

LESS TALK MORE WALK

2022 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

United
Way



United Way of
Northwest Michigan

A photograph of an elderly man, Fred Hastings, wearing a brown cap, safety glasses, a plaid shirt, and brown overalls. He is carrying a long wooden board vertically in his right hand and another shorter board horizontally in his left hand. He is standing in a snowy outdoor area, possibly a parking lot, with trees in the background and the back of a red truck in the foreground.

The TUESDAY TOOLMEN

Men On A Mission

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The main skill
you need is a
willingness to
help people.

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Fred Hastings, a Tuesday Toolmen Volunteer, makes home repairs and small installations to increase accessibility and ensure safety for low-income, homebound seniors.



Fred Hastings and Dave Coyne, both Tuesday Toolmen volunteers, work to install a deck for a Fife Lake resident. Efforts like this increase accessibility and freedom for homebound seniors in our area.

Nothing keeps Dave from making a difference. That includes rough weather and miles of bad road. Dave, a volunteer in United Way's Tuesday Toolmen program, had a job to finish this past winter — an access ramp for a homebound senior in Fife Lake. The project had been delayed several days by icy roads. As soon as the road cleared though, Dave and a co-volunteer quickly got to work using materials donated by local lumber companies. These ramps take approximately 40-48 hours to install and every minute is worth it for the joy in helping others.

Dave joined Tuesday Toolmen in 2007. "I saw an article about United Way's Day of Caring," he explains. "I was looking for a way to give back to my community. Tuesday Toolmen was a good fit."

United Way of Northwest Michigan created the Tuesday Toolmen program to assist local,

low-income seniors with safety issues. Volunteers in the program make repairs and small installations in clients' homes. This includes installing access ramps, repairing toilets and faucets, putting in grab bars and more. "These seem like small projects, but they mean so much to people," Dave states. "It means they can keep their independence."

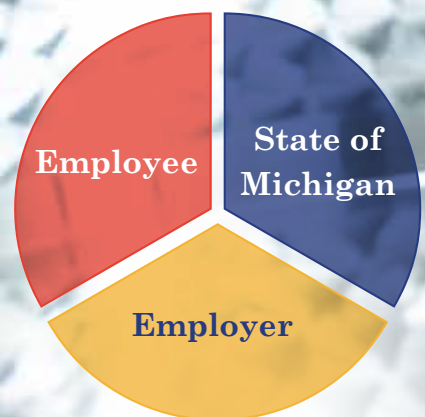
There are currently four Toolmen serving residents throughout United Way's service area. "We get a lot of requests," he explains. "We even help outside our area; the need is that great."

Dave admits they could use more help. "We need young muscle," he jokes. "I'm almost 70 and I'm the youngest in our group." Dave's quick to point out that being handy is not a prerequisite. "The main skill you need is a willingness to help people." Dave should know.

Throughout the year, the Tuesday Toolmen work on area homes to lend a hand where it is most needed. If you would like to volunteer your time and skills, we'd love to have you join us. Visit unitedwaynwmi.org today to learn more.

SHARING IS CARING

MI TriShare Child Care Pilot Program



Through the TriShare program, child care costs are split (shared) between the employee, the employer and the State of Michigan. As a result, employees save money and can afford to work. Employers can recruit and retain staff with better benefits.



With TriShare, Sherri Fenton, Managing Owner at Black Star Farms, can attract and retain staff with high-quality benefits.

Child care costs were a big hurdle for Kevin and his family. With TriShare, costs are more affordable and he can focus on his career.

There’s a lot to love about Black Star Farms in Suttons Bay. The beautiful scenery. The award-winning wines. The gracious amenities. And now...child care? Yes, child care. Thanks to TriShare, an innovative new program, Black Star Farms now offers its staff reduced child care costs and a renewed incentive to stay in the workforce. Sherri Fenton, Managing Owner of Black Star Farms, explains. “Child care is a tremendous cost to families. To be able to offer some relief to our employees is a great bonus.” Sherri signed on with TriShare through Traverse City Tourism, which offers TriShare to its lodging members.

Through TriShare, the costs of child care are split (shared) three ways: the

employee, the employer, and the State of Michigan. United Way of Northwest Michigan connects businesses and families to provide TriShare benefits throughout our region. Through the program, employees greatly offset their child care costs. Already, regionally, this program has saved families over \$56,000 in child care costs.

TriShare benefits employers too. “This program is a great recruitment tool,” says Sherri. “Like many area businesses, we’ve had staffing challenges. By offering participation in TriShare, we gain an edge in recruiting new staff. The program is easy to administer too. When you consider all the benefits, everyone wins with TriShare.”

Learn how TriShare is increasing access to high-quality, affordable child care for working families while also helping employers attract and retain staff. Visit trishare.org.



A COMMUNITY'S FUTURE

Child Care Stabilization Grants

For many families in Mancelona, the public school system is more than an educational institution. It's a trusted child care provider. Lori Harvey is the Early Childhood Program Director for Mancelona Public Schools (MPS). She sees the impact of the program every day. "Families need reliable child care," she explains. "Without it, they can't hold down jobs and life gets more complicated. We're the largest child care center in the area and the need for our services keeps growing. We need ongoing funding."

Mancelona Public Schools recently utilized Michigan's Child Care Stabilization Grants. These grants are part of Michigan's \$700 million investment in the state's child care providers. United Way of Northwest Michigan, in partnership with Northwest Education Services, awarded MPS three grants; one in the fall of 2021 and two in the spring and summer of 2022. The grant money was used to retain and hire staff, as well as expand MPS' services.

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United Way of Northwest Michigan has helped early care providers secure \$28,954,917.00 in grant funds.

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"Early child care staffing is so difficult," Lori states. "Pay is low and turnover rates are high. We have to take care of our providers." Thanks to the grants, MPS was able to bring on new staff and enroll new families, who had previously been on a waiting list.

Because of the grants, more families now have access to care. This has an additional benefit too. Children start early in the school system, making it more likely they'll stay and complete their education here. That's educational revenue that stays local.

Taking care of kids is something Lori takes personally. "I grew up here," she says. "I've seen the effects of not having child care. We hear stories of second graders being home by themselves, because their parents are at work. We can't afford that. We have to support these programs."

Visit us at unitedwaynwmi.org and sign up for our Advocacy Newsletter to join us in crafting policy in Lansing such as Child Care Stabilization Grants to give everyone a chance to thrive.



LESS TALK MORE WALK

2022 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

Less Talk, More Walk. That is the new course United Way of Northwest Michigan set in 2022 and the path we will continue to forge through 2023.

What our community needs from United Way of Northwest Michigan is different than it was a decade ago, and even different from what it needed just three years ago. At the start, United Way of Northwest Michigan set out to make sure that human service agencies had the funding needed to provide critical services for our region. Overtime, that has changed. While we will always continue to award grants to programs with impact in our region, we've adapted and expanded in important ways.

Our community has asked United Way of Northwest Michigan to do more than just talk about the problems but also to walk the walk and make a difference. That is why we are taking the bold steps to implement the solutions outlined in our 2022 Report to the Community. Alongside donors, volunteers, and advocates, we are tackling regional issues head-on, by taking chances and starting new programs, and revamping old systems with fresh ideas.

In these pages, you have read about our small but mighty volunteer group Tuesday Toolmen who are helping community members age in place with home improvements. From grab bars in showers to entryway ramps, these home improvements are simple enough, but bring about concrete solutions in real time.

You also learned about the new TriShare pilot program and how it can help employers retain talented workforce in our region by providing a benefit program for affordable child care. A huge stumbling block for many employees is accessing quality child care so they can contribute to the workforce while they raise their families. United Way has implemented this program in ten counties.

We also introduced you to a local child care provider who utilized grants to stay open and available to working families, even bringing on new staff and enrolling new families. United Way strives to keep children and their care at the forefront.

We are implementing real solutions with support from you – our donors, volunteers, and advocates. We are working to make our region better for all those in crisis and those seeking a better life. In 2023, we look forward to launching United We Smile, taking on the mental health crisis facing our region, and other bold steps.

Everyone in Northwest Lower Michigan deserves the chance to thrive and we hope you will join us through your time, your talent, and your donations to walk the walk alongside United Way of Northwest Michigan.

Seth Johnson

Executive Director



United Way of
Northwest Michigan



WALK THE WALK

UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST MICHIGAN

Volunteer

Join us for volunteer events all year long. Special opportunities include Summer of Service, Day of Caring and Tuesday Toolmen. Visit our volunteer hub online to learn how you can be involved with your community.

Advocate

At United Way, we advocate for the best possible policies focusing on the three pillars – health, education, and financial stability. Sign up for our Advocacy Newsletter and join us in this walk to strengthen our community.

Donate

Our work is focused on local solutions to help our community build a better place for us all to live, work and raise our families. We maximize the impact of every donation. With every dollar donated, we leverage our resources to increase that donation's value to the community.

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United Way of
Northwest Michigan

UNITED WAY OF NORTHWEST MICHIGAN CONNECTS AND MOBILIZES THE CARING POWER OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY TO ADVANCE THE COMMON GOOD.