



United Way of Abilene

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United Way of Abilene

FALL/WINTER 2017

INSIDE THIS ISSUE: HURRICANE HARVEY RESPONSE, NO SHAVE NOVEMBER, AND MORE!

# LIVE UNITED TODAY

## THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR

It IS the most wonderful time of the year! Thank you to all of our volunteers, partners, and donors for your support in 2017! Because of you – and citizens before you – United Way has provided funding to improve the health, education, and financial stability of our neighbors for 61 years!

We have had an exciting campaign filled with the best volunteers! Our campaign chairs, Charlie and Leigh Black, have worked tirelessly in their efforts to change the stories of families in the Big Country! Through our Loaned Executives, workplace campaigns, individuals, and special events we have had fun while raising much-needed funds. Accolades are due to our participants in No Shave November, Giving Tuesday, and our Business Blitz. A special thank you to Rob Goodenough, Wylie Junior High Principal, for winning No Shave November 2017! Giving Tuesday was a success due to generous support and matching gifts from Happy State Bank, Sylvan Learning Center, Rentech, and Loan Star Title! And finally, Deonna Galbraith led a STELLAR team who raised over \$15,000 during our Business Blitz!!! We are very blessed!

In a world that can seem overcome with problems, United Way works with 27 partner agencies offering solutions for social change that are needed now more than ever. This newsletter serves as an invitation to learn more about who we are and how, together, we can make a difference in the lives and communities of Abilene and the Big Country.

If you're interested in learning more about the value we provide, or how you can support our efforts, I'd be happy to sit down and discuss the possibilities.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and yours!

*Cathy*

Cathy Ashby  
President & CEO  
United Way of Abilene



Above: Campaign Chairman Charlie Black presents Marelyn Shedd and First Financial Bank with a Cornerstone Award at the United Way Campaign Kickoff.



Above: Suzanne Wooten, Deonna Galbraith, and Jean Goodnight accept the Platinum Record for winning the Battle of the Bands Business Blitz.

## SAVE THE DATE!

United Way of Abilene  
Annual Meeting  
February 13, 2018

Key City Rhythm & Blues Festival  
April 27 - 28, 2018



## Abilene Lends Beards to United Way

You may have seen a few extra beards around Abilene during the month of November. More than 37 individuals and groups participated in United Way of Abilene's No Shave November campaign. This was the second year for United Way to ask the community to lend their beards to the organization.

No Shave November participants asked their friends, family, and coworkers to contribute to the month long campaign as they grew beards for the cause. The campaign also allowed for friendly competition between crosstown men's basketball rivals McMurry University and Hardin-Simmons University.

This year's No Shave November campaign raised more than \$16,000 for the annual United Way of Abilene campaign. Nine awards were presented at the end of the campaign to recognize and thank top participants.

- The Whisker Reward (Top Fundraiser) - Rob Goodenough
- Most Valuable Beard - David Christianson
- Beard of the Year - Dr. David Young
- The Platinum Trophy - Scott Dueser
- Shoulda Shaved November - Greg Jaklewicz
- The Baby Face Award - Cameron Rinard
- Bevy of Beards - Hanner Chevrolet GMC
- Shaving the Best for Last - Kevin Wellborn
- Battle of the Beards - McMurry Men's Basketball

Thank you to Lonestar Dry Goods (Ted Evans) and Janice Smith for providing special gifts to all of our 2017 No Shave November participants!



Above: No Shave November participants Emilio Archuleta, Rob Goodenough, David Christianson, Tom Ambrose, Phil Ashby, Dr. David Young, Greg Wilson, Lon Biebighauser, and Kevin Wellborn

## Thank you #GivingTuesday match sponsors!





# WAYS TO LIVE UNITED IN 2018:

## 1. Volunteer

Share your time and talents with an agency in our community. Many agencies need volunteers to work on ongoing and one time projects.

## 2. Pay it Forward

Buy a cup of coffee or a meal for someone else.

## 3. Connect and Celebrate

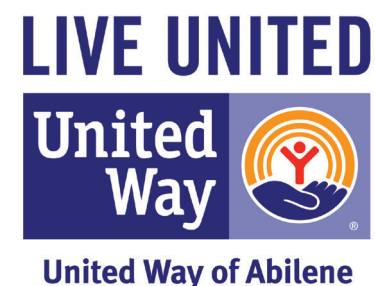
Attend our Annual Meeting on February 13 to meet new people and connect with community leaders.

## 4. Make a Donation

No time to volunteer? You can still make our community a better place by giving back financially. Gifts of any size, even \$5 or \$10 can change stories for people across our community.

## 5. Organize a Drive

Organize a drive for hygiene supplies, paper goods, or food at your workplace or church. Many agencies rely on donated items so that their budget can be used efficiently.



## UNITED WAY OF ABILENE HURRICANE HARVEY RESPONSE

On August 25, Hurricane Harvey made landfall in the state of Texas. The devastation created by both high winds and historic rains was unprecedented. As a designated Warm Center, our 2-1-1 Texas A Call for Help department was able to quickly ramp up services and coordinate volunteers for the phone corps.

Over a 12 day time period, 230 volunteers became members of the 2-1-1 Volunteer Phone Corp and contributed 1,830 volunteer hours to Hurricane Harvey response. Volunteers helped answer questions and locate resources for callers, coordinated shifts and meals, and provided behind the scenes support in stressful conditions. Almost 13,000 calls from Texans impacted by the Hurricane were handled during the 12 days.

Our hats are off to each of the 230 volunteers who answered the call, as well as the numerous companies and groups who provided resources in a time of need. We recently celebrated and thanked our Volunteer Phone Corps Superheroes. City of Abilene Mayor Pro Tem Shane Price proclaimed November 6, 2017 as Hurricane Harvey Superhero Day in Abilene during the celebration.



City of Abilene Mayor Pro Tem Shane Price presents 2-1-1 Texas A Call for Help Program Director Mary Cooksey with a proclamation.

## COMMUNITY IMPACT VOLUNTEERS REVIEW PROGRAMS

Each year, United Way of Abilene coordinates more than 60 volunteers to serve as Community Impact and Stewardship Review Team members. These volunteers review the program outcomes, efficiency, and management of applicant programs. This process ensures that your investment in United Way is used efficiently and effectively.



Community Impact Review Team members visit Abilene Hope Haven's Bridge 2 Home shelter.

Review team members learn about community needs, visit applicant programs, and have in-depth presentations with program leadership and participants. "The review process is integral to the work of United Way and our partners," said Staci Benavides, Community Investment Chair. "Our volunteers are focused on making wise investments in programs that make an impact for children, families, and senior citizens throughout our area."

For information on how to join a review team next year, please contact United Way of Abilene at 677-1841.

## YOUNG LEADERS SOCIETY DISHING UP GOOD

The United Way of Abilene Young Leaders Society assembled and donated 70 casserole meals to four Community Partner agencies this fall. The event, called Stone Soup, is based on the children's folktale concept of each person bringing an ingredient to prepare a meal for the community.

More than 20 Young Leaders Society members and their families worked to prepare the meals. "The United Way movement was founded on the idea that each person can give, advocate, and volunteer to improve conditions in our community and for neighbors," said Justin Crowe, Young Leaders Society Chairman. "Our Young Leaders group is focused to make a positive impact on local families and programs."



Justin Crowe, Reed Stafford, and Regi McCabe-Gossett volunteering during Stone Soup.



The Rogers family prepares chicken mac-n-cheese casserole during Stone Soup.

## AGENCY SUCCESS STORY MEET LORI



Over the last several years, Lori's story has changed dramatically. She had a job, friends, and was successful. However, she began to spiral out of control when drugs entered her life and she lost everything. As a result of her addiction, Lori went to jail. When she was denied parole, Lori knew it was time to face her challenges head-on. Lori spent time refocusing her life, studying, and getting back on track.

Following her release, Lori entered a transitional housing program in Abilene and found employment in a local restaurant. She began attending FaithWorks, a United Way of Abilene Community Partner. FaithWorks provided Lori with the structure, confidence, and skills to help get her back on track. "After graduation, I knew that FaithWorks had steered me back to where I was before my life spiraled. It gave me my confidence back," said Lori. "My story is not what I had originally planned, but I am thankful for a community that invests in changing stories." Lori now gives back to our community by serving as an AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) at United Way of Abilene.

## 2017 COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Abilene Hope Haven
- Adaptive Recreation Services
- Adult Protective Services Partners
- Alliance for Women & Children
- Alzheimer's Association
- Ben Richey Boys Ranch
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Big Country CASA
- Boy Scouts Texas Trails Council
- Boys & Girls Club
- Cancer Services Network
- Center for Contemporary Arts
- Communities in Schools
- Connecting Caring Communities
- Day Nursery of Abilene
- Dyess Youth Programs
- FaithWorks
- Girl Scouts Texas/Oklahoma Plains
- Hug-A-Root Family Farms
- MERCY Health Care Center
- Noah Project
- Presbyterian Medical Care Mission
- Regional Victim Crisis Center
- ResourceCare
- Southwestern Diabetic Foundation
- The Salvation Army
- YMCA of Abilene