

# UNITED IS THE WAY

2023-2024 Annual Report



**UNITED WAY**  
Frederick County

# WE ARE MOVING FORWARD UNITED

## Letter from Keith & Ken

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with immense pride and gratitude for the incredible progress we have made together. Despite the ever-evolving challenges our ALICE community faces daily, United Way of Frederick County has remained steadfast in serving our community with determination and innovation, fulfilling our mission of mobilizing the caring power of our whole community to improve lives in ways that have truly made a lasting impact.

This year, we reached new milestones that illustrate the power of collaboration and commitment. Thanks to your unwavering support, we were able to:


- **Launch the Internet Access Initiative**, which has provided 5,000 ALICE households with a new Chromebook to increase their access to telehealth, career advancement opportunities, online learning, and more.
- **Achieve the largest 12-month Unity Campaign in its 10-year history**, raising nearly \$650,000 in support of 35 nonprofit organizations making a difference in the lives of our ALICE neighbors.
- **Return over \$1.1 million to our community** through 673 tax returns, completed free of charge through our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.
- **Support more than 3,000 students** by providing the essential supplies they need for a successful school year through Stuff the Bus.
- **Provide over 14,000 free or discounted rides** to access critical needs like work, school, doctor's appointments, and more.

As we look ahead, we know there is still much work to be done. The challenges facing our community are real and evolving, but so is our commitment to addressing them. In the coming year, we will build on the foundation we have laid, deepen our impact, and continue to advocate for the **33,000+ households in our community who cannot afford to live here.**

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners. To our donors and supporters, your generosity is the lifeblood of this organization. To our board, your leadership and vision guide us toward an even brighter future. And to our ALICE community, thank you for trusting us to walk alongside you on your Pathway to Financial Stability.

Together, we are mobilizing the caring power of our whole community to improve lives. We are proud of what we have accomplished this year and look forward to all that we will achieve in the years to come.

Sincerely,



**Keith Harris,**  
Chair of the Board  
Frederick County  
Public Schools



**Ken Oldham,**  
President & CEO



# MOBILIZING THE CARING POWER OF OUR WHOLE COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE LIVES

We envision a community where all individuals and families achieve their potential through healthy lives, education, and financial stability.

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## What We Do

United Way of Frederick County brings people and institutions together to collectively build a strong, viable community. Our impact areas center on a healthy community, youth opportunity, financial security, and community resiliency, with our primary focus on increasing the financial stability of our local ALICE households.

## We Identify Local Needs

We tackle the issues. We lead programs that make a difference. We fund local nonprofits. We bring people together. We change lives for the better.

## Why We Do It

In Frederick County, over 33,000 hard-working households struggle to make ends meet. They are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE). With the basic

cost of living for a single individual at nearly \$49,000 in our community and prices of essential items increasing faster in a post-pandemic world, our ALICE neighbors are often faced with difficult choices between health care, food, child care, and transportation.

## How We Do It

This year, United Way of Frederick County generated \$4.2 million in community impact funding to help children, adults and families thrive. Whether it's through the Prosperity Savings Account programs, free tax preparation, budget coaching, free or reduced cost rides, or increased access to technology, United Way of Frederick County helps families and individuals obtain the knowledge and resources they need to improve their lives.





# SARAH'S JOURNEY TO FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

As an ALICE household, Sarah has encountered significant challenges in her journey for financial independence. However, United Way of Frederick County's Prosperity Center has been a crucial source of support and empowerment for her.

Through the Prosperity Center's Pathway to Transportation program, Sarah was able to purchase a car. This key assistance not only enabled her to secure stable employment but also improved her quality of life by eliminating transportation barriers that previously strained her relationship with her son. The new car facilitated not just job stability but also strengthened her family bond.

Additionally, Sarah took full advantage of the free budget coaching and credit counseling offered at the Prosperity Center. With these resources, she gained valuable financial management skills that have allowed her to navigate her

journey toward financial stability with confidence and determination.

The impact of these programs on Sarah's life has been substantial. She has secured a fulfilling job, and the elimination of transportation barriers, combined with newfound budgeting and credit skills, has filled her life with hope and optimism. The practical support and financial education provided by United Way have laid the foundation for a brighter future for Sarah.

Sarah's story is one of gratitude and resilience. As she continues to advance toward financial independence, she is dedicated to advocating for a more equitable community where opportunities are accessible to all. With the support from United Way, her newly acquired financial skills, and her new car, Sarah is well-equipped to overcome future challenges and achieve her goals.





# IMPACTING ALICE BY INVESTING \$4.2 MILLION IN FREDERICK COUNTY IN 2023-2024

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## Day of Action

Day of Action is one of the largest single-day volunteer events in Frederick County, taking place every October. On October 6, 2023, 280 volunteers took part in 32 service projects, totaling **2,240 volunteer hours**. New in 2023, three projects supported graduates from United Way's Pathway to Homeownership program with home renovation and beautification efforts. United Way also hosted a donation drop-off for urgently needed items, ranging from diapers to dish soap, to benefit several local nonprofits that provide critical services for ALICE households.

## Stuff the Bus

Each year, United Way of Frederick County works with local partners to collect donations of school supplies to provide students with the supplies they need to start the school year. In 2023, more than 250 bins of new, unused school supplies were collected from 75 local businesses and thousands of items were purchased from individual donor gifts, totaling \$11,750. **An estimated 193,558 items valued at \$66,231 were distributed to Frederick County Public Schools students.**

## VITA

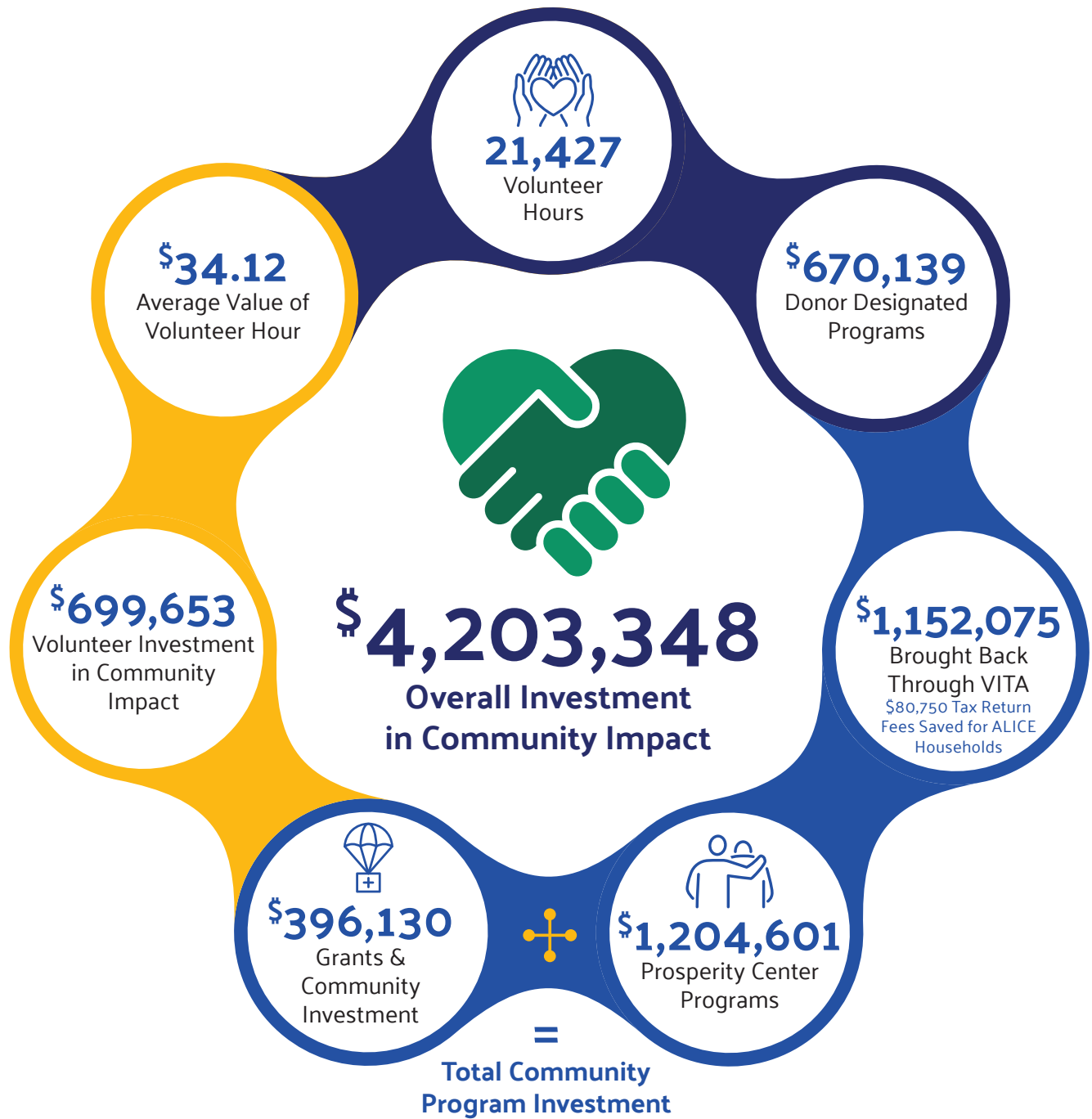
The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers FREE basic tax return preparation for local ALICE households. During the 2024 tax season, VITA volunteers filed 673 tax returns, **returning \$1,152,075 to the community** and saving ALICE households \$80,750 in tax return fees. Thanks to our incredible volunteer IRS-Certified Advance Tax Preparers for their hard work to make this possible!

## Internet Access Initiative

United Way of Frederick County is helping close the digital divide in our community. Through a grant provided by Frederick County Government and the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development, we are proud to provide technology and broadband access to those who need it by **distributing 5,000 Chromebooks to eligible ALICE families, a value of \$990,000**. Of the recipients, 82% did not have a computer in their home before this program and are now able to better access telehealth, remote work, online learning, and more.

## Summer Serve

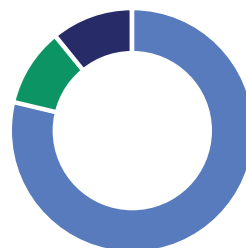
Summer Serve, a YMCA & United Way of Frederick County Partnership, is a summer camp providing local youth ages 12-17 with the opportunity to awaken their inner leader, build their teamwork skills, and meet like-minded peers while creating positive change in their community. Summer Serve is a remarkable tradition of educating our community's youth about life-enriching opportunities to help those in need in Frederick County.



United Way of Frederick County turns every \$1 invested by contributors into \$7.35 in direct community impact.



INCOME	
16.95%	Campaign and Donor Support
24.07%	Special Campaigns (Unity & Direct Response)
23.04%	Grant Income
1.93%	Special Events and Sponsorships
34.01%	In-Kind Gifts



EXPENSES	
78.73%	Programs/Designations/Grants
10.39%	Fundraising
10.88%	Administration

# IDENTIFYING NEEDS: OUR ADVOCACY INITIATIVES



## Equitable Access to Transportation

Transportation is the critical link between home and work, health appointments, educational opportunities, and so many other basic needs. In Frederick County, approximately 28% of ALICE families do not have access to private transportation.



## Access to Services for Veterans and Those Who Have Served our Nation

UWFC supports initiatives for those who have served, regardless of age, race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, etc.



## Access to Healthcare and Vaccines

We support legislation for ongoing and improved access to healthcare services and systems, including all immunizations for all ages, continued access to COVID vaccines, testing, and at-home test kits, and the development of new healthcare services and systems.



## Digital Inclusion

We support policies and legislation that provides ALICE families with access to high-speed internet, implementation of programs and partnerships to expand digital literacy and digital opportunities, and additional federal, state, and local governmental funding to completely eliminate the digital divide.



## Expanded Affordable Housing

UWFC encourages local government to increase funding and investment to first-time homeownership funds and work with programs like UWFC's Pathway to Homeownership. With funds that have accumulated in the City of Frederick and Frederick County, there is a significant opportunity to provide affordable housing.



# VOLUNTEERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Lindsey Hausler

Lindsey Hausler exemplifies the spirit of community service, making volunteering a core part of her family life. Her dedication spans numerous causes, including United Way campaigns like Stuff the Bus and Day of Action, as well as support for Wreaths Across America, The Ronald McDonald House, Comfort Cases, Blessings in a Backpack, and First Fruit Farms.

Volunteering is more than just an activity for Lindsey—it's a family tradition. Her daughters, inspired by this commitment, founded Sisters for Hope and earned Gold Presidential Service Awards for their efforts. For Lindsey, volunteering strengthens family bonds, teaches valuable lessons in kindness and community, and offers a meaningful way to step away from daily stress.

Lindsey's approach highlights how volunteering can profoundly impact both the community and family life, demonstrating that giving back enriches everyone involved.



## Ginger Jacobson

Since joining the AstraZeneca Frederick Manufacturing Center team in 2022, Ginger has made a remarkable impact through her dedication and leadership in community service initiatives like Stuff the Bus and Day of Action.

In just two years, Ginger has coordinated an impressive 236 volunteers for Day of Action events in 2022 and 2023, leading to the successful completion of 28 projects that have benefited our community. These efforts have amassed nearly 1,888 volunteer hours, showcasing her commitment to fostering a culture of service at AstraZeneca.

Each year, Ginger takes the initiative to engage the summer interns, empowering them to take ownership of the Stuff the Bus campaign. Her approach not only encourages school supply donations but also cultivates a sense of responsibility and teamwork among the interns.

With a background in fundraising, Ginger understands the vital role that volunteers and corporate partners play in driving success. As the Communications Lead at AZ FMC, she continues to inspire others to get involved, reinforcing the positive impact of collective efforts in our community.



# THE PROSPERITY CENTER

The Prosperity Center improves lives by creating a one-stop resource for individuals and families to improve financial knowledge, skills, and stability. Prosperity Center programs create Pathways to Financial Stability for local ALICE households, which make up 32% of our community.

## Pathway to Homeownership

Households can open a Homebuyer Savings Account and earn more than \$4 for every \$1 they save, allowing them to put a total of \$17,000 toward buying a home, and achieve their goal of first-time homeownership.

## Pathway to Transportation

Households can gain independence by investing in their own private transportation. A household can open a Car Program Savings Account and save a portion of the total expense of a vehicle. After completing the program, in partnership with Second Chances Garage, households will purchase their own safe, reliable vehicle.

## Free Credit Counseling

Households can attend a Credit Café, get a free credit score and report, and review it with an advisor. They can learn how to build and maintain a good credit score.

## Free Budget Coaching

Households can improve their money habits to build a better future for their families. Working for a year with a free budget coach, they can learn how to track expenses, pay down debt and increase savings.

## VITA: Free Tax Preparation

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offers FREE basic tax return preparation for qualified individuals. Utilizing the VITA program allows ALICE households to maximize their tax returns, keeping more of their hard-earned money in-hand to achieve their next financial goal.

## Ride United Network (RUN)

RUN is an initiative to overcome transportation barriers in Frederick County. This rideshare program offers free or discounted rides to ALICE individuals and families not served by public transportation, as well as those most vulnerable seeking services from the nonprofit community and veterans. In addition to the rideshare program, RUN harnesses flexible transportation options from partner agencies to fill critical service gaps for seniors, youth, rural trips, and mitigating impaired driving.

## Internet Access Initiative

Through a grant provided by Frederick County Government and the Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development, eligible ALICE families are able to receive one Chromebook per households to increase technology access. This allows ALICE families greater access to online learning, remote work, telehealth appointments, and more.

**This year, seven Prosperity savers graduated, 12 savers began our matched savings programs, and 32 savers continued their journey to begin a better life.**

The Prosperity Center is a partnership between United Way of Frederick County and a number of funders and local nonprofit partners.

United Way of Frederick County's Prosperity Center plays a unique role in providing financial stability for our most vulnerable neighbors. We believe that health, education, and financial stability are key to the well-being of ALICE households in Frederick County as they work towards achieving their full potential.



# INTERNET ACCESS INITIATIVE

**We are proud to announce the successful distribution of 5,000 Chromebooks to ALICE individuals, marking a significant step toward equal access to technology and the internet.**

The Internet Access Initiative, a partnership with the State of Maryland and Frederick County Government, aims to address digital inequality by providing technology and broadband access to underserved households. Before the initiative, 82% of recipients lacked a home computer, limiting career, education, and telehealth opportunities.

## Impact and Reach

Our initiative has made a substantial impact in the community:

- **Chromebooks Distributed:** 5,000 brand-new Chromebooks have been provided to ALICE individuals, facilitating access to crucial digital resources.
- **Community Reach:** The program has reached approximately 5% of households in Frederick County, making significant strides towards bridging the digital divide.
- **Value of Distributed Technology:** The total value of the Chromebooks distributed is nearly \$1 million, underscoring the substantial investment in enhancing technology access for underserved populations.

## Partnerships and Support

The success of the Internet Access Initiative is a direct result of the collaboration and support from various stakeholders:

- **Frederick County Government and Maryland State Department of Housing and Community Development:** We extend our heartfelt gratitude to these organizations for making this program possible. Frederick County Government not only played a role in the funding, but has also provided space in their libraries and county buildings for distributions. They've also sent numerous volunteers to assist in distributing the computers.
- **DALY Computers** provided all of the Chromebook devices and worked diligently to make sure that they arrived in a timely fashion.
- **The City of Frederick** provided storage space for the computers in addition to providing volunteers for the distributions and spreading the word with eligible families through the Department of Housing & Human Services and other programs.

We also extend our gratitude to our dedicated volunteers who organized events, offered technical support, and handled logistics, making this program a success.



# CELEBRATING VOLUNTEERS AND SUPPORTERS

**BRAVO!** is an annual event that honors volunteers, supporters, and advocates for their dedication to improving health, education, and financial stability in Frederick County, focusing on ALICE households. On June 25, 2024, the community gathered at The Delaplaine Arts Center to celebrate this year's awardees supporting local ALICE families.

## **Spirit of Community Award: Plamondon Companies**

This award recognizes organizations that foster employee philanthropy to create lasting community impact. For over 40 years, Plamondon Companies has embraced community involvement through their United Way workplace giving campaign. Each fall, they engage employees across their restaurants and hotels to support ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) neighbors through fun campaigns. This year's efforts raised nearly \$40,000 to help struggling households.

## **Outstanding Volunteer Award: Phoenix Mecano**

This award honors those who go above and beyond to serve their community. Since 2022, the Phoenix Mecano team has been dedicated to volunteerism. Each year, about 30 team members participate in service projects benefiting local nonprofits and ALICE households. Living up to their "PM Cares" initiative, they also host drives like Stuff the Bus. Their commitment to passing on these values is evident in employees' children participating at Day of Action events.

## **Digital Inclusion Advocacy Award: The City of Frederick, Frederick County Government, DALY Computers**

This award recognizes community partners addressing critical needs. Since Fall 2023, United Way of Frederick County has distributed 5,000 Chromebooks to support ALICE households, nonprofits, students, and individuals in sober living. This initiative was made possible through collaboration with The City of Frederick, Frederick County Government, and DALY Computers, who provided funding, devices, and storage to help close the digital divide.

## **ALICE Community Leadership Award: Shinea Weedon**

This award honors an individual who exemplifies leadership and advocacy for ALICE households. A graduate of the Pathway to Homeownership program, Shinea overcame six years of challenges to purchase her home. Now, she serves as a Co-Facilitator for Getting Ahead cohorts, helping ALICE individuals understand their circumstances and build resources. By sharing her story, Shinea is a true advocate for our ALICE neighbors.







# RESILIENCE AND A VISION FOR THE FUTURE AGAINST ALL ODDS

The most pressing issues for Mohammad revolve around his daughters' health and the financial strain it places on the family. With a current job at Walmart working the night shift, he finds that his income is insufficient to meet their basic needs, leading to constant worry about their well-being and financial stability. Moreover, his limited work experience and unfamiliarity with the American job market has hindered his ability to find better employment opportunities.

Seeking help, Mohammad turned to the United Way of Frederick County. He enrolled in the Pathway to Transportation Program, which provided crucial support through transportation assistance. This program allowed him to commute to work more easily, alleviating some of the stress he faced. Mohammad also accessed valuable

resources, such as budget coaching and Credit Café. These programs offered him essential skills to manage his finances and improve his understanding of the local economy.

Since participating in UWFC's programs, Mohammad has seen significant changes in his life. With the transportation support, he now has reliable access to work and the ability to manage his family's medical appointments. This newfound stability has brought joy and relief to his household, allowing him to focus more on his daughters' health and his family's overall well-being.

Mohammad envisions a community where families like his can achieve financial self-sufficiency through targeted programs that offer job training, language skills, and cultural orientation. He believes that enhancing financial stability is key to reducing stress and creating a peaceful life for families in the community.

**Today, Mohammad is grateful for the support he received from UWFC, which has empowered him to improve his family's circumstances. He remains hopeful for a future where he can secure a better job and continue to provide for his daughters' medical needs, proving that resilience and community support can lead to success against all odds.**



# UNITY CAMPAIGN 2024

The Unity Campaign is a collaborative project between nonprofits, sponsors, and the greater Frederick community to support our most vulnerable neighbors.

In 2024, the 10th annual Unity Campaign raised nearly \$650,000 from more than 1,400 donors in support of 35 local organizations, each working to address critical needs for ALICE households. This year's Unity Campaign was the highest 12-month campaign in its history, showing the unwavering dedication of our community to support our neighbors in need.



Photo Courtesy of Girls on the Run of Mid & Western Maryland

## 2024 Participating Nonprofits

Advocates for Homeless Families  
American Red Cross serving  
Howard, Montgomery,  
and Frederick Counties  
Asian American Center of Frederick  
Blessings in a Backpack  
Boys & Girls Club of Frederick  
County  
Care Net Pregnancy Center of  
Frederick  
Children of Incarcerated Parents  
Partnership  
City Youth Matrix  
Farm to School Frederick  
Frederick Community College  
Foundation – Parents Lead Program

Friends for Neighborhood Progress  
Girls on the Run of Mid & Western  
Maryland  
Helping Hands and Caring Hearts  
Housing Frederick  
Hurwitz Breast Cancer Fund  
I Believe in Me  
Interfaith Housing Alliance  
Justice Jobs of Maryland (Global  
Necessity)  
L'Arche Frederick Maryland  
Literacy Council of Frederick County  
Living Well Youth Works  
Love for Lochlin Foundation  
Maryland Ensemble Theatre  
Partners in Care Maryland

Platoon 22  
Second Chances Garage  
SOAR, Supporting Older Adults  
through Resources  
Society of St. Vincent de Paul –  
St. John Conference  
SOUL Street  
The Arc of Frederick County  
The Frederick Center  
The Ranch  
United Way of Frederick County  
Woman to Woman Mentoring  
YMCA of Frederick County



# A BUSINESS COMMUNITY THAT CARES

We are grateful for the individuals, businesses, and organizations at the heart of making change happen in Frederick County.

## LEADERS COMING TOGETHER TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE CHANGE IN FREDERICK COUNTY

LEADERS UNITED members recognize the importance of advancing initiatives like Pathways to Financial Stability and help do so through an annual contribution of \$1,000 or more.

Keith & Alma Aaron  
John Abbott  
John & Claudia Allemang  
John Allender  
Anonymous Donor  
Anonymous Donor  
Joseph D. Baker Fund  
Lori Beaudoin  
John Bohman  
Scott & Karen Borgsmiller  
Michael Braithwaite  
Jeffry & Kathleen Brightman  
Barbara Brookmyer  
Margaret Bruckart  
Lance Camarote  
Jennifer Cerrito

Daniel Chwirut  
Mary Virginia Chwirut  
James & Amy Clapp  
Family Fund  
Nicholas Clark  
Carla Clarke  
Lisa Coblentz  
Paul Dabisch  
Gabriella Damiano  
Lucille Davis  
H.Deets and Jaunita Warfield  
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Stephen Heine  
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James Plamondon  
Thomas Ramsay  
Ruth Randall  
Jeannine Ranniger  
Jim & Yvonne Reinsch  
Shirley Richardson  
Lou Schaab  
Ruth Sayler & Karen Small  
Michael & Marlene Young  
Sharon Kalbarczyk & Sam Zigler

### **Corporate Triple Crown**

Outstanding Organizations who ran Workplace Campaigns, Gave Corporate Gifts (Direct Gifts, Sponsorships, and/or Gift Matching), and Volunteered.

Ausherman Family Foundation

CCC-Frederick City Gov't

CCC-Frederick County Gov't

First United Bank & Trust

ACNB Bank

LSWG

PNC Bank

The Plamondon Companies

### **2023 Leadership**

#### **Breakfast Sponsor**

PNC Bank

### **2023 Day of Action Sponsors**

AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals

Ausherman Family Foundation

ACNB Bank

First United Bank & Trust

Middletown Valley Bank

Nymeo Federal Credit Union

Patriot Federal Credit Union

Phoenix Mecano

Wegmans Food Markets, Inc.

### **2023 Stuff the Bus Sponsors**

ALDI, Inc.

Costco

Curious Iguana

Frederick National Laboratory for

Cancer Research

Homewood at Frederick

M&T Bank

Nathan Family Foundation

Pediatrics Urbana

PREIT Associates, L.P.

Rotary Club of Carroll Creek

### **2024 UNITY Campaign**

#### **Incentive Fund Sponsors**

Randall Charitable Trust

Delaplaine Foundation, Inc.

Ausherman Family Foundation

Natelli Communities

Frederick News Post

RAK Brewing

The Plamondon Companies -

Roy Rogers

### **In-kind Sponsors**

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Frederick News Post

HealthWell Foundation

Manning Media, Inc.

Marvatem Inc. dba/Manpower

Maryland Department of Housing and

Community Development Office

Renaissance Chef Catering

SADOS MSP, Inc.

Staples

Tax Slayer Pro Software

# **TOCQUEVILLE SOCIETY: LOCAL CHAMPIONS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE MISSION**

The Tocqueville Society recognizes local philanthropic leaders and volunteer champions who have devoted time, talent, and annual contributions of \$10,000 or more to create long-lasting positive change.

**George Delaplaine · Sharon Jacko · Alice Kolb, Trust  
Laszlo von Lazar · James Reese · Ryan Yu**



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