MAKE A DIFFERENCE
FOR THOSE IN NEED
A TOOLKIT FOR VOLUNTEERS.
Your employees want to make a difference

The right volunteer endeavor can have far reaching benefits for you, your employees, your business and our community. It can help improve morale, provide enriching experiences and drive a deeper connection and loyalty to your company. And when you and your employees invest time, you make our shared community a better place to live for all of us.

Consider engaging your group in a way that will make a lasting difference throughout our community.
UNITED WAY’S GOOD NEIGHBOR CENTER IS YOUR RESOURCE FOR VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT.

United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania works with companies to link individuals and employee groups with meaningful volunteer opportunities that connect those in need with those who can help. And we offer volunteer opportunities that fit your schedule — short-term, ongoing relationship-based and corporate opportunities.

To find a volunteer opportunity that will make a difference, United Way is the place to begin.

For more information on opportunities in Westmoreland, Fayette and Southern Armstrong Counties, contact Jackie Johns, Community Engagement Manager, at Jackie.Johns@unitedwayswpa.org call 724.834.7170x17.
WHO DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

OPEN YOUR HEART TO A SENIOR
Who It Helps: Seniors
Time Commitment: Ongoing or one-time
Type of Volunteer: Individual, Group or Corporate

PRE-K VISION SCREENING
Who It Helps: Children
Time Commitment: Ongoing
Type of Volunteer: Individual

COMPANIES IN THE CLASSROOM
Who It Helps: Children
Time Commitment: 4-6 months
Type of Volunteer: Corporate

100,000 BOOKS CAMPAIGN
Who It Helps: Children
Time Commitment: Short-term
Type of Volunteer: Individual, Group or Corporate

VOLUNTEER FREE TAX PREP
Who It Helps: Financially Struggling Families, Veterans, Women
Time Commitment: 4 months
Type of Volunteer: Individual

DAY OF CARING
Who It Helps: Children, Financially Struggling Families, Seniors, Veterans, Women
Time Commitment: 4-6 hours
Type of Volunteer: Group or Corporate

SHOE BOX PROJECT
Who It Helps: Financially Struggling Families, Veterans, Women
Time Commitment: Short-term
Type of Volunteer: Group or Corporate

DAYS OF ACTION
Who It Helps: Children, Financially Struggling Families, Seniors, Veterans, Women
Time Commitment: 4-6 hours
Type of Volunteer: Group or Corporate

WANT TO LEND A HAND BUT AREN’T SURE WHERE TO BEGIN?
Whether you’re the head of Corporate Responsibility or just want to make a difference in your spare time, this chart can match you with a volunteer opportunity for a cause you care about.

WHO DO YOU WANT TO HELP?

- CHILDREN
- FINANCIALLY STRUGGLING FAMILIES
- SENIORS
- VETERANS
- WOMEN
For seniors, remaining independent in their own homes is often the best way to remain healthy and happy. Thousands of older adults in our community are striving to live independently, but may need a little extra help. Thanks to a network of caring community volunteers, they can receive the help they need to stay living at home.

Open Your Heart To A Senior recruits, trains and matches volunteers of all ages to help seniors in our community. These volunteers provide local seniors with companionship, rides to medical appointments and more. Their help enables seniors to remain independent, manage their own health, live safely and avoid isolation. And volunteers not only impact the lives of seniors, but also give family caregivers — who are struggling to manage work, life and other commitments — much needed support.

Volunteers have the flexibility to choose opportunities that work with their schedule, giving them an easy way to make a meaningful difference to a senior in need.

**Volunteer Type**
- Ongoing or one-time
- Individual, Group or Corporate

**Who You Help**
- Seniors & Their Families

**The Details**
- Individuals can volunteer on an ongoing basis after they receive training from United Way’s Open Your Heart to a Senior staff.
- Groups and corporate teams can volunteer for one-off projects, including painting and landscaping projects at the homes of senior recipients.
Vision issues in young children pose a significant but often unrealized barrier to early learning. Approximately 85% of what a child learns is learned visually, but nearly one out of every four children has a learning-related vision problem. Students usually don’t receive their first vision screening until they are enrolled in kindergarten. But by that time, vision issues may have already impaired the development of crucial early learning skills.

United Way trains and organizes volunteers, who go into schools and early childhood education facilities and conduct vision screenings with pre-k students.

Through this process, volunteers, educators and parents can detect vision problems - and their related learning issues - before a child starts kindergarten.

Vision screening volunteers are organized in teams and coordinated through United Way’s education department. All volunteers complete clearances and training.

Request more information at unitedway4u.org/volunteer-vision-screener.
Companies in the Classroom

HELP STRENGTHEN BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS ONE SCHOOL AT A TIME.

Last year, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania launched our first Companies in the Classroom project in Westmoreland County, in an effort to increase classroom learning opportunities and build stronger business-to-community partnerships.

A team of corporate volunteers visited 80 local kindergarten students during six weekly, hour-long sessions. During each session, volunteers read aloud to students and lead a book-related interactive project. At the session’s conclusion, volunteers presented each student with their own book and a copy for the classroom library.

As part of their project, the company elected to raise an additional $1,200 in school supplies, which they donated to the school to help replenish mid-year inventories.

Volunteer Type

Short-term
Corporat e

Who You Help

Children

The Details

Work with United Way’s education staff to coordinate 4-6 weeks of reading or other learning sessions at a local elementary school.

Companies also have the option of running school supply drives or making other contributions to the school as part of their project.
Kids reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade are four times more likely to graduate high school. Over the next several years, our 100,000 Books Campaign seeks to increase early reading skills in children, so they can start school feeling prepared and achieve academic success.

The program will give kids better access to quality books and reinforce the importance of building early literacy skills for parents and caregivers. Ultimately, this will improve graduation rates, resulting in greater independence and long-term success for kids.

The 100,000 Books Campaign will create supportive connections between adult volunteers and kids to improve the reading skills of children in our neighborhoods.

Individuals, groups or corporate teams can organize a book drive to benefit the Campaign. Collect quality children’s books for kids (suggested ages 3 to 6-years-old) and United Way will coordinate drop-off or pick-up and distribution.

Get started at unitedway4u.org/organize-book-drive.
Volunteer Free Tax Preparation

Help hardworking families keep more of what they earn.

Many hardworking, low-income families are struggling to make ends meet. For these families, every dollar they get back in earned income tax credits can make a critical difference. Last year, volunteer tax preparers helped prepare nearly 1,000 returns in Westmoreland County, which returned over $1 million to local people — helping these families put food on the table, pay rent, keep the heat on and pay for other basic needs.

Volunteers receive free training to become IRS certified.

Training can take place online and in a classroom setting and the duration is dependent upon your experience level. Once volunteers pass the IRS certification test they can choose from a variety of sites and times — based on their schedule — and will be connected with qualifying families in need.

In just a few hours a week during tax season, you can change lives, improve the financial health of our community and learn a new skill.

Volunteer Type

Short-term Individual

Who You Help

Financially Struggling Families, Women, Veterans

The Details

United Way partners with the Westmoreland Community Action (WCA) and the Fayette County Community Action Agency (FCCAA) to fund the Volunteer Free Tax Preparation program. Volunteers will work directly with staff from WCA and FCCAA to complete training and coordinate volunteer shifts.
Day of Caring is United Way’s signature one-day volunteer event across Westmoreland, Fayette and Southern Armstrong Counties. A community tradition for over a decade, Day of Caring brings together teams of volunteers to help local United Way partners and other community serving organizations in need.

Volunteers complete projects for organizations across our eastern service area, including painting, landscaping, cleaning, organizing, mentoring and more.

Last year, Day of Caring hosted over 60 projects for 40 different organizations. In total, volunteers donated over 3,000 hours of work valued over $75,000.

Day of Caring is held on the second Friday in September.

Volunteer teams can select one or more projects based on their location, team size and interest area.

To learn more, visit unitedway4u.org/DayOfCaring.
Income & Financial Stability

Shoe Box Project

Help hardworking families keep more of what they earn.

People struggling to make ends meet often find it hard to come by basic items like toothpaste, soap and deodorant that are essential for good health and hygiene. By organizing a Shoe Box Project you can help families meet these needs and give them a special gift.

Group or corporate volunteers can decide who they want their boxes to go to (with help from United Way), then organize a supply drive or purchase items to fill their boxes. Sample items include travel size shampoo and conditioner, child’s toothpaste, hand sanitizer and socks.

Volunteers can then decorate boxes individually or as a group, then coordinate delivery of completed boxes through United Way.

Volunteer Type
Short-term Group or Corporate

Who You Help
Financially Struggling Families, Women, Veterans

The Details
Download a more detailed Shoe Box Project tool kit at unitedway4u.org/download-your-shoebox-project-toolkit.
Collective Community Impact

DAYS OF ACTION

LET YOUR EMPLOYEES SHINE. AND WATCH THE COMMUNITY LIGHT UP.

Let us help you develop a meaningful experience for your specific organization. Group and corporate volunteer projects can be tailored to meet the unique needs of your team — size, schedule and interest. United Way can:

• Work with you to determine what your volunteer project needs and goals are

• Determine what types of volunteer projects are needed at local non-profits

• Assist in implementing your project, start to finish

• Plan a volunteering program that will be a great team-building activity, improve morale and help meet an important need in our community

VOLUNTEER TYPE

One-time
Group or Corporate

WHO YOU HELP

Children, Financially Struggling Families, Seniors
Veterans, Women

THE DETAILS

Contact your United Way staff person or visit unitedway4u.org/companies to request a project.
TO GET STARTED

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT JACKIE JOHNS, COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT MANAGER, AT JACKIE.JOHNS@UNITEDWAYSWPA.ORG OR CALL 724.834.7170X17.