

[http://www.heraldtimesonline.com/news/opinion/our-opinion-united-way-single-best-way-to-help/article\\_7a2894c8-3d7e-5c39-940b-cfad3cfca21f.html](http://www.heraldtimesonline.com/news/opinion/our-opinion-united-way-single-best-way-to-help/article_7a2894c8-3d7e-5c39-940b-cfad3cfca21f.html)

September 29, 2016

OUR OPINION

# Our Opinion: United Way: 'Single best way' to help

- Editorial staff



- David Snodgress

David Snodgress | Herald-TimesBarry Lessow, right, executive director of the United Way, talks with Tim Mayer at the United Way fundraising kickoff luncheon Wednesday at Fountain Square Mall.

Seven-year-old Jamie is one really good reason to give to United Way of Monroe County. More than one, really.

The boy with a cute grin and sharp-looking green pullover shirt wasn't introduced in person at the organization's annual kick-off luncheon Wednesday. But his photo was in the brochure left at every seat, and his story and that of his family was shared by three speakers and United Way executive director Barry Lessow.

The speakers offered a lot of specific stories. The overview: Jamie is a child who has been matched with a strong role model through Big Brothers Big Sisters. It's helped his school work and his self esteem and opened up some opportunities his family members can't provide just now because they're busy providing the essentials for Jamie and his little sister, Sarah, who's 4. Survival resources must come first.

Monroe County United Ministries is helping Sarah through its preschool program and Jamie's parents through its food pantry and self-sufficiency center. The family unit will be stronger because of the work of that agency.

You can add a third United Way agency, Area 10 Agency on Aging, which is helping Jamie's grandparents through a range of its programming, from providing transportation to health care appointments to an activity space for mind and body at the Endwright Center.

This three-agency partnership shows how United Way supports the whole family; how it supports people in Monroe County, case by case.

Talisha Coppock, who was introduced Wednesday as this year's campaign chairwoman, summed up the importance of support for United Way this way:

“Giving to United Way is the single best way to help the most people in our community.”

United Way has a web of 26 agencies and the vision to see where help can come from, adding 10 times that many nonprofits outside of the formal United Way network.

Once known almost exclusively as a fundraising organization, United Way has evolved into a fundraiser, collaborator and community resource. It raises funds for its member agencies and other nonprofits, but it also puts its resources and expertise into finding solutions for some of the most pressing issues facing individuals in the community, including food insecurity, affordable housing, equitable educational and work opportunities and much more. It helps provide a safety net of services when people need it and the tools from which people can build or rebuild their way to self-sufficiency.

United Way broke a long-time tradition this year by not setting a campaign goal. That change sends this message: It’s not about a number to meet, it’s about meeting the needs of the largest number of people possible.

The campaign has an appropriate theme: “Empowering your community. One donation at a time.”

We encourage you to help empower members of the community, like Jamie and his family, by joining the campaign at whatever level you can. Every donation helps.