a safe place but a sense of excitement and belonging, reducing idle time that can lead to risky behaviors. With record-breaking attendance and enthusiastic community support, Thrive events have become a vital part of our youth programming, offering unforgettable experiences that inspire young people to dream big and achieve their goals.

By investing in programs like Youth 360 and Thrive, United Way is making a tangible difference in the lives of Mat-Su youth.



FINANCIAL SECURITY

At United Way of Mat-Su, we believe that everyone should have the opportunity to sustain their family and build security for future generations. Financial stability is the foundation for a thriving community, and when individuals and families have access to the resources they need to succeed, the entire Mat-Su Valley benefits. That's why we focus on initiatives and partnerships that empower individuals, strengthen families, and create pathways to long-term financial health.

This year, we published and distributed **over 6,000 resource guides** throughout the Mat-Su Valley, connecting families to critical services and support systems. The overwhelming demand for these guides demonstrates how essential these resources are to our community. Despite distributing thousands of copies, we couldn't keep up with the need, highlighting the importance of accessible and reliable information for families striving to achieve financial security.

Through programs like **Project Homeless Connect**, we address the immediate needs of those experiencing housing instability, connecting them to critical resources such as employment services, financial counseling, and basic necessities.

Similarly, our **Stuff the Bus Back-to-School Fair** ensures that families can start the school year with less financial stress. With the help of 56 dedicated volunteers and 20 community partners, we distributed over 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies. This effort gave students the tools they needed to succeed while easing the financial burden for their families.

By working together with local organizations, businesses, and community members, we are building a stronger, more resilient Mat-Su Valley. At United Way of Mat-Su, we are more than a safety net—we are a springboard for families to move from surviving to thriving. Financial security isn't just about today—it's about creating a legacy of opportunity for the generations to come.





COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

At United Way of Mat-Su, we work with our neighbors to build resilient communities that are ready for any challenge. Through a focused approach on disaster preparedness and response, we strengthen our community's ability to weather emergencies together.

This year, we supported **Mat-Su VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster)** by increasing membership and engagement, offering emergency preparedness trainings, and expanding committees to enhance disaster relief and recovery efforts. We were proud to participate in the Willow Safety Fair this spring and the Mat-Su Borough Emergency Preparedness Expo in September, connecting with residents and promoting readiness across our region. Together, we are building a stronger, safer, and more resilient Mat-Su.



VOLUNTEERISM

At United Way of Mat-Su, we deeply value our volunteers and are committed to supporting their efforts to create meaningful change in our community.

Volunteers are the backbone of our mission, and their dedication allows us to serve the Mat-Su Valley in impactful ways. **Our annual Week of Caring, held from May 20-24, 2024 was a huge success thanks to over 50 enthusiastic volunteers and the generous support of local businesses!** Dozens of community members came together to help complete projects for a dozen local nonprofits, parks and programs. Without Week of Caring and United Way of Mat-Su's expertise, these important projects may otherwise have gone unfinished. Together, we tackled park improvements, spring cleanup, painting and construction projects, clothing donations and sorting, recycling initiatives, and even some farm work. Our heartfelt thanks to everyone involved for helping us build a stronger, more vibrant community—your hard work and generosity are truly inspiring!

Big Lake Library

The incredible crew from Susitna Rotary returned to support the Big Lake Public Library in preparing for summer! Each year, these dedicated volunteers lend a hand by beautifying the library grounds, creating a welcoming space for the library's bustling summer programs.



Spring Creek Farm

Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union joined us at Spring Creek Farm for a meaningful morning of planting baby Brussels sprouts! This hands-on experience brought together community spirit and sustainable agriculture as volunteers got their hands dirty to help nurture the future of local food production.



CCS Early Learning

Palmer's CCS Early Learning Center received some care and attention, thanks to dedicated volunteers from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in Palmer. Even in blustery, chilly weather, these volunteers worked to revitalize the garden. Their efforts included weeding inside and around planter boxes.



Youth 360

The Wasilla Youth360 club was fortunate to receive a day of volunteer support from the dedicated team at LINKS Resource Center. This group of six volunteers assisted with cleanup efforts and hosting an end-of-school-year barbecue for the youth and community members.



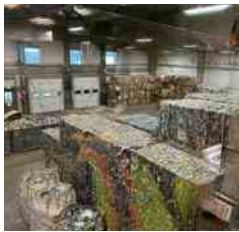
Family Promise

The team from First National Bank Alaska tackled spring yard work, raking, mowing, and using power blowers to prepare the outdoor spaces for families staying at Kari House this summer. They even filled the outdoor free food pantry with nonperishable snacks, for those in need who may visit the pantry.



Valley Community for Recycling Solutions

A dedicated group of volunteers recently spent an afternoon at Valley Recycling. Together, they sorted recyclable materials, helping to promote sustainability and reduce waste. Their hard work not only helps keep our environment cleaner but also supports local recycling efforts, making the Mat-Su Valley a greener place for everyone.



Valley Charities

These incredible MVFCU employees had us all laughing while lending a hand at Turn-A-Leaf Thrift Store in Wasilla. The donations collected at turn-A-leaf directly support Valley Charities, Inc. and its wide range of programs and services that benefit our community.



Alpine Historical Park

Our all-female volunteer group made incredible progress at Alpine Historical Park in Sutton, tackling a variety of projects while gaining a deeper appreciation for the history and Alaska Native culture rooted in this beautiful area.



Palmer Moose Lodge

Community volunteers came together to give the Palmer Moose Lodge a well-deserved spring facelift! The day's efforts included mowing, raking, hedge trimming, trash cleanup, kitchen deep cleaning, window washing, and more.



Palmer A-Moosement Park

Matanuska Electric Association employees dedicated their morning to sprucing up the Palmer Amoosement Park, giving it a fresh look just in time for summer! They also extended their efforts into nearby high-traffic areas, cleaning up trash and making the neighborhood shine.



Alaska Wildbird Rehabilitation Center

At the Alaska WildBird Rehabilitation Center, a team from Mat-Su Health Foundation rolled up their sleeves to complete a variety of tasks, including painting, cleaning bird enclosures, and tackling yard work.



Kids Kupboard

The Mat-Su Home Builders Association generously dedicated time and expertise to construct a shed for Kids Kupboard, an invaluable addition to the summer feeding program. These sheds provide secure storage for supplies and a sheltered space for volunteers to serve free, nutritious lunches to children across the Valley.



2023 VOLUNTEER AWARDS



Dorothy A. Jones Lifetime Achievement Award Honorees: Lee Henrikson & Mike Chmielewski

When we think of Palmer, we think of Lee Henrikson and Mike Chmielewski—two individuals whose dedication has become an integral part of the community. Through their tireless work at Big Cabbage Radio, they have fostered connections across the Mat-Su, bringing local insights to the airwaves.

Beyond the station, they have spent decades supporting causes like the Mat-Su Ski Club, serving as volunteer EMTs, writing grants, and advocating for critical issues. Their unwavering commitment has left a lasting impact, making them truly deserving of this lifetime achievement award.



Volunteer of the Year: Amy Spargo

When the 2024 Arctic Winter Games needed a leader, Amy Spargo stepped up—coming out of retirement to serve as Board Chair. Over the course of a year, she dedicated hundreds of volunteer hours, rallying thousands of volunteers, coordinating venues across the region, and welcoming athletes from around the world.

Amy embodies the spirit of Living United through visionary leadership and unwavering dedication. Her efforts not only ensured the success of the Games but also brought the community together, fostering resilience, teamwork, and pride.

Community Champion Award: First National Bank Alaska

For over 30 years, First National Bank Alaska (FNBA) has been a steadfast supporter of United Way of Mat-Su, strengthening our community through employee giving and hands-on engagement. Since our founding in 1988, FNBA employees have shown up year after year—assisting Family Promise Mat-Su during Week of Caring, bringing smiles to Stuff the Bus, or offering compassion at Project Homeless Connect.

FNBA's commitment to the Mat-Su is unwavering, and we are honored to recognize their decades of dedicated service and enthusiastic participation. Thank you, FNBA, for your generosity, leadership, and continued investment in a stronger community!



2023 VOLUNTEER AWARDS

Honoring Our 2023 Volunteer of the Year Nominees

The United Way of Mat-Su is honored to recognize the outstanding individuals nominated for the 2023 Volunteer of the Year Award: Debbie Norris, Mei-Li, Josephine Bidwell-Black, and Larisa Fonov. Each of these incredible volunteers has dedicated their time and talents to strengthening our community, and we are deeply grateful for their service.

Josephine Bidwell-Black and Mei-Li Parr have given countless hours to supporting Wasilla Area Seniors, the Valley Thanksgiving Blessing, and the Christmas Friendship Dinner. They also sew blankets and holiday knapsacks for children and volunteered at the 2024 Arctic Winter Games.

Debbie Norris is the heart of Willow's emergency preparedness efforts, serving as a key member of the CERT team and helping ensure her community is ready for disasters. She also leads the Willow Iditaquilters, creating quilts for those in need and providing comfort through her craft.

Larisa Fonov has been a lifeline for Ukrainian refugees, greeting families at the airport, securing housing, and collecting donations to help them settle. She also volunteers at her church and supports community events like Stuff the Bus, the Northgate Alaska shoe giveaway, and Santa Cops.

While only one recipient was ultimately selected, we celebrate and thank each of these nominees for their incredible impact. Their dedication and kindness inspire us all, and our community is stronger because of them.



Pictured (L-R): Amy Spargo, Debbie Norris, Mei Li, Josephine Bidwell-Black, & Larisa Fonov.

THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 DONORS

Foundation Donors \$1-\$499

Dawn Adams	Joseph Davis	Jay Will Knight	Joseph Ramirez
Joseph Anderson	Jake Del Hobbs	Scott & Stacey Kolstad	Tandi Remaklus
Meg Arneson	Robin Dern	Dameon Kowalke	Debby Retherford
Jeffrey Arnold	Christopher Dilitz	Joe LaBarre	Perry Robbins
Roger Baird	Judith Donegan	Douglas Ladenburger	MaryAnn Robinson
Patrick Baker	Erik Dossett	Mandy Lambert	Kristina Romero
Shawn Barnes	Annette Erickson	Michael Lane	Rick Roy
Alexander Bayle	Barbara Ervin	Jeff Laughlin	Traci Sanders
Michele Bear	Amy Sierra Facklam	Zhang Lei	Jody Serrano
Melissa Behnke	Lance Fleury	Heather Lescanec	Karl Severance
Ryan Blackwell	Alejandra Flores-Heredia	Alysia Loughlin-Bushey	Tamara Simpson
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Yvonne Charles	Jason Hall	Erin Morrow	Yan Teytelman
Daniel Cheyette	Michele Harmeling	Joe Montana Murdock	Mark Thomas
Michael Chipman	Lisa Harmon	Brittany Joy Nelson	Luela Toki
Dayton Christiansen	Charles Hayes	Destiny O'Daniel	Stephanie Toussaint
Jackie Clark	Lee Henrikson	Shawn Osborne	Jeana Tye
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Michael Clemens	Curtis Honig	Rick Pinkerton	Gail Volt
Shellie Colegrove	Danielle Howard	Natasha Pope	Matthew Vos
Desiree Compton	Christopher Jerue	Adrienne Powell	Chris Wallstrum
Steven Cooper	Ryan Jiminez	Blue Price	Phillip Weeks
Tracy Crockett	Tracy Kalytiak	Lori Proctor	Sue Welton
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Grants

Alaska Community Foundation
ConocoPhillips
Jim & Vicki Jansen Foundation
Mat-Su Borough HSCMG
Mat-Su Health Foundation
Mat-Su Trails and Parks Foundation
MTA Foundation
SOA-Department of Corrections
State of Alaska Behavioral Health
State of Alaska Positive Youth Development

Business Support

AKTive Soles
Alaska Children's Trust
Alaska Husky Adventures
Alaska Railroad
Alaska State Fair
Alpenglow Salon & Spa
Alyeska Pipeline Co.
Amazing Grace Academy
American Lung Association
BMI
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By the Spirit Photography
CIRI- Corporate
Cobb Street Market
ConocoPhillips
Crumby Bakery
Deeptree
DOWL HKM
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Enstar
Enterprise-Wasilla
Everett's Restaurant at Mat-Su Resort
First National Bank Alaska
Glacier Surgical & Glacier Med Spa
Global Federal Credit Union
Glass Doctor of Mat-Su
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church
Hello Darlin
Houston Lions Club
Hydrate Alaska
KidsKupboard
Kiwanis Club of Palmer
Knik Glacier Tours
Lazy Raven AirBnB
Lynden, Inc.
MAC FCU
Matanuska Susitna Borough School District
Matanuska Valley Federal Credit Union
Mat-Su Miners
Mat-Su Sea Hawkers
MTA
Non Essentials
Northgate Alaska
Northrim Bank
O'Reilly Auto Parts
Providence Health and Services
Palmer Lions
Palmer Moose Lodge
Set Free Alaska
Spunky Monkey
Sudzy Salmon
Sunny Knik Chapel
Target Corporate
Valley Performing Arts
Walther Dental Center
Zachry Industrial Inc.

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Stephanie Allen- Executive Director
Michele Harmeling- Development/Outreach Director
Matt Clayton- Thrive Youth Programs Coordinator
Tyler Healy- Youth 360 Director
Jennifer Walther- Outreach Coordinator
Jovan Archuleta- Wasilla Youth 360 Club Manager
Madi Emmi- Houston Youth 360 Club Manager



2024 FINANCE REPORT

UNITED WAY OF MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION JUNE 30, 2024 and 2023

	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
ASSETS		
Current Assets:		
Unrestricted Cash	\$ 236,598	\$ 330,137
Unconditional Promises to Give, Net of Allowance for Uncollectible Promises	-	1,470
Investments	514,392	500,000
Grants Receivable	68,474	72,615
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	<u>1,811</u>	<u>1,811</u>
Total Current Assets	<u>821,275</u>	<u>906,033</u>
Property and Equipment:		
Property and Equipment	52,968	52,968
Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(51,049)</u>	<u>(48,572)</u>
Property and Equipment - Net	<u>1,919</u>	<u>4,396</u>
Operating Lease - Right of Use	50,843	72,688
TOTAL ASSETS \$	<u><u>874,037</u></u>	<u><u>983,117</u></u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities:		
Accounts Payable	\$ 1,075	\$ 4,500
Payroll Liabilities	51,985	39,241
Operating Lease Liability	<u>50,843</u>	<u>72,688</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES	<u>103,903</u>	<u>116,429</u>
NET ASSETS		
Net Assets without Donor Restrictions		
Designated by the Board:		
Property and Equipment	1,919	4,396
Board Reserve	52,702	52,702
Undesignated	<u>715,513</u>	<u>809,590</u>
TOTAL NET ASSETS	<u>770,134</u>	<u>866,688</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$	<u><u>874,037</u></u>	<u><u>983,117</u></u>

See Independent Auditor's Report and accompanying notes to the financial statements.