

United Way - We Step Up During Tough Times

The past year has been a scary and anxious time for all of us. But for some, the effects of the pandemic have not just been worrying, they have been crushing. At United Way, we know that this community needs us, now more than ever before. Fortunately, this is what we do best – rise to the occasion, bring resources together, and meet needs that arise in Henderson County. That is why we've gone even further this year to help the most vulnerable in our community.

When COVID hit, we quickly partnered with the Community Foundation of Henderson County and established the **Henderson County COVID-19 Response Fund**. With the support of this community, we were able to raise and distribute almost \$450,000 to 38 nonprofits on the frontlines of the pandemic, providing immediate relief to people seeking food, shelter, diapers, child care, protective equipment, and assistance with rent and utility payments.

Because people in crisis need to know where to find help, we made sure our community knew about **2-1-1, United Way's 24 hour hotline** that also became the statewide hotline for COVID resources and for North Carolina's assistance with rent and utility payments. Our United Way also coordinates the local funds received from FEMA's **Emergency Food and Shelter Program**. Local nonprofits use these funds to help people with rent and utility payments, which is even more critical this year. Our local board applied for and distributed over \$55,000 in EFSP funding that has flowed back out to help our community.

Since people need **masks and sanitizer** to stay healthy during a pandemic, United Way of Henderson County (UWHC) also leveraged and distributed 40 gallons of hand sanitizer from Gaia Herbs and approximately 41,000 FEMA masks to local nonprofits for their employees and clients and to our school children. Then, our Day of Action received wide support from the community, resulting in **hygiene kits** with masks, more donated hand sanitizer from Gaia Herbs, and health information **for all 13,000 Henderson County Public Schools students**.

Finally, UWHC also successfully **connected our funded partners with additional grant support** this year from Dogwood Health Trust, WNC Bridge Foundation, and the James H. Cummings Foundations in order to help them replace lost revenue and sustain critical programs.

These are just some of the ways that UWHC has stepped up to respond during an unprecedented pandemic. And, we have done this while continuing our ongoing work- fighting to improve the education, financial stability, and health of everyone in our community. I am proud that we have been able to accomplish all of this with a small but incredible team of 6 staff, supported by a dedicated board, many community volunteers, and **YOU!**

If you have made a gift this year to United Way, we offer our deepest gratitude for your support. You are the reason for this success. If you have not yet made your gift, I hope you will consider doing so. Your gift will be used wisely and well and make a real impact. We can't do it without you!

Warmest wishes for a happy, healthy holiday season.



Denise Cumbee Long
Executive Director