

# United Way of Lancaster County Plays Critical Role in Helping Our Community

United Way of Lancaster County has been helping to connect people in Lancaster County with social services for over 95 years! They are a trusted organization people turn to when they need help. The global pandemic has impacted people across the world and just down the street; it has been important for United Way to broaden its focus from long-term, systemic changes to short-term solutions during this time.

- Lancaster Partnership for Learning Equity -- United Way of Lancaster County partnered with The Steinman Foundation to launch the Lancaster Partnership for Learning Equity to address student learning loss and the ongoing challenges of online learning. It started with a summer program that provided hundreds of students from kindergarten through 8th grade across Lancaster County with free technology (high-speed internet and a computer for qualified families) and access to certified teachers using curriculum designed by BellXcel, the largest evidence-based summer learning program in the nation. Outcomes indicated that children maintained their knowledge in math and increased an average of 1.5 grade levels in English/language arts. Because the summer program was so successful and popular, the Partnership expanded this online learning to include an after-school option as well.
- Project SOS – When the federal government issued stimulus checks to everyone, people with resources to share reached out to United Way of Lancaster County wanting to help others. United Way started Project SOS to receive contributions and distribute small grants to families through an application process... families who had experienced a financial challenge due to COVID-19. More than \$200,000 was raised and distributed in \$250-\$500 grants.
- PA 211 East Call Center -- United Way of Lancaster County operates the PA 211 East Call Center, serving seven counties in southcentral and northeastern PA (Lancaster County through the Allentown area). This free, confidential information and referral service connects residents with health and human service resources. In 2021, specialists responded to more than 40,000 contacts in Lancaster County alone.
- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program – United Way coordinates the VITA free tax preparation program for Lancaster County residents who make \$62,000 or less annually. A dedicated group of trained volunteers and staff members prepare and file income taxes for thousands of families each year. In 2021, more than 6,000 tax returns were filed saving \$1.6 million in preparation fees.

United Way of Lancaster County believes we can build a better future for everyone in Lancaster County – “That’s **OUR** Way” and **you** are at the heart of it. Complex challenges require coordinated solutions, and United Way helps to find solutions by mobilizing the most effective resources available.

Your kindness and generosity are what this community is all about. Never underestimate what your contribution to United Way can do.