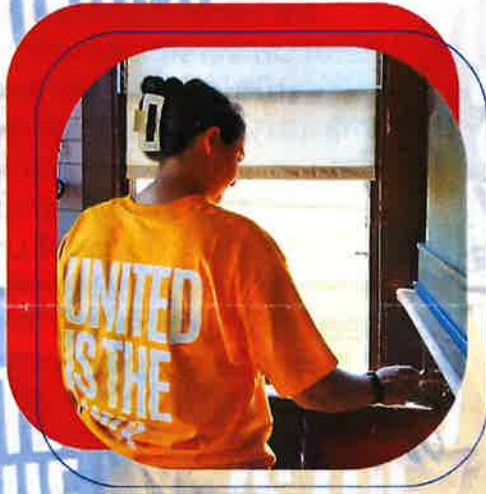


# UNITED IS THE WAY

Spring 2026 Newsletter



**Eddie Pierson**   
@Volunteer

Volunteering is important to me because I want to lead by example for my community, but more importantly, for my family. I want them to see that volunteering is a duty of all citizens to make their community a better place.

#MyDuty #LeadingByExample #Inspiration



**Amy Brainard**   
@Volunteer

I volunteer because I love our community and want to see it thrive. The gift of time is very valuable and I'm fortunate to be able to give time to organizations that are near and dear to my heart.

#Volunteer #Community #Togetherness



**Isabelle Scully**   
@Volunteer

I'm passionate about helping others, and I love that my employer shares that same focus. Volunteering reflects both my personal purpose and the mission of the organization I work for, so it feels natural and fulfilling to contribute in a way that aligns with both.

#Impactful #Purpose #Volunteering



# A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

“United is the Way” is more than a tagline; it is the heartbeat of our work. No single person or organization can solve our community’s challenges alone. Whether we are focusing on Healthy Community, Financial Security, Youth Opportunity, or Community Resilience, these pillars are deeply interconnected. Just like our dedicated interns, tax preparers, volunteers, and donors, these impact areas work together to build a stronger, more vibrant Mahaska County.



On the surface, it may look like we’re doing very different things—filing tax returns, packing backpacks, feeding children. But in reality, every volunteer and donor is working toward the same goal. We are here to ensure our neighbors can feed their children—who, as any parent knows, do nothing but eat and grow. We are here to help families receive every tax credit they’ve earned so they can pay rent, fix a car, or buy the new shoes a growing child needs.

As we head into the summer months, consider how you can be part of this unity. Take a shift for Summer Lunch, donate a new purse for Power of the Purse, include United Way of Mahaska County in your will, or sign up to help with the Back to School Fair.

United Way is unique in its ability to bring this community together through volunteering and engagement. Whether you are packing a meal or giving your time, you are the reason Mahaska County is a place where people look out for one another. Thank you for being a vital part of this mission.

United is the Way.

*Warmly,*

*Michella*

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Kaya Caprini

UWMC Intern

I am from Minneapolis, Minnesota! I am currently attending William Penn University, where I have been studying Human Services and Psychology. After doing some research on community/ human services, I found myself at the front door of United Way.



## Leah Giordano

UWMC Intern

I’m from Manhattan, Illinois! I currently attend William Penn University, where I study psychology and human services. In the future, I plan to attend grad school and further my education in sports psychology.



## Allen Cook

VITA Volunteer

I’m a senior at Central College studying accounting. I joined United Way’s VITA site as a volunteer to get hands-on experience doing taxes while also helping the community.



## Ernest

VITA Volunteer

Hi! I'm Ernest Alvarez Chedzoy, a junior at Central College, originally from Kerrville, Texas. I'm an accounting major and captain of the Men's tennis team at Central.



## Mariah Reed

Student Workstudy

I'm from Fulton, Missouri! I am currently a sophomore studying Business Management at William Penn University. I joined United Way because helping my community is very important to me. I found that my values align with United Way's.



# OUR IMPACT



## Vita Tax Program

So far completed over 250 tax returns free of cost for low-income families



## Back-to-School Fair

We provided backpacks and school supplies to just under 500 children



## Take-Along Food Program

We feed 175 kids every weekend throughout the school year at 4 schools



## Summer Lunch

We help distributed over 102,400 meals to children throughout the summer last year



## Community Investment

Together with 9 partner agencies, we help fund 12 programs that serve our community.



## Volunteers

Over 520 volunteers donated their time at United Way of Mahaska County's events

**\*\*All Funds Raised Stay In Mahaska County\*\***

# FUNDED PARTNERS

United Way of Mahaska County is proud to support the following agencies through the Community Investment process

- 4-H Foundation
- Crisis Intervention Services
- Family Crisis Center
- Imagine the Possibilities
- Iowa Legal Aid
- Mahaska County YMCA
- Oskaloosa Elementary PTO
- Oskaloosa Education Foundation

# BOARD MEMBERS



**Marcia DeVore**

*President*

Oskaloosa Community Schools

**Ryan Colter**

*Vice-President*

Cargill

**Melinda Walter**

*Treasurer*

Musco Lighting

**Jane Krutzfeldt**

*Secretary*

MidWestOne

**Cassie Veldhuizen**

*Past President*

Bank Iowa

**Shayla VanWyk**

Oskaloosa Community Schools

**Nathaniel Harris**

Community Member

**Dr. Michael Collins**

William Penn University

**Eddie Pierson**

MCG

**Micaela VanZee**

Clow Valve Co.

**Camden Levett**

William Penn University

**Logan Nord**

Oskaloosa Police Dept

**Shelbie Lenord**

Clow Valve Co.

**Katie Foster**

Community Member

**Jodi Goodale**

Cargill-Eddyville

# DONATE TODAY!

Scan the QR Code

-or-

go to

UnitedWayMahaska.org  
to donate today!



## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### Summer Lunch - June 3 thru August 5

The Summer Lunch Program serves a healthy meal to children ages 1-18 years old at several sites in the community. If you are interested in helping serve meals, be a substitute, or drive food contact Raven at 641-673-6043 or [raven@uwmahaska.org](mailto:raven@uwmahaska.org). You can sign up for the summer or for one week at a time.

### Back to School Fair - August 6

The Back to School Fair is an event that gives students at Oskaloosa and New Sharon Schools a free backpack filled with school supplies to help them be successful for the upcoming school year. You can help out by donating school supplies, helping pack backpacks, or helping the day of the event. This is a large event run by many volunteers. If you want to volunteer at this event contact Raven at 641-673-6043 or [raven@uwmahaska.org](mailto:raven@uwmahaska.org).

### Day of Caring- September 11

Watch our Facebook page for how to sign up.

### Power of the Purse - October 1

Join us this fall for the second annual Power of the Purse fundraiser. This empowering, 21+ women's evening brings our community together for laughter, connection, and impact. The night features fan-favorite male models, an exciting raffle, and both live and silent auctions. After last year's rave reviews, this is quickly becoming the most anticipated ticket of the season! All proceeds stay right here in Mahaska County.

**We appreciate you!**

Are you interested in  
volunteering?  
Contact Raven for more  
information:  
641-673-6043 or visit  
[volunteermahaska.org](http://volunteermahaska.org)

## CONTACT



**@UWMahaska**

[www.unitedwaymahaska.org](http://www.unitedwaymahaska.org)

641.673.6043

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Coordinator*

[raven@uwmahaska.org](mailto:raven@uwmahaska.org)

Julie Hyland

*VITA Program Coordinator*