

## **UNITED WAY.**

### **IT SOUNDS FAMILIAR, BUT DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY DO?**

For nearly 100 years, Butler County United Way has served the Butler County area under a series of names including 'The Hamilton Welfare Foundation', 'Community Chest', 'Hamilton War Chest', 'United Appeal', 'United Community Services', 'United Way of Hamilton, Fairfield, Ohio and Vicinity' and since 1994, 'Butler County United Way.' Established in 1920, the name may have changed but the basic mission and vision has remained...*to connect and mobilize resources to improve lives.* Envisioning a community where all individuals and families achieve their potential through education, income stability and healthy lives, this organization is backed by the strength of United Way Worldwide, the largest nonprofit organization in the world. With over 1,800 organizations in 41 countries, each independent organization is locally controlled and makes its own decisions regarding the funding of programs in their local communities.

So what makes Butler County United Way relevant in Butler County? Yes, they are a fundraising organization, but that is far from where their reach stops. More than ever, this organization is bringing the right parties together, forming collaborations to work through issues that will address the problems faced within communities throughout our county. And while monetary contributions from generous-minded people fund the many direct service programs they support, volunteerism and advocacy are also important aspects that have created real, sustained change.

Just in this past year, over 55,000 Butler County residents were impacted by Butler County United Way-supported programs and services. Here are a few examples:

- 18,720 residents realized over \$1,726,571 in prescription savings through Familywise Community Service Partnership, Inc.
- 8,527 elementary, middle, high school students participated in school and/or community-based, out-of-school-time programs, where they received individual support.
- 66,891 meals were distributed at Butler County Meal Centers to feed the hungry.
- 20,723 nights were provided to individuals who received emergency supplies and shelter.
- \$952,514 were put back in the hands of hardworking residents through "My Free Taxes" online tax support and VITA face-to-face tax support.
- 2,117 individuals accessed affordable housing, financial products, and other living services.
- 4.1 million pounds of food were distributed to hungry residents of Butler County.
- 25,383 volunteer hours were logged in support of our community.

But there is still much to do. Mag Baker, President and CEO of Butler County United Way, and its staff of seven, leverage past experiences with future results. "Bringing organizations and people together to achieve our mission will result in more impact than ever before.

Understanding the problem and working together to find the solution to issues relating to education, financial stability and health will make our communities stronger in the long run,” Baker said. “Supporting Butler County United Way and lending your time and talents will ultimately make all of our lives better. It’s a win-win.”

To learn more about Butler County United way, visit [www.bc-unitedway.org](http://www.bc-unitedway.org).

## NECESSITY PUTS COURAGE IN YOU



When Celia Cano-Ramon and her family moved to the United States from Spain in 2004 in search of better life and job opportunities, she was not only met with adapting to a new country, a new language, a new culture, but also was met with the same struggles that many Americans are faced with on a daily basis. Although she and her husband were able to gain employment, they were faced with who would care for their child while they were at work and making sure their daughter was in a safe and appropriate environment.

Celia and her husband Marino found their answer in the Butler County United Way-supported Boys & Girls Club of Hamilton. Their daughter, Miladys, was able to attend the Boys & Girls Club after school until she was picked up by her parents at the end of their work day. “She was able to get help with her homework, participate in art classes, and develop friendships with other children. She has truly built life-long friendships from this experience,” said Cano-Ramon. “Most importantly, my husband and I knew she was in a safe place, which allowed us to focus on our jobs and career development.”

Miladys is now in her junior year of college, majoring in Nursing and Psychology and holds a part-time PRN position at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.

Celia, an eleven-year employee of Western States Machine Company in Fairfield looks back on this experience and understands that without this program, the adjustment to her new life in the United States may have been much more difficult and she thanks Butler County United Way for supporting such a program. “Necessity puts courage in you”, stated Cano-Ramon. “Having the courage to seek out and take advantage of these programs really helped to build a strong foundation for our family and our future. Now, I am in the position to give back, to help others in need so they can achieve their goals.”