

SPOTLIGHT

Dedicated to informing and connecting Tocqueville Society Members | Winter 2023–2024



United Way of
Southwestern Pennsylvania

WELCOME

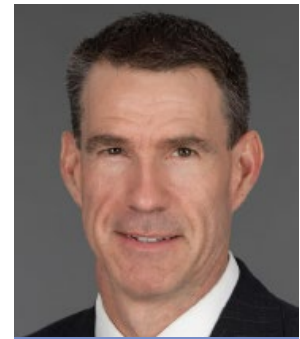
Introducing *Spotlight*:

Dedicated to informing and connecting Tocqueville Society Members.

The staff at United Way heard from Tocqueville Society donors that you want an inside look at the strategy and thought processes here at United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. We are pleased that staff took that feedback to heart and revamped our publication. We hope that *Spotlight* shows how your contributions and leadership help United Way meet basic needs, move to financial stability and build for success in school and life. United Way will provide insight into the serious issues impacting our community. And, will continue to help Tocqueville Society members connect to one another. We hope you find it compelling and inspiring. And, we welcome your feedback on what you'd like to see in *Spotlight*.



Jayme Butcher



Steven Thompson

Sincerely,

Jayme L. Butcher and Steven D. Thompson
Tocqueville Society Co-Chairs

2023-2024 Tocqueville Society Committee Members

Jayme Butcher, Blank Rome - *co-chair*
Steven Thompson, Schneider Downs - *co-chair*
William Blose, KPMG
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Thomas Hudak, Kennametal
Carol Jackson
David Matthew, GNC

Thomas McGough, UPMC
Kevin Miller, Northwestern Mutual
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Thomas Ryan, K&L Gates
Brian Trudgen, Jones Day
Chaton Turner, UPMC
Kevin Walling, PPG
James Yard, Schneider Downs
Ray Zipay, PNC

IMPACT FEATURE

Introducing the Digital Navigator Network.

In August, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania announced a five-year action plan to connect thousands of residents to the internet. Billions of dollars in state and federal funding will begin flowing to Pennsylvania for digital equity. But how will local communities manage this massive influx of dollars? United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania is uniquely positioned—thanks to our deep knowledge of the community, our partner agency network and our PA 211 Southwest system—to demonstrate how these funds can be used effectively and equitably to provide digital access to everyone.

The Digital Navigator Network, launched on October 4 with a \$363,000 grant from Comcast, is lighting the way. Now, when people reach out to our 211 helpline, they can be connected to one of three Digital Navigator Network partner agencies—Literacy Pittsburgh, Goodwill SWPA or YWCA of Westmoreland County. Staff at those agencies will help people find low-cost broadband, devices or technical training to get and stay online. These three agencies are deeply experienced in providing support to communities who might not otherwise have it and will serve our five-county area of Allegheny, Armstrong, Butler, Fayette and Westmoreland.

“Connecting to the Internet and having the digital skills to fully participate have become basic needs. Through the Digital Navigator Network, United Way has created a model for ensuring that all individuals in our community have the opportunity to adopt broadband at home and have access to devices and digital skills to help them thrive,” said Bobbi Watt Geer, president and CEO of United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania. “Our collaboration with Comcast and partner agencies already working in the digital equity space, together with our robust PA 211 Southwest network, allow us to immediately begin connecting people to the training and resources needed to get and stay online.”

Connect with health care.

Connect with employment.

Connect with possibilities.

Internet access is a basic human need. You may qualify for low or no-cost network service.



Learn more. Dial 211.

Visit pa211.org/digital-navigation or text your zip to 898-211.

Just how wide is the digital equity gap? According to Pennsylvania’s Broadband Development Authority, there are at least 276,000 households in the Commonwealth with no internet access at all and another 52,000 with unreliable access. Internet access also ties directly to all three of United Way’s impact investment areas. People use the internet to meet their basic needs such as finding food pantries or connecting to telemedicine providers, to find and keep jobs that help them move toward financial stability, and to take classes and do homework, which helps build for success in school and life.

EVENTS THAT UNITE



Candid Conversations: October 18, 2023. Nish Vartanian and Stephanie Sciuлло shared personal stories of giving and how they became leaders and philanthropists. Tocqueville Society, Bridges Society and Women’s Leadership Council members attended. *Top row:* Bob & Sue Brooks; Michael Zanic, Stephanie Sciuлло, Stefanie Lacy & Curt Krasik; Wendy & Brad Parrish; Mike & Nina Faber. *Middle row:* Nish Vartanian, Ann & Dmitri Shiry; Nish Vartanian, Erin Isler, Jayme Butcher, Bobbi Watt Geer, Stephanie Sciuлло; Chaton Turner and Megan Gilson. *Bottom row:* Sylvia Diez and Rich Soeder; Brian Trudgen.



EITC Kit Packing: October 7, 2023. Thanks to the generous support of The Buncher Company, First National Bank and Maher Duessel through the Education Improvement Tax Credit (EITC), and with hands-on help from our volunteers, United Way provided 600+ Allegheny County students with high-quality books and activities. *Top row:* Betty Lamb; Laura Miller & daughters + friend. *Bottom Row:* David Matthew & son; Marc & Laura Cordero & daughter.



Million Dollar Roundtable Private Reception: November 9, 2023. Tom Grealish hosted Million Dollar Roundtable members in his home. *Top row:* Mukul & Neelima Parikh; Dan Booker, Bonnie & Tom VanKirk; Curt & Kim Fleming. *Second row:* Scott Dibble & Stacy Juchno; Tom & Patti Canfield; John Surma, Tom Grealish, Mukul Parikh, Rob Glimcher.



Reception: Meet. Build. Be Moved: November 9, 2023. Tocqueville Society and Million Dollar Roundtable members gathered to celebrate United Way's investments in building a better future for everyone in our community. *First row:* Barbara & Rich Soeder; Ted & Lisa Frick, Carol Jackson; Betty Lamb and Steffanie Jasper; Julian Gray, Jill & Craig Tillotson. *Second row:* Ray & Donna Huber; Preston Walsh, David Bem, Anne Foulkes, Kevin Walling; Rachel Dorben, Courtney Murphy, Nate Comstock, David Matthew; Tom Buchanan, Rob DeMichiei, Jim Newell.



Week of Caring: September 11-15, 2023. Donors and volunteers met with recently funded partner agencies to learn about their vital work made possible by United Way donations. Gretchen OKunewick; Lynn Lebowitz & Sarah Shaffer; Pierce Richardson, Eric OKunewick, Darin Schindler.

CEO PERSPECTIVE

Our commitment to ending housing insecurity.

By Bobbi Watt Geer

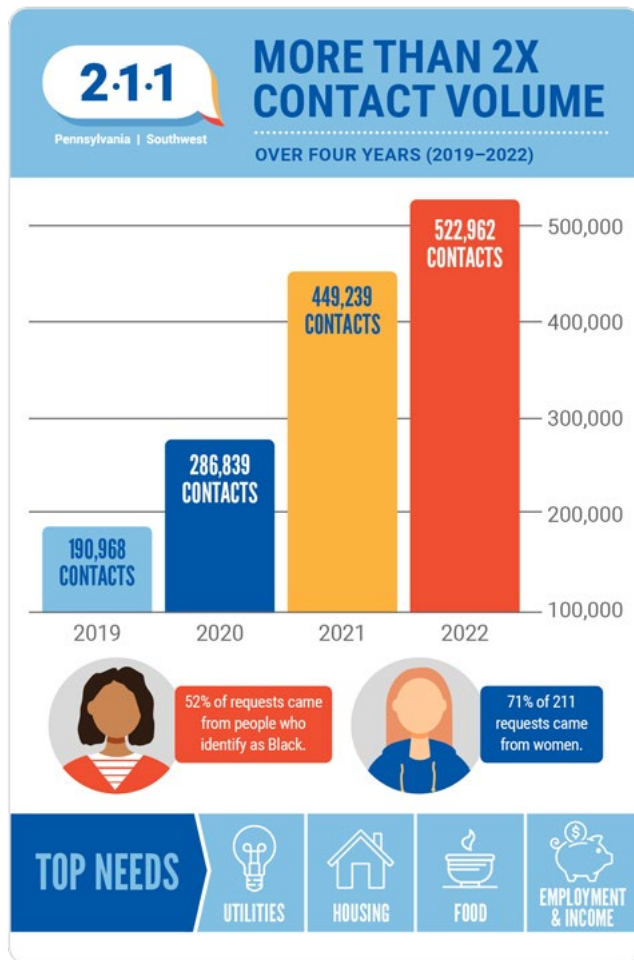


Homelessness is on the rise nationally and regionally, and particularly visible in downtown Pittsburgh. We at United Way want to make sure our donors and partners know that, from 2023 to 2026, United Way is investing at least \$1 million annually in eviction prevention and housing insecurity.

The people behind the numbers: Housing is the most basic of human needs. Increased visibility of people who are unhoused has led to an influx of news stories focused on public safety. What these stories may miss is that rising homelessness is tied directly to increased housing costs. Far too many of our neighbors are one car repair, one job loss or one illness away from being unable to afford their rent or mortgage.

Emergency shelter beds are also in short supply. As of Dec. 31, 2023, there were 685 people in Allegheny County emergency shelters, according to the county's interactive dashboard. Small towns and rural areas are also seeing increasing need. In Westmoreland County, where 331 people sought assistance with homeless in 2022, there were only 184 shelter beds available. In Butler County, where 374 sought help in 2022, and Fayette County, where 139 people sought assistance, the number of people seeking services slightly outpaces available shelter beds, according to Department of Housing data for western Pennsylvania. Only in Armstrong County, where 145 people sought homelessness assistance in 2022, is there adequate emergency shelter.

Not enough to meet basic needs. The number of those who need assistance with basic human needs continues to grow. Calls, texts and chats to our PA 211 Southwest helpline, which serves 13 counties, rose to 523,000 in 2022, more than double the number of contacts pre-pandemic. Rent and utilities assistance are the top concerns we hear from people reaching out to 211. We believe needs will continue to rise. United Way's ALICE—which stands for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed—data set, which tracks how much working families must earn to meet basic needs, indicates that 39% of people in western Pennsylvania do not earn enough to pay for what it takes to survive.



Affordable housing is needed. The lack of affordable housing in our region is at the root of much of this challenge. Housing instability increases when families must choose among child care, food, shelter, transportation, health care and basic technology. That's why we fund eviction prevention programs, such as RentHelpPGH, Jubilee Association and Just Mediation. We also invest in partner agencies that keep people housed, such as Union Mission, the Women's Center and Shelter, The Lighthouse Foundation, Blackburn Center and SistersPGH.

There is still much work to be done. Our hope is that our investments with partner agencies—and partnerships with local government via their human services departments—will increase understanding of how government, corporations and philanthropy can play roles in meeting the needs of those who are unhoused.

DONOR FEATURE

Jeff and Tara Craft:

When small-town values make an impact in the big city.

Jeff Craft grew up in a small town surrounded by hardworking, blue-collar steelworkers who valued a sense of connection. He was taught at a young age that nothing comes easy, and that it takes the power of a strong community to get things done. Jeff was determined to carry those values with him throughout adulthood and eventually pass them down to his own children.

After graduating from Juniata College in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, Jeff met his wife, Tara, who graduated from Allegheny College. The two shared similar upbringings and had an immediate connection. They began their married years in Columbus, Ohio while Tara completed graduate school, then they moved to New York to continue their careers. Their desire to be closer to family eventually drew them back to Pittsburgh. Jeff is now the managing partner of the Pittsburgh practice at Deloitte, which is the largest professional services firm in Pittsburgh providing audit and assurance, tax, consulting, and risk and financial advisory services. Tara is a full-time mom to their three active teenage boys, and recently restarted her career as a service professor at West Virginia University.

One of Jeff's roles as managing partner includes making sure that the firm aligns its people with organizations that make a positive impact in the local community. "We have such a fantastic partnership with United Way's national chapter that it's been easy for us to identify ways to make the most impact here in southwestern Pennsylvania, which is such a strong and active chapter. There's so much need right here in our community and United Way has a hand in responding to those needs, from supporting local food banks to providing support through their 211 helpline. United Way plays such a vital role in connecting the right resources and partners to address specific needs and I'm proud to be a part of that process," says Jeff. "It's been a life-changing experience for not only me, but my entire family."



In addition to his involvement with United Way, Jeff sits on the board for several other organizations, including the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, and recently joined the board of trustees for Juniata College. When he and Tara are not giving back, they enjoy traveling as a family, being active outdoors, spending time with their extended family, and of course raising their boys to follow in their footsteps.

TOCQUEVILLE SOCIETY

Candid Conversations

Wednesday, February 7 | 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Location: The University Club, Ballroom A

Speaker: Dr. Marc Cordero

Join your fellow Tocqueville Society members for the next Candid Conversation and learn more about your fellow members and their path to philanthropic success. You'll be joined by up-and-coming leaders who are members of our Bridges Society and Women's Leadership Council.

SPECIAL EVENT

Butler Office Open House

Friday, February 9 | 12:00–5:00 p.m.

Please join us for an Open House for United Way's new home in Butler County. Our new location in Bantam Commons is ideal for volunteer events like food-packing, collaborating with agencies, and conducting in-person board meetings. We're proud to show off our space to United Way donors like you. Please RSVP to Heather Ketterer at heather.ketterer@unitedwayswpa.org by February 5 and let us know how many will be attending.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Poverty Spiral Simulation

Thursday, February 15 | 3:00–4:30 p.m.

Location: United Way – Allegheny Office

The Poverty Spiral provides an opportunity to increase empathy towards those in our region who experience poverty and better understand the decision-making required to survive in financial instability. Place yourself in the shoes of someone else and face situations without clear solutions.

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

211 Experience

Tuesday, February 20, 2023 | 9:30–11:00 a.m.

3:30–5:00 p.m.

Location: United Way – Allegheny Office

Get an inside look into the work of our 211 team, learn about the significant needs of our neighbors and the resources made available to those who contact 211.

UPCOMING EVENTS

VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

Lesson Plan Kit Packing

Saturday, March 9 | 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

1:00–3:00 p.m. | 4:00–6:00 p.m.

Please join us as we put together Lesson Plan kits for students in kindergarten and first grade. Each participating classroom will receive four high-quality books and activities for their students to use in class and then take home. United Way needs your help to assemble and package the books and prepare the activities for the students.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Whether you are managing a loved one's estate, or assets of your own, nothing is more satisfying than leaving a legacy to your community to impact people's lives. When you make a planned gift to United Way, you will support meaningful work while also benefiting from tax-free giving or tax reductions that provide a better financial outcome for your estate. Contact Linda Jones at **412-456-6768** or linda.jones@unitedwayswpa.org for more information.



More great Tocqueville conversation continues online. Connect with the Tocqueville Society LinkedIn group to be a part of it at [linkedin.com/groups/7461160](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/7461160).