

SERVING OUR COMMUNITY

HEALTH • EDUCATION • BASIC NEEDS



UNITED IS THE WAY

WE CREATE LASTING CHANGE

United Way brings communities together to find strength and share hope. It's the way we rally in hard times to meet people's needs so they can rise back up and build a better future.



Volunteer Leadership

Board of Directors

Cathy C. Coyle
Chair

Jason Healey
Vice-Chair

Kevin Sullivan
Treasurer

Nina Franklin
Secretary

Jim Hutchison
Past Chair

Gregg Cogswell

Alan Colavecchio

Gloria Hall

John N. Lavieri

Lance Leifert (*resigned mid 2024*)

David Oliver

Tony Ponte (*resigned mid 2024*)

Gabriel Sousa

Robert Teittinen

Greg Tonon

Jacque Williams

Executive Committee

Cathy C. Coyle

Jason Healey

Kevin Sullivan

Nina Franklin

Jim Hutchison

Lisa A. Ferris

Development/Campaign/ Committees – 2025

Campaign/Fundraising

Nina Franklin, *Chair*

Alan Colavecchio

Jason Healey

*Lance Leifert

Greg Tonon

Jacque Williams

Cathy C. Coyle

Lisa A. Ferris

Allocations/Citizens Review/ Agency Relations

David Oliver, *Chair*

*Deborah Bernard

*Christina Emery

*Jeanne Fusco

*Jeff Geddes

Gloria Hall

John N. Lavieri

Gabriel Sousa

Bob Teittinen

Cathy C. Coyle

Lisa A. Ferris

Admissions Committee

Cathy C. Coyle

Jason Healey

Kevin Sullivan

Nina Franklin

Jim Hutchison

Lisa A. Ferris, *Executive Director*

Finance – Ad-Hoc

Kevin Sullivan, *Chair*

Gregg Cogswell

Nina Franklin

*Frank Ramsey

Cathy C. Coyle *ex-officio*

Lisa A. Ferris *ex-officio*

Nominating

Jason Healey, *Chair*

John N. Lavieri

Cathy C. Coyle

Lisa A. Ferris

* *Non-Board Members*

Supporting Our Agency Partners:

2-1-1 • Canaan Child Care Center • Cornwall Child Center
Community Mental Health Affiliates' Northwest Center for Mental Health • Falls Village Day Care Center
FISH of Northwestern Connecticut • McCall Behavioral Health Network • Northwest CT YMCA
Pleasant Valley Day Care Center • Susan B. Anthony Project, Inc. • Winsted Area Child Care Center, Inc.

A Message from Our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

I am honored and deeply grateful for stepping into the role of Executive Director at United Way of Northwest Connecticut. This opportunity represents not only a professional milestone, but also a deep personal commitment to making a meaningful impact in our community.

I am incredibly fortunate to have the guidance and support of such an amazing Board of Directors. Their dedication and vision inspire me, and I look forward to working alongside the board to strengthen our organization and expand our reach. Together, we will ensure that United Way of Northwest Connecticut continues to be a beacon of hope and resilience for those we serve.

United is the way we rise. As we move forward, I am committed to fostering a strong, adaptable organization that addresses our community's most pressing needs. I am excited about the journey ahead and eager to collaborate with all of our partners, supporters and community members to make a lasting difference in the communities we live and work in.

Here's to a bright and impactful future for the United Way of Northwest Connecticut!

With gratitude,



Lisa Ferris
Executive Director



Our Incredible Volunteers

The United Way of Northwest Connecticut greatly benefits from the dedication of community members and board members who share a commitment to its mission. These volunteers generously contribute their time by assisting with various tasks such as office organization, administrative support, moving assistance, shopping with Warm the Children families, supporting Stock the Shelves initiatives, and weighing, sorting, and delivering food to the region's 12 food banks and pantries. Thank you for all you do for the organization.

Barbara Balnis	William G. Harding	Ashlynn Klein	Luz Rodriguez
Deborah Bernard	Jason Healey	John N. Lavieri	Anita Rosa
Kathy Broege	Rachael Hughes-	Lance Leifert	Dan Santoroso
Fran Chapell	McIntyre	Anna Lovetere	John Seagrave
Alan Colavecchio	Anne Gioia	Maura Malo	Kevin Sullivan
Mason Coudriet	Holly Groleau	Paul McLaughlin	Colleen Suppa
Cathy Coyle	Jodi Height	Abigail Nardine	Mary Sweeney
Deirdre DiCara	Shannon Heiland	Susan Nardine	Bob Teittinen
Zach Ferris	Jim Hutchison	Arielle Newkirk	Joelene Teittinen
Lisa Ferris	Jennifer Ives-Groebel	Doug O'Connell	Lauren Zordan
Jeannine Frink	Debby Kane	Catherine Pellino	
Jeff Geddes	Shanelle King	Lisa Pozucek	

Advisory Members

A small group of dedicated community members met with the Board to share their insights and hopes for the future of the United Way. Their recommendations were integrated into the organization's strategic goals. Special thanks to this group that includes: Jeannine Frink, William G. Harding, Brian Mattiello, Douglas O'Connell and Robert Teittinen.

2024 in Review

Organization Milestones and Highlights

January The Board welcomed new members, Jason Healey and Nina Franklin. Additionally, the Board engaged with United Way Partner Agencies to share updates on its goals and strategic direction.

February Efforts began to recruit and hire a new Executive Director to lead the organization into its next phase of supporting agencies and implementing programs tailored to community needs.

April/May A small group of dedicated community members met with the Board to share their insights and hopes for the future of the United Way. Their recommendations were integrated into the organization's strategic goals.

June/July The Board formed a search committee to identify, interview, and recommend candidates for the Executive Director position. Following a unanimous vote, Lisa A. Ferris was appointed as the new Executive Director.

August Lisa Ferris officially joined the United Way as Executive Director.

September The United Way relocated to its new office at Brooker Memorial's building on Litchfield Street in Torrington. Special gratitude was extended to Christina Emery, Executive Director of Brooker Memorial, and the Brooker Board of Managers for generously donating the space.

October The current Officers of the Board were elected. Special recognition was given to Jim Hutchison, who stepped down as Chair after four years of dedicated leadership. Jim will continue to serve on the Board as Immediate Past Chairman through 2025.

November Five new Board members were elected: Gregg Cogswell, Gloria Hall, David Oliver, Gabriel Sousa, and Robert Teittinen. The Board also expressed appreciation to Lance Leifert and Antonio Ponte for their years of service.

December United Way hosted a reception at Five Points Gallery, attended by over 60 donors and Partner Agency representatives. The event was sponsored by Torrington Savings Bank and Conquest.

Ongoing A revitalized corporate sponsorship program was launched, receiving enthusiastic support. By December, the organization secured four Premier Sponsors, two Gold Sponsors and three Silver Sponsors. (See page 7)

Financials

The financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2023 were reviewed by Barron & Company, LLP, CPAs and no significant findings were noted. The financials are available for review on the United Way website. A comprehensive audit will be conducted by Barron & Company, LLP, CPAs for the December 31, 2024 fiscal year.

Supporting Partner Agencies

Executive Director Lisa Ferris visited with our Partner Agencies, learning more about their programs and exploring new ways the United Way can support their work.

In November, the United Way made a special donation to Susan B. Anthony Project in honor of Executive Director Jeanne Fusco's retirement. Jeanne worked at SBAP for more than 30 years, 9 of them as executive director.



In December 2024, a community reception was held at Five Points Art Gallery, sponsored by Torrington Savings Bank and Conquest. A highlight of the event was a check presentation for the 10 United Way partner agencies in the amount of \$30,000.

At their December meeting, the Litchfield County Business Professionals generously donated \$250 to *Stock the Shelves*, a program of the United Way of Northwest Connecticut. The check was received by the program's founders, Jeff Geddes, John Seagrave and Lisa Ferris on behalf of the United Way.



The Rotarians' response to the call for turkeys and hams to be donated to FISH was both heartwarming and overwhelmingly successful. Their generosity exceeded the required amount by approximately \$200. Instead of refunding the surplus proportionally to each donor, a thoughtful executive decision was made to donate the extra funds to *Stock the Shelves* a program of the United Way of Northwest Connecticut.

Building Programs to Meet Needs



Stock the Shelves was adopted as a formal United Way program, continuing the excellent work done by its founders: Anita Rosa, Lisa Ferris, John Seagrave, Jeff Geddes and Lauren Zordan.

Students at St. John Paul the Great Academy collected 2,800 boxes of cereal which they generously donated to *Stock the Shelves*.

These donations were distributed to 12 food pantries across Northwest Connecticut, including:

Annex Co-op, The Community Kitchen of Torrington, Corner Pantry, FISH / Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern Connecticut, Inc., Friendly Hands Food Bank, Fishes & Loaves Food Pantry, Food for Thought, Goshen Food Bank, Hands of Grace, Norfolk Food Pantry, Thomaston Community Pantry and Open Door Soup Kitchen.



United Way assisted FISH with its annual *Rally to End Hunger and Homelessness* and *Coat Giveaway* in November. The event was held at St. John Paul the Great Church. Over 800 individuals were able to get coats, hats, gloves and other clothing to keep warm through the winter.



United Way supported the *Northwest CT Cold Weather Shelter* with collection drives by Eversource employees and by Woodridge Lake Association members. Also collected were new towels for use at the shelter at the United Way event that was held at Five Points Gallery in December.

A campaign was launched in collaboration with The United Way of Northwest Connecticut, FISH and the *Register Citizen* to support the *Warm the Children* initiative, successfully raising funds to provide warm clothing for 72 children referred by partner agencies. With the help of volunteer shoppers, these children selected new

winter outerwear, footwear, and clothing. Special appreciation goes to the Northwest CT Community Foundation for its generous \$5,000 contribution toward this program.

Becton Dickinson organized an in-house food drive to support *Stock the Shelves*, the United Way's latest program initiative. The donations benefited FISH (Friends in Service to Humanity of Northwestern Connecticut's Food Pantry) and Friendly Hands Food Bank.

Our agency partnered with United Way of Connecticut and EdAdvance to host a roundtable discussion highlighting the significance of the Child Tax Credit for local *ALICE* (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) families. During the event, families voiced their concerns and aspirations directly to legislative leaders.

Reaching into the Community

Lisa Ferris, Executive Director, gave presentations to the Salisbury Rotary Club, LABA, Eversource and Aquarian to share the mission and work of the United Way.



Our Sponsors

PREMIER Sponsors (to date)

EVERSOURCE



Northwest Community Bank
CollinsvilleBank *Litchfield Bancorp*
A Division of Northwest Community Bank A Division of Northwest Community Bank



*Northwest Hills
Credit Union*



TSB Torrington Savings Bank



GOLD Sponsors (to date)

Thomaston Savings Bank
Tzedakah House

SILVER Sponsors (to date)

Brooks, Todd & McNeil
T&M Building/Downtown Partners
Union Savings Bank

A Look Ahead

Strategic Goals

The board adopted five strategic goals that will guide its work over the next year and beyond. The goals are:

- **Re-establish Organizational Stability:** Prioritize rebuilding internal operations by ensuring that key leadership roles are filled, staff are supported, and governance structures are solidified. This includes enhancing board engagement and revisiting operational policies to align with post-pandemic realities.
- **Reconnect with the Community and Stakeholders:** Rebuild trust and engagement with the local community, donors, volunteers and stakeholders who may have become disengaged during the pause. Launch a targeted outreach campaign to communicate the organization's renewed mission and leadership, focusing on transparency and shared goals for the community's recovery.
- **Diversify and Increase Funding Sources:** Implement a strategic fundraising plan aimed at restoring and expanding funding streams. Focus on rebuilding relationships with existing donors, work place campaign partners and attracting new donors, while also exploring new revenue opportunities such as grants, corporate partnerships, and individual donations.
- **Address Critical Needs:** Ensure internal programs and agency allocations align with the most pressing needs in the community, including education, financial stability, and basic needs. Review agency allocations process for efficiency and sustainability. Support agencies and identify new ways to enhance their success.
- **Strengthen Volunteer and Community Engagement:** Rebuild a strong volunteer base by launching initiatives that encourage community participation and involvement in United Way programs. Organize events that emphasize the importance of local engagement, while also promoting the organization's new direction and leadership.

To Our Donors

The United Way of Northwest Connecticut extends its heartfelt gratitude to the many companies, individuals, and foundations who have stood by us in recent years as we navigate challenges and work towards rebuilding a stronger, more resilient organization. Your unwavering support has been a cornerstone of our efforts, empowering us to adapt, innovate, and continue making a meaningful difference in our communities. Together, we are forging a path towards a brighter future, united in purpose and driven by the shared commitment to improve lives and create lasting change.



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