

# TOGETHER WE ARE BUILDING A BETTER WELD COUNTY



Together we are building a better Weld County, one where children are reading to learn by the start of fourth grade, youth are working at good jobs by age 25, families have stable housing, older adults are aging well and people are connecting to the help they need.

## United Way: **The Impact of Your Investment**



Jeannine Truswell  
President & CEO

Most often, we do not get to witness the impact of our investments in people, whether it be an employee or colleague, a youth that we coached or mentored or someone who benefited from our charitable donations. As parents, we are fortunate when we get to watch our children grow into amazing adults demonstrating our treasured values.

Last week I had a special moment. A woman, let's call her Sylvia, was talking with a Reading Great by 8 staff person as I was walking to my car. As I passed, I gave a quick hello. Before I could get into my car, Sylvia appeared, a big smile beaming.

Sylvia shared that she had participated in a United Way PASO Institute learning cohort and remembered me from her 2011 graduation event. Since then, she has used her PASO learning while taking care of children in her home. And now Sylvia

was back at United Way, talking with a staff member about further increasing her quality of care through licensure. Sylvia's grandson recently had a helpful time in a high quality preschool program, and Sylvia wants to offer the same experience to other children.

Sylvia was so excited and thanked United Way profusely. I told her how proud I was of her, thanked her for taking the time to share her story and, of course, gave her a hug. After saying goodbye, I was teary and so grateful for the encounter.

United Way donors, volunteers and partners, I share this to thank you for allowing me to serve as president and CEO for 37 years. You are the helper and partner of people who need a hand up and greater opportunity for bettering their lives. Sylvia is one example of thousands, even tens of thousands, that United Way has impacted during my tenure. **Because of you, every day Sylvia is positively impacting children, helping them have a better start in life and preparing them for school and lifelong success.** This is thanks to you..

## Partnering with United Way to Create Opportunity Foundation Spotlight: **Weld County Government**

Thanks to Weld County Government, your United Way is supported in a range of direct services that creates opportunity for some of our more vulnerable Weld County neighbors.

For some years and more recently, Weld County Government has funded and contracted with United Way to provide:

- 211 Colorado – operations of the information and referral service that connects people to the resources that they need
- LEAP – funds to promote Colorado's Low-income Energy Assistance Program, a resource that a number of Weld County households use during the winter months

- Reading Great by 8 – with general support and by providing the means to hire staff for recruiting child care providers as part of the Weld Child Care initiative
- Weld Project Connect – bringing Weld County staff to offer their services at the event and partnering with City of Greeley to provide the space for free
- Weld's Way Home – through general budget funding, support of the Housing Navigation Center cold weather shelter for people that are experiencing homelessness and hiring a staff person to help create more affordable housing opportunities throughout Weld County

"The many initiatives Weld County Government supports at United Way contributes to a kind of 'all hands on deck' approach that is needed to both help our neighbors in some of their most pressing moments of difficulty and to set them up for greater opportunity," said Weld County Commissioner Perry Buck, who is also a United Way board of directors member. **"When we help our neighbors in challenging times, we all benefit from a better Weld County."**

Thank you to Weld County Government for working with United Way to build a better Weld County for us all.



# Local Leadership for Your United Way

## Board Member Spotlight: **United Way Welcomes New 2022-2023 Board Members**

Please join United Way of Weld County in welcoming new board of directors members Perry Buck, Jeff Carlson, Chuck Jensen, Raymond Lee and Johan van Nieuwenhuizen.

**Perry Buck** currently serves as Weld County Commissioner At-Large. A third-generation native, from 2013 to 2021 she represented House District 49 in the Colorado General Assembly. Perry learned the importance of community service from her parents; her father also served as a Weld County Commissioner and as a State legislator.

**Jeff Carlson** is the chief executive officer of The Weld Trust. A Colorado State University alum, his professional background is primarily in nonprofit leadership and administration. In addition to being a United Way board of directors member, Jeff also serves with the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, the Greeley Arts Commission, the Greeley Planning and Zoning Commission and on the advisory committee for Surgical Technology and Sterile Processing at Aims Community College.

**Chuck Jensen** is the vice president for Administrative Services and chief financial officer at Aims Community College. With over 20 years in higher education administration, he has an array of experience on United Way boards and other nonprofits in communities where his family has lived.

**Raymond C. Lee III** was appointed city manager for City of Greeley in February 2022. Sharing that he has always had a passion for serving people, Raymond has served in municipal leadership positions in Dallas and Amarillo, Texas, and has over 15 years of city management experience that he now brings to United Way.

**Johan van Nieuwenhuizen** has served as superintendent of Weld County School District RE-1 for the past three years. Originally from South Africa and now an American citizen, he received his master of arts in Educational Leadership from University of Northern Colorado. Johan began serving students in Gilcrest, LaSalle and Platteville in 2015. Since this time, the district has earned the Colorado Governor's Distinguished Improvement Award three times and North Valley Middle School was presented with the National Blue Ribbon Schools Award for academic improvement.

Lastly, a tremendous thank you to **Jim Becklenberg, Mike Bond, Leah Bornstein, Dylan Hockett** and **Randy Watkins**, board members who have faithfully served and helped guide United Way's diverse work and recently departed from the board. All the best to each of them in their next chapter of service.

## VOLUNTEER AT WELD PROJECT CONNECT ON OCTOBER 20

Do you want to give back to your community? United Way of Weld County is seeking volunteers for Weld Project Connect, a one-day event helping those in need due to household and financial insecurity, job loss, health issues and other critical life challenges. Weld Project Connect offers individuals and families over 70 types of assistance such as medical services, counseling, food stamp enrollment, legal consultation, haircuts, early child learning resources and much more! Plus, services offered are customized to meet current community trends and needs.

Thursday, October 20, 12 to 5:30 p.m. is the date and time for this year's Weld Project Connect. Held at Island Grove Regional Park in Greeley, it is a great opportunity to assist our more vulnerable neighbors. Help someone. One day. One place. One person at a time. Register to volunteer today at [www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/projectconnect](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/projectconnect).



Invest in Weld County Today For Tomorrow. Donate today!

See enclosed envelope or donate online at [www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow)



## Investing in the Larger Community Cornerstone Partner Spotlight: 1310 KFKA

With seemingly ubiquitous access to downloadable music and podcasts, some say that broadcast radio is fading away. “But not local radio,” says Brady Hull, general manager of Greeley-based and Northern Colorado serving 1310 KFKA and host of The Hull Show. “There isn’t another station in the area that’s bringing local coverage to the air from 6:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. nearly every day. And there’s no other station north of Longmont talking about music, sports and entertainment. Local radio is still so important.”

For seven years, 1310 KFKA and United Way of Weld County partnered on the annual Live United Telethon. When COVID-19 put an end to this, United Way hosted a discussion with community media partners, including 1310 KFKA, to consider its strengths and to ask how United Way could better get the word out.

Eventually this conversation led to a new and exciting partnership. Beginning in August, United Way now has a 10-15 minute segment on 1310 KFKA every Monday morning at 8:35 a.m. Hosts Brian Gary and Tanner Schwindt are talking with United Way staff and its partner organizations about the persisting challenges that Weld County nonprofits and governmental agencies work to address, and to share progress and updates. The 1310 KFKA staff is looking forward to this opportunity for learning and insight while having some fun and giving listeners something important to listen to during the morning commute.

“A billboard can only say so many words; an article you can read. But on radio you can hear the passion involved,” Brady added. “There’s a lot of great radio stations in the area, so we’re honored United Way is looking at us to help get their message out. We want to use our outlet in a very positive way. It’s the best of both worlds.”

Thank you to 1310 KFKA for their ongoing support of United Way as a Cornerstone Partner and for this new opportunity to help listeners learn about all the great work happening in Weld County.



## Dreaming of a Day Without United Way

United Way of Weld County works towards solving community challenges, not just managing them. Since these problem-solving efforts continue throughout the year, United Way’s fundraising is year-round as well.

“It would be a wonderful day to put United Way out of business,” says Patty Gates, United Way vice president of Donor Engagement, “because it would mean people already have all of the resources that they need.”

Business and corporate partners build support for United Way through workplace giving opportunities, including employee payroll deduction and in other ways. For example, one local restaurant hosts a “United Way Day” each quarter during which a percentage of overall sales supports United Way. Other businesses have a time of United Way focus, kicking off their fundraising efforts by hosting United Way staff and having meetings for learning about the important work that United Way and its partners are doing right here, where we live.

For individuals, those who donate \$500 up to \$10,000 or more annually are recognized as Leadership Givers. “Depending on what speaks to you, there’s a place you can give in measurable ways that make a difference,” Patty noted. Donors receive regular updates on the change they are making to build a better Weld County for us all.

For the 2022-2023 fundraising year, United Way wants to partner with 50 workplaces for giving campaigns, a goal that will regain ground lost during the pandemic. For individuals and Leadership Givers, increasing personal donations by 10% or more and inviting friends to donate to United Way would be a sign of growth in community generosity.

To become part of United Way’s vibrant work in Weld County, visit the website at [www.UnitedWay-Weld.org](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org) or contact Patty Gates at [pgates@unitedway-weld.org](mailto:pgates@unitedway-weld.org) or 970-304-6185.

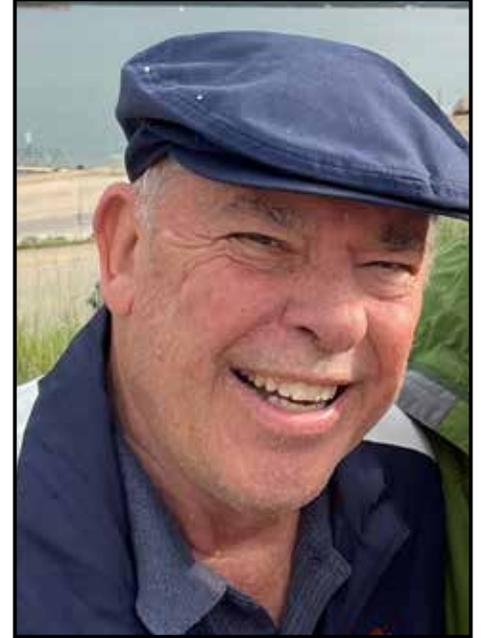
## Seeing the Need and Meeting It Donor Spotlight: **John Becklenberg**

Every so often someone extra special enters the front doors of a nonprofit. Sometimes this manifests in the form of an amazing volunteer. In summer 2019, United Way of Weld County was gifted with just this, an amazing volunteer! John Becklenberg moved to Colorado to be close to his family. During his settling in, John looked for a community organization to help build purpose and to take meaningful actions within his new community. He found a good fit in United Way.

John has volunteered in a few different United Way roles including at the Northern Colorado Children's Festival, as a donor engagement office volunteer and at the Housing Navigation Center (HNC). At the HNC, John made the role his own by providing much needed clothing for HNC guests. He would thrift locally to find items that he knew were required during the different seasons of the year. John became a recognized face at the HNC and built rapport with guests. These relationships led to program participants feeling comfortable enough to request items they specifically needed, such as larger shoe and clothing sizes.

Through his volunteerism John also founded a partnership between Guardian Storage and United Way. It has proven very valuable for the HNC's growing program needs and with the launch of the Covering Weld Diaper Bank.

United Way is so thankful to John for being an amazing volunteer for the past four years! And for all the roles that he has taken on in helping our more vulnerable Weld County neighbors.



*John Becklenberg*

## A Legacy of Leadership: **Jeannine Truswell**

Jeannine Truswell, long-time president and CEO, is retiring at the end of 2022 after 37 years of service in Weld County through United Way. In addition to your regular annual contribution, would you provide a further investment in the important work of our United Way in recognition of Jeannine's leadership through a Legacy Campaign contribution?

Contributions to the Legacy Campaign can be directed to your choice between two local funds:

- The Collective Impact Fund supports direct services provided by United Way and 80 local organization partners.
- The United Way Legacy Endowment Fund which increases longer term United Way financial stability.

Donate Today at  
[www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/Investment](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/Investment)

## JOIN US TO CELEBRATE JEANNINE TRUSWELL'S RETIREMENT!

**WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 5  
3:30 - 6:30 P.M.**

**GOURMET GRUB  
2118 35TH AVE - GREELEY**

**BEVERAGES AND LIGHT APPETIZERS**



You are invited to join us as for an open house as we celebrate 36 years of leadership and dedication that Jeannine has provided to United Way and our Weld County community!



**Invest in Weld County Today For Tomorrow. Donate today!**

*See enclosed envelope or donate online at [www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow)*





## Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County: Providing a Supported Path to Adulthood for Youth Who Need it Most

When a year ago 2nd grader Alexander started with Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County, he was a handful. Recently he proudly pulled out a bag of Skittles and exclaimed, “I got skittles for being the All-Star of the week in my group!” When the clubhouse director jokingly asked Alexander if he was going to share, Alexander replied that he was going to wait until he got home to open them, “So no one can steal any!”

Later that afternoon, the staff member saw Alexander talking with his little brother, who had just taken a fall and was crying. When asked if he was okay, Alexander’s brother pulled out the bag of Skittles and shared, “My brother just gave me these and they make me feel better!” Before Boys & Girls Clubs, Alexander would have never shown this care and generosity.

Since 1964, Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County has **inspired and enabled young people, and especially those who need it most, to reach their full potential as productive, responsible and caring citizens.** Clubs offer comprehensive youth development programs both after school and during the summer in five different locations across Weld County.

Building positive relationships, participating in fun and engaging programs, learning important skills, making new friends, and developing their talents, youth take part in The Club Experience, which is part of the Thrive by 25 vision to connect more youth with caring adults to ensure they have a successful transition into adulthood.

Even in 2021, when children were experiencing the mental and social-



emotional strain of the pandemic, 96% of club members felt they had a strong connection with a caring adult and were staying on track to graduate from high school. Furthermore, 85% of Boys & Girls Clubs youth are expecting to go on to higher education.

United Way of Weld County donors are proud to support Boys & Girls Clubs of Weld County as they help youth grow into confident, prepared and thriving adults.



## Reading Corps: Oh, the Places Children Can Go Through Reading

Imagine being a child again and feeling nervous in the classroom because your classmates are further ahead in their reading skills. Imagine not enjoying the whimsy of Dr. Seuss, the sweeping tale of *Black Beauty* or tucking into bed at night with *Goodnight Moon*. Then imagine years later, being four times less likely to graduate from high school or struggling at work because not reading well enough early in life set you so far back.

Presently in Weld County, this is the story for 6 out of 10 elementary grade children; around 60% aren’t learning to

read proficiently by the end of 3rd Grade. Before 4th Grade, children learn to read. Beginning in 4th Grade, children must read to learn. If they cannot, this sets a negative trend for their educational and actual future. Studies show the inability to read well keeps a person in long-term cycles of hardship in their daily lives and daily work. But this doesn’t need to be the end of the story for children in Weld County.

Through the Reading Great by 8 initiative, United Way has a goal to increase the percentage of children who are reading at grade level by the beginning of 4th Grade from the current rate of 39% to 43% by 2024.

Reading Corps, a program that employs well-trained, full-time tutors is turning the tide on child-age illiteracy. A partnership between AmeriCorps, Colorado Youth for a Change, and Weld County school districts, United Way

of Weld County participates with a \$100,000 annual investment. Across the 18 Weld County schools that participated during the 2021-2022 school year, **397 students worked one-on-one with a tutor to improve their literacy skills. 66% of students ended the year at or above their target reading ability. 74% met or exceeded their target growth rate.**

Now imagine being the child who thought he would never read, who with practice and the help of his engaged tutor shouted one day, “I’m reading! Oh my gosh, I’m reading!” The Reading Corps tutor told the child he was proud of him for sticking with it even when it was frustrating. The boy responded, “I am so proud of myself, too.” Just imagine the places that child will go. You can help him get there with a donation to United Way for Reading Corps.



# A New Chapter for Preventing and Ending Homelessness: Weld's Way Home 2.0



Weld's Way Home 2.0, an updated strategic plan to prevent and end homelessness in Weld County, is launching this fall.

Since 2016, Weld's Way Home has witnessed many successes. The Housing Navigation Center, a place where people can find services like laundry, shower, mail access, computers, phones and lockers as well as make use of a cold weather shelter, opened in April 2019 and **has helped 194 people get back into permanent housing**. Street outreach now proactively engages people experiencing homelessness, rather than waiting for them to find resources on their own. Shared intake and assessment and housing placement was established between providers.

Weld's Way Home 2.0 is building on this foundation of success. "The affordability of housing impacts us all," shared Shawn Walcott, United Way of Weld County director of Household Stability. "We've included in Weld's Way Home 2.0 addressing homelessness and homelessness prevention, because if ignored, an unstable housing situation often won't get any better." As evidence, over half of Weld County renters pay more than 30% of their income on housing costs, putting them in a precarious financial position that can too quickly turn into homelessness.

Shawn adds, "People tend to think losing housing isn't something that will happen to them. But if a person gets laid off or has an accident or illness and they don't have savings, they can lose their home and quickly find themselves living outdoors or in a car. We want to raise awareness and let people know they need to be prepared for any possibility."

For over two years, United Way hosted monthly meetings with 30 different partners—including nonprofits, Weld County agencies, the cities of Evans and Greeley, community volunteers, funders and faith groups—to set new priority areas. The planning gatherings began in fall 2019, bringing the added challenge of meeting virtually during the pandemic.

Of the group's 11 priority areas, four of the Weld's Way Home 1.0 plan continue on, with the addition of seven new: advocacy; landlord engagement; police partnerships; coordinated entry for homelessness prevention; diversity, equity and inclusion; transportation; and information sharing. With a strong history, Weld's Way Home 2.0 with and by its partners will raise awareness and help remove barriers that cause homelessness, so that more of our Weld County neighbors will have a solid foundation on which to live and thrive.



Thanks to donors, United Way mobilizes the caring power of our community in five initiative areas, seeking permanent solutions to our most pressing human services challenges.



**Early Childhood Development**



**Youth Success**



**Ending & Preventing Homelessness**



**Older Adults and Healthy Aging**



**Access to Services**

**Invest in Weld County Today For Tomorrow. Donate today!**

See enclosed envelope or donate online at [www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow)





## AmeriCorps VISTA Members: Clearing the Way for Recovery in Northern Colorado

# Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley: Building Relationships and Revitalizing Homes

In the early 20th century, coal miners new to Colorado settled in southwestern Weld County. In 1908, one of these areas was incorporated and named Dacono.

Sixty-one years later, a vision was cast for an affordable housing community at the heart of the town, called The Glens. Manufactured homes and trailers were placed with a notable distinction: residents could own their own land. Now, 63% of neighborhood residents are homeowners, surpassing the home ownership rate of most of Colorado. Many families have proudly raised two to three generations in this close-knit neighborhood.

One of the largest older adult homeowner populations in Colorado, many homes in The Glens are in need of repair. Habitat for Humanity of the St. Vrain Valley is working with The Glens residents on revitalization projects based on the community's needs.

Habitat for Humanity is known for building homes. But The Glens, says Habitat's neighborhood revitalization manager Krystal Winship Erazo, is intentionally different. "We are invested in the neighborhood through a place-based stance of listening to residents' stories, dreams, gifts and concerns. We are learning about what's important to them, what they see as the real problems, and then pulling them together to facilitate their own leadership in getting things done." Membership of The Pride of the Glens, a coalition of resident leaders, is 90% older adults.

In addition to transforming a neglected landscape berm into a beautiful park and commissioning a local artist for a city mural, since 2015 Habitat has invested over \$800,000 in home and neighborhood revitalization projects in The Glens, built 14 homes, and brought critical repairs to 26 more. 20 more households will be served in the next five years.

The key to their work, Longmont native Krystal says, is community and connection. Habitat organizes monthly leadership and action team meetings with the Pride of the Glens to connect with neighbors and for community planning. They host seasonal block parties and weekly events in the park for soccer games, potlucks and picnics to bring people together. United Way offers funding and local connections that Krystal says helps make the effort possible and meaningful. "Many older residents are raising grandchildren in 50-year old homes designed to last 20, with very few resources." Krystal adds that many homeowners would otherwise face deep loneliness on their own. **Through Habitat for Humanity, these proud homeowners have the resources they need to age well, with relationships at the very heart.**

AmeriCorps is a federal government program solving challenges through supporting nonprofit organizations and local government agencies. As part of AmeriCorps, VISTA members end poverty by building capacity for local communities.

AmeriCorps member Ben with United Way of Larimer County recently collaborated with the Larimer County Office of Emergency Management, Larimer County Conservation Corps and the 2020 Cameron Peak Fire Long-Term Recovery Committee to mobilize 47 volunteers for recovery efforts. The group helped clear dead trees to prevent future fires, connected local homeowners with funding and grants for home repairs and replenished resources and equipment to help local firefighters get back to operational capacity.

The Cameron Peak Fire was the first in Colorado history to burn more than 200,000 acres, destroying 224 residential structures, including 42 primary residences. It took four months and many fire departments to get the fire under control. "We need to be ready when big fires come through," said NoCO AmeriCorps Project coordinator Azia Gilbert, "otherwise a lot of people end up losing their homes and livelihoods."

Since 2013, Jobs of Hope has helped men coming out of gangs or incarceration to learn the interpersonal and job skills they need to be empowered and productive. AmeriCorps VISTA member Casey recently served at Jobs of Hope, helping with marketing, improving the website and fundraising. His efforts resulted in a boost of funding that enabled House of Hope, a 14-bed transitional housing project that gives clients a stable home from which to find a job and long-term housing, to open its doors.

As an intermediary for AmeriCorps, United Way of Weld County works with United Way of Larimer County and AmeriCorps member host sites to ensure they have a plan for their three-year AmeriCorps supported project, as well as a sufficient sustainability plan for transitioning away from VISTA resources. AmeriCorps members live at poverty level for a full year without any additional housing or income provided. To support AmeriCorps members in Weld County or to find out more about the NoCO AmeriCorps Project, contact Jon Jones at 970-353-4300 or [jon@UnitedWay-Weld.org](mailto:jon@UnitedWay-Weld.org).





United Way of Weld County  
PO Box 1944 - Greeley, CO 80632

Quarterly news and an opportunity to support your Weld County neighbors enclosed. Together we are building a better Weld County.

### GIVE

Your gift funds the programs and initiatives that make life better for 1 in 6 people in Weld County who need help.  
[www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/donatenow)

### 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](http://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 are gone.  
Contact us at 970-353-4300

### Reserve Your Seat by September 15

#### Community Leaders Luncheon

Sharing the Path Forward Working Together for Greater Results

with Rod Smith, Denver Broncos All-Pro Wide Receiver

Wednesday, September 28  
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
DoubleTree Hotel, Greeley

[www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/communityleaders](http://www.UnitedWay-Weld.org/communityleaders)

### CORNERSTONE PARTNERS

ENSURING YOUR DONATION IS GOING DIRECTLY TO THOSE WHO NEED IT

With cash and in-kind donations, Cornerstone Partners generously provide foundational support for United Way's work. This means that your donation is used only for assisting our more vulnerable Weld County neighbors.

\$50,000 +



\$25,000 – \$49,999



\$15,000 – \$24,999

Chick-fil-A Greeley - Flood and Peterson

\$10,000 – \$14,999

1310 KFKA - Chevron - Front Range Roofing Systems  
Ghent Chevrolet Cadillac - Honda of Greeley - Kaiser Permanente  
McDonald Toyota - Phelps-Tointon - Townsquare Media  
Vestas Blades America - Yoder Family of Companies

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