



612 North Main Street  
Rockford, Illinois 61103

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# THRIVING TOGETHER



WINTER  
2026

## ON THE COVER SWEET PARTNERSHIPS



Left: UWRVV staff George and Cherice picking up the bundt cakes; Right: Volunteer Dale Dickinson selling cakes. On the Cover: Volunteers Lin Schmeling & Judy Philips. (Not pictured Julie O'Rourke)

United Way RRV partnered with Woodward and Nothing Bundt Cakes for a fundraiser that sold 1,500 cakes in just two days. Huge thanks to our generous partners and incredible volunteers! A beautiful example of how when our community comes together, amazing things happen.

### WIN-WIN WAYS TO GIVE.

United Way Rock River Valley gratefully accepts IRA Qualified Charitable Distributions, appreciated stock gifts, and donor-advised fund contributions. These giving options can be simple, impactful, and tax-efficient ways for donors to support our work.

#### ORGANIZATION DETAILS

United Way Rock River Valley is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit. EIN: 36-2167843

#### MAILING ADDRESS

Please make checks payable to:  
United Way Rock River Valley  
612 North Main Street, Suite 300  
Rockford, IL 61103

#### QUESTIONS

Contact Kay Larrick, Director of Stewardship;  
kay@unitedwayrrv.org  
(815) 988-1552





**JULIE BOSMA**  
President & CEO

## LOOKING AHEAD, TOGETHER

As we get to know this new year, I find myself reflecting not only on what we've accomplished—but on how we continue to increase our impact and connect with others in the community.

We're looking ahead with intention. In February, staff will be visiting and learning from colleagues in Vero Beach, Florida, sparking meaningful conversations around literacy best practices, innovation, and sustainability. These shared insights will help sharpen our approach locally, ensuring we're not just doing good work, but doing it to ensure life-changing impact. Learning from others is good business.

In March, we'll internally introduce our "Uniting Ways", workplace behaviors that reflect the values we practice, uphold and celebrate. This focus is intended to shape our work moving forward, especially as we strengthen partnerships with local organizations to support coordinated efforts where our community needs it most.

This spring, we'll also pause to recognize the people who make our work possible at our **Volunteer Appreciation celebration in April**. Our volunteers show up consistently, quietly, and with purpose. Their impact reaches far beyond what any single metric can capture. Taking time to say **thank you** and show our appreciation is one of the most important things we do.

And sometimes, progress looks personal.

This past fall, I had the privilege of meeting Michael, a Bergstrom employee who has supported United Way for an incredible 47 years. His commitment is a powerful reminder that lasting change doesn't always come from grand gestures—it comes from showing up faithfully, year after year, believing in something bigger than yourself.



Thank you for being part of this work. Together, we are building something enduring—and the best is still ahead.

*Julie Bosma*



CALL 2-1-1 OR TEXT YOUR ZIP CODE TO 898-211 FOR HELP

211

Many grandparents step in to raise grandchildren without ever thinking of themselves as needing help. Through 211, families in this situation can find connections to childcare assistance, early learning programs, legal and guardianship resources, healthcare support, and financial guidance.

211 exists to support families at every stage, and for grandparents raising grandchildren, it can be a trusted starting point for navigating what comes next. We're here to help make the connections.

## 211 COMMUNITY FOCUS: GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN

## HIGHLIGHTING OUR WORKPLACE PARTNERS



**Associated Bank**  
To wrap up their United Way campaign, each branch competed with themed décor and a nacho bar potluck. Shoutout to North Main for their creative Italian nachos!



**Larson & Darby**  
This Halloween-themed fundraising week was a blast! It included games, prizes, and a costume contest, Walking "Dead" Tacos, and a "Blood Thirsty Thursday" drink cart.



**Morrissey Family Businesses**  
At their annual Christmas party, employees raised funds for United Way through a creative wreath-decorating contest. Congratulations to this year's winner, Michelle Conti!



**PACCAR Parts**  
Always amazed by the dedication of PACCAR Parts! They pack the week with fundraising fun—from a Bags tournament to a dunk tank and grill-out lunch.



**Rockford Township**  
This team got into the Halloween spirit by decorating office doors to raise money for UWRRV! From cobwebs to ghosts, each door told a story of creativity and care.



**Woodward**  
A big shout-out to Tom Dotson, Shannon Milligan (pictured), and Samantha Corey—Woodward's United Way champions! What an amazing team. (See back panel for details.)

### How To Get Involved

## WE CAN HELP YOU DESIGN VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES!

We partner with local businesses to create volunteer experiences that make a real impact in our community, and serve as great team bonding exercises. Opportunities are flexible, well-organized, and designed to align with your company's goals.

### HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES

- **Literacy Kits:** Support early learning and a love of reading
- **Snack Kits:** Assemble nutritious snacks for children and families
- **Teacher Kits:** Classroom supplies and care packages for educators
- **Hygiene Kits:** Essential items for individuals and families facing hardship
- **Custom Kits:** Tailored projects based on your company's interests or theme

### WHY COMPANIES PARTICIPATE

- Build stronger teams
- Increase employee engagement
- Save time with turnkey projects

### GET STARTED

Volunteer opportunities can be customized for groups of all sizes. Visit [unitedwayrrv.org/volunteering](http://unitedwayrrv.org/volunteering) or scan the QR code to learn more.



## LITERACY UPDATE

## CONNECTION AND EMPOWERMENT

Together with our partners, we are meeting families where they are—literally and figuratively. In medical clinics, schools, community centers, and churches. We are reaching families in crisis, those learning English, first-time parents, caregivers navigating early learning systems, and grandparents stepping into new roles. We're reaching families of all sizes, backgrounds, and confidence levels.

This collective work strengthens families and builds confident, enthusiastic readers and learners.

We are grateful to our partners not only for sharing data, but for sharing the stories—voices of parents, grandparents, and children that bring this impact to life and remind us why this work matters.

"Before, I wasn't sure how to make reading more fun. Now with the tips from the librarians and the backpack, my kids beg me to read! It's amazing to see their love for books grow."

— Parent at Rockford Public Library, Modeled Moments

FIND MORE STORIES ON OUR WEBSITE [unitedwayrrv.org](http://unitedwayrrv.org)

### By the Numbers

## STATISTICS FROM OUR FUNDED PARTNERS

7,061 children served

4,357 families served

42 family literacy events

36 trainings/ professional development sessions

17,088 books distributed

The "books distributed" number represent each partner's share of the 87,129 total books distributed by United Way Rock River Valley from July 1, 2025 - December 21, 2025.

United Way  
Rock River Valley

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