

BLOGS AND STORIES

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BLOGS



5 Myths about Missing School

You probably played hooky once or twice as a kid to savor that sweet feeling of sleeping in. So you might imagine chronically absent students stubbornly refusing to get out of bed.

But that's a myth. Students actually face many challenges that prevent them from getting to school, and United Way is working to solve them.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/5-myths-about-missing-school>



Mirrors and windows: how kids see the world through books

The books kids, parents, and teachers choose are extremely important, as those stories can affect how children view themselves and the people around them.

Learn how United Way and other local organizations are working to make sure the books in our community reflect the kids reading them.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/why-kids-need-diverse-books-of-their-very-own>



How you can improve mental health in central Iowa

You may know a friend or co-worker who experiences issues with mental health. Or you have heard that Iowa ranks among the worst states for access to mental health care.

As United Way partners with other groups to take on this challenge, we encourage you to take action for yourself in central Iowa.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/what-can-you-do-to-improve-mental-health-in-central-iowa>



11 ways you can fight poverty in central Iowa

Poverty seems like an impossible problem to solve. Many barriers prevent individuals from achieving financial stability, and the solutions seem just as puzzling.

Yet, there is something we all can do. It starts by asking this one question: How can I help?

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/fight-poverty>

BLOGS



5 ways to improve health in your community

You probably played hooky once or twice as a kid to savor that sweet Living a healthy lifestyle is more than choosing to eat well and exercising. Our health is most determined by where we live, including whether we have access to healthy foods, opportunities to safely be active outside, and a network that encourages us to be healthy.

Here are five ways you can improve health in your community.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/5-ways-to-improve-health-in-your-community>



How does giving to United Way benefit you?

You are making sure your kids have the best environment to learn in at school, your neighborhood is safer as more people earn a living wage, and your company and community are healthier as more people can make healthy choices.

Not convinced? Here are five more reasons.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/benefits-of-giving>



5 things you need to know about affordable housing

Many low-income residents are spending most of their income on rent and forgoing many essential needs, such as food and medical care. Some are only one crisis away from becoming homeless.

Learn what's being done to solve this issue.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/5-things-you-should-know-about-affordable-housing-in-central-iowa>



10 facts you should know about poverty in central Iowa

One in three central Iowans doesn't earn enough to cover basic expenses without support. Many struggle to find enough food or a place to sleep, while others manage by piecing together jobs and support. Yet they are one flat tire away from crisis.

Learn how to talk about poverty and what's being done to solve the complex problems involved.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/10-facts-you-should-know-about-poverty-in-greater-des-moines>

BLOGS

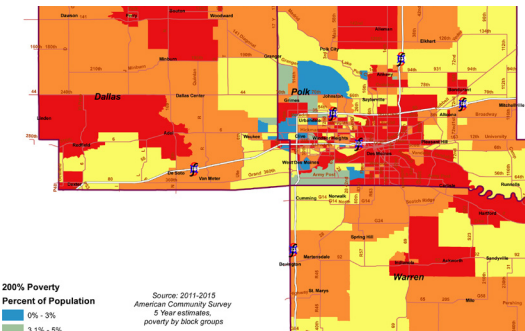


Why hire someone with a criminal record?

Nearly every individual in prison today will eventually return to our community.

How can we ensure that they don't commit another crime and that they contribute to our local economy?

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/why-hire-a-convicted-criminal>



What is poverty in Des Moines and across the region?

What is the federal poverty line? U.S. Census data defines it at 100%, but United Way focuses on 250% where Des Moines area families can thrive.

See the real data about how poverty is affecting our city and region.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/what-is-poverty>



11 things you need to know about refugees in Iowa

Iowa has become a refuge for thousands—a place to call home for those who have survived catastrophes. They can thrive—and have in the past—if Iowans are willing to welcome and assist them.

Here's what you need to know about these new Iowans.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/11-things-you-should-know-about-refugees-in-iowa>



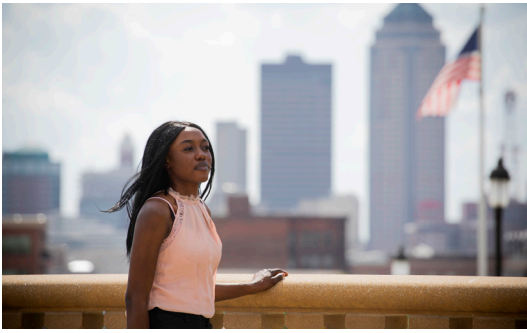
Central Iowa students need to see many paths to success

For some students, college may not be an option. Yet, many alternative paths exist that can lead to well-paying jobs and long-term financial stability.

Here are four facts to consider about students looking toward their future careers.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/blog/education-summit>

STORIES



<http://thegirlwhowalkedthroughawar.com/>

Aisha faced a shattering decision: acquire a husband three times her age (and with three wives already) or forfeit her family and her country. Those were the options her father presented her with in the remote Nuba Mountains of Sudan—one of the most isolated and war-torn regions in the world. She was a 16-year-old from Des Moines. Either choice meant losing her future, her life.

But waiting for her across a desert and an ocean—if she could make it back—was a community of people who would lock arms to fight for her future alongside her.



<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/bizimana>

Bizimana spent more than a decade in a refugee camp before resettling in the Iowa with his family. Through the United Way-funded LSI Global Greens program, he was able to start growing his own food, as he had done in Burundi. Now he has a two-acre farm and sells at multiple farmers' markets.



<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/pain-and-circumstance>

Missy Montero missed a lot of school. She's been raising her younger sister since the age of 11 and suffers from juvenile arthritis and severe migraines.

With so much on her young shoulders, how could she graduate?



<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/rhonnie>

Rhonnie Davis was forced to choose between paying for rent or textbooks. After years of struggle, she was living in her car, breaking out in hives, and studying like mad. She had no idea how to come up with tuition for her final two semesters.

Would anyone help her achieve her dream of becoming a nurse?

STORIES



Kelly, a teaching assistant in a Head Start classroom, increased to full-time hours and received a letter saying she no longer qualified for Child Care Assistance. She couldn't afford to pay all her monthly expenses, plus another \$160 for child care for her son Jaxson. Fortunately, Oak Academy, funded by United Way's Women United, was able to offer a scholarship so she could keep working full time.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/falling-off-the-cliff>



Sean Vicente

For Sean Vicente, giving back has always been an essential part of his identity and the character of Des Moines.

"I think people who work in a place like Des Moines have a responsibility to give back, he says."

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/the-power-to-change-a-life>



Jess & Tim McCulloh

With young kids at home, Jess and Tim McCulloh have found meaning by giving to United Way's Women United, which invests in early care and education.

"The more you invest in three-year-olds," says Tim, "the bigger impact you're going to see down the line."

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/pain-and-circumstance>



Debra

After her daughter was tragically murdered here, Debra moved to Des Moines to take care of final affairs. But her housing plans fell through, and the veteran found herself on the streets—somewhere she never expected to be.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/debra>



Fadia

Fadia escaped the Syria war and moved to central Iowa with four children before discovering she had cancer. A United Way-funded health program helped her get transportation to doctors' appointments and earn her driver's license. She is recovering and working toward opening a business.

<https://www.unitedwaydm.org/stories/syrian-mother>