



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

David Taylor, President & CEO
United Way of McLean County
dtaylor@uwaymc.org

Corporate Giving Propels United Way's COVID Response Forward

BLOOMINGTON, IL (Monday, April 20, 2020) – Countless volunteers are working tirelessly to distribute food to thousands of Central Illinois families. The United Way of McLean County (UWMC) announced today that the community is demonstrating that they “have the backs” of those volunteers. Contributions from grants, local businesses, and private individuals to the COVID-19 Community Care Fund have now exceeded \$300,000.

Western Avenue Community Center Board President Mike Jones says the volunteers at his food distribution location for the Feeding BN & Beyond effort are working quickly, safely, and receiving many wonderful expressions of thanks for their efforts. “But, I also think about the fact that we are only 1 of 13 distribution sites in this effort and know feeding our communities families is a growing and daunting challenge,” he says. “I think there may be more demand and need the longer we are under shelter in place and social distancing orders.”

Local businesses have rallied behind United Way of McLean County's collaborative COVID-19 response efforts. Corporate sponsors have bolstered individual giving, bringing McLean County's aggregate total to over \$400,000 (including UWMC's \$100,000 initial investment along with the \$300,000 in community contributions) since launching the COVID-19 Community Care Fund on March 16.

The COVID-19 Community Care Fund was created to provide direct and immediate assistance to families in need. Since its launch in mid-March, the funds have been mobilized through a coordinated effort of over 20 organizations including schools, churches, businesses, and nonprofits. Over 18,400 evening meals have been distributed to families across McLean County. The sustained collaboration of this response is unprecedented.

Commitment to community well-being has been evident across all sectors. Corporate contributions from Meijer, Schnucks, Commerce Bank, and Exelon Foundation's Employee Giving Payroll Deduction Grant have continued to sustain the Community Care Fund. Most recently, State Farm Insurance, COUNTRY Financial, Afni, Homefield Energy, PLR Insurance, and Integrity Technology Solutions have joined in the effort. Combined, local businesses have donated over \$154,000.



Additionally, local organizations have gotten involved with the Funk Foundation, The Sunrise Rotary Club, Moses Montefiore Temple, Islamic Center of McLean County, BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Temple and several Indian American associations contributing over \$20,000 to Feeding BN & Beyond.

“The pandemic has created urgent food insecurity needs. State Farm is humbled to be able to help provide relief in our community,” said State Farm Senior Vice President Annette Martinez. “Now more than ever, being a good neighbor means stepping up to help. We encourage other companies and individuals to come together and support the Community Care Fund.”

Ron Greene, President and CEO of Afni, shared “We appreciate the teamwork being displayed in our community to address our local needs that are being magnified by COVID.”

“COVID-19 has impacted us all in various ways. McLean County is fortunate to have United Way coordinating a response to needs in our community,” states COUNTRY Financial CEO Jim Jacobs. “At COUNTRY, our employees and representatives continue to be focused on enriching lives in our community. We are pleased to be able to partner with United Way and local community non-profits to do that.”

“For our Rotary Club, we’ve used some of the cost-savings from not physically meeting to contribute to a worthwhile response that helps all of McLean County,” Kevin Birlignmair, President of The Sunrise Rotary Club commented.

President & CEO David Taylor explains, “Our approach is to serve as a transparent, ongoing mechanism for private and corporate donations, and then we collaborate through existing systems to combine these contributions with other resources to reach those most impacted by COVID in an efficient and effective manner.”

The need for relief remains urgent. Anyone can donate directly to the COVID-19 Community Care Fund at covid19.dsgive.us to support meal distribution and other future efforts. More information is available at uwmclean.org/covid-19-community-care-fund.

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About United Way of McLean County

United Way of McLean County works to meet the most critical needs in McLean County by mobilizing efforts that will create the biggest impact in the community. With a strategic focus on youth and families, they remain dedicated to bettering the lives of neighbors in need by bringing together donors, volunteers, government, non-profits, and businesses to create sustainable solutions. Find out more at uwmclean.org.