

Early Childhood Education

Building a strong foundation for future learning



Here are some ways you can LIVE UNITED® during the summer months. Visit unitedwayrrv.org/LIVEUNITED for more ideas.

- ▶ Visit wevolunteer.org for volunteer opportunities in our community
- ▶ Prepare or serve meals at a local community center
- ▶ Join the conversation about what's important in our community - follow us on Facebook & Twitter
- ▶ Help an elderly neighbor with their yard work
- ▶ Refer a friend in need to 2-1-1 for free info on human services
- ▶ Support a child's or adult's goal to learn to read by volunteering as a reading mentor

Among the hundreds of theories regarding early childhood development, there is one common thread: Developmental education must be high quality, consistent, and uninterrupted. Children have a limited ability to retain vocabulary, reading comprehension, and other skills, and cannot expand upon existing knowledge until they have reached a specific level of development. Through its school readiness, early grade reading, and other initiatives, United Way commits to help families and their communities provide quality education opportunities for children. Here's are two examples of our work:

- ▶ **Success by 6®:** This school readiness initiative helps children birth to age six gain the necessary academic and social skills needed to enter kindergarten ready to learn. Comprised of five programs ranging from a home visiting program for families with toddlers to an in-school

program that supports pre-k classrooms, this initiative focuses on increasing family engagement and developing pre-literacy skills in young children.

- ▶ **I READ:** This early-grade reading program matches volunteer reading mentors with kindergarten students and helps students achieve literacy goals by 4th grade. Volunteers meet with their students each week for 20 minutes and are encouraged to remain with their students through 3rd grade. The consistent one-on-one attention from the volunteer creates a comfortable environment for the student to learn.

Children who succeed in school also succeed in life. United Way is working together with schools, partner agencies, and volunteers to provide high quality learning experiences and support family engagement for young children in our community.



TAKE ACTION ON JUNE 21

United Way's **Day of Action** is an opportunity for the community to help put the United Way mission into action. On June 21, take a pledge to become a volunteer reader, tutor, or mentor in our community. Why? Engaging youth in quality learning initiatives gives them the tools and skills to succeed at school, and assisting adults with literacy and education helps parents support their children.

Visit www.wevolunteer.org to take the pledge.

FamilyWize Prescription Discount Card

Immediate savings on prescription costs

It's a no-brainer really. Healthier people make healthier communities. Currently in the United States, more than one of every five people have no prescription drug coverage. Yet access and means to obtain prescriptions is one of the simplest ways for individuals to reduce healthcare costs and mitigate illness and disease.

Joining together to empower individuals to take ownership of their health, more than thirty thousand community and faith-based organizations, county agencies, doctors, pharmacies, companies, and individuals across the country have collaborated to distribute free FamilyWize prescription drug discount cards. These pharmacy discount cards are provided free of charge to all individuals and can be used to reduce the cost of FDA-approved medicines for children, families and individuals.

United Way of Rock River Valley has partnered with more than 1,000 participating United Ways to coordinate distribution of these cards. Collaborating with organizations like FamilyWize allows us to follow our mission of addressing key social issues like promoting financial stability and independence, and improving people's health.

All funding for the FamilyWize prescription card program is provided through a small part of the dispensing fee included in the cost of discounted medicines. Funding is also provided by in-kind donations and reduced costs from program sponsors.

Using a FamilyWize Card is as easy as 1-2-3

1. Print your free card at www.unitedwayrrv.org/familywize or text the word FAMILY to the number 700700
2. Take to the pharmacy
3. Start saving on your prescriptions

There are no forms to fill out or waiting periods. The FamilyWize card may be used by anyone, with or without health insurance.



It's exciting to witness the development of the vision for our region's ongoing transformation. As conversations and subsequent action plans are engaged, it's imperative to have an understanding of the region's goals as well as a willingness to assume a shared responsibility so that our efforts have a long-standing and positive impact.

The challenges we face are too big for any one sector to tackle. But when all of us combine our talents, resources, and time, we create opportunities for everyone to flourish. And it's happening right here at United Way of Rock River Valley. Throughout our recent Community Campaign we've seen thousands of caring people give, advocate, and volunteer to fuel positive change in our region.

There are countless examples from this past year that illustrate the power of collective action. This newsletter highlights several initiatives and ideas that have a meaningful and sustainable impact on the heartbeat of our community.

Please join in our efforts – LIVE UNITED®.

Paul A. Logli, President/CEO

LIVE UNITED



United Way of Rock River Valley
612 North Main Street
Rockford, Illinois 61103

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**SUMMER ACTIVITIES
PREVENT
“SUMMER SLIDE”**

Summer slide, an average two months of lost learning during the summer months, does indeed lead to adverse effects on academic achievement. Here are some ideas of family-friendly summer opportunities that engage children in activities beyond the classroom:

- ▶ **Reading can take place in a multitude of different places and is often a more productive alternative to television.** An invaluable resource, books allow children to expand their imagination and strengthen much needed skills for academic success.
- ▶ **Take a field trip.** Born Learning Trails are physical outdoor trails with bilingual (English/Spanish) age-appropriate games and activities for young children.
- ▶ **unitedwayrrv.org/summerlearning.** Visit us on the web for more ideas including a list of local summer programs, reading tips, and activities for children.

United Way of Rock River Valley advances the common good in Winnebago and Ogle counties, creating opportunities for a better life by focusing on education, income, and health. United Way unites people and organizations that bring the passion, expertise, and resources needed to get things done. LIVE UNITED® is a call to action for everyone to become a part of the change. To donate or volunteer, please visit unitedwayrrv.org.