

NEWS RELEASE

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United Way Awards Nearly \$230,000 in Grants to Fight Food-Insecurity

[TOLEDO, OH] – Today, United Way of Greater Toledo (UWGT) is announcing that \$228,590 in grants will be awarded to 17 community-based organizations across Lucas, Wood and Ottawa counties who are working to combat food-insecurity in our region.

“COVID-19 has created an unprecedented demand for food resources locally,” said Wendy Pestrue, president & CEO of UWGT.

“Countless entities who supply children, individuals and families with nutritional support are doing their best to serve those struggling, despite rising unemployment rates. What these organizations truly need are dollars to move their work forward, and I am proud to say that United Way is here to help in that effort.”

The following organizations will be receiving monetary grants through UWGT’s Emergency Response Fund, established shortly after the COVID-19 outbreak. The goal of this fund is to address ongoing, emergency community needs in the health and human services space.

Mobile Meals of Toledo \$25,000 – YMCA of Greater Toledo \$25,000 – The University Church \$21,000 – Toledo GROWS \$20,000 – Perrysburg Schools / Perrysburg Heights Community Center / Islamic Center of Greater Toledo collaboration \$20,000 – Greater Grace Christian Church \$18,000 – The Mareda Center \$16,650 – ProMedica’s Ebeid Institute \$16,380 – Mosaic Ministries of South Toledo “4-1-Dine” \$12,000 – First United Methodist Church (Bowling Green) \$10,560 – Food For Thought \$10,000 – Brown Bag Food Project \$10,000 – Lutheran Social Services of Northwestern Ohio \$7,500 – Ottawa County Family Advocacy Center \$5,000 – Church of Truth Ministries \$5,000 – Down Syndrome Association of Greater Toledo \$4,500 – Sofia Quintero Art & Cultural Center \$2,000.

Programs that dollars will help expand include emergency food boxes, distributing vegetable plants, meal kit delivery for Seniors and increased pantry-food support to name a few.

“One of our most-treasured assets here at United Way is our volunteers. Our Collaborative Impact Cabinet is a collection of residents, with varying professional expertise, who represent the interests of those we serve across Lucas, Wood and Ottawa County,” said Pestrue.

“United Way simply provides the table for discussion, but our amazing and dedicated Collaborative Impact Cabinet volunteers make the official funding decisions. This approach is more than a policy at our organization – it’s a best practice. To truly serve the community well, we need their input.”

In addition to the \$228,590 outlined above, UWGT has also allocated \$83,500 for weekend snack bags, which have been given directly to Connecting Kids to Meals. As of today, UWGT’s volunteers (in small, socially distant groups) have packed 26,000 weekend snack bags, via 6,000+ service hours, since March 17.

“On March 13, I began receiving calls from a handful of community partners who were very worried about food stability in our region, as whispers of layoffs and school-closures began circulating because of COVID-19. Since then, our staff and volunteers have been hard-at-work helping those in need,” said Pestrue.

Since the Emergency Response Fund’s establishment, hundreds of individual donors and nearly 40 corporate partners, businesses and community institutions have given to UWGT, totaling just over \$650,000.

“I can’t thank our community enough for the generous support. Food is just phase-one of our approach. Soon, we will need to work towards addressing the next most-pressing issue, which will be done through data, community studies and gathering expertise from our partners.”

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