

CHARITY SPOTLIGHT

# Helping the Community the *United Way*

By Cierra Orlyk

In 1887, a priest, two ministers, a rabbi and a local woman came together with a common goal of making lasting change in their community of Denver, Colorado by providing financial assistance to those in need. They decided to host a united annual fundraising campaign. The campaign was not only successful in the community; its message of raising money “the United Way” sparked a movement that spread across the globe.

Today, United Way continues to benefit communities throughout the United States and abroad. Local chapters are independent but fight for the same thing — improving the health, education and financial stability of local residents in the areas it serves. According to Cassandra Madsen, Director of Strategic Communications at United Way of the Greater Capital Region, the organization effectively benefits communities due to its “ability to view the entire landscape of human need and address the total picture of what it takes for a person to succeed.” The non-profit uses data-driven research to identify the areas of greatest need in its regions and subsequently supports organizations that strive to fix those problems. In the Capital Region, United Way has made a profound impact on the accessibility of summer meals to children who depend on free/reduced-price lunch during the school year.

United Way realized something was wrong when they discovered local data that showed only 1 in 7 of the 48,000 children who eat



**When it comes to your to-do list, put your future first.**

To find out how to get your financial goals on track, contact your Edward Jones financial advisor today.



**Roderick D Sipe**  
Financial Advisor  
125 Wolf Road Ste 505  
Albany, NY 12205  
518-459-2271

edwardjones.com  
Member SIPC

**Edward Jones**  
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING

free/reduced-price lunch at school had access to free summer meals. The non-profit immediately got to work. They launched the Summer Meals Collaborative in 2013, which joined together health and human service providers, policy advocates and government agencies that vowed to change this statistic. In 2018, the Collaborative received a grant from Hannaford Supermarkets, which allowed the Boys and Girls Club of the Capital Area to serve 300% more meals than they did in 2017, and the Regional Food Bank to serve twice as many families as they did in 2017. As of 2019, the Summer Meals Collaborative has served over 240,000 meals to children in need. The mission has become even more urgent with the COVID-19 pandemic, and United Way has shifted its approach to provide to-go and delivery meals.

United Way of the Greater Capital Region acted fast when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. It provided more than \$1 million in grants to 100 non-profit organizations on the frontlines of the pandemic. This allowed for increased resources for coordinating basic needs, mobilizing food and supplies and delivering health care services. The organization also made efforts to support local artists affected by the pandemic, adapt volunteer opportunities to online and provide emergency funds to various agencies in the Capital Region.

Visit [www.UnitedWayGCR.org](http://www.UnitedWayGCR.org) to see how you can help, or volunteer today at their free volunteer portal, [www.UnitedToVolunteer.org](http://www.UnitedToVolunteer.org). Also, be sure to visit them on social media on Facebook (@UnitedWayGCR), Twitter (@UnitedWay\_GCR), Instagram (@unitedway\_gcr) or LinkedIn at United Way of the Greater Capital Region.