



LIVE UNITED[®] 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

In
Southeast
Alaska
we live
**UNITED
TOGETHER**

**GIVE
ADVOCATE
VOLUNTEER**

A message from Karen Crane

Chairman of the Board of Directors for United Way of Southeast Alaska



When I review what United Way and partner agencies have accomplished over the last year, I am proud to be part of the organization and proud to support the agencies and people who do such amazing work. I hope you will read through the Annual Report and see what has been accomplished not only in Juneau but throughout our region. You are the reason it was possible.

You helped to feed the hungry, helped a child learn to read, provided assistance to people diagnosed with cancer, helped victims of abuse, helped someone get a GED, supported the Red Cross, Hospice, Boy Scouts, Southeast Senior Services and many more. None of this is possible without your help. When you look at the list of partner agencies, think of how strong and diverse our support network is.

I want to thank all of you who have contributed time, money or talent

over the last year. I want you to know how important you are to the health and quality of life across our region. United Way encompasses more than 30 agencies. While many of those served are in financial difficulty, others find themselves with life challenges. Did you know that one in three people in our community will need the assistance of United Way or a partner agency in their lifetime?

Change is inevitable and the Board is working to keep United Way strategic, to make sure we are in touch with community needs and are able to help our agencies meet them. In addition to funding agencies and services, we are working to lead community discussion on issues that are important to all of us.

It was an honor to serve as Board Chair in 2014. If you have questions about United Way or the annual report, don't hesitate to let us know. Please help us to spread the message that it takes all of us to LIVE UNITED.

2013-2014 PLEDGES DEDICATED TO AGENCIES

Agency	Total	Agency	Total	Agency	Total
		\CCS Hospice and Home Care of Juneau	5,202	Sitkans Against Family Violence	684.12
		\CCS Child Care & Family Resources	1,300	Southeast Alaska Food Bank	10,264.68
AWARE	24,823.49	\CCS Southeast Senior Services	929	Southeast Alaska Guidance Association	584.99
Alaska Health Fair	260	Gastineau Human Services	3,909.09	Southeast Alaska Independent Living	7,795
Alaska Legal Services Corporation	396	Girl Scouts of Alaska	4,013.77	St. Vincent de Paul Society	2,855
Alaska AIDS Assistance Association	460	The Glory Hole	37,827	United Way of Southeast Alaska	124,031.22
American Red Cross Of Alaska	620	Helping Hands	9,182.87	UW Education	10,764.58
Association for the Education of Young Children		Hospice of Haines	1634	UW Income	1,678.50
	2,888.13	Juneau Family Health and Birth Center	2,688.49	UW Health	6,051.82
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Alaska	5,951.73	Ketchikan Youth Initiatives	624	UW Community Impact	6,824
Big Brothers Big Sisters of Butte Montana	10	Love Inc Juneau	3,985.66	Wildflower Court	1,506.66
Boys Scouts of America, SE Alaska	6,953.07	Lynn Canal Counseling Services	360	WISH	184
Boys and Girls Clubs of Alaska	1300	Planned Parenthood of the Great Northwest	1365	\WISH: Emergency Shelter	2,988.67
\Boys and Girls Club of Juneau	166.66	REACH, Inc	6,634.62	Wrangell Senior Center	75
\Boys and Girls Club of Ketchikan	713.95	Rendezvous Senior Day Services	408		
\Boys and Girls Club of Sitka	839.34	Salvation Army Ketchikan	650		
Brave Heart Volunteers	496.09	SERRC: The Learning Connection	1926.30	BOLD - Partner Agency	
Cancer Connection	12,032.43	\SERRC Public Assistance Program	2,988.68	\ Indicates funded program of an agency	
Catholic Community Services	12,393.09	Sitka Counselling and Prevention	462.77	Non bold - Not a Partner Agency	

Why United Way?

An individual who donates to a domestic violence shelter likely gives because she wants to support women and children, believes that safety inside the home can translate into safety in the broader community, and values healthy relationships. But a family seeking safety at a domestic violence shelter isn't only receiving services from the shelter itself; the family is likely connecting with counseling services, food banks, youth programming opportunities, and legal resources, among others. Supporting healthy relationships and the safety of women and children is more complex than meets the eye.

This is where United Way of Southeast Alaska steps in.

We hope that this annual report will help you answer the question, "why United Way?"

United Way of Southeast Alaska has the power to bring groups together to tackle the issues facing our communities. When we convene individuals and groups and encourage collaboration, there is greater power to address the challenges we face.

United Way of Southeast Alaska is committed to doing the most good in our communities – together. We believe that the problems facing our communities are complex and multi-faceted and that giving should be leveraged to make the most impact.

United Way helps to leverage this impact in 4 important ways:

1. We efficiently raise and distribute funds to ensure that our partner agencies are able to do their work effectively in order to make our communities stronger.

2. We act as a facilitator between partner agencies and community stakeholders, welcoming everyone to the table and starting conversations to ensure that our communities have the passion, expertise, and resources to work together to accomplish real and lasting change.

3. We gather and distribute data about important indicators in our community. This allows us and our partner agencies to see where the need is, what needs are being met, and where services are lacking. We focus on health, income stability, and education, the building blocks for a good life, to affect the most impact and to address the root causes of the complex problems facing Southeast Alaska.

4. When there are important pieces missing, we work to address those needs through community impact through grants and projects.

Doing more together than we can do individually – this is what it means to LIVE UNITED. I hope you will read the articles about the amazing work of our partner agencies in this annual report to see how United Way of Southeast Alaska and our partner agencies have been doing the most good together during the last year.

Our annual report provides an opportunity to reflect on the past year, acknowledge our accomplishments, prepare for the challenges in the year ahead, and acknowledge the great spirit of volunteerism and giving that exists in our communities across Southeast Alaska. I am very appreciative of the many folks who have given of themselves this past year to make a difference in their respective communities. They served on Boards of Directors, volunteered for service on committees, gave of their time to our partner agencies and made significant contributions of their financial resources because they know that together, we can make a bigger impact.

Please contact our offices if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions for the coming year and we look forward to the opportunity to work together with you to ensure another year of success in achieving our mission.

United Way Cruise for A Cause an Annual Success

By Juneau Empire

United Way of Southeast Alaska, with support from Allen Marine, hosted "Cruise for a Cause" Wednesday, May 14, 2014. Alaskan author Don Reardon was the featured guest speaker.

The cruise, which included dinner dinner of grilled wild Alaska salmon and/or chicken, rice pilaf, coleslaw, fresh-hot rolls, and dessert. at Orca Point Lodge.

Rearden, of Bear Valley, is the author of the highly acclaimed novel, "The Raven's Gift," and is an associate professor at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

He is also president of the board of directors of 49 Writers, a state-wide organization that provides a wide array of resources for Alaskan writers.

"The Raven's Gift," Rearden's debut novel, reflects his experiences with Yup'ik culture and childhood in rural Alaska, as well

as the influence of the Alaskan wilderness. The book tells the story of a white teacher and his wife who are living in a small Native village when a devastating epidemic strikes, killing off most of the people. Told through three time periods, the book is both a post-apocalyptic thriller and an allegory. It has garnered high praise from critics across the country, and landed on the Washington Post's Notable Fiction List of 2013, with the reviewer describing it as "a novel with the hunter-hunted suspense of Geoffrey Household's 'Rogue Male,' the post-apocalyptic bleakness of Cormac McCarthy's 'The Road' and the haunting mysteriousness of 'The X-Files.'" It was also named 2012 Alaska Novel of the Year.



Alaska 2-1-1

People like you know how important it is to have the right information at the right time.

Oftentimes, the struggles that families and individuals face can appear suddenly and without warning. Services that you never expected to need before might become necessary to the health and safety of your family. Why you're in trouble, sometimes it's hard to know where to turn.

Just as we know to dial 9-1-1 for an emergency, or 4-1-1 for phone information, Alaskans can dial 2-1-1 for immediate referral to critical health and human services.

2-1-1 offers information, free of charge to the caller, on a broad range of services, including rent assistance, food banks, affordable housing, health resources, child care, after-school programs, elderly care, financial literacy, job training programs and more.

Requests for utility assistance up in Southeast

Referrals for help in paying utilities in Southeast jumped 34% from 2012 to 2014, according to numbers released recently by Alaska 2-1-1. The top three unmet needs last year – which means referrals couldn't be made because assistance wasn't available – were transportation (airfare), rent/utility payment assistance, and rent/utility deposit

assistance.

Alaska 2-1-1 made a total of 987 referrals in Southeast Alaska last year, a 30% increase over 2013. In 2014, referrals for basic needs (food, housing, material goods, transportation and utilities) accounted for 33% of all referrals, slightly more than the year before. Twenty-four percent of the 2014 referrals were related to health, 13% were related to employment and income boosts, and 3% were related to mental health.

Alaska 2-1-1 is an integrated communication system that connects Alaskans in need to agencies providing almost 3000 statewide resources that range from rent and utility assistance to summer camps (can change). Calls are confidential and free of charge, providing assistance in navigating complex government and non-profit human services systems.

Operated by United Way of Anchorage, People should feel confident of being able to call 2-1-1 and reach a trained specialist weekdays Mon.-Fri., 8am to 5pm, dial 2-1-1 or 800-478-2221, or answers are available 24/7 online at www.Alaska211.org. Alaska 2-1-1 utilizes Language Line to communicate with limited-English speaking callers in a wide variety of languages, including: Russian; Korean; Tagalog; Yupik; and Hmong.

Get Connected Today!

When our nonprofits are able to meet their mission, the health, education, and income stability of our community members and our community in general improves. One way to help non profits meet their mission is by becoming a volunteer. As a volunteer, you can give your time and skills to projects and programs that otherwise would not be possible to complete or run. In turn, building a team of skilled, passionate, community driven volunteers contributes to the success of an organization's projects and programs. Finding ways for organizations and volunteers to connect on these projects and programs can sometimes become a challenging task for both parties.

In 2012, United Way of Southeast Alaska, in partnership with Galaxy Digital, stepped up to the challenge by establishing the tool Get Connected. This tool creates a space for both agencies and potential volunteers to connect with one another based on the volunteer's availability and interests as well as an agency's need(s) and mission.

If you're looking for another platform to engage volunteers or looking for volunteer opportunities yourself, take a look at this free tool at www.GetConnected.United-WaySEAK.org and Get Connected!



L-R Seated United Way Board members Sheryl Weinberg, SERRC, Mary Becker, CBJ Assembly, Rosemary Hagevig. Standing Middle - Ann Gifford, Chair Karen Crane, Robbie Stell, Jessie Wuerst, APR Senior Communications Manager, Avista. Standing Rear - Tim McLeod, General Manager AELP, Bill Peters, UWSEAK Board, Dennis Vermillion, Chairman of the Board for AEL&P and Vice President of Avista Corp., , Patrick Lynch, president of the Avista Foundation, Wayne Stevens President/CEO UWSEAK, Rustan Burton Chair Elect.

Avista Corporation

Dennis Vermillion, Chairman of the Board for AEL&P and Vice President of Avista Corp., Patrick Lynch, president of the Avista Foundation present United Way of Southeast Alaska with a check in support of the organization. This gift come as the company celebrates its merger with Alaska Electric Light & Power Company (AEL&P), which was finalized on July 1, 2014.

"We are very pleased that AEL&P has joined Avista. We look forward to a long and productive working relationship with the company and the residents, businesses and organizations of Juneau," said Dennis Vermillion, senior vice president, Avista Corp. and chairman of the board for AEL&P. "Avista has a legacy of community support that dates back to the founding of our company in 1889. We invest substantially in our communities because we care about those who live in the places we all call home. It's simply the right thing for us to do.

"Avista and AEL&P hold similar values embedded in a culture of trust, innovation and collaboration," Vermillion continued. "We believe that being active partners with those who serve the community strengthens the area's social, cultural and economic vitality and enhances the quality of lives of the people served by our company."

United Way Continues to Grow Southeast Community Indicators

By Jennifer Treadway for United Way of Southeast Alaska

Tools to track data are popping up everywhere nowadays, with the importance of using data as a reflection of where one's for or non profit company was, is, and projected to be at the forefront of best business practices. United Way of Southeast Alaska had taken on this approach, starting in 2005, to find out how southeast communities were and are doing to help community members decide how they wish to shape what direction the community moves into in the future.

In 2005, the project COMPASS II was developed in partnership with McDowell group to identify and provide data on key issues found to be important to the community. A variety of issues in the area of education, health, and income stability were discovered through surveys, focus groups, and interviews performed by McDowell Group staff.

Over the years, this project has evolved from a community indicators database to being developed and published into an online tool, thanks to the McDowell Group. This

tool was created to give easy access to community stakeholders to current data already out there in the community that could help them shape policy, apply for new or existing grants, or even help individual community members decide where they want to step in and help their community thrive and grow.

This past year, the project has expanded to include new data and indicators to help continuously construct a well rounded picture of how southeast communities are doing today. The updated information will be released in 2015 and will cover not only Juneau but also Ketchikan and Sitka, new communities added this year. Our hope is to continuously grow each community's database and eventually expand to other Southeast communities.

Until the updated data is released, take a look at our online tool that McDowell generously took the time to create for us. It gives a great snap shot of how Juneau has been doing in the last ten years and may even spark some ideas in how you wish to give back to your community today.

Coeur Alaska maintains the gold standard for supporting literacy in Juneau's schools

Juneau – The United Way of Southeast Alaska is pleased to announce the renewal of a strategic partnership with Coeur Alaska and the Juneau School District focused on getting all Juneau students reading at grade level by third grade.

Recently, Coeur Alaska presented United Way of Southeast Alaska with \$25,000, as part

of its generous, multi-year investment of \$75,000 toward the education and future success of children by sponsoring the LEARN UNITED: Reading Tutors Program.

To find the right individuals to help support language and literacy skills in schools, the United Way of Southeast Alaska utilizes Get Connected, a volunteer engagement and management tool that allows non-profit organizations in Southeast Alaska to post available advocacy, employment, and volunteer opportunities as well as in-kind donation needs while also allowing interested individuals or groups to search for volunteer opportunities tailored to their availability and interest. To sign up to volunteer, visit ww.getconnected.unitedwayseak.org.

Once volunteers have been selected and vetted, the Juneau School District trains volunteers on literacy instruction, provides materials and step-by-step lesson plans, and matches them with students who can benefit the most from their time and caring attention.

This partnership sets the gold standard for real, meaningful volunteer work in our schools. In short, The LEARN UNITED: Reading Tutors Program identifies students in need of reading skill building, solicits and engages volunteers to serve as reading tutors, and provides training and recognition for the tutors. It gives community members a way to genuinely impact the lives of our students and families.

Literacy is a critical predictor of high school success or failure, as success in nearly every school subject depends on how well a student can read. Statistics show that 74% of students who are poor readers in third grade will never catch up. Regardless of career path, literacy is a fundamental requirement of young people to acquire employment suitable for sustaining a family and their health.



Wayne Zigarlick, General Manager of Coeur Alaska - Kensington Gold Mine, presents a \$25,000 check of support to United Way of Southeast Alaska's Board of Directors for the LEARN UNITED: Reading Tutors Program (L-R): Board Members: Robbie Stell, Mary Becker, Assembly Member Ann Gifford, Rosemary Havevig, Bill Peters, Karen Crane, and Mark Mesdag; Wayne Zigarlick, General Manager of Coeur Alaska; and Board Member: Rustan Burton.

Cancer Connection: Giving Hope, Celebrating Life

By Geoff Kirsch for United Way of Southeast Alaska

When it comes to cancer and Alaska, there's good news and there's bad news. The bad news: for the past two decades now, cancer has been the state's leading cause of death. The good news: in response to this, we've also seen an explosion of local cancer-related community groups working to connect, educate and inspire.

A shining example: Cancer Connection. Based in Juneau but serving the whole Southeast Alaska region, Cancer Connection is a grassroots non-profit organization designed to assist those living with cancer, their families and their support systems. It is guided by an all-volunteer board with part-time paid office help, with the support of a broad array of volunteers and partners.

"We're working hard for our neighbors right where we live," says Nicole Hallingstad, Southeast Alaska Cancer Connection president and lifelong Southeast Alaskan.

With a mission of bringing together health and wellness resources geared specifically for the people of this idiosyncratic region—Southeast Alaska certainly comes with its own set of geographical and cultural considerations—Cancer Connection focuses on empowerment by providing support, awareness, education and resources.

"Most importantly, we try to keep the conversation going," says Hallingstad, herself a breast cancer survivor. "The first step in fighting cancer is being able to say the word 'cancer' without feeling like it's taboo, or worse: a death sentence."

For Southeast Alaskans, especially those in the smaller towns and villages, access to cancer treatment remains an issue, as can availability of diagnostic tools and screening (for instance, at least 1/3 of Alaska still has inadequate mammography technology).

In this area, Cancer Connection runs a travel reimbursement program, the Lynne Wunsch Memorial Travel Assistance fund, available to Southeast Alaska cancer survivors to cover up to \$500 a year in cancer treatment-related travel costs.

"For so long, you couldn't get radiation and chemotherapy treatment anywhere in Southeast, but now you can in Juneau, which is huge," says Hallingstad, noting the United Way of Southeast Alaska's Community Impact and SHARE grants as key contributors to the travel reimbursement program.

"Cancer Connection anticipates a huge uptick in demand for travel to Juneau from the outlying communities," she says. "Even though it's a whole lot closer to get here than to Seattle or Anchorage, it's not necessarily much less expensive."

For those who receive treatment and/or testing in Seattle, Cancer Connection also rents a furnished one-bedroom apartment—decorated and outfitted by volunteers and donations—between the Virginia Mason and Swedish Medical Centers. It then offers discount bookings for both long and short term stays—sometimes hundreds of dollars below market price—on a first come basis. In addition to United Way support, various other community sponsors including Valley Medical Care, First City Council on Cancer, Southeast Medical Clinic, Holland America Cruise Lines and Alaska Glacier Seafoods make possible this popular Cancer Connection program.

Beyond travel reimbursement and the Seattle apartment, Southeast Alaska Cancer Connection also serves as a clearinghouse for educational materials as well as a repository of information for other assistance (e.g counseling services, outside assistance programs, etc). It seeks to raise awareness through sponsored community cancer and wellness-related events, most visibly Cancer Connection's annual Community Health Forum. Speakers typically include local and visiting doctors and health workers, and have dealt with topics such as diet and lifestyle, screening schedules, genetics and medical advances relating to cancer.

Held every October—the forum for 2015 will be Oct. 17, focusing on stress and featuring a keynote by Dr. Astrid Pujari—the Community Health Forum offers a free cancer-related public health seminar and lunch, completely free and open to the public. This year Cancer Connection with partner with Bartlett Regional Hospital to host the event.

"We used to host separate forums for men and women, but then we found the women would bring the men, so we combined them," explains Hallingstad.

Of course, Southeast Alaska Cancer Connection also works with survivors, offering a support group as well as the "Let's Talk Program," which pairs newly diagnosed cancer patients with someone "who's been there, done that." And it hosts a yearly "Celebration of Life" to coincide with National Cancer Survivor's Day, which has historically been the first Sunday of June. In the past, the event took the form of a small walk, lunch and award presentation to the corporate partner, medical professional, volunteer and survivor of the year.

"This year we're changing it up with a new date and approach," says Hallingstad of the National Cancer Survivor's Day 2015 Celebration of Life, slated for May 30, 4:30 pm – 7 pm at the JAHC.

"We're combining the awards event with a fundraiser for Cancer Connection," she says. "Instead of a walk with a lunch, it's later afternoon with catered appetizers, a silent auction and even a no host bar. We're still recognizing four outstanding honorees and we're especially excited to welcome back Mike Miller, the founder of Cancer Connection. We're just punching up the celebration part!"

Of Cancer Connection's relationship to the United Way of Southeast Alaska, Hallingstad characterizes the United Way as tremendously helpful.

"Through contributions and grants, yes, but also in terms of outreach," she says. "People know the United Way. They know what it stands for, its standards and its accountability."

Cancer Connection is currently working under a five-year plan centered on awareness and reaching out to the Southeast Alaska population.

"We want to make our program as sustainable and robust as possible, while still maintaining our local nature," Hallingstad says.

"It's a big fight, but we're making a real difference for people in our home communities."

To learn more about United Way and its partner agencies, visit www.unitedway-seak.org. To learn more about Southeast Alaska Cancer Connection, visit www.cancerconnectionak.org.

First National Bank of Alaska

The amount includes donations from employees and the corporate contribution from First National Bank Alaska. United Way of Southeast Alaska wishes to express sincere appreciation and recognizes the efforts of FNBA employee's efforts in their Southeast communities of Juneau, Sitka and Haines, where FNBA operates branches.

Luke Fanning, Regional Vice President, right, and Jaysen Katasse, Asst. VP, left of First National Bank Alaska, Juneau present a check to Bill Peters, Karen Crane, and Wayne Stevens, (L-R) with United Way of Southeast Alaska in the amount of \$8,183.41 as part of the recently concluded Southeast Alaska region-wide campaign results for First National Bank Alaska.



Ketchikan Youth Initiatives: For Youth, By Youth (with Adult Mentors)

By Geoff Kirsch for United Way of Southeast Alaska

For Ketchikan Youth Initiatives (KYI), you might say its expansion came before its expansion.

“When we first started ten years ago, we thought we were just opening a paintball park,” says KYI Administrator Bobbie McCreary.

“The original goal was to provide one activity for Ketchikan’s youth,” she explains. “But once we began working with young people, we kept seeing more need—job skills, life skills, a safe place to turn for support—so we kept growing and growing.”

Today, KYI and its entirely volunteer staff—many of them youths, themselves—run the Hot Shots Paintball Field and the Shane Howard White Skateboard Park, as well as a host of education, volunteer, life skills and other programs geared toward connecting with Ketchikan’s youth. At any given time KYI coordinates some 20 volunteers, a number exceeding 40 during special events, like those scheduled throughout the Fourth of July weekend.

Believe it or not, all the administration takes place out of McCreary’s home office, the programming in whatever space she can find around town. That is, until KYI moves into its future home, the Youth Community Center building, which has been under slow, steady renovation since it was donated by the City in 2010. In addition to support KYI from volunteers and youths, the project has received multiple grants, including a recent \$98,000 “top off” grant from the Rasmuson Foundation.

“It’s a challenge, not having our building yet,” McCreary says of the still-uncertain timetable for completion. But in true Southeast Alaska style, both she and KYI seem determined to make the most of the situation looking forward to the future.

“Silver lining: it forces us to think creatively about programming and collaborating with other local organizations,” McCreary says.

Prime example: KYI’s recent three-part workshop “Hungry for Health,” teaching young adults how to stretch their food dollar while also eating more nutritiously. Supported by a United Way of Southeast Alaska Community Impact Grant, the series features classes such as “Cheap Eats,” facilitated by a Ketchikan couponing expert, “Green Not Gross,” developed by a hospital dietician and “Cooking for Dummies,” in which chefs presented hands-on culinary.

“That seems to be a very effective way to connect—food and cooking,” says McCreary, illustrating an approach marked by flexibility, positivity and an emphasis on reaching youth effectively. “It’s all about teaching good life skills to young adults and their families.”

Building on the success of Hungry for Health, KYI began “Teens Cooking for Teens,” a similar program targeted at a younger age group.

“And now we realize we will need a much bigger kitchen, so we’ve adjusted the design of the Youth Community Center,” McCreary says. “See? Sometimes there’s a reason things take a little longer...”

Ketchikan Youth Initiatives was originally established in 2005 in response to the needs of at-risk youth; specifically, it grew out of a community meeting stemming from the prescription drug-related deaths of two young men.

“Youth face challenges particular to Ketchikan,” says McCreary. “It’s a small community confined to an island. That in itself attracts some people to trouble.”

To combat that, KYI provides what it calls “Healthy Alternative Activities” (e.g. paintball; skateboarding; cooking).

Over time, the organization also began to emphasize community service and skills programming for young adults ages 14-24.

KYI’s Hot Shots Paintball Field illustrates this evolution perfectly. As KYI’s first project, in 2006 a group of high school students opened a paintball course. Over the past ten years, it’s grown into a successful small business, run by an all-volunteer, all-youth staff, that works for the experience (plus a little free paintball play—and a bonus at the end of the

season depending on the program’s net revenues).

Again led by local youth—and emboldened by the paintball park’s success—in 2013, KYI opened a brand-new state-of-the-art concrete skate park on land donated by the Ketchikan Gateway Borough and with a generous gift by the White family in memory of their grandson. Shane Howard White Skate Park quickly became a highly popular recreation spot, open 24/7 to skateboarders, inline skaters and scooters.

“We’re about to put a similar youth leadership team in place at the skatepark,” says McCreary; the team will also support community fundraising efforts to “raise the roof.”

“It does rain in Ketchikan from time to time,” she says. “Like 14 feet per year on average. We definitely need a roof over the skatepark.”

KYI is a shining example of a youth-directed, adult-mentored organization. In addition to its volunteers, four youths age 14-17 also serve as board members, not only playing an instrumental role in planning but also offering the perspective of the exact demographic KYI hopes to reach.

“Because we started with youth, we understand the value of youth input,” McCreary says. “Youth input keeps us on track.”

While volunteers remain the lifeblood of Ketchikan Youth Initiatives, like many non-profits throughout Southeast Alaska funding continues to be a limiting factor, especially for an organization focused on programming. KYI’s greatest need is an ongoing source of donor funding to build its capacity, beginning with paid staff.

“The United Way certainly helps with these efforts, not only with Community Impact Grants but also the SHARE program,” says McCreary, who would love to see an even greater United Way of Southeast Alaska presence in Ketchikan, specifically an expanded workplace giving campaign.

Half-finished headquarters notwithstanding, Ketchikan Youth Initiatives remains true to its original aim.

“We’re always looking to see where service is needed,” McCreary says.

To learn more about United Way and its partner agencies, visit www.unitedway-seak.org. To learn more about Ketchikan Youth Initiatives or donate to its operations or building fund visit www.kyiyouth.org

Northrim Bank

Front Row holding check
– Northrim employees
Fejje Monta-Carandang,
Ramona Gerber,
Assembly Member
Karen Crane, Chair,
United Way Board. Back
Row – Cheryl Fellman,
VP/SE Regional Sales
& Service Manager
Northrim Bank, Colleen
Dimmitt Northrim, John
Blasco, Vice President/
Commercial Loan Officer,
Northrim, Larry Cooper,
SVP Commercial Loan
Unit Manager Northrim
Bank, Teresa Saaiman,
Branch Manager for the
Juneau Financial Center,
Northrim Tom Sullivan,
VP, Commercial Loan
Unit Manager, Northrim,
Rustan Burton, Publisher
Juneau Empire and
United Way Campaign Co-chair, Wayne Stevens, President/CEO, United Way of Southeast Alaska,
Joe Beedle, President & CEO, Northrim Bank



United Way of Southeast Alaska, President/CEO, Wayne Stevens, United Way Campaign Co-chair, Wayne Stevens, President/CEO, United Way of Southeast Alaska, Joe Beedle, President & CEO, Northrim Bank

All in a Day's Work: The United Way of Southeast Alaska's Day of Caring 2014

"How wonderful it is that nobody needs to wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." -- Anne Frank

By Geoff Kirsch for United Way of Southeast Alaska

A typical workday lasts eight hours—but if you combine the efforts of 50 people over that time, suddenly one day becomes 400 person-hours long. What if those workers are volunteers, focusing their concentrated man and womanpower on improving the community?

The result would look like the United Way of Southeast Alaska's Day of Caring, an annual event—this year, slated for Thursday, October 2—in which local businesses encourage their employees to spend one workday volunteering at various non-profit organizations in Juneau.

With the goal of growing volunteerism throughout Southeast Alaska, each year the United Way matches workplace teams from businesses and other non-profits with specific day-long volunteer projects. Day of Caring volunteers spruce up hallways, meeting rooms and offices, clean and sanitize children's playrooms, landscape, paint, pick up trash and (this being Alaska) build things.



"Volunteers come in and bust out in a day something we need to do but probably wouldn't ever get to do without shutting down our programming," said Jordan Nigro, Deputy



Director of SAIL (Southeast Alaska Independent Living).

One of last year's Day of Caring projects involved building custom-designed wheelchair-inclusive picnic tables for SAIL and Wildflower Court seniors' residence. This year, explained, Tristan Knutson-Lombardo, program

director for ORCA, SAIL's adaptive sports and recreation program, Day of Caring volunteers will refurbish the safety straps on ORCA's sit skis.

"We're also trying to build some covered bike storage," he said. "In Juneau, that's really important, keeping our gear dry."

"Of course, the Day of Caring serves other purposes aside from free labor—which is also great, don't get me wrong," Nigro interjected. "But it also gives people a better idea of what service organizations are out there."

Indeed, dozens of nonprofit organizations operate in Juneau, each with its own mission: from eldercare to youth initiatives, adult literacy to early childhood education, food programs to clothing banks and everything in between. Volunteers keep these organizations running smoothly, particularly those with limited staff and budget.

"We're a pretty small non-profit doing a pretty big job," said Rachel Brown, volunteer coordinator at AWARE (Aiding Women in Abuse and Rape Emergencies), a longtime Day of

Caring participant.

"We do everything ourselves—not only programming, but day-to-day things like recycling, cooking, admin, child-care, you name it. Without volunteers we wouldn't be able to do all that."

Whether they donate special skills and talents or just tackle a seemingly "unimportant" project like Spring cleaning—"there's always Spring cleaning to do around here, no matter what season," Brown said—volunteer efforts make a tangible difference.

"Every year, the Day of Caring uplifts our space; in turn, the people we serve feel uplifted," she said. "We're very lucky and very appreciative."



Last year's Day of Caring involved nearly 50 volunteers from four businesses working on six projects. Kicking off United Way's Annual Giving Campaign, the 2014 event stands to be even bigger.

"More volunteers, more projects, more workplaces and new workplaces partici-

pating," said Day of Caring organizer and United Way of Southeast Alaska's resource development director Jennifer Treadway.

Indeed, this year's Day of Caring will spill over into a second day, with three volunteer projects scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 4. And, for the first time, it will spread to Ketchikan.

"Oh! We've also got new t-shirts!" said Treadway.

While volunteerism is the lifeblood of any non-profit agency, the Day of Caring is as much about those who donate time, as it is those who receive it. The Day of Caring provides businesses a unique opportunity for pro-social corporate citizenship and building a culture of volunteerism among employees. It's also a meaningful, hands-on teambuilding experience.

"You're outside, working together, expending physical energy," said Kate Wolfe, director of children and youth services for REACH, which offers information, referrals, support and services for people with developmental delay or disabilities.

Not only did REACH receive a volunteer workplace team at last year's Day of Caring; they also supplied one.

"REACH has always benefitted from United Way vol-



unteers, so we thought it would be nice to return the favor," Wolfe said. "And it wound up turning into an impromptu community event for our staff."

"From the beginning, the idea was to raise awareness of community need and figure out the private sector's role in filling that need," said Max Mertz of Elgee Rehfeld Mertz, who helped establish the Day of Caring in Juneau back in the early 1990s.

"It's great to see the tradition continue."

But of course, the job of advancing the common good is never done, let alone fully completed in one day.

"We get to talk with our partner agencies about their needs, not just for the Day of Caring, but bigger picture," said Treadway.

The United Way of Southeast Alaska is an umbrella organization that, in conjunction with its 30-plus local non-profit partners, strives to create lasting change in the areas of education, income and health. To that end, United Way board members always serve as Day of Caring volunteers (several also volunteer as mentors in the United Way's reading tutor program, as well as other local volunteer efforts). Does United Way staff



also volunteer at the Day of Caring?

"Kind of—we run around all day bringing snacks and drinks to the teams," she said.

"Most of these projects are outdoors in Southeast Alaska in October, so we make sure everyone has plenty of coffee."

For more information, visit the United Way's web site at unitedwayseak.org; to donate visit unitedwayseak.org/donate.

Interested in volunteering for the Day of Caring or just in general? Visit "Get Connected" (getconnected.unitedwayseak.org) a social media-style volunteer engagement and management platform linking prospective volunteers with community organizations throughout the region.



United Way of Southeast Alaska recently presented Community Impact Grant awards totaling \$15,000 to eleven regional non-profit organizations from a pool of eighteen applicants. The eleven funded projects were selected by a volunteer committee chaired by Ann Gifford of Faulkner Banfield, P.C. and comprised of select members of United Way of Southeast Alaska's Board of Directors as well as community members. The total amount of requests was in excess of \$39,700.00.

During the annual giving campaign, donors can direct their contributions directly to United Way of Southeast Alaska, one of our action areas – Education, Income, and Health – or one of our 33 partner agencies. All community impact grant funds are derived directly from donations designated to one of our three action areas. The recipients and their projects are listed below:

Education

- Association for the Education of Young Children - Southeast Alaska (AEYC-SEA) received \$2,500 for their All Aboard for Early Literacy project.
- Juneau Family Health and Birth Center received \$1,250 for Building Strength in Families: Community Parenting Classes.
- SERRC (Southeast Regional Resource Center) received \$1,250 for their Family Literacy Center at Gruening Park.

Income

- Helping Hands received \$750 for the acquisition of a new freezer.
- Sitkans Against Family Violence received \$2,500 towards Sitkans Against Family Violence.
- Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) received \$1,500 for rural community outreach.

Health

- Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association received \$750 for the Alaska Syringe Access Program.
- Discovery Southeast received \$1,000 towards their Accessing Nature to Build Resilience pilot program.
- NAMI Juneau received \$1,250 towards their peer to peer training project.
- Shepherd of the Valley received \$1,500 towards their summer lunch program.
- Women in Safe Homes (WISH) in Ketchikan received \$750 toward their family preservation and reunification program.

Inspiring Personal Independence: SAIL

By Geoff Kirsch for United Way of Southeast Alaska

Believe it or not, people with disabilities constitute the single largest minority in the United States—some 20% of the total population.

Closer to home, roughly 85,000 Alaskans report some type of physical, cognitive or age-related disability, a total that only stands to grow in the coming years. Alaska leads the US in aging rate; Southeast Alaska leads the state.

“Alaskans with disabilities want to stay in their communities and live in their homes,” says Jordan Nigro, Deputy Director of SAIL: Southeast Alaska Independent Living. “We walk beside them in that process.”

As the name implies, SAIL seeks to inspire personal self-sufficiency by providing independent living services to more than 1000 people in 18 different communities throughout the region. These services include: advocacy, information and referrals, assistive technology, peer support, transportation solutions, vocational services, skills training, recreation opportunities and sign language interpretation.

“Individuals with disabilities are just that—individuals, each with unique needs and circumstances,” says Nigro. “And of course, Southeast Alaska, itself, presents unique challenges. Like everything around here, a lot of times you have to find creative solutions.”

SAIL is one of hundreds of independent living centers throughout America, a legacy of the disability rights movement of the 1960s. Forged alongside other large-scale rights movements of the time period, it, too, inspired federal legislation: the Americans with Disabilities Act, which provides comprehensive civil rights protection for people with disabilities. Enacted in 1990, the ADA celebrates its 25th anniversary this year.

As a grassroots organization, SAIL addresses a wide variety of independent living issues. While a fair portion of this work revolves around home modification and transportation, in Southeast Alaska, enjoying a full life experience—recreation, housing, transportation, and work—can entail a different set of accessibility considerations altogether.

“We’ve worked with folks to get accessible fishing gear on boats,” Nigro says. “And to make garden beds accessible.”

Of course, not every project is as large as modifying a gillnetter or configuring adaptive gardening. Gearing services to every individual, Nigro explains, hinges on reaching out to those individuals, especially in more geographically isolated locations where resources tend to be limited.

As such, an important part of SAIL’s work in smaller communities involves introducing technologies. This often takes the form of durable medical equipment and new—and more importantly less expensive—assistive devices, such as magnifiers and “pocket talker” personal sound amplification systems.

“Many of us will lose our hearing, but not all of us can afford hearing aids or has access to an audiologist,” says Nigro.

“We’ve also recently been providing pens that record what you write, so it can then ‘read’ your writing back to you.”

“Being independent doesn’t mean you’re all alone,” she says. “It means you are in charge of the choices in your life. You are in the driver’s seat.”

Not surprisingly, SAIL’s biggest challenge remains the cost associated with reaching more geographically isolated locations. As such, it relies heavily on grant funding for rural travel, such as the United Way’s Community Impact Grant; SAIL ranks as a perennial Community Impact Grantee.

“The Community Impact Grant certainly helps facilitate our work in rural Southeast,” she says. “With enough funding, ideally, we’d have programs in every single community.”

For one, SAIL would like to expand its adaptive sports and recreation program, ORCA, which currently operates offices in Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka, offering adaptive kayaking, skiing/snowboarding and adaptive backpacking, in addition to equipment loans, classes and multi-day domestic and international trips.

Also on SAIL’s horizon: accessible tourism.

“We’d like to make Southeast really accessible for visitors with disabilities—we think it has the potential to become one of the most accessible tourist destinations in the world,” says Nigro.

Central to SAIL’s work is its partnership with the United Way of Southeast Alaska, and, through that, the United Way’s other partner agencies.

“Southeast Alaska is small enough for organizations to really work together,” says Nigro, citing the potential of umbrella organizations like the United Way to facilitate collaboration and referral.

She also credits the United Way’s Annual Giving Campaign as an especially effective means for people to give back to the community.

“It lets people do so much without barely even noticing,” she says. “Five dollars a week out of your paycheck may not seem like much, but it really goes a long way... United Way partner agencies really count on that.”

To learn more about United Way and its 33 partner agencies, visit www.unitedway-seak.org. To donate online, visit www.unitedwayseak.org/donate. To volunteer, visit getconnected.unitedwayseak.org.

Wells Fargo



Wells Fargo presented a check for \$5,000 to United Way in addition to the support from their Southeast employees in the annual workplace campaign.

From left to right: Sara Truitt, Resource Development Director for United Way of Southeast Alaska, Karen West, Vice President of Wells Fargo and Wayne Stevens, President and CEO of United Way of Southeast Alaska pose for a picture. Wells Fargo employees from Ketchikan, Juneau, Skagway and Sitka pledged their support to the annual workplace campaign. United Way Worldwide recently recognized Wells Fargo for its significant support of United Way organizations across the country.

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Shepherd of the Valley Summer Lunch Program: Sharing Meals, Breaking Barriers

By Geoff Kirsch for United Way of Southeast Alaska

For Tari Stage-Harvey, pastor at Shepherd of the Valley Church in the Mendenhall Valley, the mission is clear.

“We want to make sure every kid in Juneau who’s hungry, eats. Period.”

To that end, Shepherd of the Valley heads into the fourth year of its highly successful and steadily growing drop-in Summer Lunch Program, supported by a Community Impact Grant from the United Way of Southeast Alaska, which provides free lunch and activities during summer break to neighborhood youth—“those who benefit from free lunch during the school year and those who benefit from being around other youth and away from electronics during the summer.”

The ten-week program, which begins this year on June 8, feeds not only elementary, middle, and high school stomachs, but also minds. For from noon to 1:30 pm each week-day, Shepherd of the Valley’s Summer Lunch Program provides a rotating menu of healthy meals—“protein-heavy, lots of veggies”—as well as one organized activity.

“We do gardening, cooking, science—it’s chaos, but it’s a blast,” Stage-Harvey says. “We also have a reading room, where we pair up younger kids with older kids to just sit and read. They really seem to love it.”

During the Summer Lunch Program’s 2012 inaugural year, Stage-Harvey estimates she’d see anywhere between three and 20 children on any given morning, varying widely. This year, she expects 45 a day, every day.

Part of the reason for this increase owes to Shepherd of the Valley’s approach, which emphasizes looking for obstacles and finding practical ways to overcome them.

“One obstacle, of course, is that some people are suspicious of anything having to do with a church,” Stage-Harvey says. “But with our Summer Lunch Program, there’s no proselytizing, no hidden agenda; we just want to help.”

To ease trepidation, and also raise community awareness for the program in general, Shepherd of the Valley kicks things off with a “bike rodeo” from 4-6 pm the Sunday afternoon before the Summer Lunch Program begins. This year, the bike rodeo takes place June 7, in the Shepherd of the Valley parking lot (a nice big flat place to ride a bike, by the way).

Another obstacle relates to transportation—how do you safely, effectively and inexpensively get 45 children to and from a lunch program?

Shepherd of the Valley’s answer: “bike chaperones,” a team of trained middle and high school volunteers who accompany younger kids to the Summer Lunch Program and back home again.

“We get a lot of bike chaperones who come to help, but sometimes it’s obvious they’re hungry, too,” says Stage-Harvey of the serendipitous secondary benefit. “Volunteering takes away some of the stigma of asking for help.”

Of course, the Summer Lunch Program represents only one portion of Shepherd of the Valley’s larger work toward ending hunger in the local community, a problem Stage-Harvey believes is more serious than people may think.

“One of the gifts of living in Juneau: our neighborhoods are economically diverse. However, that disqualifies us for certain federal food programs,” she says. “Right now, we’ve got about half the emergency rations we need. And that’s before whatever state and city budget cuts are coming.”

To that end, not only does Shepherd of the Valley maintain its own independent food pantry; it also meets each month with United Way and the other food agencies in town to identify “food gaps” and then coordinate an efficient response to those gaps.

“We bring folks to the table, so to speak,” she says of this united effort to ensure the whole city is fed, every meal, every day. “That’s a gift of having limited resources: you learn to work together.”

To Stage-Harvey the largest gaps remain summer—“food pantries are slammed June through August”—weekends and breakfast.

“We don’t have everyone covered, not yet,” she says with characteristic optimism. “But we’re working on it.”

Shepherd of the Valley’s Summer Lunch Program exemplifies the kind of teamwork it

takes to end community hunger. Staffed by 12-14 volunteers a day—“a lot of teachers, actually, and quite a few retirees”—it also employs two paid positions: a kitchen and cleanup organizer/overseer and a recreation specialist, both of whom Stage-Harvey characterize as integral to the program’s success.

“In addition to the cost of the food, itself, being able to hire paid staff creates a more sustainable program,” she says, crediting the Community Impact Grant’s support in these areas.

“Partnering with the United Way also raises the program’s profile, and that really increases the likelihood of wider community involvement.

Interested potential volunteers for the Summer Lunch Program can email Shepherd of the Valley at sov@alaska.net or stop by the bike rodeo. Note: all volunteers must first pass a background check.

“When we share a meal together, we share more than just food,” Stage-Harvey says of a concept she terms “meal fellowship.” “We share company. We share stories. We break down our barriers. We relate to each other.”

Rotary International



Juneau Rotary President Elect and Brewfest Chair John Blasco presents a check for \$5,060 to United Way of Southeast Alaska from the proceeds of the third annual Juneau Rotary Club’s Capital Brewfest. Rotary volunteers and others from across Juneau welcomed more than 820 spectators to Capital Brewfest to raise money for the United Way and Rotary’s charitable efforts in Juneau. “We’ve got a lot of (Rotary) members with energy, and then we put those dollars toward things like the food drive,” explained Brewfest founder Andy Mills. The festival oversold its allotment of 800 tickets. As many as 900 people came to the JACC on Saturday, forming a crowd that spilled into a fenced-off space in the building’s parking lot.

Accepting the check on behalf of United Way are Board members Bill Peters and Treasurer Mark Mesdag accompanied by staff members Jennifer Treadway, Resource Development Director and Wayne Stevens President/CEO of United of Southeast Alaska.

United Way hosts Juneau Jumpers in Kake

By Jennifer Treadway for United Way of Southeast Alaska

On a trip spanning five days, United Way of Southeast Alaska took nine members of the Juneau Jumpers team to Kake to host jump roping workshops for children as part of United Way of Southeast Alaska's continued efforts to build more connected communities across Southeast. The team was accompanied by two coaches, a parental chaperone, and our former United Way AmeriCorps volunteer, Samantha Ortiz. The group traveled to Kake by ferry on Sunday, January 19, 2014. Arriving in Kake on Monday morning, the group spent two full days in Kake before departing on Wednesday morning, returning to Juneau early Thursday morning.

Early Monday morning, the Juneau Jumpers began working in recess and gym classes with the students at Kake Elementary. The training, depending on the class, lasted anywhere from fifteen minutes to an hour and a half. During the trainings, the Jumpers would lead a large group stretch session while introducing themselves before dividing off to do the workshop. In groups of two, the jumpers would work with 2-5 students to teach and coach jump rope skills. The jumpers participated in these workshops until the end of the school day. On Tuesday, the Jumpers worked again with the same classes and continued their trainings. A pep rally on Monday allowed the Juneau Jumpers to participate in some games against the Kake basketball teams in front of all Kake students.

On Monday evening, the Jumpers attended the Angoon-Kake basketball games and performed a show during half time. They were greeted with an overwhelmingly welcoming response by the crowd of students and residents. During Tuesday evening's game, the Jumpers performed again between games. Students received United Way Live United t-shirts, which they asked the Juneau Jumpers to sign after their second performance. In addition to offering jump roping workshops, the group delivered DVD training materials, sixty five individual jump ropes of varying lengths, and ten double-dutch jump ropes for the students to continue training and developing a jump rope program in Kake. The school administration and community members will be working to help the students develop a regular program of jumping rope and encouraging the development of a jump rope team. Community members are already in conversation with the Juneau Jumpers about a return visit at some point in the future given the excitement and enthusiasm exhibited by the students and community members for the program was clear to all who participated in the trip and training.

This trip to Kake was made possible thanks to a generous discretionary gift for Anthony Mallott, a Rasmuson Foundation Board Member. For more information, interested individuals are encouraged to visit <https://youtu.be/UVwGipdZ23k> to watch a short video to see how United Way worked with the Juneau Jumpers and the Kake School District to create positive change among children in Alaska.

Moving the Needle: United Way's Annual Giving Campaign

By Geoff Kirsch for United Way of Southeast Alaska

Data shows 1 in 3 people will use the United Way or United Way partner agency at some point in his or her lifetime.

Throughout the Panhandle, the average family size is 2.5—statistically speaking, this means virtually every family living here will be touched in some way, shape or form by the United Way of Southeast Alaska.

"Working together for everyone, that's what we're all about," says Kristen Bartlett, co-chair of the United Way's Annual Giving Campaign.

As the name implies, the Annual Giving Campaign is the United Way's yearly effort to raise funds in support of its own mission—to improve the lives and communities of Southeast Alaska—as well as the programs of its 33 partner agencies. These partners range from hospice care in Haines to social services in Sitka, youth initiatives in Ketchikan to senior centers in Juneau and family programs in Petersburg, not to mention various community organizations serving the region as a whole.

"We're a close, connected community, but at the same time relatively isolated too," Bartlett explains of the particularly special niche nonprofits fill in Southeast Alaska.

"It's important to help people and part of the culture to help people, but sometimes it's hard to ask for help or you don't know where to look," she says. "That's also what the United Way's about."

Since 1974, the United Way of Southeast Alaska has been working to "advance the common good" by identifying community issues and then focusing a response to those issues. Its "Live United" movement—with a rationale that extending a hand to one improves society for all—outlines a clear strategy for philanthropy: "Give, Advocate, Volunteer."

"The Annual Giving Campaign does all of those," says United Way of Southeast Alaska Board Chair Karen Crane. "It's a way of harnessing the community's energy, advocacy and resources and then directing them right back into the community."

Bartlett, along with fellow 2014 Giving Campaign co-chair Rustan Burton, publisher of the Juneau Empire, have stretched this year's campaign goal to \$450,000. Not only do they wish to increase total donations, but also broaden the donor base by reaching out to individuals, businesses and organizations in the community.

"We want as many people as possible to experience the satisfaction of making a real difference right here in Southeast Alaska," says Burton. "When they see the needle move on important social issues, they can feel proud of their collective accomplishments."

To that end, the United Way of Southeast Alaska channels its charitable contributions

and coordinates community response as efficiently and effectively as possible—to move not only one, but several needles at the same time. Partner agencies, while working to achieve different goals, all focus on at least one of what the United Way terms the "Three Building Blocks for a Good Life": education, income and health.

And while the Annual Giving campaign focuses on attracting new supporters, it continues to rely on old friends, as well—longtime supporters such as Lynden, Inc. and Coeur Alaska.

"Being part of the Annual Giving Campaign gives our employees an opportunity to give back to the communities where they work, play and live," says Matt Jolly, Account Representative for Lynden's Alaska Marine Lines, based in Anchorage.

"That's part of the corporate culture at Lynden and its whole family of transportation and logistics companies," he says, noting that Lynden Chair Jim Jansen generously offered to match employee donations, dollar for dollar. "We're run like a family. We really do celebrate people."

"It also opens more people's eyes about the United Way, and what they offer," adds Bill Merk, Human Resources Coordinator with Lynden's Alaska Marine Trucking in Juneau. "We've had several employees who've used United Way services before, for one reason or another. They're particularly fired up this about year's campaign."

Not only does Coeur Alaska serve as a vital participant in the Annual Giving Campaign, its work with the United Way takes many other forms. Prime example: Coeur sponsors the Learn United Reading Tutor Program, a three-way partnership between the United Way, Coeur Alaska and the Juneau Public School District directed squarely at improving elementary school literacy.

"Reading is a cornerstone to life success," says Wayne Zigarlick, Vice President and General Manager of Coeur Alaska – Kensington Mine. "And we are honored to support the United Way, especially when it comes to the future of our youth."

Kristen Bartlett, who also happens to work as Chief of Staff for the Juneau Public School District, agrees.

"The partners and programs of United Way of Southeast Alaska are extremely important to the success of our students," she says. "They make a huge impact on the kids we work with everyday. The whole community benefits when kids come to school ready to learn."

Learn more about United Way and its 33 partner agencies, visit www.unitedwayseak.org. To donate online, visit www.unitedwayseak.org/donate. To volunteer, visit getconnected.unitedwayseak.org.

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L-R: Mary Becker, Karen Crane, Roberta Stell, Ann Gifford, Bill Peters, Rustan Burton & Mark Mesdag.

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