

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



THANK YOU

You are the center of everything we do here at United Way of Greater Chattanooga. ***Your unwavering support for our mission of uniting people and resources in building a stronger, healthier community empowers us to show up for our neighbors every day.***

We're proud to look back on a year of collective impact. Together, we served more community members than ever before.

- Answered 62,790 calls through our 211 helpline
- Funded 62 nonprofits with \$4.4 million through our community investments grants
- Provided direct emergency assistance to 805 neighbors
- Connected 1,035 volunteers to nonprofit projects through our [ihelpchattanooga](#) platform

As we look forward, we'd like to share a powerful vision with you – one that has the ability to transform our community today and create impact for generations to come.

A new report from early childhood policy experts at Vanderbilt University finds that Tennessee ranks 49th when it comes to helping children and families thrive and escape poverty. In our region alone, approximately 40% of households are facing financial hardship, many of them with children. Imagine a future where every child in our community is given the opportunity to reach their full potential. To do this, we must create foundational change for families.

When families thrive, communities thrive. This simple fact is our north star – our guiding light as we continue to serve our community. Together, we can build a family-friendly community where every child has the opportunity to dream of a brighter future.

Thank you for serving alongside us over the last year. We are deeply grateful for you and look forward to serving together for years to come.

United,
Lesley & Jay



Lesley Searce
President & CEO



Jay Dale
Board Chair

Collective Impact.

We believe a more
connected community
changes everything.

Our mission is to connect people and resources in building a stronger, healthier community. We connect neighbors looking to give help to those in need of help. Together, we are driving impact in six core areas.

211 Helpline

Connecting neighbors in need to the right resources

Community Investments

Investing in our nonprofits to drive transformational change

Nonprofit Support

Empowering nonprofits through collaboration and capacity building

Volunteerism

Offering year-round opportunities to serve our community

Tutoring Program

Partnering with public schools to provide high-impact, low-ratio tutoring

Local Fundraising

Working with generous organizations and individuals to fund community action

211 Helpline

62,790 calls answered

Our 211 helpline has been serving neighbors across a 15-county footprint for more than 41 years. This critical service continues to grow and evolve to meet the changing needs of our community. Our client's top needs last year included food, housing assistance, rent and utility assistance.

Helped 5,257 people begin their journey to permanent supportive housing

Welcomed two bilingual navigators to the team who served 1,032 Spanish speaking callers

Meet your neighbor

A single mother who was reduced to part-time status and facing eviction due to her reduced income contacted 211 looking for assistance. Our 211 navigator was able to connect her with the critical resources she needed. We connected her to food assistance from a pantry near her home. Additionally, we provided a deposit and covered the first month's rent for a more affordable place for her and her children. We also assisted her in enrolling in a local nonprofit's life coaching program, which will aid in workforce development and job placement.




Emergency Assistance Bridge Fund

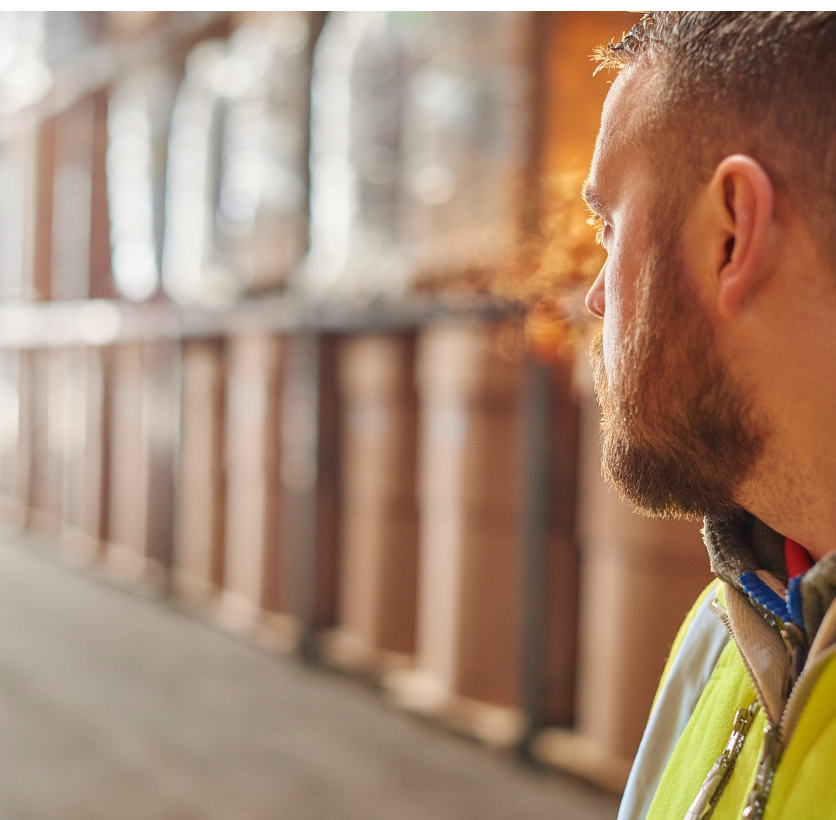
805 neighbors served

In moments of crisis, our neighbors can count on the Bridge Fund for emergency financial assistance. We distributed **over \$340,000** from the Bridge Fund to community members in need last year. The top three needs included rent, utilities, and car repairs or payments. This essential service ensures neighbors can keep their jobs and housing during times of crisis.

Hear from Your Neighbors



Meet Lisa. A single mom of two teenagers, she works full time while also picking up shifts for food delivery and tutoring to support her family. She got behind on her electric and Wi-Fi bill, leading to her electricity being disconnected. The Bridge Fund provided utility assistance so Lisa and her teenagers could continue using Wi-Fi for Hamilton County Virtual School programs. **"You have no idea the weight that has been lifted off my shoulders! Thank you so very much! I have to catch up on the water bill and buy the kids some school clothes so I'm ecstatic at the thought of being able to do that."**



Meet Jermitrius. He has been chronically homeless for the last few years, leaning on family members for a temporary place to stay. When his mother abruptly left Chattanooga, he was able to get a room at the Chatt Inn for just a week. He was about to start a new job at Amazon but would not receive his first paycheck for two weeks. The Bridge Fund helped with a temporary stay until his housing voucher was approved. This allowed him to stay on the bus line and make it to work on time each day so he could remain employed.

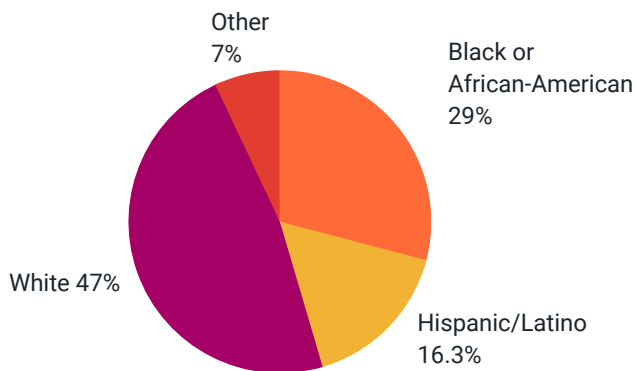
Community Investments

Funded 62 nonprofits with \$4.4 million

The 2022 – 2023 grant cycle transformed our community investment model. For the first time, funding was open to any local nonprofit organization in our six-county footprint. This new funding model has allowed an expanded array of partners to offer services, ensuring United Way funds are reaching historically under-funded pockets of our community.

A Snapshot of Individuals Served

RACE AND ETHNICITY



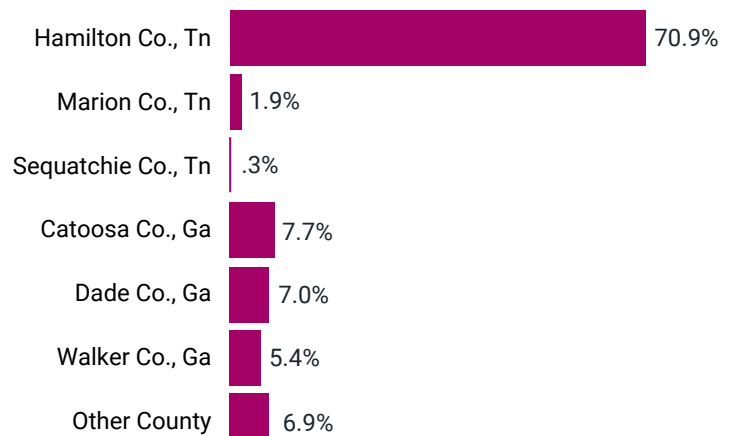
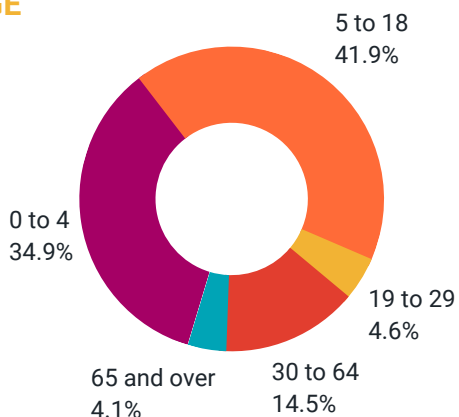
60%

of funded partners were first-time United Way grant recipients

116,755 individuals received 203,516 services from one or more of our funded partners.
That's a 22% increase in individuals served compared to last year.

SERVICES BY COUNTY

AGE



Meet Your Neighbors

Stories from our grant model at work



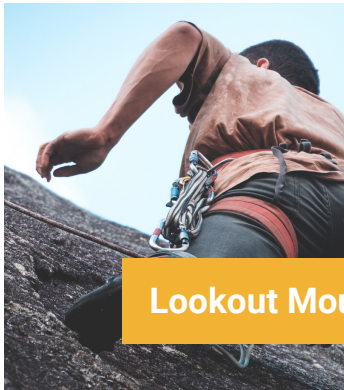
Habitat for Humanity of Greater Chattanooga

Jasmine Walker

Jasmine is a hardworking single mother from Chattanooga who has been part of the Habitat program since 2019. She works as a frontline manager at Food City in St. Elmo and is excited to move into her new home with her two children, her 19-year-old daughter studying nursing at Chattanooga State and her 17-year-old son attending Lookout Valley High School.

This home is the first-ever United Way-designated Habitat home, thanks to a \$75,000 grant from United Way. Jasmine is eager to become a Habitat homeowner and looks forward to putting in the hard work on the build site to complete her house and be able to call it home!

"I am honored to be chosen as the owner of the first-ever United Way Home. It takes a village to build and own a home, and thanks to Habitat and United Way, my village grows every day."



Lookout Mountain Conservancy

Hector

Hector took part in the Lookout Mountain Conservancy Howard School Leadership Program thanks to a \$37,500 grant from United Way. "Working and climbing on the Mountain gave me the experience and bravery to become who I am today. I'm not a quitter. I am a helper because I know what it feels like to need help. I'm resilient, kind, and strong. I am proud to be me."



LAUNCH

Meet Terence. Terence's culinary passion led to the opening of Chef Express, his full-time catering venture. While confident in his culinary skills, he recognized the need to learn business management. In 2018, he joined the LAUNCH Program, which improved his business and financial acumen. After graduating, he continued with LAUNCH's support, attending coaching sessions and workshops.

In 2020, when the pandemic disrupted catering, LAUNCH opened the Kitchen Incubator of Chattanooga, establishing a community food program that provided hot meals for thousands and allowed local food businesses to use the commercial kitchen space for free. Chef Express joined this initiative, securing a consistent income stream while serving the community.

Over the past year, Terence has expanded his business, acquired a food truck, and now mentors others through LAUNCH's 10-week program. This program is made possible thanks to a \$75,000 grant from United Way.

Learn United Conversation Series

Engaged with 310 community members

Learn United launched in January 2023 as a community-wide conversation series designed to ignite meaningful connections and foster intentional dialogue during a time of increased polarization. The series leverages the power of joy and conversation to break down barriers across every corner of Greater Chattanooga. Each session explored a core value to help us develop individually and as a community.

"This was my first Learn United event and will not be my last. I've attended speaker series for decades in Chattanooga, and the intentionality around this event was unmatched. Curated tables, experienced facilitators, space to connect with others in a meaningful and open way, and time to build community are all necessary – now more than ever. United Way united us that evening, and that sense of togetherness continues to collide in multiple ways since that evening,"

Teal Thibaud, Owner of Little Things Lab - A Placemaking Firm.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the Learn United experience with Reverend Nontombi Naomi Tutu. Her message of "Ubuntu" reminded us that we all are connected by a shared humanity. This dual experience of networking and learning was inspirational and informative. I'm looking forward to continuing these events,"

Patricia Russell, Executive Director of Social, Emotional and Academic Development with Hamilton County Schools.



January:

A conversation on Hope
with Samar Ali,
President and CEO of Millions
of Conversations

April:

A conversation on Resilience with
Reverend Nontombi Naomi Tutu

Summer:

Community-Based Roundtables

Nonprofit Support

Engaged with more than 2,000 nonprofit individuals to power a more connected community

As we retired the Venture Forward name in 2023, our support for the nonprofit community has only strengthened under one strategic brand and vision. Membership dues are a thing of the past, allowing us to support even more nonprofits to lead with innovation, build capacity, and foster connection.

Shared **300** job postings through our dedicated nonprofit job board

Hosted **15 nonprofit circle events** for young professionals and CEOs

Launched Resilia pilot program with **25 partners**.

The Resilia program offers a digital platform and coaching support to address pain points in fundraising, board management, program evaluation, storytelling and more.



Celebrate Awards

Nonprofit Organization of the Year:
MetMin – Metropolitan Ministries

Nonprofit Leader of the Year:
Kristen Pavlik McCallie from the Children's Advocacy Center

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Award:
The Bethlehem Center

Innovation in Action Award:
A Step Ahead Chattanooga

Volunteer of the Year Award:
Lamar Selcer from Partnership for Families, Children and Adults

Volunteerism

Fulfilled 1,035 requests
through [ihelpchattanooga](#)

ihelpchattanooga provides a one-stop-shop for local volunteer needs. Agencies can manage their volunteer projects and community members can sign up to help.



ENGAGEMENT GROUPS

Find your passion.

Anyone can join the following engagement groups to get more involved in our community.

EMERGING LEADERS



Our fastest-growing group! A diverse network of passionate, young professionals between 21–40 taking collaborative action in philanthropy, volunteerism and leadership.



Launched an annual leadership retreat and collaborated with numerous community partners for events and volunteer engagements, including the Chattanooga Lookouts and the Chattanooga Autism Center.

LEADERSHIP CLUB



A group of donors who exhibit extraordinary foresight and dedication to improve the quality of life for all of our neighbors by contributing at least \$1,000 annually.

ALEXIS DE TOCQUEVILLE SOCIETY



A group of our most generous community-minded investors who donate a minimum of \$10,000 annually.



Meet the Students & Tutors

"I love being a part of the tutoring program. I love my tutor and the time we spend together. Last school year, I improved in my reading and this year, I've made the honor roll on my first report card."

**Taylor, student receiving tutoring at
The Bethlehem Center**

"Most of our students are significantly behind grade level for reading. The United Way tutoring program has given our students individualized support that not only helps with their literacy but exposes them to more adults who care about them. We could not be more grateful for this partnership!"

Chandler Ouzts, site director at InZone

"After a wonderful tutoring experience that United Way facilitated years ago, I am excited to be able to, once again, connect to children in Hamilton County Schools that need additional support. I strongly believe that the high dosage tutoring initiative can make a difference in the lives of children who need it most, and I am thrilled to be a part of it."

**Anne, tutor at the Boys and Girls Club
Hardy Elementary School**

Tutoring Program

Supported local students
with high-impact,
low-ratio tutoring.

We partnered with local schools and after-school community sites to help public school students in 1st – 8th grade accelerate their learning. Our pilot effort reached 59 children, and has now expanded across all schools for the 2023 - 2024 school year.



Local Fundraising

Partnered with 300 businesses to craft unique engagement plans on how to give back

As a United Way partner, businesses enjoy stronger employee engagement, increased visibility, networking opportunities, and most importantly—the ability to make a difference in the local community.

8,165 donors trusted United Way of Greater Chattanooga to invest in a stronger community



Meet our Campaign Chair

Dionne Jenkins
Vice President, Corporate Engagement at
Tennessee Valley Federal Credit Union

“Showing up is important, but it’s not always enough. Truly engaging with your community is asking how you can help. Chattanooga is a beautiful place with such generous people, and I am honored to be in the position to affect real change with the United Way team.”



Fundraising at a Glance

Funding

Campaign, Undesignated \$6,813,316

These funds are raised and used to support community grants, United Way of Greater Chattanooga programs that serve the community, and other fundraising efforts.

Campaign, Designated/Restricted \$3,940,746

These funds are raised and directed towards specific agencies and programs by donors.

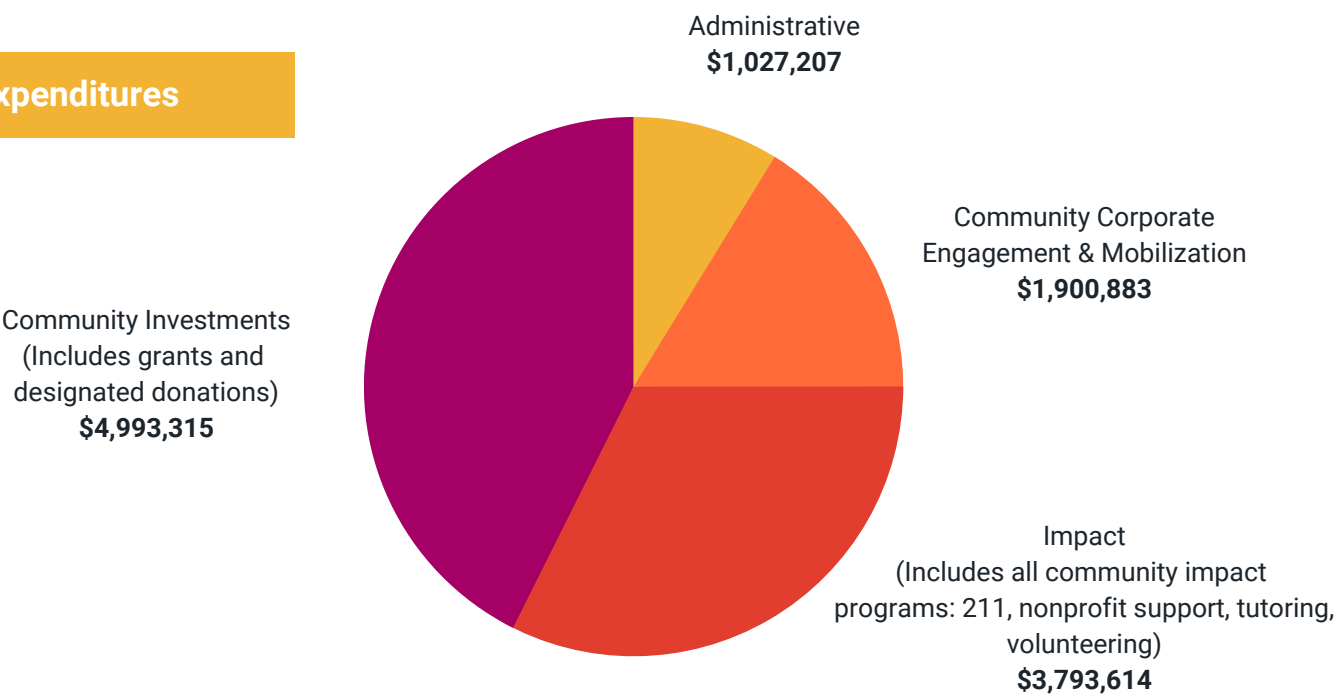
Endowment and Investment Draws \$1,125,173

This is an annual draw of dollars from Endowment and Investment earnings to support administrative overhead and fundraising.

Earned and Other Income \$1,197,423

Revenue earned from administering special programs in the community and other support services for the nonprofit community.

Expenditures



Meet Alysha Walker

Alysha Walker is a single mother raising three children under the age of five. Alysha lost the father of her children due to gun violence – in a home they shared with their children. After his death, finding work was extremely difficult with the lack of childcare support. She then lost her home suddenly for the second time in 14 months after the closing of the Budgetel Inn.

Our 211-team stepped in to help Alysha navigate this crisis right before Thanksgiving. Our team was able to put her and her three children in an apartment three days later. But finding a place for Alysha's family to call home is just the first step to providing long-term stability.

Now, imagine a community where families like Alysha's have the resources to thrive, not merely survive. Where working parents can be fully present at home and in the workplace.

Help us bridge the gap between helping in a moment of crisis and providing transformational change for families in our community.



Donate Today

Let's not just meet
families where they are,
let's meet families where
they dream.





We believe a connected community changes everything.
With people like you, anything is possible.

Thank you for serving alongside us.

UnitedWayCha.org