

Presentation to Centerville Noon Optimists by Terri Leputa

August 7, 2018

What United Way does United Way do?

United Way fights for the education, financial stability and health of every person in our community.

United Way of the Greater Dayton Area has been working in the region (Montgomery, Greene, Preble counties) since 1914

United Way focuses on finding long lasting solutions to health and human service problems such as hunger, homelessness, poverty, domestic violence and other barriers that prevent people from realizing their full potential. Many of these individuals and families are working but don't make enough to afford a basic household budget (housing, childcare, food, transportation and healthcare). We refer to these individuals as **ALICE** families, which stands for **A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed. In Ohio, 14% of households are at the poverty level with another 26% at the ALICE level. This means 40% of the total population in Ohio struggles to afford the basics; in Montgomery County, that figure is 44% (poverty level of 17% + ALICE level of 27%).

United Way is a convener and brings together the business community, faith community, other non-profit organizations, local government and community leaders to work collectively at solving some of our most pressing problems. We know it is not enough to simply treat a symptom. For example, food pantries do a lot of good in our region by helping people who need food but simply funding a food pantry will not alleviate the problem of hunger. The goal is to address the issues that are contributing to why someone is dealing with food insecurity so the result is moving someone out of that situation toward independence and self sufficiency.

There are many examples of United Way's impact in our region. Today I will focus on two:

HelpLink 2-1-1 is a referral service that is available 24/7/365 for anyone needing information on available services. This service, supported through donations to the Live United Fund, is free and confidential and could be for anything from needing assistance paying the utility bill to looking for area services for aging parents.

Last year, more than 128,000 callers in Montgomery, Greene and Preble counties reached out to HelpLink 2-1-1 for assistance. Recently the service was expanded and now is offered in a total of 9 local counties.

In November, United Way of the Greater Dayton Area will launch VetsLink, a division of HelpLink, to provide veterans and their families assistance in connecting with the array of health and human services available in our region.

Another example of United Way's investment in our community is the summer program, **Freedom Schools**. This 6 week full day program focuses on literacy and addresses the "summer slide" kids experience on their school break. Freedom Schools enrolls at risk youth who may not have opportunities for enriching summertime activities. Facilitated by college students who are selectively screened and trained, attendees receive not only encouragement for their reading, but mentoring and opportunities to supplement what they read and learn with field trips as well as service activities. The results have been significantly positive with 96% of attendees returning to school averaging a 4 month gain from where they began. Additionally, teachers and parents report these children are more engaged and have a more positive attitude about school and their ability to achieve. The program is currently held at 7 locations in Montgomery County and this past year 490 students participated.

I appreciate the time you have given me to share a little bit on what United Way of the Greater Dayton Area is doing to improve our community. This is only a tiny portion of the many programs, services and initiatives supported by United Way donations. None of this is possible without the generous support of our donors and volunteers. We live in a generous and caring community but there are still problems to address and work to do. United Way cannot do this alone which is why we ask everyone to join us in our fight to make our region the best it can be.

THANK YOU

Terri Leputa introduction Bio

Terri Leputa is the Associate Vice President for Resource Development at United Way of the Greater Dayton Area and has been there for 10 years. Her work involves engaging people in the work of United Way by supporting the organization with their treasure, talent and time. Prior to joining the United Way Team, Terri spent 9 years at the University of Dayton where she worked in the President's Office with both Brother Raymond Fits and Dr. Dan Curran, managing the work of the Board of Trustees and other leadership groups on campus. She is a graduate of The University of Georgia and received her Master's Degree in Educational Administration from UD.

A native of Albany, New York, Terri lived in New York, New Jersey, and Georgia before moving to the Miami Valley region in 1994. She lives in Miami Township with her husband Joe and spoiled rotten dog, Daisy. Terri has 2 grown sons, a stepdaughter and stepson and 4 beautiful grandchildren.