



UNITED WAY
Steele County

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

**20
24**

OUR MISSION

**We unite our communities to address critical needs, foster equity,
and empower individuals for lasting change.**

OUR VISION

**Steele County will be a thriving community where every individual is
empowered to succeed, supported by a culture of engagement, collaboration,
equity, and compassion.**



OUR SOCIALS



unitedwaysteelecounty.org



507-455-1180



@UWSteeleCounty

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Karen Duncan, Board Sec.



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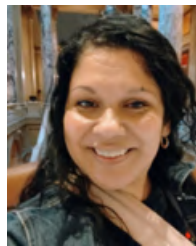
Grace Hannover



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Our Staff



**Annette Duncan
President**



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Operations Coordinator**



Christina Wetmore

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**Pearl Rendon
Youth Support
Coordinator**



**Madeline Bruessel
PCN Coordinator**



Daelynn

Theo

Abbie

2024 UNITED WAY LEADERS IN GIVING

Tocqueville Society

(\$10,000+)

Jeff Fetters

President's Circle

(\$9,999-\$5,000)

David Thomas

Gregg & Anne Draeger

Annette & Bryan Duncan

Paul Enter

Michael & Nancy Keller

Lonna Lysne

(1) Anonymous Donor

Steele County Champions

(\$4,999-\$3,000)

Cheryl & Allen Arnold

Tyler Borst

Tom and Denise Dufresne

Barry Gillespie and Patty Huset

Steven and Barb Judd

Michael and Joanne Kerr

Otto Nelson

Ryker & Cheryl Richardson

Jim Wolesky

(2) Anonymous Donors

Leadership Society

(\$2,999-\$1,000)

Julie Anderson

Avonne Anderson

William & Anne Beer

David & Sharleen Berg

Alyson & Jacob Bowman

Brian & Kari Bunkers

Andy & Jessie Cowell

William & Mary Cronin

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Barry & Jesse Hess

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Mark & Renee Hood

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Rachel & Matthew Peterson

Thomas & Shelly Peterson

Sean & Hilary Pick

David & Kim Ramsey

Irwin Reynaldo Martinez

Jane & Brandon Rolloff

Ann Ruehling

Dann & Susan Rypka

Jeremy Saufferer

Catherine Schauweker

Cynthia & Keith Scheid

Michael & Diane Schoeneman

Nicole & Chris Schulz

Lawrence & Billie Schwierjohann

Amy & Shane Shornock

Richard & Carol Slieter

Karen & Joshua Spielman

Bradley & Clare Steffen

Leroy & Judy Svenby

Kristin & Roger Warehime

Lori & John Weisenburger

Scott Westbrook &

Kellyanna Moore

Christina & Jeff Wetmore

(15) Anonymous Donors



For the complete list of donors in 2024,
scan the QR code below or go to
unitedwaysteelecounty.org!



"My children have attended SACSO for several years, and I have witnessed their growth both socially and academically while enjoying their time there. SACSO consistently provides high-quality care and a safe environment. The staff are supportive, offering excellent tutoring, homework assistance, and reliable transportation. Thank you to all the foundations for your continued support of SACSO!" - Parent

Thank you, donors, for your generosity!



2024 FUNDED PROGRAMS & SERVICES

UNITED WAY INITIATIVES & PROGRAMMING

Healthy Community

Helping young people realize their full potential

- **Children's Remedial Fund** - Children's Healthcare Stipends
- **HealthFinders Collaborative** - Medical, Dental Services, and Mental Health
- **Healthy Seniors** - Neighbor to Neighbor
- **Let's Smile, Inc.** - Clinical Dental and Oral Health Education
- **SEMCAC** - Senior Nutrition and Caregiver Advocate
- **Spero** - Sage Enrichment Center
- **Alliance for Greater Equity** - Operations Coordinator
- **Health and Happiness Project** - Online Mental Health Resources
- **Ride United** - Delivery of Community Meals
- **SingleCare** - Prescription Discount Card Program
- **SCCHY and PCN** - Youth Substance Use Prevention
- **Teen Mental Health** - Training, Support, and Social Activity Nights

Youth Opportunity

Improving health and wellbeing for all

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters** - Community Mentoring and REACH Mentoring
- **Blooming Prairie Youth Club** - Youth Development
- **Cedar Valley Services** - Preschool Transportation
- **Grandparents for Education** - K-12 Tutoring
- **Medford Public Schools** - Medford Tiger Club
- **NRHEG Public Schools** - Panther Preschool (Ellendale)
- **Somali American Cultural Society of Owatonna** - Homework Help and Tutoring
- **Workforce Development** - SteeleCoWorks
- **Born Learning Trails** - Educational trails that promote early learning & activity
- **Dolly Parton's Imagination Library** - Free book delivered monthly up to age 5
- **Internship Program** - Paid student skill building internships
- **Lantern** - (Text) Educational Activities and Local Community Events Resource
- **Made in Owatonna Days** - Youth Workplace Experience Collaborative
- **Owatonna Opportunity Scholarship Partner** - Volunteer Support
- **Stuff the Bus** - Annual School Supply Collection
- **U.P.L.I.F.T.** - Truancy intervention and Youth Support
- **Youth Access to Work** - Transportation Solutions

Community Resiliency

Addressing urgent needs today for a better tomorrow

- **Crisis Resource Center** - Domestic Violence and Abused Children's Program
- **Exchange Club Center for Family Unity** - Parent Mentoring and Supervised Visitation
- **211 Call Center** - 24/7 All Language Resource Call Center
- **Volunteers United** - Capacity Building Nonprofit Support Network
- **Disaster Recovery** - CAER Partner and Long-Term Recovery Team



Financial Security

Creating a stronger financial future for every generation

- **Cedar Valley Services** - Competitive Placement
- **Community Pathways** - Furnishing Hope, Marketplace, and Unique Finds
- **The Lighthouse of Southern MN** - Housing Stabilization
- **Transitional Housing of S.C.** - Transitional Housing and Eviction Prevention
- **Workforce Development** - Job Readiness Counselor/Universal Client
- **Adopt-A-Family** - Christmas Gift Collection and Distribution
- **Affordable Housing** - Landlord Summits, Housing Triage, and Advocacy
- **Driver's Education** - Adult ESL Support
- **Legal Kiosk** - Self Serve Legal Station
- **Tax Preparation** - Free VITA Tax Preparation
- **United for Childcare** - Childcare provider support, resources, and advocacy

The blue box indicates that these are internal United Way Initiatives and/or collaborations.





2024

MOST GENEROUS WORKPLACES

2024 Most Generous Workplace Campaigns

1. Federated Insurance Company
2. Viracon, Inc.
3. Wenger Corporation
4. Mayo Clinic Health System - Owatonna
5. ISD 761 - Owatonna Public Schools
6. US Bank - Owatonna
7. Daikin Applied
8. Steele County Free Fair
9. Napa Distribution Center
10. Owatonna Public Utilities
11. Profinium Bank
12. West Bank
13. Bremer Bank
14. CliftonLarsonAllen
15. Cash Wise Foods
16. ERA Gillespie Real Estate
17. Gopher Sport
18. Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
19. Keen Bank
20. Steele County Employees

2024 Most Generous Small Business Gifts

1. Climate by Design, Inc.
2. Owatonna Bus Company
3. Premier Bank
4. Holland Family Dental & Diane Holland, RE/MAX Venture
5. Gandy Company
5. Modern Metal
5. Prairie Ridge Orthodontics
5. Steele-Waseca Co-op Electric
9. VIBES
10. Ameriprise Financial Services - Dean Velzke
10. Corporate Recognition, Inc.
10. Evapco, Inc.
10. Jensen Agency
10. Spherion
15. Bushel Boy
16. Honest -1 Auto Care
17. American Family Insurance - Jessica Gruenwald Agency
18. Be Still Wellness Center
19. Aurora Faith In Action
20. Meger Funeral Home



4 Ways to Give:

- 1) Scan QR Code
- 2) Text GIVEUNITED to 53-555
- 3) Venmo @uwsteelecounty 
- 4) Mail to: P.O. Box 32, Owatonna, MN 55060



"The eviction prevention assistance I received was invaluable. I am now able to pay my rent on time. I work full time for a day care center. I have just been approved to purchase a new home." - TH Client

2024 365 SMALL BUSINESS CIRCLE

The Goal: To engage with and empower local businesses while providing new and innovative ways for small businesses to support their community. Our belief is that together, our nonprofit organizations and local business community can impart lasting change in our communities.

- ABC Seamless Siding Owatonna LLC
- American Family Insurance - Jessica Gruenwald Agency
- Ameriprise Financial Services - Dean P. Velzke
- Be Still Wellness Center
- Corporate Recognition
- Express Employment Professionals
- Evapco, Inc
- Gandy Company
- Holland Family Dental/Diane Holland, RE/MAX Venture
- Honest-1 Auto Care
- Jensen Agency
- Modern Metal Products
- Prairie Ridge Orthodontics
- Premier Banks - Owatonna
- Spherion
- Steele Waseca Co-op Electric
- VIBES

"I like going to Clubhouse because it is a safe place to socialize with people who also have Mental Illness. There are lots of fun activities and no one criticizes or judges me. Everyone enjoys sharing Monday lunches together. The money that the United Way provides funds many of the activities that I attend and enjoy."

- Sage Clubhouse Participant

To learn more about 365 Small Business, Scan the QR code!

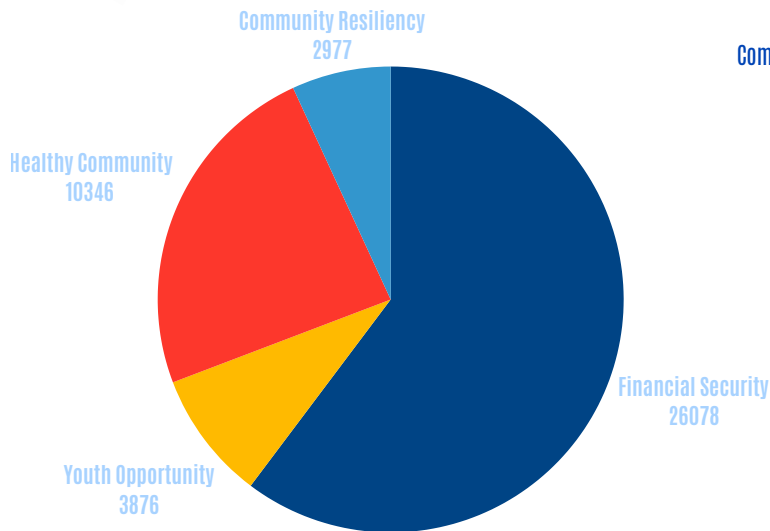


2024 STEELE COUNTY RESULTS

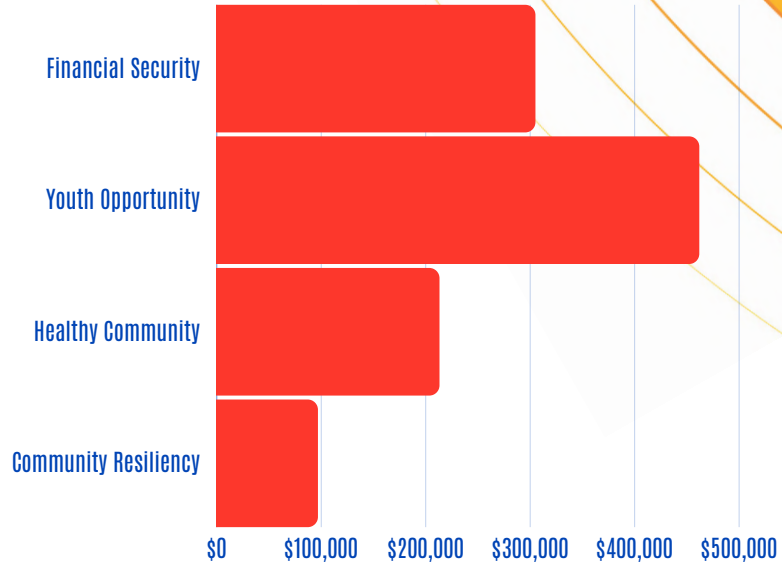


Individuals Served

In 2024, **43,277** individuals were served within Steele County.



Funding Grants and Initiatives



Where funds were recieved from:

- Campaign* \$785,598
- Grants and Contracts \$435,733

*Raised in 2023 for 2024

Programs: 81%
Fundraising: 17%
Operations: 2%

“Richard had been out of work for several months, tirelessly searching for the right opportunity but facing one challenge after another. When he finally secured a job through a temp agency, there was still one obstacle standing in his way: he needed work boots and appropriate clothing to begin. That’s when Workforce Development, through the United Way of Steele County’s Universal Customer Funds, stepped in to help. With their support, Richard was able to get the essential work boots and clothing he needed to start his new job. Three months later, Richard returned to the office with incredible news: the company had hired him full-time. Not only that, but he had been promoted to second shift lead—a role he truly enjoys. He is making a sustaining wage with full benefits. He has secured his own housing and is supporting himself. Richard’s story is one of resilience, and it’s a reminder of how the right support at the right time can change a life. We’re thrilled to see him thriving and look forward to watching his continued success.” - Workforce Development Staff

VOLUNTEERS UNITED



Our purpose is to increase the capacity for nonprofits to achieve their missions in Steele County and to fulfill the desire of individuals within our community to lend a helping hand in a variety of different capacities.



“Big Brothers Big Sisters is a wonderful addition to the REACH school curriculum. He adores his Big and this relationship has helped him build trust and gain confidence! Grayson’s anxiety level has lowered significantly since being a part of REACH. He can now go out to eat with his family and order his own food. This was something he previously couldn’t do because of his anxiety.” - OPS Staff

GRANT FUNDED PROGRAMING



STEELE COUNTY COALITION
- FOR HEALTHY YOUTH -

Empowering youth to choose a chemical free lifestyle through education, advocacy, and community engagement. The areas of focus include youth mental health, prevention/reduction of underage drinking, marijuana use, tobacco/vaping use, and prescription drug misuse/abuse. Programs and services include:

- Advocacy and public policy work
- Community messaging
- Educational presentations
- Opioid prevention, intervention, and recover
- Red ribbon week
- Responsible beverage server training



Established in 2021 through a grant funded by the Department of Human Services Behavioral Health Division and housed within the Blooming Prairie Public Schools. The program’s main goal is to reduce the monthly rate of underage substance misuse and delay the age of first use. This is achieved with prevention efforts using Positive Community Norms. By focusing on the healthy choices BPHS students make, we can help deter students from making unhealthy choices. By working to close the gap with use rates and students’ perceptions, and by showing the majority of students don’t drink alcohol in a typical month, we can reduce underage consumption and delay the age of first use. BPAC also supports Hand in Hand Club.



In 2024, United Way of Steele County launched UPLIFT, a pilot program aimed at reducing barriers to school attendance and supporting student success in Blooming Prairie, Medford, and Owatonna. Focused primarily on 7th-12th graders and is funded by the Office of Justice Programs through a Youth Intervention Program grant, UPLIFT connects students and families with a dedicated Youth Support Coordinator to identify challenges and create a plan for academic success. This referral-based, voluntary program is laying the groundwork for a long-term solution to chronic absenteeism—and helping youth build a path toward graduation and beyond.



United is the Way to Impact



UNITED WAY
Steele County

“When I came to the Lighthouse of Southern MN, I was working on getting my kids back. I was able to get my two boys back as I completed treatment and worked with my CPS workers. Lighthouse supported me along the way, providing the resources that were needed to succeed. I was also pregnant while at Lighthouse and they helped me get to the hospital and bring the baby home to a warm welcome home. I am not in the Jeremiah program which helped me secure housing while providing support, while raising my boys and now going to school. I am forever thankful to the Lighthouse staff. Because of them I had a positive happy birth experience. I have felt loved, supported, and peaceful. I will forever be thankful to the Lighthouse of Southern MN for changing my life and my children’s lives.” - Lighthouse Guest

Tickets \$40

*Presented by
United Way of Steele County*



ALL IN FOR
**Steele
County**



November 2nd, 2025
Mineral Springs Brewery
2:00PM- 5:00PM

Music
Food-Drinks
Casino Games
Raffles