

**United Way Blackhawk Region**

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United Way  
Blackhawk Region

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**United Way kicks off 2018 campaign**

(BLACKHAWK REGION) – United Way Blackhawk Region kicked off its annual community campaign at a breakfast held at the Eclipse Center on Wednesday, Sept. 19.

At the breakfast buffet sponsored by KERRY, United Way delivered its enduring call to action by urging the 450 attendees to give, advocate, and volunteer, in order to Live United. To reaffirm donors' commitment and to inspire new financial support, United Way unveiled its 2018 campaign video, introduced this year's campaign champions and announced the community fundraising goal of \$2.6 million dollars as set by its board of directors.

"While volunteers contribute so much, we know that volunteering is not enough. A financial investment is required to deliver effective programming and accomplish measurable results," said United Way Blackhawk Region Board Chair Jon Schlemmer. "That's why United Way's Board of Directors has committed to investing \$2.34 million dollars to help fight family violence, poverty, hunger, homelessness, and many other daunting problems families face in the Blackhawk Region. And, we need your generous support to keep fighting."

Champions of United Way's 2017 campaign, Lori Curtis Luther, Mark Freitag, Al Hulick, and Ted Rehl, were on hand to recap last year's success in meeting the goal and to introduce the local leaders championing this year's campaign.

"In a creative spin on the champion concept, each of our newly appointed campaign champions represents one of United Way's three impact areas: health, education and financial stability," Hulick said. "Securing high visibility advocates in this role sends a clear message to our community that creating real and lasting change requires collaboration, innovation and strong leadership."

Regina Dunkin, Community Relations and Volunteer Coordinator at Beloit Health System, School District of Janesville Superintendent Steve Pophal, and Marc Perry, Director of Planning and Development at Community Action, Inc. were announced as champions for United Way's 2018 community campaign. Each champion shared information on how United Way fights for the health, education and financial stability of every person in the Blackhawk Region, including coalition work, community grant investments, launching Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and United Way's refreshed ALICE<sup>®</sup> Report.

Held every year in conjunction with the campaign kickoff, United Way's Day of Caring will surpass 2017 numbers with another record-breaking year of participation. Organizers thanked sponsors and participants for another meaningful day of volunteerism, boasting 916 volunteers, 163 corporate teams from 34 companies, 117 projects slated at 44 local nonprofit organizations.

The event concluded with an upbeat breakdance performance by the "BBoys": Ethan Hough (6th grader at Marshall Middle School), Alexz Pfeiffer (freshman at Parker High School) and Wyatt Flann (homeschooled student).

To learn how you can give, advocate or volunteer, visit [LiveUnitedBR.org](http://LiveUnitedBR.org).

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### **About United Way's 2018 Community Campaign Champions**

#### **Health: Regina Dunkin, Beloit Health System**

Regina Dunkin is the Community Relations and Volunteer Coordinator for Beloit Health System. Dunkin previously served for 18 years as the Executive Director of the Merrill Community Center in Beloit. She currently serves as part of Rock County's Health Equity Alliance, City of Beloit Appointment Review Committee, Greater Beloit Economic Development Board & Investment Committee, as well as United Way's Campaign Cabinet. Dunkin has also served as an elected official, previously for six years as a member of the Beloit Board of Education and currently as Vice President of the Beloit City Council. At the state level, Dunkin was appointed by Gov. Scott Walker to the Wisconsin State Public Defender Board, currently serving as the board's vice president. Dunkin has been recognized for her service through various awards and accolades including the School District of Beloit Hero Award, League of Women Voter's Women in Politics Award, YWCA Women of Distinction Award, NAACP Community Award. In 2006, Dunkin was honored with an Official Proclamation from the City of Beloit declaring August 9 as Regina Dunkin Day.

#### **Education: Steve Pophal, School District of Janesville**

Steve Pophal began in his current position as Superintendent of the School District of Janesville in July 2017. Prior to this role, Pophal served as a social studies teacher and coach in Appleton, Wis. and was athletic director and assistant principal in Sheboygan Falls, Wis. He served as a principal in three Wisconsin school districts, Sheboygan Falls, Plymouth and D.C. Everest in central Wisconsin. He is also the former Director of Secondary Education at D.C. Everest and Past-President of the Association of Wisconsin School Administrators and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Pophal was born and raised in Wausau, Wis. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, earned a graduate degree from Marian University, and his Superintendent credential from Edgewood College. In August 2018, Pophal joined United Way Blackhawk Region's Board of Directors.

#### **Financial Stability: Marc Perry, Community Action, Inc.**

Marc Perry has more than 20 years' experience working with youth and adults from diverse backgrounds and currently serves as the Director of Planning and Development for Community Action of Rock and Walworth Counties where he oversees the Merrill Community Center in Beloit, adult preparation programs, and fund development. Perry has conducted cultural equity training for a

variety of organizations, coordinating community-wide needs assessments, and is working to develop the organization's strategic plan. Since 2017, Perry has trained more than 4,600 people in cultural equity, including every Rock County government employee. Perry's past experience includes directing youth development, program development and inclusion initiatives for Wyman Center Inc., Mentor St. Louis, Wesley House Association and the Kohl Children's Museum. Perry was awarded the 2014 UAW Local 95 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Civil Rights Service Award for his commitment to social justice, diversity and inclusion.

**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 solutions to old problems; by mobilizing the best resources; and inspiring individuals to join the fight against a common foe, each community's most daunting social crises. United Way Blackhawk Region Lives United against poverty, family violence, hunger and homelessness to name a few, by providing community grants and resources to 62 human services programs at 28 nonprofit agencies in Rock County, Wis. and northern Winnebago County, Ill. More information is available at [LiveUnitedBR.org](http://LiveUnitedBR.org).

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