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# PASSING THE TORCH AT UWWC

**By Ruben Garza, Executive Director, United Way of Windham County**

It is with humility and utmost respect for my predecessor, Carmen Derby, that I am accepting the position of Executive Director of United Way of Windham County. My thanks go out to the staff and Board of Directors for this opportunity. Carmen has been a great leader, mentor, and coach; never failing to support and nourish my professional growth.

From Tropical Storm Irene, the Brooks Fire, and the creation of Windham County Dental Center, Carmen's tenure as Executive Director was full of challenges and opportunities that she navigated with poise, determination, and an immutable sense of humor. Carmen's new endeavor as Business Manager at Windham County Dental Center will no doubt have as large of an impact on our community as her seventeen-year impact at United Way of Windham County. However much as she will be missed as our leader, it is a joyful opportunity for Carmen to stay close to us while following her personal mission to ensure that neither social position nor circumstance disadvantages anyone from their full health potential.

With a deep sense of history, I envision the following years at United Way of Windham County to be guided by the mission, vision, and values articulated in our newly completed Strategic Plan. It is within that understanding and direction that I will bring our organization in alignment with the needs of our rapidly diversifying community. As new partnerships are forged and old partnerships strengthened, United Way of Windham County can and will play a role in supporting the equitable care of new and existing members of our community and increase the capacity of our stakeholders and partners to improve the lives of all children and families. It is my devoted mission to live up to the standards set by my predecessors, throughout our 63-year history in Windham County.

With transitioning leadership amidst challenging times, I ask for your continued support and encouragement. United Way of Windham County believes in your commitment to champion the priorities reflected in our long-standing mission: to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of community!

With gratitude,

**Ruben R. Garza**

**Executive Director, United Way of Windham County**

# The Collaborative Care Package Project

## 12 Local Organizations Collaborate on Wellness Care Packages for the Community



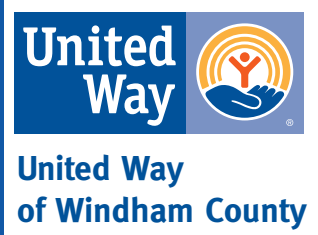
tions, Out in the Open, The Root Social Justice Center, The Susu Healing Collective, United Way of Windham County, and West River Valley Thrives.

The items and experiences included in the care packages fall into two categories aimed at improving and maintaining both physical and mental health and wellness: direct COVID prevention and connection to self and community.

Packages went out to over 1300 individuals, including all currently incarcerated people at the Southern State Correctional Facility in Springfield, Vermont.

Brattleboro, VT — United Way of Windham County released funds in the amount of \$90,322, via a Vermont Department of Health Grant, to eleven area organizations in support of the Collaborative Care Package Project. The participating organizations were: The AIDS Project of Southern Vermont, The Brattleboro Community Justice Center, Brooks Memorial Library, Community Asylum Seekers Project, Deerfield Valley Community Partnership, Elnu Abenaki, Greater Falls Connec-

Approximately two-thirds of the released funds stayed in Windham County. First, by supporting the labor of BIPOC individuals at the organizations working on this project. Secondly, by purchasing items for the packages from Vermont- and Windham County-based businesses including: Antidote Books, Darn Tough, Everyone’s Books, Megan Ray Baehr, Shapeshifters, The Susu CommUNITY Farm, Tiny Pony Apothecary, Warp | Weft, and others.



### Scan Here to Donate to the Community Fund



# United Way of Windham County Strategic Plan Highlights

# 2021-2026



## United Way of Windham County's Values Statement

**United Way of Windham County values hope, diversity, equity, inclusion, innovation, and adaptability.** These core values shape the organization's approach to its work and align with its commitment to the community. United Way of Windham County strives to represent the community as a whole, connect resources to the greatest need, empower grassroots efforts, and hold a big picture, forward-thinking vision to guide its work.

## United Way of Windham County's Role in the Community

**In the coming five years, guided by Community Impact principles, United Way of Windham County will act as a:**

**Community Convener** bringing together and mobilizing cross-sector organizations for conversation and action in response to community needs

**Fiscal Partner** to Windham County's mission-driven organizations as funder of programs and initiatives, fund holder of specific purpose funds, fiscal agent for new community initiatives and organizations, and lead applicant or convener for complex or collaborative funding applications

**Resource Hub** connecting the community to information and resources to help maintain and improve health and well-being

**Advocate** in order raise awareness of issues and engage stakeholders in efforts related to publicity, resources, policy, and action

**Leader** in response to crisis in the community, by facilitating immediate crisis response, organizing volunteers, and developing resources to promote long-term recovery

**Provider** of community programs that respond to a community-identified need and directly serve members of the Windham County community



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# Program Goals and Objectives

## Health Equity

**Goal:** Improve health equity for Windham County residents by ensuring social position or socially-defined circumstances do not disadvantage anyone from attaining their full health potential.

- Continue to support United Way of Windham County's flagship program, the Windham County Dental Center, as it transitions to nonprofit status and continues service delivery through outreach, communication, and governance support
- Pursue and support funding for collaborative projects that advance community health equity goals.
- Leverage lessons learned from COVID-19 pandemic to drive progress towards health equity

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Goal:** Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating welcoming communities and workplaces.

- Continually analyze United Way of Windham County's workplace culture and identity and make necessary changes to ensure internal workplace is diverse, equitable, and inclusive among staff, Board members, and volunteers
- Collaborate with community partners to ensure diversity in workplace culture by providing training and coaching initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Explore and respond to opportunities to support community-driven initiatives focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

**Goal:** Increase diversity, equity, and inclusion by creating welcoming communities and workplaces.

## Community Partnerships and Capacity-Building

**Goal:** Increase the capacity of Windham County's mission-driven organizations to respond to community needs by initiating, cultivating, and supporting community partnerships.

- Serve as fiscal agent for mission-driven organizations as needed
- Solicit, provide, and manage funding and funds that respond to specific community needs and align with United Way of Windham County's focus on equitable outcomes
- Convene partners and facilitate nonprofit response to crisis when it arises.

**VISION:** United Way of Windham County improves lives and builds stronger communities by focusing on Health, Opportunity, Prosperity, and Education—HOPE. We unite individuals, businesses, and organizations to create long-lasting, measurable change. *Join us in this important work by donating today!*





**Windham County Dental Center** is busier than ever as we move through 2021. The need for a Dental Center that truly serves every Windham County Community Member has become appar-

ent in the past couple of years, and as such, Carmen Derby has stepped down as Executive Director of United Way of Windham County, and takes the reigns at the Dental Center as our Business Director. Exceptional patient care and expansion of the Windham County Dental Center are two of her main objectives. Here is Carmen's announcement:

It has been my great honor, over the last 12 years, to have held the position of Executive Director at United Way of Windham County, and to be employed by this organization for over 17 years and counting.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the Executive Director position is the individuals that I have connected with in this community. Engaging in conversations with small and large business owners, town officials, donors, local and statewide nonprofits, and all community members gave me the perspective that was necessary to lead United Way of Windham County.

Bringing folks together to determine a solution to a community issue is so very satisfying. And so, it is also my great

pleasure to announce that I will be taking on the role of Business Director at Windham County Dental Center, a program of United Way of Windham County, to lead the practice through upcoming growing stages.

Windham County Dental Center is only two years old and growing rapidly. In the Summer of 2022, in partnership with Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, we will be relocating to a new facility where we will be able to offer expanded care. I am very excited for this growth opportunity and that I will continue my working relationship with United Way of Windham County.

Through new and expanded leadership at United Way of Windham County, and Windham County Dental Center, respectively, I hope that you will continue to join us in moving their respective missions forward.



Sincerely,

**Carmen Derby**, Business Director  
Windham County Dental Center

**Scan Here to Donate to  
Windham County Smiles**



In 2020, our **Kids in Coats** fund donated directly to our public school systems in Windham County so they could use the funds to provide much needed winter gear to their students who would not be able to access these warm clothes without assistance. While this was a change from the usual physical voucher system, we felt it was a safe and responsible alternative intended to be supportive of our local schools and their expanded outdoor programming. Our teachers and school staff did an incredible job reimagining their worlds and working diligently to keep our children safe.

Our communities are wonderfully connected and interdependent. Please join us as we work to respond to the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors. Growing the Kids in Coats fund is important every year, and this year, it is absolutely critical. We can't do this work without you, and we are, as always, grateful to all of our donors, partners, and community members who help us to rebuild our communities into the strong, vibrant, and equitable places they need to be. Scan this QR Code to give to our Kids in Coats fund!

**Scan Here to Donate  
to Kids in Coats**



# THANK YOU

FOR CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND INSPIRING HOPE FOR A BETTER TOMORROW

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