

LIVE UNITED



United Way of Asheville
and Buncombe County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNITED WAY ANNOUNCES 2014-15 INVESTMENT DECISIONS

ASHEVILLE – On May 21, United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County’s Board of Directors approved its 2014-2015 Investment Strategy, the result of a competitive grant process in which \$2.4 million will be invested in 81 high-quality programs that align with the community-level results outlined in United Way’s Education, Income and Health strategies.

“We are proud of the decisions made by our community volunteers and the impressive services provided by our funded partners. We know that with greater resources even more could be accomplished and our board and staff continues to strive to raise more funds to improve our community” said Suzanne DeFerie, board chair.

RESULTS ORIENTED INVESTMENTS

United Way is committed to investing community donations into high-quality, results-based programs that align with its goals in the areas of Education, Income or Health. What does this mean? It means that programs that receive funding are able to show how their work has improved the lives of those they serve in measureable ways.

Final reports from 2012-13 funded partners will arrive in late summer but expect that the lives of more than 56,000 people will be improved right here in Buncombe County.

For some, this means their first affordable home, for others it means support and training following a layoff. In the area of education, United Way invests in programs that span an entire educational spectrum - from school readiness in kindergarten to supportive programs that impact a child throughout their educational experience.

NEW THIS YEAR: ADVOCACY

In this year’s investment cycle, United Way developed a separate stream of funding for programs working on advocacy issues. In years past, advocacy programs and direct service programs were evaluated in the same pool of dollars and both the staff and volunteers felt that there was a need to separate the two for a fair evaluation of merit. This year, four programs were chosen for advocacy funding, impacting issues of Family and Children’s Poverty, Affordable and Safe Housing, Services/Support for Displaced Women and Access to Quality Food in poor neighborhoods.

UNITED WAY’S WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

In addition to raising and investing community donations, United Way staff are hard at work on a number of essential initiatives in our community.

- **Middle School Success Initiative** - United Way invests significant time and talent in an effort to improve

the quality and quantity of programs that serve middle school students. The goal is to ensure success-ready 9th graders that are solidly on the path to graduation.

This initiative works closely with Asheville City and Buncombe County schools as well as a host of “out of school” service providers such as the YMCA’s 21st Century Learning Program and are among a handful of communities from across the country working to establish an “Early Warning and Response” system. This coordinated response to students in need would be the first of its kind in our community.

- **NC 2-1-1 Asheville Call Center** - Knowing how or where to get help for yourself or a loved one is often a confusing and frustrating experience for those in crisis. The highly trained 2-1-1 staff answer calls 24/7, 365 days a year and connect callers to health and human services in a seven county region of western North Carolina.
- **Hands On Asheville-Buncombe** - Among the many things Hands On Asheville-Buncombe, United Way’s volunteer center, does for the community is to increase volunteerism and connect community members to opportunities that support the many, wonderful nonprofits in the area. The Hands On database is updated regularly, is free to the public and allows users to refine their search based on a number of factors including skills, interest and availability.

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE: A CALL TO ACTION

As in prior years, United Way received \$1 million more in requests than was available in the organization’s Community Fund. While this will always be true to some degree, the reality is that donations have dropped since 2008 and have yet to return to pre-recession donation levels.

United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County continues to rely on the great support of local businesses during the fall giving campaign. The ability to connect with the community in their workplace is an important part of United Way’s story, but it can no longer be the only way funds are raised.

“We have such a strong base of support in this community and we want to grow even stronger. We want and need even more Givers, Advocates and Volunteers and ask that the community answer our call to action by visiting our web site to learn about all the ways they can get involved and to make a secure online donation today” said David Bailey, President/CEO of United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For information about our process, investments and key volunteer leadership that were a part of this process please contact:

LANCE EDWARDS, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY INVESTMENT- 239-1044

LINKS

[A full list of funded programs 2014-15.](#)
[The 2013 Annual Report.](#)

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