

## United Way of Marion County

LIVE UNITED



VOLUNTEER.

GIVE.

ADVOCATE.



### Investing in Marion County's Children

United Way of Marion County is currently deeply involved in its Community Investment (formerly known as allocations) process. It will again this year invest a percentage of its allocable donor dollars in four areas - education, financial stability, health and safety net programs.

Twenty five percent of those allocable dollars will be invested helping our children reach their potential through education. Why and how will this be done?



The "why" is easy; Marion County statistics are dismal at best. According to recent statistics from the Ohio Department of Development, almost 20 percent of Marion County residents is without a high school diploma. That's three percent lower than the state average. But regardless of how we compare with others, that statistic means that one in every five Marion County residents is basically uneducated. Higher education is even worse. The most recent U.S. Census tells us that only about 11 percent of our residents 25 years of age and older have a bachelor's degree; the state average is 21 percent. Again, we are 10 percent below the average. The facts are simple - an uneducated workforce drives away new business and industry.

The "how" is a little tougher. We know that about half our county's children reside in county school districts, while the other half live in Marion City School District (MCS). We also know that graduation rates and other measurements are much worse in MCS than the county schools, not because of the quality of education but because of

### Tea With the First Lady



Instead of tea, it was pop, coffee and water as regional counties met with Francis Strickland this week on the topic of education.

First Lady Francis Strickland issued invitations to county teams of individuals to discuss how to ensure community involvement in schools as a way of strengthening education in Ohio. Counties represented were Marion, Crawford, Ashland, Seneca and Wyandot.

United Way joined Marion County Family & Children First Council, Marion County Children Services, North Central Ohio Educational Service Center, River Valley Schools and Marion City Schools to tackle this issue.

Marion County discussion focused on student-centered

demographics. Currently more than 70 percent of MCS students qualify for free or reduced lunches due to household income and about 20 percent suffer from disabilities. So, in order to make the biggest impact for the county, we start with the city schools.

They have asked us to work on four areas: parenting skills, kindergarten readiness, behavior and social skills and transitioning kids from school to higher education or the workplace. The programs we fund in 2010 must show measurable results in those areas and become our strategies in this war. Together with school student-centered programming, we hope to see results in the next three years. See an example of this work below:

## Building a Strong Future - One Child at a Time

When Marion City School officials contacted United Way with plan to open an Alternative School for students in danger of dropping out, they asked for help in finding community services to work with the kids on things other than scholastics - things like goal-setting, leadership skills and attitude. As a result of that first contact, Boys & Girls Club offered the services of Scott Caudill.

During his time at the Alternative School, Scott took note of one particular young man. He saw great potential in Shawn, overlooking the facts that his grades and attitude were equally poor. In researching the situation, Scott discovered that Shawn was placed at the school only because of truancy issues. Digging a bit further, Scott discovered that Shawn's attitude was, "No one else cared if I went to school, so why should I?" Scott went out on a limb and offered to mentor Shawn on his leadership abilities at an after-school site with the stipulation that Shawn had to show improvement in his grades and attitude. Fully embracing the challenge, Shawn has exceeded everyone's expectations. The kids at the site see him as a person they can truly relate to and he equally enjoys doing what he can to make a difference in their lives. Shawn even attended a State Legislative Dinner in May with a Boys and Girls Club staff member to talk to some of the state representatives about the benefits of the Boys and Girls Club.

This is how we improve our graduation rates - one child at a time.

education with help from community partners like United Way and Family & Children First-funded programs. Planning will continue with additional partners to improve graduation rates and non-traditional student options.

## A Note From Pam



This is an easy month to **LIVE UNITED** - opportunities abound!

First, you can help build a house on our June 20 Day of Action. Face it, how often does someone actually let you use power tools?! Call us for details.

Or you can jump on our education initiative bus, or more accurately, "Stuff the Bus" with school supplies for kids that would otherwise go without. That's an easy one; just pick up some crayons or rulers or notebooks sometime this month while you're out shopping and stuff them into a nylon bus at Marion Community Credit Union, Marion Star or United Way of Marion County. I promise, you'll make a little



## Stuff the Bus

The "Stuff the Bus" campaign is a month-long (June 1st - 30th) effort to gather school supplies to help youngsters become ready to learn. Many families struggle with the extra cost of items their children need to start the new school year. These children begin classes at a disadvantage, either doing without the needed supplies or borrowing from others. In an effort to **LIVE UNITED** and further the ability for children to reach their potential, Marion County residents are invited to buy extra items and donate them to the cause.

Drop off locations include: The Marion Star, Marion Community Credit Union and the United Way of Marion County.

School supplies needed include:

- 8 count Crayola crayons
- 24 count Crayola crayons
- 8 count Crayola washable markers
- # 2 pencils
- box of colored pencils
- plastic crayon/pencil box
- pink erasers
- yellow highlighter
- Fiskars scissors
- 4 oz. Elmer's white school glue
- 8 oz. Elmer's white school glue
- spiral notebooks, notebook paper
- 12x18 white drawing paper
- Two-pocket folders
- 3 ring binders
- 12" ruler (centimeters/inches)



person smile.

Think about volunteering for the Marion County Parks District as they move closer to completing the first mile of their Rails to Trails Project. It's great weather for clearing ground and we could all use the exercise.

Or call us for other great volunteer opportunities to mentor a child, deliver a meal, or give blood.

And I don't want to miss a chance to thank our Community Investment volunteers for all the time, energy and talent they've given in the past month to determine how our campaign dollars will be spent in 2010. Thanks guys for **LIVING UNITED**, we couldn't do it without you!

However you decide to **LIVE UNITED**, do it with glad hands and joy in your heart. See you next month!

Sincerely,

Pam Stone  
Executive Director

## Live United

Underneath everything we are, underneath everything we do, we are all people. Connected, interdependent, UNITED. And when we reach out a hand to one, we influence the condition of all.

**Give. Advocate. Volunteer.**

**Email Sponsored By:**



The "Constant Contact *Cares4Kids*" program supports educational and social non-profit organizations that help children. Learn more about the [Cares4Kids](#) program.

More than 250,000 small businesses and organizations trust Constant Contact to connect with their customers and members. [Signup for a free 60-day trial.](#)

[Forward email](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to [kathy@unitedwaymarion.org](mailto:kathy@unitedwaymarion.org), by [kathy@unitedwaymarion.org](mailto:kathy@unitedwaymarion.org)  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



United Way of Marion County | 125 Executive Drive | Suite 100 | Marion | OH | 43302