



GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER. LIVE UNITED®

SPRING 2010

A Community Newsletter
for Middlesex United Way

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Middlesex United Way

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF CHANGING LIVES

Middlesex United Way kicked off a year-long 75th anniversary celebration in January. At the Annual Meeting, guests included former Board Presidents, representatives from original member agencies, and previous recipients of the Community Service Award.

Former Middlesex United Way Executive Director and longtime volunteer Patti Anne Vassia received this year's Community Service Award. The award is United Way's highest and most prestigious honor. Vassia is actively involved with the Middlesex County Coalition on Housing & Homelessness, and in particular, the Homeless Prevention Fund. For an update on United Way's housing efforts, please see the story on page 5.

Executive Director Kevin Wilhelm announced the installation of a Born Learning Trail in Middletown. Comcast is sponsoring the trail and its employees will help install it during Comcast Cares Day in April. Wilhelm expressed his hope to place a Born Learning Trail in every town in Middlesex County. The trails are a valuable early learning tool for parents and caregivers, and they offer excellent visibility for any company or organization wishing to sponsor one. For more information on sponsoring a Born Learning Trail, visit middlesexunitedway.org.

Originally called the Middletown Community Chest, the organization was established in 1935 by local leaders who sought an answer to the frustration of competing appeals for funds, demands for volunteer time, and the fragmentation of human services.

"We've come a long way since then," noted Board President Faith Jackson. "But the spirit of bringing people together for a common cause is still alive. That's what United Way is all about."

Original headquarters were located at Middletown Savings Bank, now Liberty Bank. Twelve local agencies benefited from the first campaign which raised \$51,954.20 and lasted just one week. The campaign theme in 1935 was "Glad to Give." Fund distribution reflected the key areas of concern at that time which were: caring for the poor, sick and elderly; providing shelter and food for neglected children; and making healthful recreation available for boys and girls.

See photos from the event and more about our 75th anniversary on page 4.



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middlesexunitedway.org.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



FAITH M. JACKSON

MIDDLESEX UNITED WAY BOARD PRESIDENT

What a privilege it is to be serving as Board President during Middlesex United Way's 75th anniversary celebration.

United Way is constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of the community. I firmly believe it is our place and fortunate position to support the

basic needs of people — food and shelter. We are also getting to the root causes of problems and addressing the underlying issues of why someone is hungry or homeless. United Way is partnering with organizations, towns, and schools in a way we never before would have dreamed. As a result, our community impact is really making progress and in the long run, will save valuable community resources. You'll read a great example of this in the story about our affordable housing and homeless prevention efforts on page 5.

One thing that has never changed is our strict and very high standards of financial accountability. Fiscal responsibility remains one of our top priorities. Our low overhead rate is 17.3%, well below the acceptable administrative rate of 35% according to the Better Business Bureau. We have had a clean, unqualified audit for many years, and all internal control procedures are reviewed annually by auditors and throughout the year by members of our Finance Committee. I invite and encourage you to view our financial information at middlesexunitedway.org.

During this anniversary year, take a moment to think of how you can get involved with United Way by giving, advocating and volunteering. Visit our website for volunteer opportunities, information about local issues, and to donate online. You can also call us at (860) 346-8695 or stop by the office. And of course, be sure to wear your LIVE UNITED t-shirt!

When we work together and LIVE UNITED, we can accomplish more than any single person or organization can on its own. Working together to make a difference—just as true today as it was 75 years ago.

Free Discount Prescription Cards Saving Money for County Residents

FamilyWize, a free discount prescription card, is available to help people save money on their prescriptions. Many local pharmacies are participating in the program. The cards are available at Middlesex United Way or you can download one at familywize.org.

United Way is spreading the word about the FamilyWize cards as part of our ongoing effort to increase the economic self-sufficiency of individuals and families. Since we began distributing the cards in 2009, Middlesex County residents have saved about \$30,000 on their prescriptions. Across Connecticut, consumers have saved more than \$894,000.

The FamilyWize card saves individuals and families an average of 20% on eight out of ten prescription medications. Simply present the card and your prescription at a participating pharmacy and you will receive either the FamilyWize discounted price or the pharmacy's customary retail price, whichever is lower.

Anyone can use the FamilyWize card, regardless of age, income, or employment level. The card can offer immediate savings to people who have no health insurance. It can help save money during deductible periods, for prescriptions that are not covered by health insurance, Medicare or other benefit plans, or if you have exceeded your plan's limits. In addition, if your plan does not offer a drug card and you are reimbursed after each transaction, you may be able to use the FamilyWize to lower your out-of-pocket expenses

For more information about FamilyWize and a listing of participating pharmacies in our area, visit their website at familywize.org. The program also offers a toll-free customer service number about the card at (800) 300-3301.

ANNOUNCING THE 2010/11 CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Three Local Leaders Join Forces to Benefit The 75th Anniversary
United Way Campaign



Chandler Howard
President & CEO
Liberty Bank



Larry McHugh
President
Middlesex Chamber
of Commerce



Michael Roth
President
Wesleyan University

It's a special time when three distinguished local leaders step up to the task of co-chairing the 75th anniversary United Way campaign. They exemplify what it means to LIVE UNITED — working together to advance the common good. We extend our sincere thanks to Chandler Howard, Larry McHugh, and Michael Roth for their generosity and commitment to our community.

We invite you to LIVE UNITED during our 75th anniversary year by giving, advocating and volunteering. Please visit our website to learn more about planned activities throughout the year at middlesexunitedway.org.

Thanks to our 2009/10 Corporate Sponsors

Platinum Sponsors



McCutcheon Burr & Sons
Insurance Specialists

Gold Sponsors

Advanced Copy Technologies, Inc.
Environmental Group, Inc.
Jarvis Products Corporation
Macca Plumbing & Heating

Aresco Construction Company
GKN Areospace Services Structures
Kennedy, Gustafson & Cole Sheet Metal
Xenelis Construction Co., Inc.

Silver Sponsors

Liberty Bank • PrimePay • State Farm Insurance • Tower Laboratories • Webster Bank

**Read more about our sponsorship program and view these sponsors' profiles
at middlesexunitedway.org and click on the 'GIVE' button.**

75th Anniversary Celebration Launched at Annual Meeting

Below, Patti Anne Vassia stands next to a beautiful 1935 Buick which will be featured at events throughout Middlesex County this year. Special thanks to Antique Auto Service in Essex for allowing us use of the car!



Above, Board President Faith Jackson, Russell Carter from Comcast, United Way Executive Director Kevin Wilhelm, and Kristen Roberts from Comcast surround one of the signs from the Born Learning Trail. Comcast is sponsoring the trail in Middletown and its employees will help install it on Comcast Cares Day on April 24. Both Carter and Roberts serve on United Way's Board of Directors.



Below, David Royston from Dzialo, Pickett & Allen, P.C. presents the Community Service Award to Patti Anne Vassia.

Above, leaders past and present gather at the Annual Meeting to celebrate Middlesex United Way's 75th anniversary. Pictured above are members of the Red Feather Society: Matthew Stillman; William Wrang, III; Patti Anne Vassia; David Reynolds; Bonnie Bennet; and Jean and Biff Shaw.



The Community Service Award and the cover of the 2009 Annual Report, left, feature a photo of the Connecticut River by photographer Steve Demarest. The Annual Report includes a 2010 wall calendar. If you would like a calendar, please call us at (860) 346-8695. Many thanks to Steve for donating his work!

View our 2009 Annual Report and all financial information online at middlesexunitedway.org.

Assure a Legacy of Caring

Support the Endowment in Honor of Our Anniversary

You can make a lasting difference in the lives of people for generations to come. Become a member of the Red Feather Society by contributing either directly or through a planned gift to our Endowment Fund, and help Middlesex United Way strengthen lives and help people well into the future.

An endowment supplements funding to our partners and initiatives in difficult times and provides stability. During our 75th anniversary year, we hope you will consider joining the Red Feather Society in honor of this milestone. If you have already thought of us in your estate plans, please let us know about it so we may add you to the list below of Society members.

The Middlesex United Way Endowment Fund is established at the Middlesex County Community Foundation, which is managed by the foundation's Board of Directors, and we encourage you to direct your contribution to our fund there.

To learn more about the endowment, contact Kevin Wilhelm, United Way Executive Director, at (860) 346-8695 or kevin.wilhelm@middlesexunitedway.org. Or contact Clifford Straub, Chair of the Investment Committee of Lifestyle Financial Strategies, LLC at (860) 344-8356 or clifford.straub@lifestyle-financial.com.

Members of the Red Feather Society

- Mel Arden*
- Bonnie Bennet
- Harry Eben Burr
- Helen Burr Trust
- Mary Burr Trust
- Timothy Cahill
- Arline C. Fifield/Ruth Cone Trust
- J. Ellsworth MacDonnell Trust
- Christie McLeod*
- David L. Reynolds
- Ernest J. Schwartz Foundation
- Nathan Shapiro*
- Jean and Biff Shaw
- Matthew T. Stillman
- Patti Anne Vassia
- William E. and Heidi Wrang, III

*deceased

TEN YEAR PLAN IS WORKING

Middlesex Coalition on Housing & Homelessness Making Progress on Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness

Two years into the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness, great strides have been made to reducing the number of homeless single adults and families. At a Legislative Breakfast in February, the Middlesex County Coalition on Housing & Homelessness, in which United Way participates, provided a report on its progress on the Ten Year Plan to date. Overall, the number of individuals who are homeless has dropped by 30% while the number of families that are homeless has been reduced by 36%.

The Ten Year Plan contains strategic priorities to help the community move from simply managing the symptoms of homelessness to preventing and ending it. River Valley Services Executive Director Howard Reid, chair of the steering committee overseeing the Ten Year Plan, announced at the Legislative Breakfast that 49 new units of supportive housing have been created so far using the "Housing First" model. One of the goals is to develop 50 of these permanent supportive housing units in the first two years, which means the Coalition is at 98% of its goal. The plan emphasizes a countywide approach. To that end, 26 units outside of Middletown have been created including ten units built by The Connection, Inc. and another 16 units to be built by HOPE Partnership in Old Saybrook.

The Housing First approach is aimed at those who are chronically homeless. It is client-driven and provides

immediate access to an apartment. After settling into new apartments, clients are offered a wide range of supportive services that focus primarily on helping them maintain their housing. Another key area of the Ten Year Plan focuses on prevention and developing a countywide model for a flexible housing assistance fund for people at risk of homelessness. A private fund has already helped 31 families from 7 towns in Middlesex County stay in their home. Five county organizations have made referrals for people to access this fund totalling \$22,576.

In partnership with Meriden-Wallingford and Lyme-Old Lyme, a \$927,000 grant in federal stimulus money for rapid re-housing and prevention is helping people remain in their homes. So far \$53,090 has been awarded to 36 households including 20 children in Middlesex County.

The cost of managing the various symptoms of homelessness far exceed the cost of supportive housing and prevention, two key elements of the Ten Year Plan. Supportive housing costs an average of \$40 per day. Incarceration, residential substance abuse treatment and inpatient psychiatric care are all expensive services for the community and can cost up to \$55, \$105 and \$822 per day, respectively.

For more information about United Way's housing efforts please visit our website at middlesexunitedway.org.

Mother's Day - Father's Day Diaper Drive



Honor Mom or Dad through a Contribution

Did you know there is no permanent diaper bank located in Middlesex County? Local diaper drives helped to collect 20,000 diapers in 2009. Our goal this year is to reach 50,000! Please help us continue to serve our most vulnerable citizens as they enter the world and through their early years of life. Make a donation in honor of your mother or father and we will send a heartwarming card to them prior to Mother's Day or Father's Day informing them of your generosity. In cooperation with the Connecticut Diaper Bank we are able to purchase the diapers at cost with the contributions. The diapers will be distributed through WIC and Maternal & Child Health programs at Middlesex Hospital.

Read more about the incredible need for diapers in our community, see a sample of the card, and download your contribution form at middlesexunitedway.org.



Middlesex United Way

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Years of
Changing Lives

Save the Date:

Mother's Day—Father's Day
Diaper Drive
Now through June 14

Comcast Cares Day / Born
Learning Trail Installation
Saturday, April 24

Campaign Awards Breakfast
Wednesday, April 28

National Association of
Letter Carriers Food Drive
Saturday, May 8

The Power of the Purse!
Hosted by the United Way
Women's Initiative
Thursday, June 24 at
Cantina Restaurant

OUR FIVE YEAR GOALS FOR THE COMMON GOOD

EDUCATION

Increase children's readiness
to learn by school entry.

INCOME

Increase economic self-sufficiency of individuals and families.

HEALTH

Reduce the rate of risky behaviors among youth and adults.

Improve the health and increase the safety of individuals
and families.

HOUSING

Increase the ability of individuals and families to attain
affordable housing.

