



Leading the Way
July 2024

GET CONNECTED *with volunteer opportunities*

Summer 2024

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July 31-Aug 2 | Billings Public Schools Disaster Exercise 1pm - 6pm at West High School. We are in need of 50 volunteers for each day. |
| Aug 14 | Operation School Supply Drop off 10am - 2pm at United Way 2173 Overland Ave |
| Aug 19-21 | Backpack Distribution Volunteers are needed from 9am - 3pm to help students shop for school supplies, at United Way 2173 Overland Ave |
| Aug 22 | CARE Academy/Discover Zone Back to School BBQ
Volunteers are needed to help set up 4pm- 6pm, during 6pm- 8 pm and clean up from 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm |
| Sept 12 | CommUnity Rally- This is United Way's chance to say thank you to the great people of Yellowstone County. There will be Food Trucks, Live Music from Counting Coup, Lawn Games, Silent Auction, Soda and Beer |

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

unitedwayyellowstone.org



United Way
of Yellowstone County

Click here if you are interested in other great volunteer opportunities

Partner Agency Funding Boosted to \$300,000



United Way of Yellowstone County awarded **\$300,000** in grants to local non-profits on June 27, increasing support by \$75,000 compared to last year. These partner agencies are integral to combating poverty, improving access to education and resources, and providing mental health support – topics that are crucial for Yellowstone County amid continued inflation and wealth disparities.

Money will go to programs operated by 14 different local organizations. Each grant application was vetted by a section of UWYC's Community Impact Committee, totaling 30 local community members, then approved by UWYC's Board of Directors.

The following programs received funding. Click [**HERE**](#) for an explanation of each program:

Head Start, Inc., \$38,196: Literacy, language & lifelong success/conscious discipline implementation.

Billings Family YMCA, \$19,306: Educational components create school readiness preschool students.

Tumbleweed, \$10,000: Fostering enduring transformations that pave the way for brighter futures.

Young Families Early Head Start, \$20,000: Curriculum aids.

Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools, \$18,915: Mobile food program.

Friends of the Children – Eastern Montana, \$10,000: Investing in Billings' Youth: violent crime and gang prevention through relationship-based mentoring.

Special Olympics, \$10,000: Revitalization and engagement of Special Olympics Montana school age teams.

YWCA Billings, \$31,792: Crisis Stabilization for Victims of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking.

Veterans Navigation Network, \$20,000: Resource Counseling, Case Management & Timely Intervention to Prevent Crisis.

Family Service, \$20,000: Feed, Furnish, Fortify.

District 7 HRDC, \$25,000: Wheels for Work/Homeless prevention program.

CASA of Yellowstone County, \$10,000: Volunteer court-appointed special advocates for youth in foster care.

Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools, \$10,000: Family Resource Center.

Adult Resource Alliance, \$31,792: Senior Community Health Program.

Veterans Navigation Network, \$15,000: Helping our senior veterans and their families to thrive.

Setting Kids Up For Success



Summer is already flying by, and the school year will be here before we know it! Help ensure that every kid has the tools they need to succeed at school by participating in Operation School Supply!

This year, we've partnered with Mattress King; their stores will serve as drop-off sites for supplies, and on Aug. 14, we'll pack the bus at 2173 Overland Ave. Look for additional drop off sites and "pack the bus" sites through the summer! We partner with Family Service and the Education Foundation for Billings Public Schools to help kids get the supplies they need and to maximize the impact of your donation.

Why supply?

- Billings Public Schools consistently has about 600 student who identify as unhoused – and likely more who don't report their status.
- 40% of Billings Public School students qualify for free or reduced lunch
- Between 2021 and 2023, the average costs of school supplies rose 24%
- 94% of teachers surveyed nationwide spent their own money on school supplies for their students
- Most teachers spent between \$500 and \$700

The most needed items

- Headphones
- Disinfecting Wipes
- Boxes of Tissue

- Feminine hygiene products
- Spiral Notebooks (College & Wide-Ruled)
- Loose Leaf Paper (College & Wide-Ruled)
- Pencils
- Colored Pencils
- Crayons
- Liquid Glue and Glue Sticks
- Dry Erase Markers (Various Colors)
- Markers-Washable, Wide Tip

We will gladly accept all school supplies and hygiene items, but those listed above are the most requested.

For questions, please reach out to Chrissy at volcoord@uwyellowstone.org

Get Ready for the BEST BOGO Deal in Town!

Looking for the best deal for beer, wine, mocktails and coffee?



Purchase United Way of Yellowstone County's Beverage BOGO Discount Card!

Are you ready for an unbeatable summer adventure? The United Way Beverage Bingo BOGO Discount Card is back, and it's packed with 24 amazing deals at your favorite local spots!

For just \$25, you can sip, savor, and support an incredible cause. Kick off your summer in style on June 19 by purchasing your Beverage Bingo card at our Day of Action, or at Tiny's Tavern during the afterparty. Can't make it? No worries! You can snag your card online right now by clicking below.

These fantastic cards are valid from June 19 to September 12, 2024, giving you plenty of time this summer to enjoy all the Buy One, Get One goodness. Don't miss out — we've only got 500 cards and they're flying off the shelves!

Hurry and get your Beverage Bingo BOGO card today Enjoy great deals, have a blast, and support United Way's mission to improve lives and strengthen our community.

Purchase your BOGO card
HERE

BUY YOURS TODAY

unitedwayyellowstone.org/form/beverage-bingo



For just \$25, United Way of Yellowstone County's Beverage BOGO Discount Card gets you access to BOGO deals at the best bars, breweries, wineries and coffee houses throughout Yellowstone County.

Valued at over \$100, the Beverage Bingo Discount Card is perfect for summer gatherings, and you help a great cause!

Promotion runs June 19th through September 12th.

BEVERAGE BINGO

BINGO WITH BENEFITS

Our partners include:

- 406 Kitchen and Taproom
- Aloha Coffee
- American Legion
- Bar MT
- Breakfast Exchange Club
- Canyon Creek Brewing
- Carlton Depot
- Diamond X
- Hooligans
- Levity
- Magic City Casino
- Mazevo Coffee
- Meadowlark Brewing
- Montana Brewing Co.
- Palace Bar & Lanes
- Poly's Place Coffee
- Tap Inn
- The Den
- The Play Inn
- The Sapphire Lounge
- The Vig
- Thirsty Street Brewing
- Tiny's Tavern
- Yellowstone Cellars & Winery

Community Rally: A Great Sponsorship Opportunity

COMMUNITY RALLY

SAVE THE DATE!

United
Way



United Way
of Yellowstone County



ROCK THE
BLOCK!



- Thursday, September 12
- 4:00-7:00 PM
- 2173 Overland Ave

- Live Music from Counting Coup
- Food Trucks
- Lawn Games
- Soda and Beer

Scan for more info:



This is our chance to say "thank you" to our community! We'll have lawn games, food trucks, beverages, and live music from Counting Coup. Join us from 4-7 p.m. on Sept. 12 at our headquarters, 2173 Overland Ave. In addition to all the fun, we'll still have information available about community resources like 211, Bright by Text, and volunteer opportunities.

This is a great chance for business partners to join us in saying "thank you!" We have sponsorship opportunities that not only help us put on a fun event, but give businesses valuable exposure and help them build goodwill. We're also happy to accommodate individual sponsorships! Contact Klewis@uwyellowstone.org to learn more.

Day of Action



We marshalled about 200 volunteers to Dover Park on June 19 for United Way of Yellowstone County's annual Day of Action. It was our second year partnering with the Yellowstone River Parks Association to improve the park



in the Billings Heights. Volunteers removed invasive species, repaired fencing, improved trails, stained bridges, and more! We had 20 different businesses and organizations turn out to help.

Check out the Q2 News report on Day of Action [HERE](#)

Day of Action is a chance for us to flex our volunteer-mobilization muscles and make a major dent in a community project. At Dover, volunteers put in more than 500 hours of work -- the equivalent of almost \$17,000! That helps make real improvements to the Billings' Heights premier green space. In turn, better green spaces help improve public safety and the mental and physical health of their neighbors. Volunteers get great benefits too -- volunteering combats feelings of loneliness and depression, and getting outside is great for mental health.



Fish on! Kids tackle a new activity at Lake Elmo



More than 100 kids from United Way of Yellowstone County's CARE Academy and Discover Zone programs got the chance to fish at Lake Elmo on June 27. Some kids caught fish; some screeched at the sight of worms. All of the kids got a chance to revel in the outdoors and sunshine.

We couldn't have pulled off a trip like this without dozens of volunteers; thank you especially to the

Billings Chapter of Walleye's Unlimited for grilling up lunch, and to Catholic Heart Workcamp for helping kids rig their poles, learn to cast, and untangle lines.

Montana FWP provided some great guidance about how to have fun while fishing responsibly, plus some wildlife education. Altana Federal Credit Union provided cool ice cream on a warm day.

This wasn't just a trip about catching fish; kids learned about patience and conservation, and got a chance to build some confidence learning a new skill.



We saw some great community interest in the event. Check out a report from Non-Stop Local News [HERE](#) and a photo from the Billings Gazette [HERE](#).

If you're interested in volunteering in future CARE Academy and Discover Zone events, contact Michelle at ostdirector@uwyellowstone.org.

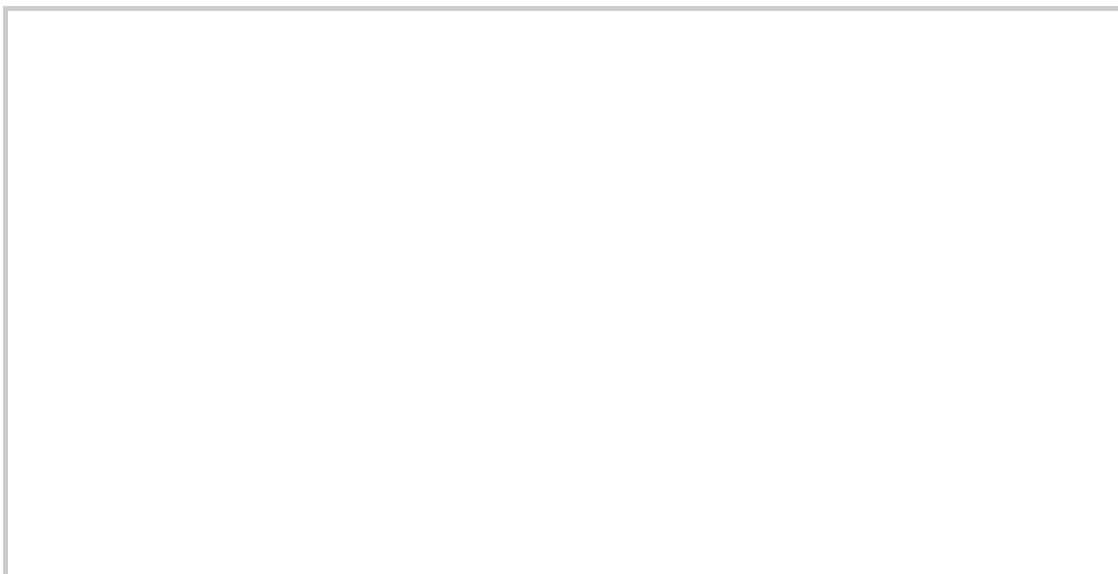
Did you know?

United Way of Yellowstone County is listed in Healthy By Design's Worksite Wellness Toolkit! We got a shout out for promoting employee health through staff wellness surveys that inform an educational platform that supports and educates employees about health and wellness.



The Toolkit features great local examples of how workplaces can promote a healthy work-life balance and -- like Healthy By Design's mission -- help make the healthy choice the easy choice. Only 49% of people report having a good work-life balance. See the toolkit [HERE](#).

Sponsorship spotlight: CHS sponsors Laurel CARE Academy





We celebrated CHS' new sponsorship of our Laurel CARE Academy site with a ribbon cutting on July 1. Our out-of-school-time programs provide care and educational opportunities for more than 300 kids during the school year, and about 130 in the summer at sites across Yellowstone County. CHS' sponsorship of Laurel's site is a seamless fit; reliable child care helps keep parents in the local workforce, boosting our local economy. Thank you CHS!

[Click here for more information about sponsorship opportunities!](#)

Juneteenth Annual Festival



The Juneteenth festival at South Park was a day filled with joy, creativity, and community spirit. We hosted a booth for decorating kindness rocks, where attendees of all ages joined in to paint and spread messages of positivity.

United Way of Yellowstone County (UWYC) also had the opportunity to share valuable resources with festival-goers. It was a fantastic chance for us to connect with the community, provide support, and engage in meaningful conversations. Thank you to everyone who participated!

Partner Agency Spotlight



Young Families Early Head Start (YFEHS) has been providing high quality childcare since 1983. What began as a program for teen parents and their babies has expanded to provide care for all children birth to five years. YFEHS also offers services to qualifying pregnant women and can continue serving their babies once they are born.

Through funding from United Way of Yellowstone County, YFEHS will be investing in new curriculum materials and additional teacher training programs, resulting in higher quality instruction and care for kids. UWYC values this partnership and looks forward to continuing to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

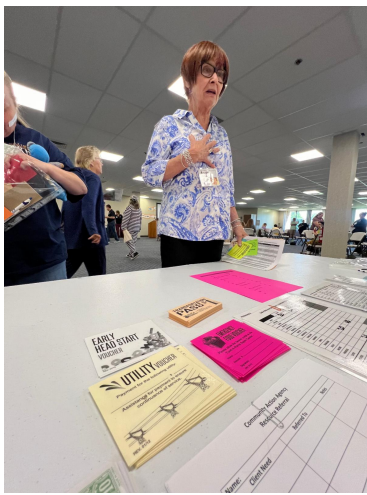
History Lesson

The Highland Elementary CARE Academy program learned about a formative event in the American West last month -- The Battle of Little Bighorn. The group took a field trip to the battlefield to learn more about the history of the site.

CARE Academy and Discover Zone summer programs provide education and child care for about 130 kids. In addition to fighting the summer slide, a period of learning loss when school's out, programs like this are critical to helping parents stay in Yellowstone County's workforce.



Providing a window into poverty



Poverty simulation provides chance to live challenges

About 30 people from HRDC7 and Young Families Early Head Start attended a poverty simulation at United Way of Yellowstone County's headquarters on June 25. The event offers a window into some of the hard choices that poverty forces; participants have to navigate a simulation of challenges posed by employment, transportation, healthcare, finances, child care, housing, and more, coping with good and bad luck along the way. A four week timeline is compressed into an hour. The experience is designed to fostering empathy and understanding that can drive meaningful change.

Participants shared the following after the simulation:

- "I'm just sitting there and watching my family drown, and there's nothing I can do to help."
- "We're all sitting here frustrated."
- "It gave me a little more compassion."
- "It's just easy for us to say, 'just do this,' but really that's not realistic."
- "Oh, and I just thought I was getting ahead."
- "I'm trying to take care of all the basic needs...you do feel really helpless."

Volunteer for future Poverty Simulations

Volunteers are essential to this event. You'll operate community agencies within the simulation, helping to build a realistic environment that highlights the daily struggles of those living in poverty. Your role is crucial in creating a transformative experience for participants.

How to Sign-Up

Click [HERE](#) to sign-up for the August 13th poverty simulation from 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

Click [HERE](#) to sign-up for the August 27th poverty simulation from 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

For any questions or additional information, please reach out to Maia Dickerson:

mdickerson@uwyellowstone.org or 406-272-8506



**Get Ready to Rally:
Rock the block with us on September 12**

COMMUNITY RALLY

SAVE THE DATE!

United
Way



United Way
of Yellowstone County



- Thursday, September 12
- 4:00-7:00 PM
- 2173 Overland Ave

- Live Music from Counting Coup
- Food Trucks
- Lawn Games
- Soda and Beer

Scan for more info:



Add event to calendar

[Apple](#) • [Google](#) • [Office 365](#) • [Outlook Web](#) • [Outlook](#) • [Yahoo](#)

Local event spotlight

DISABILITY PRIDE FORUM

There will be panelists that live with disabilities as well as community members that can make change!

Moderated by former Billings City Councilwoman Penny Ronning

July 29th 2:30-4:30
Billings Public Library
Pint Night to follow at Thirsty
Street

Thank You and Hello: New Board Members

United Way of Yellowstone County (UWYC) will welcome four new board members in July as three community members end their term. We welcome:

Janet Hardy: Janet will be resuming a familiar role; she previously served on the Board of Directors for the United Way chapter in Bartlesville, OK. Janet, who directs communications for Phillips 66 in Billings, brings 16 years of experience with Phillips 66 from across the nation.

Tyler Nash: Tyler will bring a new jolt to UWYC. Tyler co-founded Mazevo Coffee, a favorite spot for staff fuel-ups. In addition to his business experience, Tyler has volunteered with the Exchange Club and Mazevo's own outreach efforts.

JJ Carmody: JJ has already played a critical role in local organizations, and is bringing that experience to UWYC. JJ currently serves as Billings Clinic's Director of Health Policy, and has

a sophisticated understanding of business finances. She's volunteered with several local organizations, including serving on UWYC's Impact Committee.

Dominic Neameyer: Dominic knows how to help build on success. He comes to the UWYC board as a project engineer for Sanderson Stewart and is pushing into the local real estate market. Dominic has volunteered for his office's efforts on UWYC initiatives like Operation School Supply and Stuff the Sleigh.

We thank the following outgoing board members for their service:

Shawn Hinz, who has served on the UWYC board since 2018 and been involved in other roles for more than 15 years. Shawn served as the Impact Committee Chair, and previously retired from a 30-year career in public health at RiverStone Health in 2021.

Jesse McKee, an Operations Manager for Phillips 66, joined the UWYC board in 2023.

Craig Burke, the Vice President and owner of Entre Technology Services, joined the UWYC board in 2021.

If you are looking for a way to give back and make a difference in Yellowstone County, consider becoming a board or committee member. United Way of Yellowstone County provides an opportunity to use an analytical-mindset to build a stronger community, especially for our most vulnerable. Board members set the tone for UWYC, steering us toward sustainability and a bright future. Our board is a great place to make connections across the community, and to build skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and budgeting. To learn more, visit: <https://www.unitedwayyellowstone.org/volunteer>



Our team is growing!

This spring we welcomed Matt Hoffman to the United Way of Yellowstone County team as our new marketing coordinator! This is a new position for UWYC, as marketing was identified as an area of need in several recent analysis. With better community awareness, UWYC hopes to recruit more volunteers, fundraise more effectively, and better connect people to services.

Matt previously worked for a decade in print journalism and also has experience in education and sales. He's lived in Billings for almost 10 years. When he's not planning UWYC social media posts or writing newsletters, Matt enjoys hiking and fishing in the Beartooth Mountains, especially with his wife and daughter. He looks forward to shining a light on UWYC's work while continuing to chase high-elevation trout.

Monthly Honor Roll

Thank you to the following donors for contributing to improving lives through health, education, and crisis stabilization for those in Yellowstone County.

Cheryl Ash
Associated Food Stores
Carol L. Atchison
Michael K. Baker
Marquice Barnett
Eliza Bayliss
Michael D. Bertram
Shaun Biggerstaff
Karsen Binstock
Brooke Bloomenrader
Jeffrey Bolton
Stephanie Bond
Cory Bruce
Howard Butler
Billings Community
Foundation
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Michael Card
Frank Casasola
Christopher A. Castillo
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Troy Taylor
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Raymond Viceral
Liza Webb
Tracie Welliver

Want to see your name here? Donate below!

DONATE

**United Way of
Yellowstone County**



United Way of Yellowstone County

406.252.3839

www.uwyellowstone.org

2173 Overland Ave, Billings, MT 59102

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