



UNITED WAY OF WINDHAM COUNTY 2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

UNITED IS THE WAY WE CAN CREATE LASTING CHANGE

From enhancing health and education to empowering livelihoods and building community resilience, we connect people with possibilities that change lives. Together, we mobilize communities to action to close gaps and open opportunities so everyone can thrive.



United Way
of Windham County

DEAR WINDHAM COUNTY,

As I enter my third year as Chairperson of the Board of Directors at United Way of Windham County, I am incredibly proud of the good work UWWC continues to do to benefit our community. I have such gratitude for the trust placed in me and the other members of the board who give their time, talent, and knowledge year after year. Their contributions are many and profound.

In the spirit of gratitude, I want to take a moment to honor the years of service of our outgoing board members, Rohan Providence and James Gay. Their dedication, vision, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in guiding our organization. We thank them for their invaluable service and commitment to the mission of United Way of Windham County. Their legacy will continue to inspire us as we move forward.

We are lucky to be led by our wonderful Executive Director, Ruben Garza, who embodies the values of our organization. Ruben is the engine that drives UWWC's mission to maximize the impact of its programs in our communities. In particular, I want to highlight his work focusing on dental health equity - providing access to affordable and compassionate healthcare options for underserved and unique communities such as our refugee and asylum-seeking populations. The vision for a more prosperous community is imperative in welcoming new families to Windham County and to remove traditional barriers such as transportation, language, and cultural differences. However, we understand that more work needs to be done so that more people, across Windham County, might have access to dental health care.

Additionally, our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program continues to focus on providing resources to jumpstart our community members journey to financial literacy and accessing resources that meets their aspirations of debt relief, credit building, and home ownership. In 2025, we hope to expand our programs to bring more financial literacy programs into our communities and work places to further strengthen the resilience and promise of a successful and well-rounded financial future for underserved individuals and families in Windham County.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, please accept our heartfelt appreciation for your continued support of United Way of Windham County. We wish all a safe and happy holiday season and best wishes in the new year.



Sincerely,

Melissa Swim
Board Chairperson
United Way of Windham County

HOUSING STABILITY

In 2024, we are faced with new and alarming housing trends; safety, stability, and affordability are present in everyone's minds and hearts. While long-term sustainable solutions are being implemented by local and statewide agencies, immediate needs are also being addressed by dedicated professionals that live and work right here in Windham County. Our Community Impact Committee, in limited partnership with Southeastern Vermont Community Action and Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing assisted numerous families obtain critical resources such as rental assistance, eviction prevention, and housing counseling. The efforts of our committee and community partners stabilized individual households and upheld the promise of community that Windham County is so deservedly known for.



ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND ARTS

Early childhood education has been a focal point of UWWC's community impact for many years – being staunch sponsors and supporters of the Early Learning Express. This year, we expanded our scope - partnering with Next Stage Arts to increase musical arts and cultural access to all Windham County families. Inclusivity and understanding of diverse cultural celebrations and artistic expression, regardless of socioeconomic situation, is important in fostering a sense of belonging and place. When telling the story of United Way of Windham County in 2024, we will proudly say that our understanding of what feeds a community's spirit includes joy, laughter, and yes – dancing!



HEALTH EQUITY/JUSTICE

In its final year, our multi-year Health Disparities Grant, which includes our Charitable Dental Care program, was recognized by all involved parties (primarily the VT. Dept. of Health, ECDC, and CASP) as a resounding success. **In total, United Way of Windham County secured close to \$350k to address health disparities in the refugee, immigrant, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and underserved rural populations. With a caseload of more than 100 individuals, the Charitable Dental Care Fund facilitated more than 300 dental appointments, partnered with 11 different dental practices, and undeniably increased the quality of life of all those involved.** Our truest gratitude goes out to the staff and volunteers at ECDC's Multicultural Center, Sarah Pugh and Dr. Candice Taylor-Diallo.

GRATITUDE TO BOARD MEMBERS

“As we celebrate our successes, I want to take a moment to honor the contributions of our outgoing board members, Rohan Providence and James Gay. “Prov” and Jim have served on our board for a combined amount of time of 10 years. In that decade, they led UWWC through a global pandemic and through a leadership change. Without their dutiful leadership and mentorship, I would not have success in my role as I enjoy now. My very personal thanks to Jim and Prov! May you have watered, be watered in your future endeavors!”

UNITED IS THE WAY

As we embark on a new year, we are excited about the opportunities to expand our existing programs and deepen our impact by evolving to the needs of Windham County. We will lead by remaining emotionally neutral and honest when confronting the obstacles of tomorrow, while also being proactive when searching for solutions. We will be accountable – yet demand innovation from ourselves. We believe that **United is the Way** forward!



THANK YOU

We acknowledge and thank each of our donors, volunteers, and community partners! Together, we are building a stronger, healthier, and more equitable Windham County. **Thank you for your continued support and for believing in the power of unity and collaboration.**

Respectfully,

Ruben R. Garza

**Executive Director
United Way of Windham County**



URGENT: KIDS IN COATS NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT TO CONTINUE HELPING LOCAL CHILDREN

At United Way of Windham County, we are proud of the difference we make in the lives of our community's elementary school-aged kids through our Kids in Coats program. Each year, we ensure that local school children have the warmth and protection they need to thrive during Vermont's harsh winters. This program provides brand-new, winter-appropriate coats and outerwear to kids in all of Windham County Supervisory Unions.

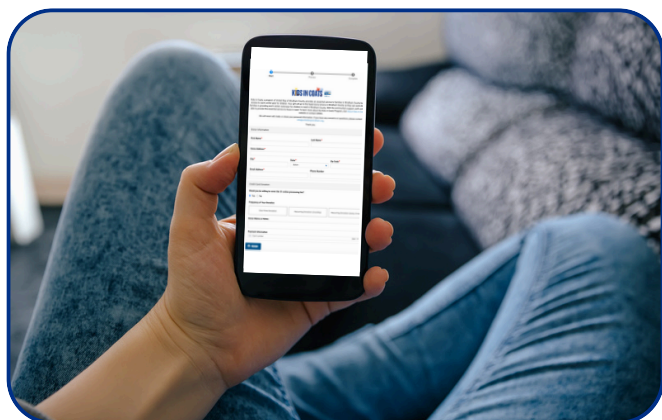
But, today, we face a critical challenge. Without additional support, Kids in Coats will not be able to continue serving all the children in need. Our fundraising has not kept pace with the growing demand, and we're running out of time to secure the resources needed to provide coats to every child who needs one.

The colder months are fast approaching, and we are committed to making sure no child in our community is left out in the cold. But we need your help to do it!



You can help by donating today (every dollar contributed goes directly to providing more coats for children in need) or by sharing our message. Your support is more critical now than ever. Without it, Kids in Coats will falter this year, and many children will go without the basic warmth they need to stay healthy and thrive. We cannot let that happen.

Together, we can ensure that all Windham County's elementary-aged children are ready to face the winter with warmth, confidence, and security.



Thank you for standing with us—and for the children who depend on us.

To donate to the Kids in Coats fund online, scan this QR code:





VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX ASSISTANCE

This year, our Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program made a significant impact in the Windham County community by returning over \$106,000 in federal refunds to local residents. The average refund for those we served was \$3,324, demonstrating the vital financial support provided through this program.

In addition to federal refunds, our dedicated volunteers facilitated the receipt of \$40,480 in state refunds for residents. We also assisted individuals in filing for property tax relief and renter credits, further enhancing the financial well-being of our community members.

Our program served a diverse range of clients, including wage earners, self-employed individuals, and seniors. Thanks to the hard work and commitment of our volunteers, many individuals and families received critical financial assistance, including the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), Child Tax Credits, and Additional Child Tax Credits.

As we look ahead, United Way of Windham County is committed to continuing this essential service in the coming years and well into the future. We believe that access to free tax assistance not only supports individual financial health but also strengthens our community as a whole.

We are grateful for the dedication of our volunteers, whose efforts make a profound difference in the lives of so many. Together, we will continue to empower Windham County residents by providing them with the resources they need to navigate their financial futures confidently.





MAKING AN IMPACT ON YOUR COMMUNITY STARTS WITH A SIMPLE BUT POWERFUL ACT - GIVING BACK!

By donating to the United Way of Windham County, you play a pivotal role in championing critical programs that address the most pressing needs of our neighbors. Your generous contributions support a wide range of initiatives, from promoting health equity and ensuring access to essential healthcare services, to fostering financial literacy and stability for families striving for a better quality of life.

Every dollar you give helps provide vital resources that strengthen local families and empower individuals to overcome obstacles. We focus on creating lasting change that not only addresses immediate challenges but also builds a foundation for future success. Together, we can cultivate a stronger, more resilient community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

We invite you to join us in making a meaningful difference in the lives of those around us. Your gift truly matters—it has the power to transform lives and uplift our entire community. Together, we can continue to create a brighter future for Windham County.

STRONGER TOGETHER: THANK YOU!

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

CHARITABLE DENTAL CARE

Aspen Dental Care
Brattleboro Dental Health
Central New England Endodontics
Connecticut Valley Oral Surgery
Greater Falls Dentistry
Noble Dentistry
North Adams Family Dental
Suzanne West DMD
Union St. Dental
West River Family Dental
Windham County Dental Center

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Brattleboro Area Affordable Housing
Building a Positive Community
Next Stage Arts
SEVCA
Winston Prouty Center

FLOOD RESPONSE AND RELIEF

Ben & Jerry's
The Holt Fund
Vermont Community Foundation

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
Community Asylum Seekers Project
Ethiopian Community Development Council
Vermont Department of Health
Vermont Public Health Institute (VTPH)
Vital Partnerships

FISCAL AGENT AGREEMENTS

NAACP of Windham County
Voices of Hope

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Melissa Swim (Chair) Kiera King (Director)
Rohan Providence (Vice Chair) James Gay (Treasurer)
Andrea Wright (Director)
Samantha Eagle (Director)
Amaryah Pendlebury (Director)
Etan Nasreddin - Longo (Director)
Nancy Overman (Secretary)

WORKPLACE CAMPAIGNS

802 Credit Union
Austin Design Cooperative
Brattleboro Memorial Hospital
Brattleboro Savings & Loan
C&S Wholesale Grocers
Chroma Technology
Grace Cottage Hospital
Green Mountain Power
GS Precision
Hannaford's Supermarket
The Richards Group
Town of Brattleboro
M&T Bank
State of Vermont
World Learning
Windham County Dental Center
Windham Central Supervisory Union
Windham Southeast Supervisory Union

365 BUSINESS CIRCLE

C.E. Bradley Laboratories, Inc.
Clear Solutions Inc
David G. Reid Attorney At Law, PLLC
Holland's Bloom
Sanofi Foundation of America
Southern Vermont Board of Realtors
Vermont Realtors Charitable Foundation
West Hill Energy and Computing, Inc.
Zaluzny Excavating

VITA VOLUNTEERS

David Grady Linda Tummino
Jill Williams Marie Tattersall
Kate John Mary White
Linda Gobbo

YOUR INVOLVEMENT MATTERS!

START A WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN

The central component of United Way fundraising is the workplace campaign. It gathers employees' gifts of all sizes through payroll deduction. Our United Way then supports Windham County through programs that have a community impact.

Please contact info@unitedwaywindham.org or 802-257-4011 for more information.

To donate, scan the QR code below for our online Community Fund form!



Send your donation by check to:
1222 Putney Rd Suite 202
Brattleboro, VT 05301



Want to stay in the know? Sign up for our monthly newsletter, scan this QR code:



JOIN BUSINESS 365

Every day of the year United Way of Windham County unites people, organizations and businesses to create positive sustainable change. Our local businesses are also present, 365 days a year, providing services and products. To honor that daily presence, members of the business circle make a contribution of \$1 a day.

