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**Campaign Coordinator Talking Points – 2023**

HOW TO DESCRIBE RICE COUNTY AREA UNITED WAY

1. When you give to United Way, you give to the greatest needs in Rice County.
2. All donations stay local to benefit local residents.
3. Donations work to stabilize families and individuals, and give them the foundation for security and independence.
4. Stabilizing families and individuals takes financial stability, health and education. These three areas are like a three-legged stool. Without one of these legs, a person cannot stand.
5. Our United Way has been around since the 1956. United Way is considered the gold standard for trustworthiness in stewarding donor dollars.

WHAT IS THE CURRENT NEED?

1. **12.4% of Americans lived in poverty in 2022**, up from 7.8% in 2021 and children’s poverty is skyrocketing.
2. **26% of people in Rice County cannot afford basic needs** such as nutritious meals and stable housing – without help.
3. Food shelf visits have grown by **50% in Rice County**.
4. The need for **emergency shelters** is causing Ruth’s House to consider expansion. Affordable housing continues to be a huge issue locally as it is nationwide.
5. **50%** of all Americans will experience a **mental health issue** in their lifetimes.
6. In the area of education, **41.9%** of Rice County children were **not reading at the third grade** **level** be the end of third grade in 2021 (most current figure). A quarter won’t graduate from high school, statistics show.

SUCCESSES! Thanks to partner agencies…

1. **Food access:** Last year the food shelves responded to the uptick in need by increasing food stocks. They gave families and individuals in Rice County **$1,700,000 pounds of food**, feeding thousands of local residents who often visited the food shelf once or twice a week.
2. **Affordable housing:** Hillcrest Village in Northfield was completed, providing **housing for 17 families.** A new affordable housing community is being planned in Faribault.
3. **Entrepreneurs:** A market was opened for the Latino community to sell crafts and food in Northfield.
4. **Disabled adults:** many in Project ABLE got music lessons thanks to a United Way grant.
5. **Education**: More teachers are trained in LETRS – the new standard for phonics and fundamentals in reading. Scores in Northfield are improving as a result. We expect to see improvement in Faribault, as well.
6. **Literacy:** Nearly half of pre-school children locally are now receiving Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library books thanks to United Way donors, and are more prepared for kindergarten
7. **At-Risk Students:** 100% of Northfield’s TORCH students – considered at risk – graduated on time and in total were were awarded college scholarships of $18,000
8. **Mental health resources:** Counselors (without reporting requirements) have been added to our schools by HealthFinders Collaborative

AND SO MUCH MORE!

OUR 2023 GOAL

1. Last year our United Way gave funding of $285,000 to local nonprofits and we hope to equal or grow that amount.
2. We also strive to connect people with needs through our Day of Caring and other volunteer opportunities.

WHAT’S NEW IN THIS YEAR’S CAMPAIGN?

1. Campaign theme: **Change Doesn’t Happen Alone**
2. As part of its Youth Literacy focus, Rice County Area United Way is asking donors to consider “sponsoring a child” for **Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library** at **$30 per pre-school child** for monthly books sent home. We want to enroll **2000 children** this year, up from 1500 currently.
3. Our **Partner Impact Report** is new! Check it out online.

HOW TO GIVE

1. Donors may designate to “**the greatest need**”; if no designation is given, this is where the donation will go
2. Donors may **designate a charity** of their choice in giving
3. **Options for giving** range from credit cards to paycheck deductions or checks or cash. (See ricecountyunitedway.org/donate for all the options)

If you have questions about Rice County Area United Way, you are invited to contact Executive Director Elizabeth Child, elizabeth@ricecounyunitedway.org or 507-664-3510 (office).