United Way of Metro Chicago

2023/2024 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR LEADERSHIP

DEAR SUPPORTERS,

Thank you for being a part of another year of significant impact with United Way of Metro Chicago. The 2023-2024 campaign year brought continued expansion of our work in communities across the Chicago region – and opportunities for us to step up and lead this critical work together.

We celebrated the one-year anniversary of 211 Metro Chicago. To date, the free 24/7 helpline has made more than 200,000 referrals to essential health and social services across Cook County. We continue to expand 2-1-1's capabilities and partnerships, making the database of resources as robust and accurate as possible, all to better serve our neighbors and increase our reach.

We continue to invest in our neighborhoods and celebrate key milestones alongside our community partners. Brighton Park Neighborhood Council and its coalition partners broke ground on their Service Center, which will house youth programs, counseling, workforce development, legal services, and more for residents in the Brighton Park Neighborhood Network.

We also celebrated the launch of the new Little Village-South Lawndale Quality of Life Plan. Led by Enlace Chicago, this plan expands the work of the Little Village Neighborhood Network, complementing Latinos Progresando's efforts and focused on arts & culture, economic development, education, environment & infrastructure, health, housing, immigration, and safety. Together, these partners will guide transformative work across the entire neighborhood.

United Way's United Neighborhoods Equity Fund continues to grow with our third cohort of small, local grantee organizations on the South and West Sides of Chicago and in the south suburbs. The Fund reaffirms United Way's commitment to investing in historically disinvested communities. Each grantee receives up to $50,000 of unrestricted funds over two years, plus capacity building and networking opportunities with potential funders.

We also announced the expansion of our Neighborhood Network Initiative with the launch of the suburban Summit Neighborhood Network, in partnership with Cook County's Transforming Places program. The investment in Summit is an investment in the residents and the resources they need and deserve.

As we continue to elevate United Way's role in transforming neighborhoods, we are so grateful for your support and partnership. We are proud of the impact we have made together and acknowledge the work still ahead of us.

Thank you for joining us as we work together across sectors to create thriving communities. **This is United Way.**

SEAN GARRETT
President & CEO

LINDA T. COBERLY
2023/2024 Chair,
Board of Directors

United Way of Metro Chicago

2023/2024 YEAR-IN-REVIEW

JULY 2023

CONNECTING WITH SECRETARY BUTTIGIEG IN BRONZEVILLE

- United Way of Metro Chicago President & CEO Sean Garrett and our partners in Bronzeville met with Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg to discuss a vision for building thriving communities on the South Side of Chicago.

AUGUST 2023

CAMPAIGN HEROES CELEBRATION

- The annual event honored United Way's Top 25 Corporate Partners and welcomed 2023/2024 Campaign Chair David C. Blowers, Vice Chairman of Northern Trust.

ASSOCIATE BOARD BASICS SEMINAR

- The professional development opportunity brought together young professionals to learn how they can make a difference through service on a nonprofit associate or junior board.

LATINOS PROGRESANDO OPENS COMMUNITY CENTER

- Our Little Village Neighborhood Network partners celebrated the ribbon cutting of their new building to welcome neighbors and provide essential immigration services and resources.

SEPTEMBER 2023

9/11 DAY OF SERVICE

- Hosted by Women United and Young Leaders United, volunteers prepped the gardens and grounds at Garfield Park Community Council Garden Project with The Trotter Project.

OFFICE OPEN HOUSE AT THE MART

- United Way welcomed our partners to our new office in the Merchandise Mart.

OCTOBER 2023

BMO DAY OF ACTION

- 1,300+ employees from our #1 corporate partner volunteered with United Way at their national leadership conference in Rosemont.

YOUNG LEADERS UNITED SPEAKER SERIES

- CEO of Reactivate Utopia Hill shared the impact of renewable energy development in our local communities.

A TOAST TO TOCQUEVILLE

- Tocqueville Society members networked and heard from a panel of prominent leaders about the business community's role in investing in our neighborhoods.

NOVEMBER 2023

UNITED NEIGHBORHOODS EQUITY FUND COHORT 3

- Nine small, local organizations on the South and West Sides of Chicago and south suburbs were selected to receive a $50,000 unrestricted grant over two years, plus capacity building and networking.

DECEMBER 2023

UNITING FOR THE HOLIDAYS

- Thousands of meals and gifts were distributed to 2,000+ individuals and families in six suburban communities.

JANUARY 2024

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY WITH CHEF MAYA-CAMILLE BROUSSARD

- The star of the Netflix series *Bake Squad*, author, and owner of Chicago bakery Justice of the Pies shared her story and success as an entrepreneur.

JANUARY 2024

ONE YEAR OF 211 METRO CHICAGO

- The free 24/7 helpline celebrated its **one-year anniversary** connecting Cook County residents with critical health and social services.

FEBRUARY 2024

NATIONAL ALICE SUMMIT

- United Way and 2-1-1 staff attended the **National ALICE Summit** in New Orleans and hosted a session on using ALICE data to engage corporate partners and invest in communities.

BE UNITED BASH

- Young Leaders United hosted the **happy hour fundraiser** for young professionals at Molson Coors Taproom.

BRIGHTON PARK COMMUNITY CENTER GROUNDBREAKING

- Community leaders and partners broke ground on the **Brighton Park Neighborhood Network Service Center**, which will provide youth programs, counseling, workforce development, legal assistance, and more.

MARCH 2024

2-1-1 ADVOCACY DAY

- 211 Illinois and 211 Metro Chicago staff met with legislators in Springfield to **advocate for state funding** to build the 2-1-1 network and connect more people to essential services.

WOMEN UNITED PURPOSEFUL TRANSITIONS

- The **annual breakfast event** featured a conversation with Grace B. Hou, Deputy Governor for Health and Human Services, and Linda Coberly, United Way of Metro Chicago Board Chair and Chair of the Appellate and Critical Motions Practice at Winston & Strawn LLP.

APRIL 2024

APRIL FOOD DAY

- Volunteers collected and sorted **100,000+ pounds** of food at the annual event supporting food security for our neighbors in the Southland.

LITTLE VILLAGE-SOUTH LAWNDALE QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

- Enlace Chicago and the Little Village Neighborhood Network celebrated the launch of the **2024 Little Village-South Lawndale Quality of Life Plan**, which will guide the coalition's transformative work.

MAY 2024

DEI CONVERSATION WITH JENNER & BLOCK

- United Way's Chief People & Equity Officer Tamiya Aurel and Jenner & Block's DEI Protection Task Force Co-Chair Ishan Bhabha shared their insight and expertise on **pressing DEI issues**.

COMMUNITY ANCHORS: THE SOCIAL SERVICES RESPONSE TO THE MIGRANT CRISIS

- **Expert panelists** from local nonprofits discussed how the social services sector is supporting new arrivals.

NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK INITIATIVE EXPANDS IN SUMMIT

- United Way and Cook County's Transforming Places announced an **investment in suburban Summit**, becoming the 18th Neighborhood Network.

MAY 2024

2-1-1 ATTENDS INFORM USA'S GRAND GATHERING

- The 211 Metro Chicago team led a session on "**2-1-1 as a Community Utility**" at the conference for information and referral professionals from across the U.S. and Canada.

2024 STRONGER NEIGHBORHOODS AWARDS

- The **annual awards luncheon** honored David Casper, Nicor Gas, and Don V. Villar and raised more than $1 million.

JUNE 2024

ITW DAY OF ACTION

- ITW hosted their annual **staff volunteer day** at David Speer Academy in our Austin Neighborhood Network.

JUNETEENTH CONVERSATION WITH DR. ANDRE M. PERRY

- The nationally respected scholar and educator discussed **structural inequality and economic inclusion**.

PRIDE PARADE WITH THE CHICAGO FEDERATION OF LABOR

- United Way and the Chicago Federation of Labor marched in the **Chicago Pride Parade**, celebrating our vibrant LGBTQ+ community.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL OF OUR PROGRAMS, INITIATIVES, AND EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR!

@UNITEDWAYCHICAGO @UNITEDWAYCHI
@UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO

THIS IS WHY CHICAGO STILL NEEDS UNITED WAY.

BY LINDA T. COBERLY,
CHAIR, UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO
BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND CHAIR OF APPELLATE & CRITICAL MOTIONS PRACTICE,
WINSTON & STRAWN LLP

This Letter to the Editor was originally published in Crain's Chicago Business on January 8, 2024.

Almost six years ago, Crain's Chicago Business published an article asking, "Does the world still need United Way?" (April 6, 2018). It questioned the decades-old model of a fundraising intermediary, concluding that it was no longer necessary in the face of widely accessible online charity trackers that empower individual donors to do their own research to find worthy organizations to support.

While we disagree with this characterization of United Way's historical role, Crain's was right that United Way needed to evolve. Five years later, under the leadership of President and CEO Sean Garrett, the new United Way of Metro Chicago has an entirely new model and is making a tangible impact across the region. The new model aligns high-level corporate philanthropy and workplace giving programs with United Way's deep expertise as a convener and strategist, developing new ways to address our region's most significant and systemic community challenges.

Today, United Way is a multiplier of impact. It unites business leaders, individual donors, corporate partners, philanthropic organizations, government resources, and community organizers to make meaningful progress.

Look no further than the recent catalytic investments in Austin — like the Aspire Center for Workforce Innovation and the new BUILD community hub — as well as the expansion of the Auburn Gresham Healthy Lifestyle Hub & Campus and new community centers in Little Village and Brighton Park. Look at community investment partnerships with BMO, ITW, and Nicor Gas. Each of these efforts is strengthening neighborhoods by meeting local needs and creating

economic, workforce, and employment opportunities. And most important, all are community-led initiatives supported by United Way but run by experts who know their communities best.

Following the successful execution of one of the nation's largest COVID-19 response funds, where United Way partnered with The Chicago Community Trust to raise $35 million in support of more than 400 nonprofits, a critical gap in the health and social service sectors surfaced. In January 2023, United Way partnered with the City of Chicago and Cook County to launch 211 Metro Chicago, a free 24/7 helpline that connects county residents with a vast network of health and social services organizations. The United Way-operated 2-1-1 helpline provides a critical resource for our most vulnerable neighbors struggling to secure housing, feed their families, or keep up with utility bills. To date, 2-1-1 resource navigators have fielded more than 100,000 contacts and are critical connectors to resources that help residents solve their immediate problems and get on the road to lasting security.

In fiscal 2023-24, United Way will provide more than $21 million to support place-based transformation across the region. This includes $8 million-plus in basic needs impact grants that will provide unrestricted support to more than 140 local nonprofits that address a variety of critical basic-needs gaps, such as Metropolitan Family Services, Enlace, DuPage Health Coalition, and Deborah's Place. United Way is directing $7 million-plus to our Neighborhood Networks, which span 17 communities across the suburbs and the South and West Sides, and another $6 million-plus to the operation and optimization of 211 Metro Chicago.

These strategic investments are about more than direct funding. United Way and its partners collaborate with community leaders to ensure they have the resources they need to achieve critical long-term goals and support neighborhood-level transformation across the Chicago region. From helping Chicagoans and Cook County families find secure food and housing to helping remove systemic barriers, United Way's goal is to ensure that all individuals and families can meet their basic needs and that community leaders can build neighborhoods that are stronger and more equitable.

So, as you peruse online charity trackers and consider where your charitable donations should go in 2024, remember that no one organization can solve the systemic issues that too many of our communities face. That is why the world — and Chicago — still needs United Way.

211 METRO CHICAGO CELEBRATES ONE YEAR OF IMPACT

UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO LAUNCHED 211 METRO CHICAGO IN JANUARY 2023, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE CITY OF CHICAGO AND COOK COUNTY. ONE YEAR LATER, THE 24/7 HELPLINE SURPASSED 100,000 REFERRALS, CONNECTING OUR NEIGHBORS ACROSS COOK COUNTY TO CRITICAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

The 211 Metro Chicago contact center is calm, almost peaceful. But the 2-1-1 team is anything but idle. Each Resource Navigator speaks quietly so their colleagues in cubicles nearby can field calls without distraction. They're patient and poised as they listen to someone on the other end of the line tell them about recent challenges – and what they need.

A senior citizen looking for affordable dental care. A teenager who is hungry. A father seeking safe and warm shelter for his family. Desni Holmes, a 2-1-1 Resource Navigator, answered this call and listened as the father asked for help. After searching the 2-1-1 database for a resource that matched his needs, Desni shared details about a local organization that provides stable housing. But he needed to call now, before the organization closed for the day.

Desni called the father back a few months later. She was thrilled to hear he had contacted the referral organization just in time, she said. "When I did the follow-up call, they had just moved into their new place. We were able to connect him with resources that allowed him and his family to both solve immediate issues and get them back on stable footing."

This was one of thousands of calls made to 211 Metro Chicago over the last year. Since United Way of Metro Chicago launched 2-1-1 on January 27, 2023, in partnership with the City of Chicago and Cook County, the 24/7 helpline has made a significant impact. In its first year, 2-1-1 surpassed 100,000 contacts, including calls, texts, and web chats, connecting our neighbors in Cook County with critical health and social services.

211 Metro Chicago was a decade in the making. The need for a centralized 24/7 health and social service helpline was significant, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, said Richard LaPratt, executive director of 211 Metro Chicago. "The pandemic showed that awareness of and access to social services was extremely limited in Cook County, with residents unsure where to turn as they struggled to find health care resources, support with household bills, or food to feed their families."

United Way of Metro Chicago responded to the need, working closely with the City of Chicago, Cook County, and other key philanthropic and corporate partners to launch 211 Metro Chicago. In the first year of operation, we're seeing significant impact as 2-1-1 is reducing barriers and getting residents the help they need, Richard said. "I see the benefit 2-1-1 is having and understand now more than ever the unique nature of the needs facing Chicagoans and Cook County residents."

"We are seeing significant asks for housing and food security, but the issues that follow run the gamut of utility payment assistance, mental health and substance use treatment, and employment," Richard said.

Thresholds is one of our partner referral agencies that provides supportive services, including mental illness and substance use disorders, and is one of thousands of local organizations and resources in the 2-1-1 database. They see firsthand the impact 2-1-1 is having – and how it's helping their clients navigate an otherwise complicated system of social services, said Emily Moen, vice president of public relations and marketing for Thresholds.

"People in need of social services often spend an enormous amount of their time trying to navigate the system. 2-1-1 reduces the time to seek needed services and provides the benefits they need to move forward," Emily said.

Thresholds' clinicians also use 2-1-1 to better support their clients who they often meet in their residences, in hospitals, or on the street and need help finding resources like food or health care near them. "2-1-1 is a valuable tool for our clinicians to help their clients troubleshoot unique situations because every single case is different. Because we're out in the field, it's really important to have easy-to-access resources," Emily said.

Thresholds also serves on the advisory board for 211 Metro Chicago, guiding the growth and future of the helpline.

As we celebrate one year of 211 Metro Chicago, we celebrate one year of connecting thousands of residents to services. None of this would be possible without our generous partners, who, together with United Way of Metro Chicago, have made this invaluable resource a reality in Cook County.

Together, we are committed to supporting our neighbors' basic needs – and continuing to grow and reach even more of our neighbors in the year ahead.

STORIES

REMEMBERING DR. JOYCE CHAPMAN

Dr. Joyce Chapman, president of the Far South Chicago Coalition and the leader of United Way's Far South Neighborhood Network, passed away on September 27, 2023.

Joyce was a force and champion for her South Side community and the greater Chicago region. A beloved community activist, she was the founder of the Pullman Community Development Corporation and a member of the Chicago Public Schools Board of Education under Mayor Lightfoot.

She led the Far South Chicago Quality-of-Life Plan process that launched the Far South Chicago Coalition, which was selected to lead our Far South Neighborhood Network in 2022. Under Joyce's unwavering and passionate leadership, the coalition has been working tirelessly to improve the lives of our neighbors and build thriving communities on the Far South Side.

May her spirit live on in our work together.

ASHANTI'S FUTURE IS BRIGHT IN FORD HEIGHTS

Ashanti Johnson is pursuing her dreams in Ford Heights. Having recently participated in Cornerstone Community Development Corporation's workforce development program, she's working hard to make her future career a reality.

> **"I was at a point in my life where I didn't know what I was going to do. I couldn't afford college. I didn't have a good paying job. I feel like this program helped put a career in my path and helped me be able to eventually afford college. Now I'm certified, and I'm a professional and have the skills for the work I want to do."**
> —ASHANTI JOHNSON

READ MORE › LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/Ashanti

OF IMPACT

WHEN WE EMBRACE ALL OF OUR NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITIES AS THE HEARTBEAT OF THE CHICAGO REGION, EVERY PERSON HAS THE OPPORTUNITY TO THRIVE. HERE ARE SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR AND HOW WE'RE WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD A STRONGER, MORE EQUITABLE CHICAGO REGION.

UNITING FOR THE HOLIDAYS GIVES FOOD AND HOPE

More than 30% of households in Cook County have difficulty meeting their basic needs – including access to food. Uniting for the Holidays is United Way's response. The drive-thru style events provided holiday meals and gifts for 2,000+ households in 6 communities across the suburbs.

> **"We know that we've got large pockets of food insecurity. It's very important not only during the holidays. For organizations like United Way and Cornerstone, we work throughout the course of the year to make sure that those food insecure [residents] are able to access healthy foods so they can survive."**
>
> —**BONITA ESTELLE** External Affairs Manager, ComEd,
> and Board President, Cornerstone Community Development Corporation

READ MORE › LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/Holidays2023

100,000+ POUNDS OF FOOD COLLECTED AT APRIL FOOD DAY 2024

April Food Day 2024 made an impact. Our partners across sectors came together in the Southland to restock pantry shelves and support food security for our neighbors. Because everyone needs access to food to thrive.

> **"No one should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, and too many people do. One in five families are experiencing food insecurity, and we need to change that. April Food Day collects as much as we can and restocks pantries, getting food where it needs to be and fighting hunger."**
>
> —**HANNAH HAYES** Chair, United Way's South-Southwest Suburban Regional Board

READ MORE ›
LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/FoodDay2024

SUMMIT SOARS AS NEW NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK

Suburban Summit joined United Way of Metro Chicago as our 18th Neighborhood Network, in partnership with Cook County's Transforming Places program. SGA Youth & Family Services is leading the coalition's vision and work to improve the quality of life for Summit residents.

> **"SGA Youth & Family Services is honored to be United Way of Metro Chicago's community quarterback in Summit. Being a Neighborhood Network will help the residents of Summit identify and address needs. This aligns with SGA's proprietary service model, the Cycle of Opportunity®, which empowers children and families to build upon their strengths to realize their greatest potential."**
>
> —**MARTHA GUERRERO** Chief Executive Officer and President, SGA Youth & Family Services

READ MORE › LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/Summit

LITTLE VILLAGE LAUNCHES QUALITY OF LIFE PLAN

Led by Enlace Chicago, the 2024 Little Village-South Lawndale Quality of Life Plan expands the work of United Way's Little Village Neighborhood Network, complementing Latinos Progresando's efforts in the community. Together, these partners will guide transformative work across the entire neighborhood.

> **"The 2024 Quality of Life Plan is not just a document. It's a living, breathing framework that reflects the evolving needs and aspirations of the Little Village community."**
>
> —**CESAR NUNEZ** Co-Executive Director, Enlace Chicago

READ MORE › LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/LittleVillageQLP

BLACK ENTREPRENEURS DRIVE INNOVATION ON THE SOUTH SIDE

The Healthy Lifestyle Hub in Auburn Gresham hosted a Black Vendor Showcase in honor of Black History Month. These small business owners are not only creating economic opportunity and jobs for residents, but they're re-investing in neighborhoods from the inside out.

> **"Markets like the Black History Month Vendor Showcase are important because they bring small businesses to the neighborhoods. Black-owned businesses are the backbone of our community. It's important to shop local because it's more personal. We do this work from the heart."**
>
> —**RITA TOWNES** Founder and CEO, Vessels of the Paut Neteru

READ MORE › LIVEUNITEDchicago.org/BlackHistoryMonth2024

THANK YOU TO OUR

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OUR DEDICATED SUPPORTERS MAKE OUR WORK BUILDING THRIVING COMMUNITIES POSSIBLE. THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS CORPORATE PARTNERS, DONORS, AND VOLUNTEERS FOR COMING TOGETHER TO TRANSFORM OUR REGION.

SUPPORTERS

6

7

5

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THANK YOU: 2023/2024 CAMPAIGN IMPACT

Over the 2023/2024 Campaign year, hundreds of corporate partners ran employee giving campaigns, thousands of volunteers showed up, and millions was raised for United Way of Metro Chicago. **All to support our work together building thriving communities.**

Leading the charge was Dave Blowers, Vice Chairman of Northern Trust. Serving as the 2023/2024 Campaign Chair, Blowers brought his can-do attitude as he oversaw a committee of fellow corporate leaders. Together, they drove employee giving, energizing their colleagues to support United Way and invest in our neighborhoods.

"It was such an honor for me to serve as Campaign Chair," Blowers said. "I enjoyed being able to visit so many of our Neighborhood Networks this past year. The work that is going on and the incredible people I met were so inspiring. I am also very appreciative of the many volunteers and donors giving their time, talent, and treasure to United Way. I am thrilled to celebrate our success and impact together this past year."

$44M+

RAISED DURING 2023/2024 CAMPAIGN YEAR

$1M+

RAISED AT 2024 STRONGER NEIGHBORHOODS AWARDS LUNCHEON

600
CORPORATE PARTNERS

30K+
DONORS

2.5K+
LEADERSHIP DONORS
($1,000+ GIFTS)

350+
TOCQUEVILLE DONORS
($10,000+ GIFTS)

3K+
VOLUNTEERS
PARTICIPATED IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECTS

DAYS OF ACTION WITH BMO AND ITW

Our corporate partners show up for their communities. During the 2023/2024 Campaign year, United Way was thrilled to support volunteer days and engagement opportunities for partners across the region, including BMO and ITW. Their Days of Action brought thousands of staff volunteers together to make a difference.

ITW DAY OF ACTION

(JUNE 2024)

- 500 ITW staff volunteers
- Assembled thousands of backpacks with school supplies, snack packs, and hygiene and menstrual kits for local nonprofits and shelters housing new arrivals
- Prepped gardens in Austin and Belmont Craigin at LeClaire Gardens, Menard Gardens, and Root Riot

BMO'S "NETWORK WITH PURPOSE"

(OCTOBER 2023)

- 1,300+ BMO staff volunteers from across the country during their national leadership conference in Rosemont
- Assembled thousands of snack packs and hygiene kits, made scarves and bookmarks, and more for local nonprofits

KELLANOVA EXPANDS SUPPORT

Kellanova is looking to make a greater impact in the Chicago region through their community outreach efforts, including their partnership with United Way of Metro Chicago.

THANK YOU TO DAVE BLOWERS, OUR 2023/2024 CAMPAIGN CABINET, AND ALL OUR GENEROUS PARTNERS AND DONORS FOR MAKING AN IMPACT THIS PAST YEAR! OUR WORK TOGETHER IS HELPING TRANSFORM NEIGHBORHOODS – AND THE CHICAGO REGION.

GROWING THE GOOD: DAVID CASPER RECEIVES 2024 ANDREW J. MCKENNA LEADERSHIP AWARD

On David Casper's first day of work at Harris Bank, he attended orientation for new staff and was handed a card. He was asked to pledge a portion of his paycheck to United Way of Metro Chicago. **On that day in 1978, David's decades-long relationship with United Way began.**

The Wisconsin native grew up in Milwaukee and attended Dartmouth College where he earned a bachelor's degree in economics. A Midwesterner at heart, David left the East Coast after graduation and moved to Chicago. He was soon hired by Harris Bank, kicking off a 45-year career there and later BMO, which acquired Harris Bank in 1984.

David took night classes at Northwestern University, earning a Master of Management degree from Kellogg Graduate School of Management. He met his wife, Jane Casper, and settled in Chicago. All the while, David continued to donate to United Way as he deepened his roots in the city he now called home – and desired to make a difference.

"I saw the difference in resources and disinvestment among the neighborhoods in Chicago," David said. "If we can support the people living and working in those neighborhoods and give them the resources they need, that in the long run will make such an impact."

As David's philanthropic spirit continued to grow, his career blossomed. After leading BMO Harris Bank's U.S. commercial and investment banking businesses, David became U.S. CEO in 2018. One of his proudest moments as CEO was overseeing three major acquisitions – and significant expansion of BMO's clients and staff. With growth came the opportunity to mold BMO's culture and reaffirm the company's role in community impact.

"We built a culture of doing well financially for the company and individuals while also doing good in communities," David said. "People want more than just a job. They want to work for a company that shares their values, shares their sense of purpose and their willingness to do good. We have a motto, to boldly grow the good in business and life. I'm proud of the culture, and I'm proud of our staff."

David lives out "bolding growing the good in business and life" through his longstanding partnership with United Way. From donor to executive volunteer, David strengthened his commitment to furthering United Way's work by serving on the organization's Board of Directors for eight years. He also signed on as United Way's Campaign Chair in 2019 – 2020. That year, he oversaw BMO's $10 million investment in United Way's Neighborhood Networks, a gift focusing on development in the Austin community and made alongside the launch of Mayor Lori Lightfoot's INVEST South/West.

"Economic inclusion and strong neighborhoods go hand in hand," David said at the press conference in October 2019, announcing the first corporate investment in Invest South/West. "As an institution with deep Chicago roots, we consider it our responsibility to boldly grow the good across the city, and that includes building strong, resilient neighborhoods."

Under David's steadfast leadership, BMO has been United Way of Metro Chicago's #1 corporate partner for the past 10 years, donating more than $74 million directly to United Way. "We're really proud that more than 90% of our employees participate in employee giving through United Way," David said.

In recognition of his commitment to improving the quality of life for countless individuals and families in the Chicago region and serving as a philanthropic leader and mentor, David Casper received the 2024 Andrew J. McKenna Leadership Award at United Way of Metro Chicago's annual Stronger Neighborhoods Awards Luncheon on May 30, 2024.

The award is especially meaningful to David who knew the incomparable Andy McKenna – and is inspired by his legacy of giving back.

"I miss Andy every day. He was dedicated to doing the right thing and being generous," David said. "I think everyone who knew him felt like he was their mentor, and he really was. He was genuinely interested in everyone's careers."

Today, while he still serves as Chairman of the Board of BMO Financial Corp, David is retired from full-time work. He is thrilled to spend more time with his wife, three daughters, and two granddaughters. Seeking recognition for his storied career and deep impact in the Chicago region is not in David's nature. Making him all the more deserving of the award.

"My success is largely due to my wife, Jane, and our three daughters who have kept me honest," David said. "I'm more than humbled to receive the Andrew J. McKenna Leadership Award. I don't belong in that league, but I'm honored."

FUELING POSITIVE CHANGE: NICOR GAS RECEIVES 2024 CORPORATE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Nicor Gas is more than a natural gas company. For over 160 years, Nicor Gas has provided fuel for life. The company has stood by its mission, safely delivering natural gas to northern Illinois homes and businesses – while remaining committed to making a meaningful impact.

"Beyond the clean, safe, reliable, and affordable service that our customers expect and deserve, it is our commitment to do all we can to improve the lives of our communities and customers," said Wendell Dallas, President and CEO of Nicor Gas.

"Nicor Gas serves 2.3 million customers in northern Illinois. We are in over 650 communities. Our employees live, work, and play in the communities that we serve," Wendell said. "We believe in giving back to these communities."

Nicor Gas lives out this commitment to serving the community by supporting basic needs for families, protecting the environment, and enabling economic opportunity through workforce development. The company invests in local nonprofits – including its longstanding partnership with United Way of Metro Chicago.

"We have been partners for almost seven decades," Wendell said. "From the beginning, our organizations have shared a mutual interest in advancing the well-being and common good of our local communities."

Nicor Gas' employees are generous. The company has ranked among United Way's top 25 corporate partners for the past 15 years. They have contributed more than $17 million dollars to United Way, supporting the Neighborhood Networks and the United Neighborhoods Equity Fund – key investments in advancing economic equity and strengthening communities.

In addition to investing dollars, Nicor Gas employees also give of their time. They participate in volunteer activities, offer critical steering committee insight for the United Neighborhoods Equity Fund, and serve on United Way's Board of Directors, regional boards, and campaign cabinet.

Wendell Dallas led United Way's employee giving efforts as Campaign Chair in 2022 – 2023. That year, Wendell oversaw Nicor Gas Foundation's transformative investment expanding United Way's Neighborhood Networks in the suburbs. The Nicor Gas Foundation committed $1 million over four years to launch the Elgin Neighborhood Network and support workforce development and capacity building programs in United Way's South Suburban Networks.

"Nicor Gas is committed to equitably supporting economic development and building a workforce pipeline across suburban Cook County to help create stable households and stable communities," Wendell said. "When we work together, we can do meaningful things. It takes business, civic, community, government – all of us working together. When we do that well, the residents and the community benefit from it."

In recognition of the company's longstanding commitment to create thriving communities across the region, Nicor Gas received the 2024 Corporate Leadership Award at United Way of Metro Chicago's annual Stronger Neighborhoods Awards Luncheon on May 30, 2024.

"I am privileged to work with my Nicor Gas team every day. I'm very proud of them," Wendell said. "On behalf of our over 2,000 employees throughout northern Illinois, I'm humbled and honored to accept this award for Nicor Gas."

Nicor Gas is committed to fueling positive change. The Corporate Leadership Award is a testament to this transformative work – and Nicor Gas' deep investment in their customers, employees, and communities.

"At Nicor Gas, our customers are at the center of everything we do," Wendell said. "Any investment of our time, talent, and resources is made through the lens of supporting them to the best of our ability. We want to ensure that our communities are better."

UNITED WAY IS A MULTIPLIER OF IMPACT. IT UNITES BUSINESS LEADERS, INDIVIDUAL DONORS, CORPORATE PARTNERS, PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS, GOVERNMENT RESOURCES, AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS TO MAKE MEANINGFUL PROGRESS.

LINDA T. COBERLY
CHAIR OF UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS
CHAIR OF APPELLATE & CRITICAL MOTIONS PRACTICE
AT WINSTON & STRAWN LLP

VIEW OF DOWNTOWN CHICAGO
FROM THE SOUTH

LABOR OF LOVE: DON V. VILLAR RECEIVES 2024 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Don Villar lives his life by the Golden Rule. His parents instilled this value – treating others as you wish to be treated – at a young age. As immigrants from the Philippines, Don's family moved to the Uptown neighborhood in Chicago in the early 1970s. The racially diverse community struggled with poverty, affordable housing, and gang activity.

But Don's family remained hopeful. They often opened their door to strangers in need. "My folks were always there to help people, and it rubbed off on me," Don said.

He also saw the positive work of several local charities in his neighborhood. They provided essentials like food and shelter and ran after-school programs, which Don attended. Many of these organizations and programs were likely supported by United Way, he said.

"Growing up, I saw that this is what United Way means, to come together and lift each other up and provide support," Don said.

Today, Don carries on his neighborhood's legacy of giving back. Whether as an Emmy award-winning broadcast news journalist, a civil rights attorney, or a labor activist, Don has always been a champion for workers. Over the decades, he has tirelessly advocated for his fellow Chicagoans to have equitable access to basic needs and rights.

This impactful work is only possible when we "stand together," Don said. United Way of Metro Chicago's partnership with the Chicago Federation of Labor, where Don is in his second term as Secretary-Treasurer, is a shining example of what's possible when we unite to help our neighbors. "We can't do this work alone, which is why our partnership with United Way is so critical," Don said.

In 2020, Don joined United Way to advocate for working families at the launch of United for ALICE in Springfield. Later that year, he helped launch the Chicago Labor COVID-19 Relief Fund. Don worked alongside United Way to support thousands of union members impacted by the pandemic at food distributions and with direct cash assistance. He saw firsthand the fear and anxiety in the eyes of recently furloughed workers – and the hope they carried after receiving a box of food.

"Our work through the Chicago Labor COVID-19 Relief Fund brought things into focus, that we are our sisters' and brothers' keepers," Don said. "We have to be there to help each other, and it was a great experience doing this with United Way."

Before his current role with the Chicago Federation of Labor, Don was a decades-long donor to United Way. When he was a news writer and producer at WLS-TV / ABC7, he started supporting United Way's annual campaign in 2015 as a member of the cabinet while representing his union NABET-CWA Local 41, where he would eventually serve as President.

Don also serves on the board for HIRE360, which began as Access United, a labor training program launched at United Way.

In honor of his commitment to strengthening communities across the region and serving as a champion for workers, Don received the 2024 Community Leadership Award at United Way of Metro Chicago's annual Stronger Neighborhoods Awards Luncheon on May 30, 2024.

The award recognizes Don's transformative work in Chicago – and the arc of a career dedicated to making his home a better place.

"[Receiving the 2024 Community Leadership Award] is very moving. I'm touched and humbled, but I don't do what I do for accolades," Don said. "I do what I do because I want to build a better city. I get to get up every day and try to make a difference, and that is powerful."

"When I was a journalist, I got to write stories that touched people's lives. At the Chicago Federation of Labor, I work with people who want to make a difference and provide hope. I want to build a more beautiful city, a city where people can thrive and reach their full potential."

PAYING IT FORWARD: HANNAH HAYES GIVES BACK

"Can you tell I love the Southland?" Hannah Hayes beams with pride as she talks about her hometown and the region that has shaped who she is today.

She was born and raised in Oak Lawn, a southwest suburb of Chicago. Her parents and grandparents were lifelong south siders. Her college career was also rooted in the south region where she enrolled at St. Xavier University for both her undergrad in business and later an MBA. She has worked in banking ever since and now serves as a senior vice president at Northern Trust. Both Hannah and Northern Trust are long-time supporters of United Way of Metro Chicago.

But Hannah's story, her pride for the Southland, grew out of tragedy. When she was just 11 years old, her family was in a fatal car accident. Her dad and brother died. While her mom recovered in the hospital for months, "extended family and the community lifted us up. They made us meals and took care of us," she said. "That made a lasting impression on me, how people should take care of one another and to be of service in any way is the greatest thing you can do."

Hannah has been giving back ever since, supporting her community just as they supported her so many years ago. When a friend who worked for United Way of Metro Chicago approached her about joining the South-Southwest Suburban Regional Board, she knew this was a way to continue investing in the region that she loves.

"I had been a United Way donor since my first job in 1988, and I knew it was a great organization," Hannah said. "When I got the chance to help the Southland through United Way's regional board, I jumped at the opportunity."

Ten years later, Hannah is in her first year serving as the board chair. She's focusing on "continuing to do the amazing work that the board has done," she said. "I'm energized and inspired by my fellow board members because every day they're looking at how they can help the Southland and make our community thrive. I am in awe of them and want to make sure I continue their work and their legacy."

The board's hard work can be seen in action every year at April Food Day, a massive food drive that collects nearly 100,000 pounds of food to restock pantry shelves throughout the south suburbs. The event also includes an awards luncheon to recognize the impact of local leaders committed to supporting food security for our neighbors in the Southland.

"No one should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from, and too many people do. One in five families are experiencing food insecurity, according to the Greater Chicago Food Depository, and we need to change that," Hannah said. "April Food Day collects as much as we can and restocks pantries, getting food where it needs to be and fighting hunger."

"April Food Day is a life-changing event. When you see people and communities come together and all that food helping our neighbors, it's very impactful," she added.

Supporting food security through April Food Day is just one of the many initiatives United Way is leading in the Southland, Hannah said. United Way's place-based investment through the Neighborhood Network Initiative expanded in the south suburbs this past year, with new Networks launching in Ford Heights/Chicago Heights, Harvey, and Park Forest/Richton Park. We also increased our investment in the existing Blue Island/Robbins Neighborhood Network. "There are so many great things happening through United Way's work in the Southland," Hannah said.

"I love the Southland. I want it to be strong. I want it to thrive. I want it to be a go-to destination for anybody who wants to live there," Hannah said. "I want people to love it as much as I do because we have such rich diversity of people and neighborhoods and art and food. I just want the world to know it." ●

COMCAST ADVANCES DIGITAL EQUITY

United Way of Metro Chicago and Comcast are helping get more Cook County residents online and connected to essential resources.

Bridging the digital divide is crucial for building thriving communities. For more than a decade, supporting its local communities to advance digital equity has been one of Comcast's top priorities. Comcast continues to accelerate this work through Project UP, the company's comprehensive $1 billion initiative to advance digital equity and help build a future of unlimited possibilities. Comcast has been a longstanding partner with United Way and continues to share its resources and offer solutions to closing the digital divide that furthers its commitment to the communities the company serves.

Comcast's Internet Essentials, a key component of Project UP, provides low-cost, high-speed internet service to eligible low-income households. Since it launched in 2011, the program has helped more than 10 million Americans – 1.9 million in Illinois – connect to broadband at home. Comcast continues to deepen its impact through the program by partnering with United Way of Metro Chicago and our Neighborhood Networks in Cicero and Brighton Park.

"We know that access to the internet, along with the tools and information necessary to participate and succeed in today's increasingly digital world, are crucial to closing the digital divide," said Jourdan Sorrell, Comcast's regional senior manager of external affairs. "Comcast is proud to continue our partnership with United Way and the Neighborhood Networks to help more Chicagoans harness the power of the internet."

Through the partnership, Comcast is providing information about Internet Essentials and the federal Affordable Connectivity Program, which provides eligible low-income households up to $30 a month toward the cost of Internet service, to Parent Mentors and residents in Cicero and Brighton Park. Parent Mentors serve as a trusted resource for other parents and families in the community, and they can help residents learn digital literacy skills and get connected to high-speed internet at home.

Parent Mentors are also using new laptops donated by Comcast to enhance their own training and better serve residents in Cicero and Brighton Park.

"The laptops donated from Comcast are being used by Parent Mentors to connect to their weekly state trainings. This is helpful because some Parent Mentors do not have the devices needed for connectivity at home," said Elida Ortiz, director of the Cicero Community Collaborative, the nonprofit agency leading the work of the Cicero Neighborhood Network. "Our coordinators also use the laptops to complete reports and fill out FEMA applications to assist community members that have no access or could not maneuver the website."

Comcast will continue to deepen its commitment to digital equity through these partnerships in our Neighborhood Networks – and through the launch of additional Lift Zones. Lift Zones are WiFi-connected spaces in community centers where children can get online to do schoolwork and adults can get online to learn new digital skills, search for jobs, and access and array of services.

There are Lift Zones in 48 community centers across Chicago and more than 1,250 nationwide. Comcast is working with United Way and our nonprofit partners to identify additional Lift Zone locations in the city.

These impactful initiatives and our partnership with Comcast and Cicero Community Collaborative are helping bridge the digital divide. Together, we're committed to driving digital equity and ensuring that all residents are connected.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH: "UNITED WAY BECAME A PART OF ME"

Twenty years ago, Amy Attenberger donated $30 to United Way. In exchange, she wore jeans in the office for a month. Her gift was a part of Kimberly-Clark's employee giving campaign, benefiting their local United Way in northeast Wisconsin.

As a new employee of Kimberly-Clark, Amy was unfamiliar with United Way and unsure how her donation would make an impact. But her uncertainty was short-lived. "A community tour was the turning point," she said.

"I saw the many ways that United Way helped our community, and it just really touched me. I remember being almost in tears as we visited the Boys and Girls Club, a women's shelter, and a grief support group for children," she said. "I started to lean in a little bit more."

Amy leaned in a lot. United Way soon became her charity of choice, she said. "United Way became a part of me."

So much so that when Amy, her wife, and their four children moved to the Chicago region a little over two years ago, she signed on to lead Kimberly-Clark's employee giving campaign with United Way of Metro Chicago.

Kimberly-Clark had just relocated their office from Neenah, Wisconsin, to Chicago. Amy, now the director of omni-channel marketing for Kimberly-Clark, saw the campaign leader role as an opportunity to connect with her colleagues. Many of them were new – just like her two decades ago, when she was unfamiliar with Kimberly-Clark's longstanding partnership with United Way.

"With Kimberly-Clark's new presence in Chicago and nearly half of the employees in the Fulton Market office being new to the company, I saw an opportunity to be the bridge between our heritage of giving and the important role of building the 'why' behind the partnership with United Way to the folks new to Kimberly-Clark," Amy said.

Kimberly-Clark's history with United Way goes back more than 70 years. Nationally, in the last decade alone, Kimberly-Clark and its employees have contributed more than $65 million to United Way to improve lives and build stronger communities. All employee donations made through the annual campaign giving-portal are matched by Kimberly-Clark, dollar-for-dollar.

"Honoring history and cultivating partnerships is so important when you work in a 152-year-old company," Amy said. "For me and for my colleagues, it feels good to give back to the communities where we live and work, especially when doing so is directly aligned with our core Kimberly-Clark values: We care. We own. We act."

Amy embodies these core values. And she's committed to seeing the partnership with Kimberly-Clark and United Way of Metro Chicago grow. So much so that she's "raised her hand" to lead Kimberly-Clark's employee giving campaign for a second year.

"We're going to keep growing this new relationship with United Way of Metro Chicago and build this into something that is really strong," Amy said.

"Employee giving campaigns make an impact by rallying people around a shared cause that provides hometown support and helps us live out our values each and every day," she added. "We've already proven that the partnership between Kimberly-Clark and United Way is there. So let's just keep building."

GROWING GREATNESS IN CHICAGO: SCOTT SWANSON LEADS WITH PASSION AND PURPOSE

Scott Swanson first rode the Blue Line with his grandmother at age seven. They boarded the train at Harlem in Norwood Park on the northwest side of the city. Through the railcar window, Scott watched the different neighborhoods pass by as they made their way downtown.

These rides on the CTA – and his time exploring the city with his grandmother – became a formative part of Scott's future as a devoted Chicagoan.

"My grandmother was intellectually curious. She loved the city," Scott said on an episode of The Executives' Exchange podcast. "She wanted me to understand the neighborhoods, the nooks and crannies of the city, the history, and it got me very excited. I think those early days exploring the city with her ensured that Chicago and my future here became woven into my DNA."

Scott was raised in Tucson, Arizona, but visited Chicago frequently as a child. With both sets of grandparents and an extended family here, it was only a matter of time until Scott put down roots in the Windy City. After graduating from the University of Illinois with a degree in finance, he started his professional career at the accounting firm Arthur Andersen, where he met his wife, Rhonda. A few years later, he accepted a position at American National Bank, kickstarting a nearly 30-year career in banking.

For the last 11 years, Scott has served as president of PNC Bank in Illinois, leading PNC's overall growth strategy. During his tenure, he has been especially proud of building a team of effective leaders and establishing PNC as the official bank for the Chicago Bears. "As a multi-generational Chicagoan and a deep-seated Bears fan, this partnership means a lot to me," Scott said.

Driving positive change in his community also means a lot to Scott, both personally and professionally. Under his leadership, PNC's signature philanthropic initiative, PNC Grow Up Great®, has invested more than $16 million in bilingual early education initiatives at community-based organizations across the Chicago region. He serves as a member and in leadership roles for several civic committees and nonprofit boards, including the Adler Planetarium, the Commercial Club of Chicago, and United Way of Metro Chicago, where he has been a board member for over a decade. His commitment to United Way goes back even further. Scott has been a United Way donor for 35 years.

"In Chicago, the business community recognizes the value of an organization like United Way," Scott said. "PNC's employees come together through United Way campaigns to support an organization that is a key steward of bringing together businesses, government, and agencies in communities to really drive sustainable change."

Scott is deepening his commitment to United Way by serving as campaign chair for the 2024-25 fiscal year. He's ready to "raise the bar and maximize impact," he said. "As this fiscal year's campaign chair, I'm going to take on the challenge of bringing in more resources and engaging a broader constituency. We have wonderful companies, individuals, and organizations that have given year after year and continue to support United Way. They very much recognize that together an investment in United Way will have a more significant impact than any one individual could have alone."

Once a small child on the Blue Line traveling across the city with his grandmother, now a prominent business leader, philanthropist, husband, and father of four, Scott's love for Chicago is undeniable. Leading United Way's employee giving in the year ahead is just the next step in his work to create a better, stronger Chicago.

"I'm a multi-generational Chicagoan. I think we're the greatest city in the world, but we have disparity," Scott said. "For us to truly realize our potential as a city, as a region, we need to make sure we find ways to help advance opportunities for all of those who are disadvantaged and under-resourced."

"I see United Way as the most effective organization at driving sustainable change so that all neighborhoods and all communities in the Chicago region are realizing a level of opportunity, a quality of life that is higher and sustainable, and have access to resources that create environments where people want to live and can thrive."

“

OVER THE COURSE OF MY CAREER, I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE OUR COMMUNITY FROM MANY DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES. THERE HAS BEEN NO TIME MORE THAN NOW WHERE THE GOOD WORK AND LEADERSHIP OF UNITED WAY HAS BEEN MORE NEEDED.

DAVID C. BLOWERS
VICE CHAIRMAN OF NORTHERN TRUST
CHAIR OF UNITED WAY'S 2023/2024 CAMPAIGN

VIEW OF DOWNTOWN CHICAGO
FROM THE NORTH

2023/2024 TOP 25 CORPORATE PARTNERS

1 BMO			
2 KPMG	3 pwc	4 ITW	5 Exelon ComEd An Exelon Company
6 Deloitte.	7 Nicor Gas	8 Northern Trust	9 Costco Wholesale
10 Peoples Gas We Keep Life Moving	11 EY Building a better working world	12 Baird	13 Aon
14 Fifth Third Bank	15 Sargent & Lundy LLC	16 Kellanova	17 Caterpillar
18 PNC	19 Burns McDonnell	20 Ford	21 Kimberly-Clark
22 Harris Associates Oakmark Funds	23 Raymond James	24 Conagra Brands	25 Sidley

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211 METRO CHICAGO EXECUTIVE BOARD

211 Metro Chicago
City of Chicago
Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
Illinois Department of Human Services
Polk Bros. Foundation
Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation
Sinai Chicago
The Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH)
United Way of Metro Chicago

211 METRO CHICAGO ADVISORY BOARD

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AgeOptions
Alliance to End Homelessness in Suburban Cook County
Battered Womens Network
Chicago Housing Authority
City of Chicago, Department of Family & Support Services
City of Chicago, Department of Public Health
City of Chicago, Office of the Mayor
Cook County Bureau of Economic Development
Cook County Department of Public Health
Greater Chicago Food Depository
HANA Center
Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
Illinois Partners
Momentum Consulting Group Ltd.
New Life Centers
People Matter
Safer Foundation
Thresholds
United Way of Metro Chicago
University of Chicago, Inclusive Economy Lab

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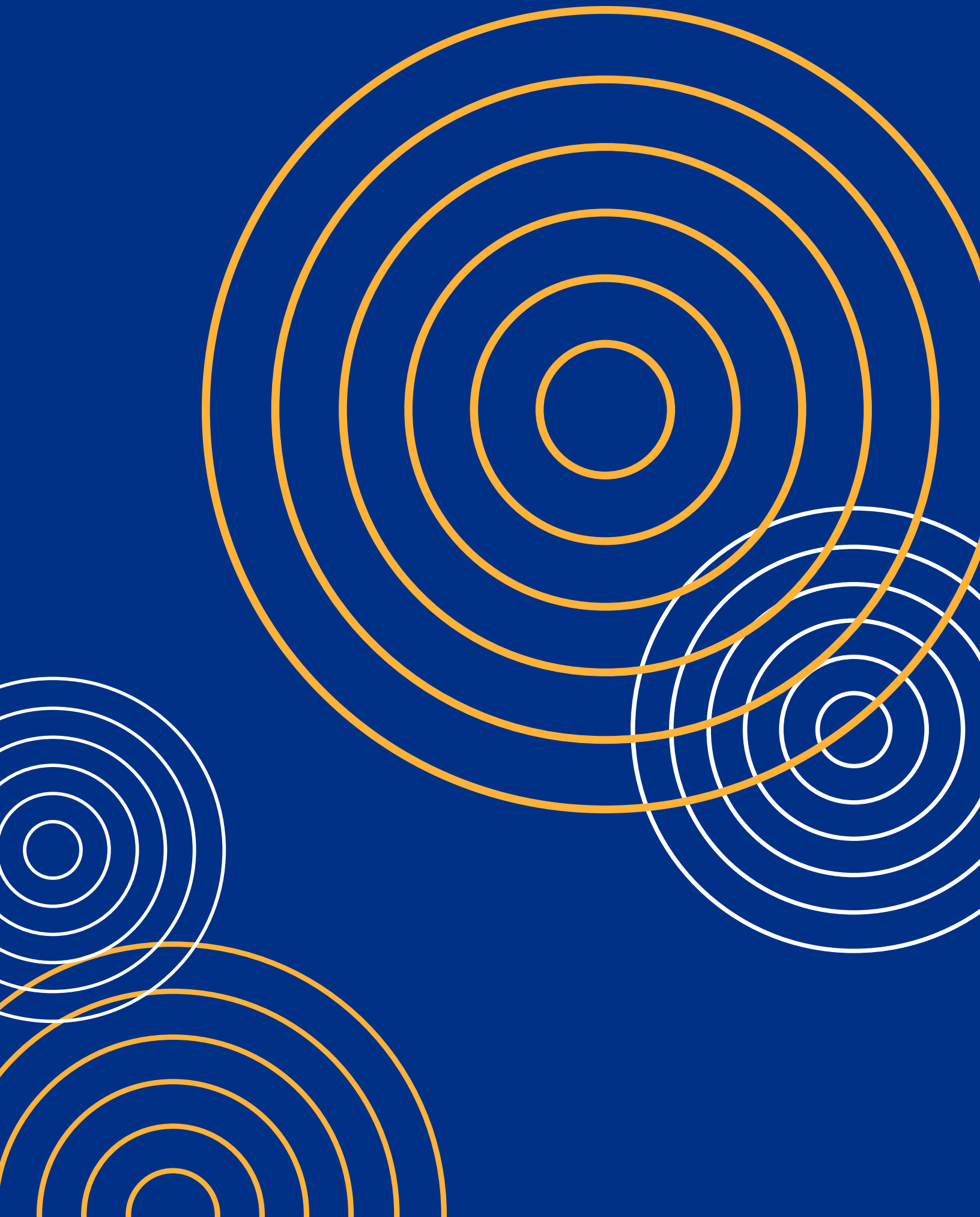
WE'RE WORKING HARD NOW SO THAT SOMEDAY YOUR ZIP CODE DOESN'T DETERMINE YOUR ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION, FOOD, HEALTH CARE, AND JOBS. SOMEDAY EVERYONE WILL HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO THRIVE. UNTIL THEN, UNITED WAY IS HERE AND WE'RE COMMITTED TO SEEING THIS PROMISING FUTURE, TO MAKING THAT FUTURE A REALITY. THERE'S A LOT OF WORK LEFT TO DO. LET'S KEEP GOING.

SEAN GARRETT
PRESIDENT & CEO
UNITED WAY OF METRO CHICAGO

VIEW OF DOWNTOWN CHICAGO
FROM THE WEST



United Way
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