Greetings during unprecedented times. Just a few short weeks ago, we would have been focused on the emerging signs of spring – the clocks moving forward, days lengthening, and the calendar saying spring is here. Now, everyone around the world is being impacted by a new virus that has set us all on edge. We hope as the weeks of social distancing go by that you and your loved ones, neighbors, and colleagues find new ways to stay connected and adjust to what is for now the “new normal.”

In the midst of all this uncertainty, we want to again say “Thank You” for supporting the efforts of United Way of York County to “improve lives by mobilizing people and resources.” Even though our office is closed and our staff are working remotely, we have been learning what residents and nonprofits need now. Through calls, emails, and online community forums, we are also learning what those needs will look like moving forward and who has resources to meet those needs. You make it possible for us to continue to provide financial resources to nonprofits, to share additional resources with those providing housing and food assistance (see COVID-19 Fund), and to connect volunteers where needed.

Events have been postponed and opportunities to connect face-to-face are delayed. Yet we are confident that this will pass, and when it does, that the interest in and need for helping our neighbors will be as strong as ever. Thank you for keeping community in your heart – we are grateful for your support!

Wishing you well,

— Barb Wentworth, UWYC President & CEO

Fourth Teddy Bear Toss Helps Partner Nonprofits

The University of New England handed off over 3,200 teddy bears and other stuffed animals to United Way of York County (UWYC) on Friday, Feb. 28, in a ceremony commemorating the University’s fourth annual Teddy Bear Toss. The Toss is organized by the student building managers of the Harold Alfond Forum (HAF) on the University’s Biddeford Campus.

Each year, during both a men's and women's hockey game, fans throw teddy bears onto the ice when the Nor’easters score their first goal. The bears — collected in advance through community donations — are then handed to UWYC, which further distributes them to community organizations across southern Maine.

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This year’s Teddy Bear Toss, held on Jan. 31, collected a record 3,268 stuffed animals to go to children in the region. To date, UNE has donated 10,168 stuffed animals to United Way.

“United Way’s mission is to improve lives by mobilizing people and resources. That is the goal of the Teddy Bear Toss,” said D.J. Whitten, manager of the Forum. “We believe deeply that the planning of this event each year provides our student building managers an experience that complements their overall experience at UNE and gives them skills they can take with them their entire lives.”

During the ceremony, held at the Forum, students and other attendees heard from nearly a dozen community partners about where the bears will go and whom they will benefit.

UNE President James D. Herbert, Ph.D., welcomed the crowd and spoke about the University’s partnership with the United Way. “The partnership between the United Way is strong, and it is growing,” he said. “The Teddy Bear Toss is one of the most fun events for me every year.”

### Volunteers share the love with seniors

The Valentine’s Day Senior Food Project wrapped up in mid February with delivery of fruit, nuts, chocolate, and Valentine greeting to more than 70 seniors throughout York County!

Thanks to Arundel Ford, Corning, Haley’s Metal, Kennebunk Savings, Saco & Biddeford Savings Institution and Southern Maine Healthcare for their donations and personal delivery of the food-filled bags.

Thank you also to Cabot Cheese for their donation of cheddar cheese packets and Girl Scout Troop 63 of the Kennebunks for making beautiful cards!

If United Way of York County is one of your most important charitable causes, you can make it part of your legacy. Contact us about planned gifts.

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### Board Searching for New President, CEO

Did you know that Barb Wentworth, our President & CEO, is retiring this summer after 30 years with the organization? The Board has designed a succession plan to ensure continuation of leadership for the organization, and has retained Starboard Leadership Consulting to guide a comprehensive, professional search process.

In communication to the Board and staff, Chairperson Chris Indorf wrote, “Barb has provided visionary leadership for United Way, and served the residents of York County for three decades. Her accomplishments are too many to list, and while we wish she’d stay forever, we wish her all the best and thank her for assistance during this critical transition.”

“Our next President & CEO will work with our exceptional staff and dedicated board to deepen UWYC’s impact in our community – galvanizing individuals and organizations to act, while mobilizing resources, expertise, and funding,” Indorf noted.

The Board plans to make a hire before Wentworth retires in June.

### 2020 Community Investments Distributed

A total of 37 eligible organizations have been contacted regarding approval of the 61 funded program investments that impact our community.

These investments span all three UWYC priority areas (Bright Beginnings, Connected Youth, and Supportive Services) with a total of $599,973 invested back into York County in 2020.

Special recognition goes to each of the dedicated and skilled volunteers who serve on UWYC’s Community Review Team! Thank you!

### UWYC NEWS, EVENTS

- The annual Spirit of Service awards will be given to an adult and youth during our Annual Meeting — the original date was May 13, but stay tuned for any changes due to the coronavirus pandemic. Don’t worry, nominations are ONLINE! Nominations for an ADULT can be done HERE. Nominations for a YOUTH can be done HERE.
- This year’s KeepME Warm Telethon was a success with an initial contribution of $4,246 coming to York County. This amount, plus the balance carried over from 2019’s campaign, allowed UWYC to distribute $5,575 to 25 town/city general assistance offices to provide emergency heat and fuel to their citizens.
- $22,500 in investments from Tom’s of Maine was dispersed to nine organizations across York County in early February. Tom’s of Maine partnered with UWYC on their three priorities of heating subsidies for seniors, supporting food banks/pantries, and non-food pantries in the local community to fund these contributions again this year.

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**Contact us about planned gifts.**