



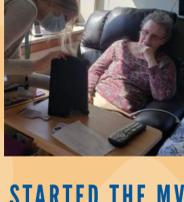
United Way of the Mohawk Valley

# UNITED WAY OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY'S COVID-19 RESPONSE RECAP

## A YEAR IN REVIEW

In the past year, a lot has changed for our community and its residents due to COVID-19. However, United Way of the Mohawk Valley's **ability to step-up in times of crisis and create innovative solutions to problems facing our community has not wavered.**

MARCH 2020



### STARTED THE MV COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

We replicated a national model to launch a fund that distributed **more than \$1 million** providing urgent support to non-profits and organizations on the front lines. With this fund, partners were able to acquire needed medical equipment, PPE, specialty cleaning tools and supplies, food, technology, and more. In January 2021, this fund has ramped up for a second time to assist local non-profits to continue to build capacity.

APRIL 2020

# 2-1-1

Get Connected. Get Help.™

### STAYING CONNECTED TO OUR COMMUNITY

**United Way MV's 211 hotline and database is the most comprehensive listing of health & human services in our community.** We captured feedback from local organizations to keep our 211 database updated on changes to services due to the pandemic. Ongoing outreach and dialogue with our network of non-profits ensures that United Way stays up-to-date on local unmet needs.

JUNE 2020



### DISTRIBUTION OF FACE MASKS

We know that proper PPE, like face masks, significantly reduces the risk of spreading COVID-19. Initially, many non-profits lacked the needed resources to purchase this product needed to continue providing our community with vital services. United Way assisted by purchasing and sourcing donated masks from local partners, such as VOAD, Bank of America, and AIS. Through this effort we have been able to provide **more than 150,000 masks** to non-profits and families throughout the Mohawk Valley.

JULY 2020



### INSTALLED "BORN LEARNING" TRAIL KITS IN LOCAL PARKS

COVID-19 changed our original 2020 Annual Day of Action plans, but it did not stop two small groups of volunteers as they safely joined us to install signs as part of our "Born Learning" trails. In July, volunteers helped set **10 signs with fun tips for childhood learning** and outdoor activity along two walking areas at a local park in Utica and Rome. We are excited to bring our "Born Learning" trails to more local parks in June 2021!

AUGUST 2020



### DELIVERED JOY WITH A FAMILY ACTIVITY KIT GIVE-AWAY

As the summer of 2020 was winding down, families had been isolating for the better half of a year. We know the toll that has taken on the mental health of our community. To bring some joy and fun new outlets to families, we created **200 Activity Kits** filled with a dozen activities to enjoy at home. The kits were given away to families in Utica, Rome, and Herkimer, through a partnership with three local agencies.

SEPTEMBER 2020



### FUNDRAISING IN A VIRTUAL WORLD

Dozens of programs and initiatives rely on funding from United Way MV each year. Our focus on our new digital strategy over the past year allowed us to easily transition into fundraising in a virtual landscape. With use of technology and innovative thinking, we were able to stay connected with partner companies and their employees throughout our annual workplace campaign fundraising efforts. We designed several easy-to-use digital assets including workplace giving website pages and a revamped campaign toolkit with more digital resources. We transitioned our usual in-person presentations and meetings to virtual options. With a successful fall fundraising campaign, **we are excited roll out our spring fundraising efforts to ensure we not only meet, but beat, this year's fundraising goal!**

OCTOBER 2020

+ DECEMBER 2020, FEBRUARY 2021, APRIL 2021



### TAKE & MAKE FOOD AND MEAL BOXES SERIES

Thanks to a grant from the City of Utica, United Way of the Mohawk Valley launched our Take & Make Meal Box series, a unique food giveaway for Utica residents facing food insecurity. We partnered with Casa Imports and Karam Produce, to pack our food and meal boxes with fresh produce, meat, and other ingredients. Each box contained 5 to 6 meals for a family of 5 with step-by-step recipes. **This food distribution series will provide about 139,500 fresh and healthy meals to families.** Grant Funding: City of Utica, Community Development Block Grant CV - CARES Act

This series has been so successful, that we were able to add an additional distribution during the holiday season to three local senior centers throughout Oneida County and one local childcare center, thanks to an anonymous donor.

OCTOBER 2020

### READY FOR KINDERGARTEN



POWERED BY United Way

### R4K PROVIDES HELP DURING VIRTUAL SCHOOLING

R4K takes a holistic approach to education, including ensuring families can meet basic needs, such as access to food. Our R4K Family School Navigators have been a huge asset to our community through the pandemic. During the past year, COVID-19 transformed families' living rooms into classrooms as schooling turned virtual. Virtual learning has been a struggle for students, parents, teachers, and schools alike. Our R4K Family School Navigators have played a significant role from the start of this transition by staying connected with families of students. Among their everyday outreach and assistance, they now have been **assisting students who are struggling with remote learning** sessions for various reasons by identifying their needs and providing aid.

DECEMBER 2020



### RAMPING UP HOUSING AND HOMELESS EFFORTS

Housing stability is the foundation of our health and wellbeing. Without housing, our ability to obtain an education or job, and even meet our basic needs to live a healthy lifestyle is nearly impossible. Housing and homelessness have been a focus of United Way MV for many years, however due to the current pandemic, there has been an increased need for this work.

**United Way MV has secured \$479,175 in grant funding** to prevent, prepare for, and respond to the increased housing insecurity due to the pandemic among individuals and families who are homeless or receiving assistance in Oneida County. This grant also helped purchase needed sanitation systems, metal bed frames and bed dividers, and bed bug hotboxes for local shelters. (Emergency Solutions Grant COVID through Oneida County Department of Family and Community Services and awarded by New York State Office of temporary and Disability Assistance.)

JANUARY 2021



### TRANSFORMING TWO INITIATIVES WITH A VIRTUAL PLATFORM

United Way began utilizing a teleconnect software to continue to help our community. This platform was initially designed for the medical field's telehealth visits, but has allowed us to offer our Free Tax Prep initiative virtually, keeping our volunteers, clients, and staff safe, while assisting hundreds of local individuals in preparing their taxes for free.

Additionally, this platform offered a solution for our R4K Family School Navigators to host **easy and secure virtual, yet face-to-face, meetings with local families.**

FEBRUARY 2021



### FREE TAX PREP GOES VIRTUAL

COVID-19 brought new challenges to our Free Tax Prep program, a program that utilizes IRS trained volunteers to provide tax preparation at no cost to the client. Our team used technology to transform a service that usually requires in-person meetings into a **safe, no contact option.** Both volunteer training and certification courses were fully online, as well as a client appointments. This allows United Way to still offer one-on-one, personal assistance between client and tax preparer while keeping our staff, volunteer, and clients safe. Alternative options for those without access to the technology for virtual appointments were made possible by leveraging our vast network of partners including local libraries and MVCAA.

FEBRUARY 2021



### ONEIDA COUNTY COVID HOTLINE ASSISTANCE

Oneida County's COVID-19 hotline phone calls significantly increased throughout the pandemic. Utilizing United Way MV's expertise and connections with a network of established hotline call centers, we helped create efficiencies by transitioning the county's COVID-19 hotline calls to a partner call center.

# UNITED. MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER.

United Way MV continues to adapt in the face of this global pandemic. Beyond creating innovative solutions to tackle our community's most pressing problems, annual our strategic investments continue to support dozens of programs and agencies as they transition their services to help thousands of Mohawk Valley residents. United Way and our funded partners are stepping up for our community beating the odds.

**Our fight is not over yet.** We have much work to do as we continue to fight, recover, and rebuild. Our community is stronger when we LIVE UNITED, and together we can support each other through the challenges and implications of COVID-19.

**United Way of the Mohawk Valley will continue to do what we do best: Identify and address our community's evolving needs. We will work with local leaders, non-profits, businesses, and individuals to help the Mohawk Valley thrive.**

Your help is vital to the success of our work. With your support we will keep leading the way to a better tomorrow.

## TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE.

Donate. Volunteer. Live United.



United Way of the Mohawk Valley

258 Genesee Street  
Utica, NY 13502  
315-733-4691

[unitedwaymv.org](http://unitedwaymv.org)

