Making a difference

United Way of Weld County provides many opportunities to help others. See page 3
United Way of Weld County (UWWC) appreciates the $25,000 youth-focused donation by long-time supporters and donors John and Delia Haefeli to the Legacy Endowment Fund. The Haefelis, retired educators in the Greeley-Evans School District 6, were recognized at the Leaders in Giving Tillers Club Reception on Dec. 3.

“Delia and I have really strived during the course of our lifetimes to create a positive reputation in the community both with our words and our actions and they match each other,” John said. “I think that by doing an endowment, it leaves a footprint and a legacy for generations to come. Hopefully, something that we have done during the course of our lifetimes is emulated by somebody else. Because, you know, the Haefelis did it so we can do it. I think that’s really important.”

Delia said she was a recipient of people giving to her when she was growing up. “I am in a position now that I can give back and I think it’s very important that it happens,” Delia said. “If you have that ability to help somebody else out, then that’s an obligation. We need to help others.” John added: “When you look back to the legacy of my family in the community, it’s important that we always have tried to help the underserved. It doesn’t matter if it’s from my dad as an optometrist or with Catholic Charities or Salvation Army, or with my mother whose community activism is as long as your leg, giving was the right thing to do. They had a profound impact on us. Consequently, it’s important for us to continually strive to help the place where we live.”

John’s mother, Julianne Haefeli, was the recipient of the UWWC Humanitarian Award in 2000.

“I think that the idea that United Way is not selective in their generosity, it’s throughout our entire community and our entire county,” John said. “I think that’s what makes it special. It’s not isolated to youth. It’s not isolated to homelessness or to hunger. It’s everybody. Now with the idea of being a collective idea of going out and serving, because when you put everybody on the same team you tend to be really successful. That’s why United Way is what it is and the special place that it is.”

Delia believes in UWWC because of how it reaches out to the community. “Somebody can contact you and United Way can send them to where they need to go,” Delia said. “It’s just such a huge resource for people.”
Carol Streit of Greeley didn’t know what to expect when she volunteered for the first time as a navigator for Weld Project Connect in October.

After guiding Alexandra through many of the 70-plus free services at the one-day event, Streit said she’s ready to volunteer again. Facilitated by UWWC, the ninth annual Weld Project Connect was a one-day event providing free on-site services to those in need due to housing instability, job loss, age, health problems and other issues.

“I’m impressed with your organization. It’s amazing,” said Streit as she was holding Alexandra’s 1-month-old baby boy while Alexandra was getting a haircut. “Everyone is friendly and kind. It’s awesome.” Streit, a computer technician for 29 years at Aims Community College, recently retired from Aims and found out about the volunteer opportunity in the Aims student newspaper. Streit admitted to not knowing what she was getting herself into before volunteering.

Fear of the unknown is what many people experience before throwing their hat into the volunteer ring. “I didn’t know what to expect,” Streit said of her first experience as a navigator at Weld Project Connect. “I’ve been trying to find something. I have to find other things to do after working for 29 years.”

More than 1,300 people volunteered for UWWC events or projects last year. For those interested in volunteering, they can access the user-friendly UWWC Volunteer Connection located on the Get Involved tab on the UWWC website. The website is a one-stop service to nonprofits like UWWC, schools, government programs and events that need volunteers, and is also a service to individuals, employee groups and others. Sixty-four organizations/agencies are registered for people to find volunteer opportunities, which also can be used for people to log in their volunteer time and track their hours.

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“I’m thrilled that (Alexandra) got her birth certificate for the baby,” Streit said of one of the services at Weld Project Connect. “It’s an excellent place to go to get a lot of services quickly and efficiently, and the people here are awesome. I haven’t seen a grumpy person all day.”

Alexandra recently moved from New Mexico and hadn’t ever experienced anything like Weld Project Connect and the volunteers such as Streit who assisted her. “We weren’t going to come, but it’s good that we came,” Alexandra said. “She has helped us out a lot.”

For volunteer opportunities at UWWC, contact Nicole Quinn at nicole@unitedway-weld.org or call her at (970) 304-6198.
The Colorado Division of Housing recently awarded a grant for $103,750 for services of the Housing Navigation Center (HNC) managed by United Way of Weld County (UWWC), including the cold weather shelter (CWS), diversion, housing stability/tenancy support and staff time.

Melanie Falvo, director of community impact for UWWC, said grant funding will begin in April 2020. Specific amounts and what the money will be used for include:

- Cold weather shelter operations - $20,000
- Cold weather shelter staff time - $30,000
- Community health worker staff time - $20,000
- Bonus Funds - $33,750
- $11,875 Diversion/Rapid Exit Fund - money to help divert people from homelessness and back to their support systems
- $5,000 Diversion/Rapid Exit staff - to help pay for HNC coordinator Shawn Walcott and the community health worker’s time
- $7,875 Housing Stability/ Tenancy Support Fund - money to help get people into housing, and help keep them there
- $9,000 Housing Stability/ Tenancy Support staff - to help pay for HNC’s Walcott and the community health worker’s time

Going into mid-December, the cold weather shelter has sheltered 2,541 guests since October 28, an average of 61 guests per night, over 42 total nights.

The UWWC Housing Navigation Center has seen 1,670 guest since it opened in April 2019, with 122 referrals made and 462 agency meetings at the center.

“I think the work that we’re doing at the Housing Navigation Center is critical because in the past all of those resources were scattered around the community and it was really challenging for people to access them, to even find out about them and then access them,” said Angel Flores, board member for UWWC and a volunteer leader in the household stability focus area. “Now that we have this one-stop shopping experience for that vulnerable community, I think we’re doing so much better at serving that community and resourcing them.”

Flores added: “At the cold weather shelter, we are literally saving people’s lives who are the most vulnerable in our community, and then we’re giving them a path to being housed. Not only is it a hand out but it’s a hand up.”

For HNC opportunities, contact United Way of Weld County HNC coordinator Shawn Walcott at 970-515-6281.
Meet the Board

Lori Gama

Q: How did you become involved with UWWC?
Lori: (UWWC President and CEO) Jeannine (Truswell) invited me to join the board this year. To work with Jeannine and everyone else on the board, as well as the UWWC staff, is an honor for me. Though, in the past, I’ve volunteered with UWWC and other nonprofits whenever I could, being part of this board gives me an opportunity to contribute my skills in a more focused, and, hopefully, impactful way.

Q: Why do you think UWWC is important to Weld County?
Lori: The UWWC brings together many, many people from different sectors of our community to solve health and human care challenges. It’s critical that our community has an organization like United Way of Weld County so that every child, every woman, every man has the resources they need to succeed in life, if they need those resources. Live United is not just a slogan: it’s actually the aspiration that all of us believe in.

Q: Why do you feel that it is important to volunteer your time?
Lori: The UWWC staff is made up of incredibly talented, thoughtful, very smart and kind people. But there are so many focus areas and new challenges emerging in our area, especially as our population grows here in Greeley, Evans and Weld County, that there’s simply no way one group of people can tackle all these issues by itself. The more people who can volunteer, the better our community becomes for everyone. Whatever I can contribute to make my community a better place for everyone, I will. I believe we’re truly blessed to have such outstanding leadership from Jeannine Truswell and her team at UWWC.

Q: What are your goals as a board member?
Lori: To use my marketing skills to support and contribute to the awesome UWWC staff’s efforts in communicating the UWWC’s aspirations; the needs; and communicating the success stories. When more people know about the positive impact their funds contribute to, the more likely they’ll be to continue contributing. United we fight, united we win!

Q:What are you passionate about outside of work?
Lori: I’m passionate about my family, first and foremost. I’m passionate about connecting people to resources and to each other whenever possible. And I’m passionate about our community. We’re very fortunate that so many people care so deeply about our community. Greeley is a wonderful place to live, work and play!

Meet the UWWC Board of Directors by visiting, www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/Board

NCHA helping people at UWWC Housing Navigation Center

North Colorado Health Alliance (NCHA) is one of 16 agencies and programs that are helping people at the UWWC Housing Navigation Center in Evans. NCHA engages in strategic health planning and innovative management to create health care neighborhoods for all individuals living in the northern regions of Colorado, with a special focus on the underserved.

NCHA works to improve the health of the communities it serves by integrating the four main domains of personal health (physical, dental, behavioral and social) and building on access to care, workforce and organizational development, integrating infrastructure and accountability. The Alliance leads in promoting greater community understanding of the complex factors that contribute to the health of the community and the Alliance’s ongoing integration of health and other community services is the outcome of this widening understanding of health as a single puzzle with many interlocking and equally indispensable pieces. NCHA has worked with UWWC on the Thriving Weld Dashboard, several action labs, Weld’s Way Home, Promises for Children and Weld Project Connect to name a few.

Other agencies and programs at the HNC are:
• CO-SLAW (substance abuse) program through NCHA
• North Range Behavior Health
• Connections for Independent Living
• The Rock Found
• Employment Services of Weld County
• Volunteers of America
• A Woman's Place
• Department of Human Services
• Shiloh House
• SSI/SSDI Lawyer
• Woman's Wellness Connection
• Catholic Charities Senior Services
• Veterans Affairs
• Assurance Wireless
• Greeley Family House (formally Greeley Transitional House)
Household Stability
It’s a challenge in Weld County

Household Stability is one of UWWC’s five focus areas to help residents in the community. The aspiration for this focus area is for households to attain and maintain stable housing in Weld County.

Weld County was recently ranked as the U.S. region most likely to be on the verge of a housing crisis; a separate study showed that seven of the 12 most unaffordable places to live in the United States are along the Colorado Front Range (Weld County is number four).

“They are people that we sat next to in kindergarten. They are people that we played on the same middle school basketball team with, and for whatever reason their life has taken a different path than ours,” said Angel Flores, board member at UWWC who is helping lead the focus area. “These are not strangers. These are human beings that many of us know.”

Unaffordable housing combined with stagnant wages have made many households unstable and at risk of becoming homeless. For example, an individual has to work 80 hours a week at minimum wage to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Colorado.

A 2015 Piton Foundation study found that Weld County had a deficit of 3,866 affordable rental units for families living on 30% of the Area Median Family Income (at the time $19,890 per year). In Weld County, 43 percent of renters and 24 percent of mortgage payers spend more than 35 percent of their income on housing, putting them in a precarious financial situation – one unexpected expense (a car repair, replacing a furnace, etc.) could push these households out of housing and into homelessness.

UWWC, along with the Household Stability collective impact work group, have identified the following community-wide measures of effectiveness, as we work together to help households toward stability and self-sufficiency:
• % of owner-occupied housing
• % of families living temporarily doubled up
• % of evictions per year
• % of adults with bankable credit score
• % of families with $1,000 in savings
• % of adults with banking relationship

For more information, visit www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/Household-Stability

A big congratulations go out to Scott and Holly Ehrlich of Greeley, who were honored as United Way of Weld County’s 2019 Humanitarian Award recipients at the 31st annual Leaders in Giving Tillers Club Reception at the DoubleTree by Hilton Greeley at Lincoln Park on Dec. 3.

The Ehrlichs designated the proceeds of the Leaders in Giving Tillers Club reception wine auction to benefit Household Stability, a main focus area that United Way of Weld County is addressing to help all Weld County residents attain and maintain stable housing.
UWWC Announces Funding Support

JBS USA raised $406,555 for UWWC in 2019 in support of the company’s ongoing commitment to residents in the community.

The money will assist Weld County residents in Early Childhood Development, Youth Success, Household Stability, Older Adults and Healthy Aging, and Access to Services such as 2-1-1 Colorado, a confidential and multilingual service connecting people to vital resources across the state. “JBS USA is proud to support the community where we’re headquartered in a tangible way through this partnership,” said Andre Nogueira, JBS USA CEO. “The United Way of Weld County provides essential services to people who need them and improves the lives of numerous individuals and families in our area.”

JBS USA Headquarters in Greeley, Colo., raised $276,374 for UWWC, which included $58,361.68 at the annual golf tournament and $40,000 toward being a Cornerstone Partner, which includes a portion of their corporate donation covering 100 percent of administrative and fundraising costs for the resources under UWWC’s management. It was the most money raised by JBS USA since 2015. “It’s exciting to live in a community where the corporate partners recognize the importance of supporting things like early childhood education,” UWWC board member Angel Flores said. “This is a huge win for the community.”

JBS employees donated $100,000 for 10 full-time Colorado Reading Corps tutors for the 2019-20 school year in Greeley-Evans School District 6. These funds enabled UWWC to partner with Colorado Youth for a Change, AmeriCorps and the district to implement the program that helps build literacy skills and increase reading proficiency. “This partnership with District 6, United Way and JBS has been remarkable and we are very grateful,” said Deirdre Pilch, superintendent of Greeley-Evans School District 6 and a board member for UWWC.

First-year results of the program indicated that 72 percent of the children in kindergarten through third grade were performing above target reading growth.

For more information, visit www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/colorado-reading-corps/
Weld County is facing a growing demand for resources as working families struggle, children strive to read, youth prepare for the workforce and older adults age in place in their homes. It has never been more important to support your United Way.

A gift to United Way of Weld County is an opportunity to make a significant impact on your community. Your gift remains local – helping our neighbors, friends, co-workers and families.

We are passionate about helping to improve the lives of residents in all of Weld County. We cannot do this work alone. Never underestimate the power of your contribution. Any size gift is important.

Please consider making a year-end donation today!
www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donate

Join Us! No matter the size of your gift, it makes a difference for someone in Weld County!

**Give**
Your gift funds the programs and initiatives that make life better for 1 in 10 people in Weld County who need help.
Help your neighbor.
Change our community.
www.UnitedWay-Weld.org
Text UWWCGIVE to 41444

**Volunteer**
You can help people in your own community. Tell us what you love, and we’ll pair you with the perfect volunteer opportunity.

www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/volunteer

**Leave a Legacy**
Your legacy gift ensures that the issues and community you care about most will enjoy continued support after you’re gone.

Make a gift to the UWWC Legacy Endowment Fund
Contact Jeannine Truswell at 970-304-6161

YOUR DONATIONS GO FAR, BUT NOT FAR AWAY.