

ANNUAL REPORT

24



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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

CORPORATE GIVING

Greetings!

I am pleased to present the United Way of the Capital Area's Annual Report for the fiscal year 2024. This year has been marked by remarkable achievements and significant challenges, and I am proud to share our progress and impact with you.

Our unwavering commitment to improving lives and strengthening communities has led to significant impact throughout the past year. Our initiatives in education, financial stability, and health have not only addressed critical issues but also made meaningful strides. This progress, made possible by the support of our dedicated partners, donors, volunteers, and staff, is a testament to the power of collective action.

Education: We have worked tirelessly to ensure every child can access quality education. Our programs have provided essential resources, mentorship, and support to students, helping them to achieve academic success and develop the skills needed for a brighter future.

Financial Stability: Economic empowerment has been a critical focus of our efforts. We have implemented financial literacy education programs, job training, and employment opportunities. These initiatives have enabled individuals and families to achieve greater financial independence and stability.

Health: Promoting health and well-being remains a top priority. Our health initiatives have focused on increasing access to healthcare services, promoting healthy lifestyles, and supporting mental health. Through our partnerships and community outreach, we have improved the health outcomes of many in our community.

This year, we faced unprecedented challenges due to the ongoing water crisis in part of our Hinds County service area. However, this crisis has also highlighted the resilience of our community and the importance of our work. In response, we launched emergency relief efforts to provide critical support to those affected. Our response initiatives, including distributing water, food, and essential supplies, offering financial assistance, ensuring access to healthcare and mental health services, and assisting with utility bill payments, have been a testament to our community's strength.

Our success would not be possible without our donors' generous support, our volunteers' dedication, and the collaboration of our community and corporate partners. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for your commitment to our mission. Together, we have made a tangible difference in the lives of countless individuals and families.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to create lasting change. We are excited to continue our work, innovate approaches, and deepen our impact in the Capital Area and beyond. Your continued support is vital to our success, and we look forward to partnering with you in the years ahead.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to the United Way of the Capital Area.

Warm Regards,



Nikki K. McCelleis, Ed.S.

President and CEO

United Way of the Capital Area

BOARD & STAFF



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DIRECTOR**

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EDUCATION COORDINATOR

Keedrick Palmer
**COMMUNITY IMPACT
COORDINATOR**

Clara Jackson
RECEPTIONIST



To improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of communities around the world.

MISSION



& VISION

United Way envisions a world where all individuals and families achieve their human potential through education, income stability, and healthy lives.

COMMUNITY

IMPACT

EDUCATION



Service Opportunities to Advance Reading (SOAR) United

The Soul Café, a signature program of the United Way of the Capital Area, is designed for students to experience a “coffee house vibe” where they pick a book and read while relaxing in a comfy, quiet space with a cup of hot chocolate or juice. They can share their reading with others via verbal, written, artistic, or other modes of expression.

There are more than **30 different (appropriate grade-level and reading-level) book titles** in the Café featuring diverse characters, topics, and genres with 2-3 copies of each book, which allows organic “reading groups” to form based on the book a student chooses to read. Students will engage in Literature Circles, a “book club” format that allows them to serve different roles, such as the summarizer, illustrator, and connector, to set a variety of purposes while reading, with the ultimate goal being to foster a love of reading and connecting with others.

- The Soul Café' at Jackson State University is a product of a partnership between the United Way of the Capital Area and the JSU TRIO Programs.
- The Soul Café at McWillie Elementary School is a product of a partnership between the United Way of the Capital Area and Trustmark Bank.
- UWCA provided **1,000 books** to children during the summer:
 - Participated in the MPB Family Summer Learning Day and distributed over **600 books** to children ages 1-8 years old.
 - Donated **200 summer reading books** to Voices of Calvary's Little Free Libraries, primarily targeting 3rd-9th grade children.
 - Provided **215 books** to Soul Café Partner Sites to remain in use during programming.



Author's Summit- United Way of the Capital Area, in partnership with Jackson State University TRIO Talent Search program, hosted its Best-Selling Author, Angie Thomas, for the Inaugural Authors Summit for middle schools across the tri-county area. The students in attendance received a free signed copy of the author's latest book, ***Nic Blake and the Incredibles***. Approximately **250 students** were impacted by this experience.

Emerging Entrepreneur Leadership Symposium (EELS)

United Way of the Capital Area, in partnership with Jackson State University TRIO Education Opportunity Center (EOC), hosted **200 high school scholars** in its first youth entrepreneurship event in September 2023. EELS is an initiative designed to empower the next generation of entrepreneurs by providing an exhilarating and enriching experience that will fuel passion, share valuable insights, and connect aspiring young entrepreneurs to business leaders. This transformative event inspires young minds with the knowledge, skills, and mindset needed to thrive in the evolving world of business, entrepreneurship, and marketing.

Youth United Ambassador Program

The Ambassador Program is a positive youth development and leadership initiative for rising junior and senior students in Hinds, Madison, and Rankin County School Districts. Youth United's mission aims to empower student leaders and equip them with the tools needed for a successful future. This involves, but is not limited to, organizing and mobilizing their peers to address various challenges related to education, health, and financial well-being, receiving guidance from trusted adults regarding staying on track for high school graduation, preparing for college and/or a career, and taking advantage of expanded enrichment and professional networking opportunities. This program serves approximately **30 students** annually.



JSU/Blackburn Learning Garden benefits middle school students and combats food deserts in surrounding communities. The garden focuses on teaching young people about healthy living, growing vegetables, and entrepreneurship. Blackburn Middle School students help patrons select fruits and vegetables they have grown themselves at their annual student-led farmers market held each spring. United Way of the Capital Area donated **\$10,000 towards this garden.**

Youth Health Matters Symposium

United Way of the Capital Area hosts an annual **Youth Health Matters Symposium** at the Jackson Convention Complex. The symposium is an initiative that provides learning sessions, group activities, phenomenal speakers, and health vendors to engage with students from Hinds, Madison, and Rankin County School Districts. It's a unique opportunity to learn about health issues that impact youth across the state and nation. The symposium hosted 12 vendors and 15 presenters from various health and wellness professions and **250 high school students representing 8 schools from Hinds, Madison, and Rankin County.**

Food Box Giveaway

UWCA gave away **200 Food Boxes** to families in the Pelahatchie Community at Pelahatchie High School. Food boxes included a bunch of fresh greens, red and sweet potatoes, carrots, onions, and bell peppers.

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Food Insecurity Initiatives

The Gardens out of Dirt (GOOD) Project is an initiative to address food insecurity in the South Jackson community. United Way of the Capital Area, Atmos Entergy, and We Are One United Methodist Church partnered to address the growing food disparity in the community. This project includes a community garden, expanding a food pantry, and providing educational resources to families on making healthier eating and buying choices while also learning how to grow and prepare healthy meals. Alcorn State University Extension (AG Division) has joined in this effort to provide its educational expertise and, through this initiative, fresh produce grown in the garden located on the grounds of the church. The Good Project hosted four (4) educational classes for the community, "What's Really Going in Your Body," "How Much Fat, Sugar, and Salt Are You Consuming," "Preparing Healthy Meals," and "Growing Your Container Garden?" Classes were held every 4th Saturday at We Are One United Methodist Church immediately following the food pantry giveaway. The Food Pantry giveaway began at 7:30 am and typically ended at 9:30 am, **feeding over 200 families monthly.**

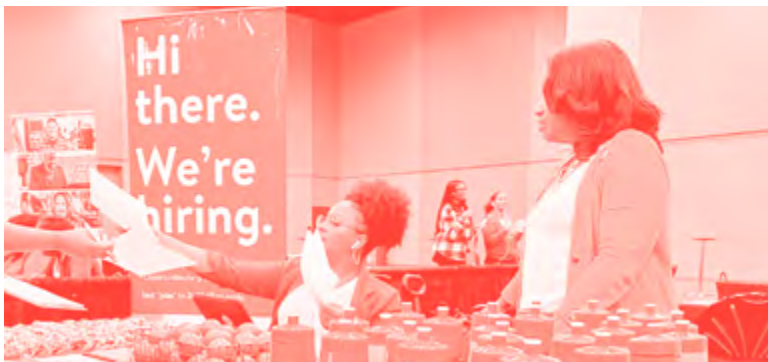


Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

- Total tax returns filed by volunteers **1,322**
- Total Earned Income Credit (EIC) Dollars **\$633,560.00**
- Total Amount Refunded to VITA recipients **\$1,651,868**

United Employability Fair

UWCA hosted *The United Employability Fair* at the Jackson Convention Complex with **51 vendors and 1311 students.**



Bank ON

- UWCA partnered with Chase Bank to **host two online financial education workshops** on Understanding Credit and Homeownership.
- UWCA, in collaboration with Community Bank, hosted a **Community Credit Workshop** at Wingfield High School for community residents. Approximately 20 families were represented.
- The UWCA presented to high school seniors at Ridgeland High School the "Importance of Credit" in partnership with Community Bank.
- UWCA, in partnership with We Are One United Methodist Church and Community Bank, hosted Budgeting, Saving, and Home Buying basics for members and residents in the community.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Day of Action

UWCA staff volunteered their time at Bridge Builders Leadership Institute in Rankin County, Madison Counties Allied Against Poverty (MadCAAP) in Madison County, and We Will Go Ministries in Hinds County. UWCA Staff also engaged in reading and outdoor activities with the children attending the various summer camps and sorting and packing food boxes in the local food pantry.

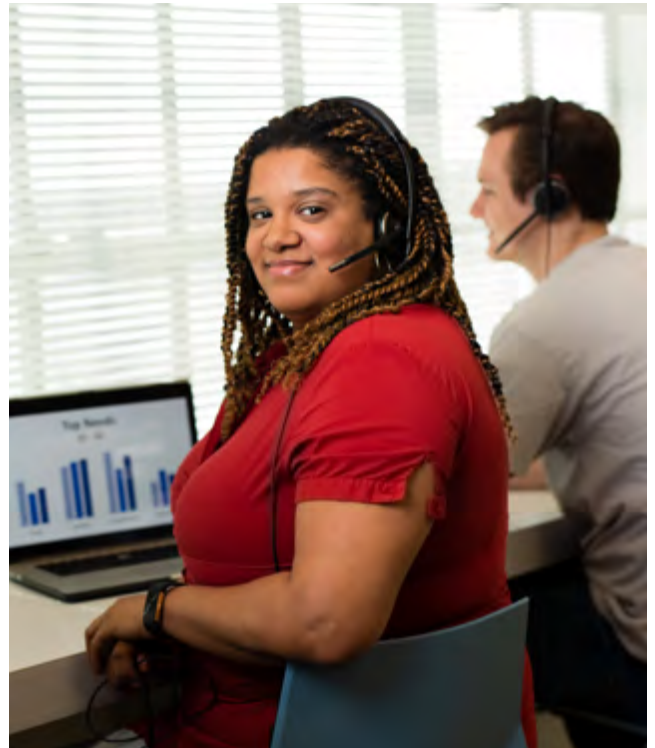
School Tools

On July 30th, in partnership with 16 WAPT News and surrounding communities, UWCA collected around **4000 school supplies.** Donations were given to Gods Haven Ministries, Women's Domestic Violence Shelters, East Flora Elementary, Gary Road Intermediate, and Raymond Elementary.



STATEWIDE INITIATIVES

United Way of the Capital Area's service area includes Madison, Hinds, and Rankin counties; however, UWCA funds initiatives and resources available to Mississippians across the entire state.



2-1-1 Mississippi

211 Mississippi is a program initiative funded by United Way of the Capital Area, whose mission is to improve lives and build strong communities by uniting individuals with the will, passion, expertise, and resources needed to solve problems. 211 is a 24/7 go-to resource that connects millions with locally available help. Expert, caring call center operators support 99% of the U.S. population. People can contact 211 by phone, text, and online.

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Safety Mask Giveaways

UWCA gave away **52 pallets of Mask and Car Protective Covers** on Tuesday, November 28th, at the Jackson Medical Mall to community residents. Special thank you to our partners, the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation and The Bee Foundation.

Donations

- In partnership with Target Corp., United Way of the Capital Area **supported two families with gifts** for the Christmas holiday.
- UWCA supported The MS School for Deaf and Blind by providing **toiletries, hats, gloves, and scarves to the 49 residential students**. We also donated Christmas goodie bags for all 110 students enrolled.
- UWCA donated **200 children's books** for the Angel Tree Christmas Giveaway with the Salvation Army.
- UWCA also donated over **500 books** to the Briarwood Art Center for their community library.
- UWCA provided **367 children's books** to the We Will Go Ministries book fair

Every day, clients call 2-1-1 to access free and confidential crisis and emergency counseling, disaster assistance, food, health care and insurance assistance, stable housing and utility payment assistance, employment services, veteran services, and childcare and family services. No matter the situation, the specialists at 211 listen, identify underlying problems, and connect people in need with resources and services in their community that improve their lives.



United for ALICE

United For ALICE is a driver of innovation, research, and action to improve life across the country for ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) and all.



A new way to measure financial hardship called ALICE has provided a thorough and unbiased picture of the situation. United for ALICE presents a framework and language for stakeholders to reassess public and corporate policies and implement changes that improve the lives of ALICE and their communities.

What ALICE Does

1. Produces Reports

We provide unbiased data that is replicable, easily updated on a regular basis, and sensitive to local context. This data is accessible to corporations, nonprofits, and foundations throughout Mississippi.

2. Leads a Learning Community

United For ALICE facilitates a forum for sharing experiences, developing best practices, and building broader impact and fundraising strategies.

3. Inspires Action

The ultimate goal of this project is to stimulate action that will improve the financial stability of ALICE families and their communities.

540

TOTAL

VOLUNTEERS

4,592.54

TOTAL VOLUNTEER
HOURS, which is
equivalent to

\$153,804.¹⁷

IN WORKED HOURS

BY THE NUMBERS

\$58,626.¹¹

SPONSORSHIPS TO
COMMUNITY PARTNERS
(non-profits addressing Health,
Education, and Economic Mobility
in our service area)

\$150,000.⁰⁰

2-1-1 HELPLINE

\$30,401.¹⁷

DISASTER RELIEF SERVICES

\$89,860.⁷⁴

VOLUNTEER INCOME TAX
ASSISTANCE (VITA)

\$12,561.³⁶

COLLEGE & CAREER
READINESS PROGRAMS

\$30,374.⁹⁴

BANK ON
(addressing unbanked and
underbanked)

\$25,000.⁰⁰

ASSET-LIMITED, INCOME-
CONSTRAINED, EMPLOYED
(ALICE) RESEARCH

\$6,467.⁰⁶

SCHOOL TOOLS
(school supply drive)

\$3,160.⁴⁰

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS EVENT
(supporting students at the MS
School for the Deaf & Blind)

\$26,984.⁸⁴

FEEDING PROGRAMS

\$38,652.⁰⁰

JXN FILM CAMP
(supporting careers in film)

\$13,646.⁴⁰

SOAR UNITED
(childhood & adult literacy
programs)

\$546,208.⁰²

TOTAL **FUNDS ALLOCATED**

Thanks to our donors!

Thank you so much for your generous support. Your contributions are vital to our mission, and we truly couldn't achieve our goals without your help. Your commitment empowers us to continue making a difference, and we're deeply grateful for your partnership in this journey.

