WE FIGHT FOR MARSHA
When the September 2013 floods hit Weld County, Marsha’s mobile home and everything in it was completely destroyed. She had no idea what to do or who to turn to. Marsha’s neighbors were going to the Disaster Recovery Center to seek assistance, so she went with them. There, Marsha started talking with a United Way of Weld County 2-1-1 representative, who sat down with her and explained the available services. In addition to FEMA and the Red Cross, Marsha found out that United Way had a fund available for those affected by the floods, and that 2-1-1 would always be just a phone call away if she needed more help finding resources.

United Way of Weld County fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. We are more than fund-raisers. We are hand-raisers. We raise our hands not only to lead the fight, but to reach out to people who need help. And hope.

We win when we Live United. By forging unlikely partnerships. By finding new solutions to old problems. By mobilizing the best resources. And by inspiring individuals to join the fight against our community’s most daunting social crises.

WHY WE FIGHT
Being prepared for disasters is a shared responsibility. It takes the whole community working together to effectively prepare for, respond to, and recover from the destructive forces of nature and other emergencies and disasters. In 2014, 324 natural disasters were registered worldwide, killing 7,823 and affecting 140 million people. Economic damages were estimated at $99.2 billion. A recent report by the National Academies found annual U.S. federal spending on disasters jumped from $20.9 million in 1953 to a staggering $1.4 billion in 2009.

United Way of Weld County helps when disaster strikes. And being ready is up to all of us. Ways to prepare include:

- Get informed about hazards and emergencies that may affect you
- Develop an emergency plan
- Collect and assemble a disaster supplies kit
- Learn where to seek shelter from all types of hazards
- Identify the community warning systems and evacuation routes
- Practice and maintain your plan
- Visit www.ready.gov for more ideas

Approximately 50% of American households claim to have a disaster plan and supplies, but when pressed for more information in a follow-up question, it was found that only 35% of all households had prepared adequately.
HOW WE FIGHT
Disaster preparedness and response has always been a function of United Way of Weld County and 2-1-1. Following September 11 and Hurricane Katrina, the United Way role in Weld County and other locales increased. When there is a disaster, 2-1-1 makes information including road closures, locations of temporary shelters, pre-evacuation areas, and much more readily available for both callers and website visitors. 2-1-1 also publishes a print and electronic guide with the most needed resources.

Additionally, United Way staff assume other disaster roles in the community including: staffing Emergency Operations Centers and Disaster Recovery Centers; coordinating in-kind donations; connecting volunteers with opportunities; accepting and facilitating the allocation of relief and recovery fund donations; facilitating the work of long-term recovery committees; and more. United Way staff attend the monthly meeting of Northeast Colorado disaster preparedness personnel, held at various locations throughout the region. Staff members also attend training drills held to prepare for disaster response. Additionally, United Way of Weld County has provided staff expertise to help with disaster response throughout Colorado and nationwide.

JOIN THE FIGHT
- **Give**
  Make a donation to support United Way of Weld County’s disaster preparedness and response efforts. Also, when a disaster occurs, United Way can direct your donation to any disaster response fund in the world.

- **Advocate**
  Start a conversation with your friends and family about their personal disaster preparedness plans.

- **Volunteer**
  During times of disaster, United Way connects dozens, even hundreds, of volunteers with those who need help.

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“Disasters are complex events. The ability of systems to respond effectively in the immediate and long-term aftermath of a catastrophic disaster is the product of many factors: organizational policies and practices, encompassing both the public and private sectors; sufficient information, gained through situational awareness, robust early warning systems, and comprehensive communication strategies; significant preparedness and training; appropriate resources; and the capacity to innovate at a moment’s notice.”

– National Center for Disaster Preparedness

In 2017, United Way staff participated in **20+** Weld County and regional planning meetings.

In 2017, **3** volunteers and staff were available to take calls in times of disaster.

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Please contact the UWWC Community Impact team at Impact@UnitedWay-Weld.org or 970-353-4300 for more information or to get involved.