

United Way Blackhawk Region

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**United Way
Blackhawk Region**

LIVE UNITED



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United Way Blackhawk Region celebrates philanthropy

Honoring the Heroes Among us breakfast held Wednesday (March 23)

JANESVILLE – Expressing gratitude to a generous community was the focus Wednesday morning (March 23) at United Way Blackhawk Region's annual LIVE UNITED Celebration, Honoring the Heroes Among Us, held at the Pontiac Convention Center in Janesville.

"We're here to pay tribute to the people who dedicate their lives to the greater good, committing acts of heroism in times of crisis and disaster," said United Way Blackhawk Region 2017 Board Chair Jon Schlemmer. "Heroes including United Way's funded Program Partners who work in the health and human service field each day to improve the lives of our friends and neighbors."

United Way Blackhawk Region President & CEO Mary Fanning-Penny announced at the event that United Way's 2016 campaign resulted in pledges from the community of \$2.34 million, 97.5 percent of the \$2.4 million campaign goal.

Additionally, United Way announced the presentation of more than 80 campaign awards to local companies and organizations, including its most prestigious award, the Cornerstone Award, presented to companies that hosted employee campaigns that exceeded \$100,000 in pledges. Receiving the Cornerstone Award this year are, ABC Supply Co., Mercyhealth, and Regal Beloit.

Welders Supply of Beloit, received the Emerging Campaign Award, for supercharging their campaign and increasing pledged financial support to United Way by 104% over the previous year.

United Way Blackhawk Region also recognized two individuals for their advocacy and volunteerism.

Martha Pearson, program director for YWCA Rock County's Transitions for Women Program, was honored as this year's recipient of the Excellence in Advocacy Award. The award

recognizes an individual who strives to create meaningful change and demonstrates measurable progress toward improving lives and strengthening our community.

"Martha Pearson believes in the value of second chances, extending a helping hand, inspiring and empowering women of all ages to realize their full economic potential in a community environment created by women for women," said Fanning-Penny. "Martha is the kind of person that inspires the hero in all of us."

The Geraldine Hedberg Volunteer of the Year Award was awarded to Mike O'Brien. In 2008, O'Brien served as co-chair of the local United Way community campaign. The following year, he was elected to the United Way Board of Directors and served with distinction through December 2016. During his tenure, Mike volunteered on several United Way committees and continues to play an active role on United Way's Campaign Cabinet.

"Mike O'Brien has always been willing to lend his time and expertise in support of United Way's mission," said United Way Resource Development Director Rick West. "We are very fortunate to have him as a volunteer and friend, and thank him for his generous in-kind support as the General Manager of WCLO and WJVL Radio."

The annual LIVE UNITED Award, presented to a company that displays exceptional support for the United Way through its workplace campaign, as well as volunteerism was presented to ABC Supply Co. In the five years since United Way Blackhawk Region's inception, ABC Supply Co. is the first corporate partner to pledge more than \$1,000,000 in support of the community via United Way.

For the third straight year, ABC Supply's workplace campaign has steadily increased and continues to exceed \$200,000.

"Community involvement has always been important to ABC Supply founders Ken and Diane Hendricks, and they've instilled that value throughout the organization," said Schlemmer. "ABC Supply has made volunteering and charitable support a vital part of their corporate culture, and our community is grateful."

Nearly 300 United Way supporters attended the LIVE UNITED Celebration, which featured a superhero theme and photo booth. Guests were also treated to a moving vocal performance by Addison Schuh, sophomore at Parker High School and granddaughter of ABC Supply Co. Owner and Chairperson, Diane Hendricks.

About United Way Blackhawk Region

United Way fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. We win by Living United, by forging unlikely partnerships and by finding new