



United Way
of Greater Nashville

LEADERS UNITED

Quarterly

FALL
2022

100

*Celebrating the past.
Building for the future.*



2022 marks the 100th anniversary of our United Way. For 100 years, we have united the community and mobilized resources so that every child, individual and family thrives. For 100 years, we have asked our donors, partners and supporters to join in, stand up and dig deep. And for 100 years, you have done just that. Thank you for helping us create a community where every person—no matter their background, their circumstances or their zip code—has an equal chance at a bright future.

100 YEARS OF SERVICE

1922

The **Community Chest** is born, providing funds, volunteers and much needed support for local health and human services, as Nashville rebuilds from World War I.

1920s and '30s

Led by a small group of dedicated volunteers, the organization continues to grow the coordination of fundraising and distribution efforts among local charities, drawing **steady, annual donations** of \$250,000 for 39 organizations.

1940s

Local companies begin to invite the Community Chest in for once-a-year **fundraising campaigns** in the workplace.

1954

Renamed the **United Givers Fund**, the organization reaches its first million dollar campaign goal, raising more than \$1.2 million allocated to 40 partner agencies providing relief programs such as food, clothing and shelter to those in need.

1961

United Givers Fund is established in **Williamson County**, serving Franklin and surrounding areas.

1975

Now known as **Nashville Area United Way**, the organization evolves from a fundraising and allocations mechanism to a system working to solve community human services problems.



1981

Philanthropist Dr. Thomas F. Frist, Jr. partners with 27 Nashville visionaries to create the **Alexis de Tocqueville Society Alpha Chapter**, an alliance of leaders who work collectively to address our community's most pressing needs.

1992

The first neighborhood **family resource center** opens in Caldwell Elementary School.

1994

A group of volunteers start **Ryan White Part B**, now a state grant that helps individuals with and those affected by HIV/AIDS access important care and prevention services.

1997

The **Outcome Based Investment** process is introduced, representing a significant shift in the way funds are allocated. This process is still in place today.

1998

The Sennet Society, now known as the **Young Leaders Society**, forms to connect young professionals through leadership development, volunteerism and networking.

1999

The **Restore the Dream Fund** is established, thanks to gifts from Cal Turner, Jr., and Dollar General Corporation, to help local nonprofits recover from natural or manmade disasters.

The organization service area ebbs and flows becoming United Way of Middle Tennessee and then **United Way of Metropolitan Nashville**, reflecting changes to the organization's footprint over the years.



2002

The Ingram family provides the seed funding to establish the first **Read to Succeed** sites promoting early literacy and professional development to underserved early childhood education centers.



2004

The newly-formed Nashville Alliance for Financial Independence collaborative expands access to **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** across the community.

United Way launches the **211 Helpline**, connecting individuals in crisis with services 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2005

Williamson County activist and volunteer Patricia Hart lends her name to the formation of the **Patricia Hart Society** to bring women together in community service and philanthropy.



2008

United Way offers **Days of Action**, providing corporate partners and community members access to large group volunteer opportunities.

2010

United Way launches the **Restore the Dream Centers** in response to historic flooding to provide long-term recovery support and case management.

2012

The **Raise Your Hand** program is founded in Williamson County, pairing volunteer tutors with local students to improve math and literacy outcomes.

United Way, Nashville Alliance for Financial Independence and the Mayor's Office launch **Bank On Music City** to connect individuals to mainstream and safe banking.



2013

United Way launches the **Financial Empowerment Center**, in partnership with the Mayor's Office, offering no-cost financial counseling to individuals.

United Way partners with Dolly Parton's Imagination Library to begin **Imagination Library of Middle Tennessee**, delivering free books to children's homes once a month.



2014

The Family Empowerment Program, now known as **The Family Collective**, launches to prevent and end family homelessness in Davidson County.

2016

The **Financial Assistance Network** is formalized as a coalition of professionals providing emergency financial assistance to neighbors in need

2019

United Way of Metropolitan Nashville merges with **United Ways in Robertson and Williamson Counties** and becomes United Way of Greater Nashville.

UWGN is selected to act as the backbone organization for the **Blueprint for Early Childhood Success**, a city-wide effort to increase third grade literacy rates.

UWGN implements the **SNAP Employment and Training** program to help individuals achieve their vocational goals.

UWGN brings **ALICE** data to the state to better assess self-sufficiency in our counties served.



2020

The Mayor's Office asks United Way to launch the **COVID-19 Response Fund**, chaired by Senator Bill Frist, to provide financial assistance and community support to those affected by the pandemic. United Way is also tapped to act as administrator for state and local CARES Act funds to provide rent, mortgage and utility assistance to families.

The Financial Assistance Network expands to manage and deploy more than \$16 million for rent and mortgage assistance for families impacted by COVID-19.



2021

United Way's strong reputation of service to the community moves philanthropist **MacKenzie Scott** to make a one-time, unrestricted gift of \$20 million, the largest single gift in the organization's history.

Dickson County becomes part of the United Way of Greater Nashville service area.

United Way and local partners launch the **Welcoming Nashville Fund** to support evacuee and immigrant families joining our community from Afghanistan.

The **Robertson County Prevention Coalition** is formed to address substance misuse in Robertson County.

2022

United Way of Greater Nashville celebrates its **100th Anniversary**. Now serving six counties across Middle Tennessee with a staff of more than 80 professionals, UWGN raises more than \$17 million annually and allocates funds to more than 100 partner agencies to create a strong, thriving community for all.

WHAT CAN WE DO WITH THE NEXT 100 YEARS?

A Q&A with Erica Mitchell, United Way's executive vice president and chief community impact officer

In what ways has our community changed these past few decades?

Greater Nashville has seen so much growth over the last 20 years. Corporate headquarters are landing here at a rapid rate, thanks to our community's diverse economy, culture and relatively low-cost of living compared to other economic hubs. But with that growth we also see challenges, particularly for our neighbors who live at the margins.

From your perspective, how has that growth impacted families?

So many of our neighbors and families who live at some level of poverty struggle to keep up. For many, their income is just above the poverty line, so they don't show up in poverty data. They fall into a category we call ALICE—asset limited, income-constrained, employed. These are individuals and families who are one paycheck away from some really difficult times. We saw this time and time again during the pandemic. In Tennessee, 47 percent of households struggle to make ends meet. That is a staggering statistic. We're also seeing that as housing costs continue to rise, many families are being forced out of their homes. They can no longer afford sharp increases in rent and property taxes. Many people have rented homes for years, but those homes are being sold to developers often with very little notice. We've seen such an uptick in the number of

families who are now experiencing homelessness. We have to see the correlation here. It forces people farther and farther outside the city to find affordable homes, which only layers on additional challenges.

Is that where United Way of Greater Nashville fits in?

United Way is—and has always been—uniquely positioned to lead our community during times of transition. It's the foundation we were built on back in 1922 as Nashville was recovering and rebuilding from World War I. I think we saw during the pandemic that our community calls on and counts on us in the face of challenges. It is our responsibility to rise to that challenge and work with other organizations to meet community needs. Our position was solidified even more when we received the call from billionaire and philanthropist MacKenzie Scott in December 2020.

Can you talk a bit about that gift?

As the first year of the pandemic ended, MacKenzie Scott announced a one-time, unrestricted gift of \$20 million to our United Way. We are humbled by and so grateful for this gift, which we know has the power to be transformational for our community. We adopted a multi-step process to determine the best possible deployment of those funds, including a comprehensive strategic planning process to help guide us through the creation of the investment plan. We began by holding focus groups and surveying community stakeholders, donors, nonprofit agencies and corporate donors for their input. This process allowed us to hear from a



diverse audience that represents our multi-county footprint and to capture a broad picture of the most pressing issues.

What are some of the priority areas that emerged from that planning?

I think the timing of the gift coincided with a period in our community that was revelatory. We were at the height of a pandemic, which surfaced some of the most vulnerable parts of our community's safety net. What does a family do when they need to work, but there is no childcare? How does our education system rise to the challenge of educating students in a virtual environment and what implications will this have on education cornerstones like literacy and math, particularly for the most vulnerable? How does one's workforce capacity—their skills, knowledge and competencies—impact their earning potential inside and outside of a pandemic? These questions shined a spotlight on real time needs in our communities and made the identification of our priorities clear: high-quality, affordable childcare, early literacy and grade level reading and workforce development. The needs themselves are not new, but the depth of need is certainly more clearly illuminated.

Can you dig into some of that work and how you plan to tackle it?

We've seen a really nice opportunity to leverage MacKenzie Scott funds to attract, or complement, additional funding sources. We can start with access to childcare. Earlier this year, we received a grant from the city of Nashville to help stabilize financially vulnerable childcare centers serving families with lower incomes. We are convening and collecting data from these childcare operators to highlight needs within the sector and make recommendations for long-term sustainability. We believe these recommendations will be applicable across the childcare sector and can serve as levers to make important changes within the system.

We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Tennessee Department of Education to expand grade level reading work in multiple school districts. Our Raise Your Hand program, which provides after-school literacy and math tutoring, was expanded from Williamson and Franklin Special School Districts to include Wilson County, Lebanon Special Schools and Robertson County School District. Additionally, the Blueprint for Early Childhood Success has forged ahead creating its next set of strategies to tackle grade level reading in Davidson County. It has been exciting to see

the number of partners that have convened and spoken into this next set of strategies and who are committed to moving the needle on outcomes from birth through third grade. It really does take a full community.

Finally, we recently convened a group of stakeholders around workforce development for the Northern Middle Tennessee region. This group is on fire! Once again, multiple sectors—nonprofit, government entities, higher education, the business community—have come together to co-design plans. This group wants to create a more cohesive and accessible workforce system across the region. Think, if you want to increase your workforce capacity, where do you begin? How do people know what is available in the workforce space and how to access those resources? How do we create true workforce pathways and pipelines, knowing they are not always linear? How do we connect the dots between workforce entities across the region that create a more efficient and effective experience for clients? These are some of the questions we want to answer. We are working with [CivicLab](#), an outstanding design partner who is assisting in stakeholder engagement.

How can someone be a part of this work?

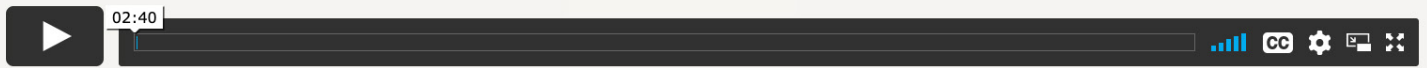
How can they help?

If anyone wants to learn more about the work, please reach out. I would be glad to share more details. If anyone desires to be part of the work, once again, reach out. We can find a table for you to join. And finally, if you want to contribute to the work financially, I sound like a broken record, but reach out! While Ms. Scott's gift was significant, \$20 million alone will not be enough to accomplish the kind of big, transformational change we want to see for our community. Our goal is to leverage the gift to attract and match other donations to make the dollars go further. These are significant challenges, but significant progress can be made.





**United Way
of Greater Nashville**



NOW IS THE TIME

For 100 years, we have worked tirelessly to break the cycle of poverty, to give kids an equal chance, to meet our neighbors' basic needs and to build strong, healthy communities. Yet, there is still so much work to be done. So many children's futures to be written and so many lives to be changed for the better. As we celebrate how far we have come, our focus is not just where we have been, but where we will go. We have big dreams for our community. As we look toward the future, we envision a region in which:

- Every family has access to high-quality, affordable child care
- All of our students have a solid foundation and are ready to read and learn
- Our workforce is equitable, educated and ready to take on new challenges
- Every person has a roof over their head and food on the table
- No family lives in poverty
- Our communities are strong, healthy and vibrant for all of our neighbors

It will take all of us—standing up and rallying around these efforts with the aligned mission of investing in something big—something no one gift or one organization can accomplish on their own. To create a thriving community, it will take the whole community. We hope you'll consider joining us as we create a thriving place for all. Will you be a part of our next 100 years?

About Leaders United

Leaders United donors provide the foundation for a better community with a generous annual gift of \$500 or more. Your gifts allow us to continue to fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community.

Eagle Level
\$500 - \$999

McGavock Level
\$2,500 - \$4,999

**Tocqueville Society
Alpha Chapter Level**
\$10,000+

Robertson Level
\$1,000 - \$2,499

Cockrill Level
\$5,000 - \$9,999

Looking for more ways to get involved?

- Find a volunteer opportunity
- Host a poverty simulation
- Build Comradery with a Cause by recruiting friends or colleagues to create kits for our neighbors in need
- Share this newsletter with friends and family

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