



***A Message from:  
United Way of McLean  
David Taylor***

***County's President & CEO:***

Thanksgiving is just two weeks away, and this has always been my favorite holiday. You have great food, time with family, no presents to buy, and as a life-long Dallas Cowboys fan, I know that they'll be playing that day!

Many of us can recall learning in school how the Pilgrims and the Wampanoag tribe celebrated the "first thanksgiving". Diverse people and language were barriers they overcame to commemorate a bountiful harvest and appreciate what they had. Regardless of the historical accuracy or inaccuracies of how and when it actually happened, symbolically, it's a powerful reminder of the power of a community.

As young children, we all probably made some sort of craft leading up to Thanksgiving Break, either the familiar black Pilgrim hat, or perhaps a cornucopia. As we grew older, high school and college, we likely looked forward to a 4-day break from school, and as college students, having mom catch us up on a semester's worth of laundry.

As we mature into adulthood, each person and family develop their own Thanksgiving traditions. I've taken on the role of hosting since our mother passed several years ago. I just got a 24-pound turkey and "all the fixin's" yesterday. I've got 5 grown men and my 9-year-old daughter to feed! I'll brine it, cook it, baste it, and I'll peel 10 to 20 pounds of potatoes, make stuffing, and everything else that we'll enjoy. My dad will bring a shrimp cocktail platter, a tradition that he carries on from family since departed, and my brothers and nephew will bring desserts to share.

Sometimes, it's easy to get caught on auto-pilot...I'm certainly guilty of it. We go about life from one activity or event to another, constantly connected to our phones or iPads and collapsing exhausted into bed at the end of the day. This is a time of year to step back from all of that and recognize how fortunate and blessed many of us are.

As I've grown older, those traditions (food, family, Cowboys) still remain important, but I've now grown to appreciate what the holiday is meant to symbolize and to appreciate the fact that as fortunate and as blessed as many of us are.

For many people in our local communities, the holiday may feel less festive. As the holiday season approaches, whether it's a donation to United Way, buying a turkey dinner for a family in need at one of the local supermarkets, or serving meals, consider

how you can help lift the spirits of someone else in the community, providing them an opportunity to step back from their situation and be thankful that we're a community that cares.

## **EVERY DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE**

In McLean County, we're working every day to ensure every child has a quality education, every family has a stable income and safe place to sleep and everyone is able to enjoy a life of good health. But to continue our vital work, we need your support.

### **Ways to give:**

•

**Give online: [www.uwaymc.org/gift](http://www.uwaymc.org/gift)**

- **Call to make a donation: 309) 828-7383**
- **Given by mail: United Way of McLean County, 201 East Grove Street, Bloomington, Illinois 61701**

**This is how your gift can help:**

- **A \$50 gift will provide one student with a ride to an after-school program, five hours of employment training and support for a person with a developmental disability, five hours of child care for children of parents experiencing financial hardship and shelter and food for 12 homeless people for a day - all of this with a \$50 donation.**
- **A \$100 gift will provide a one-on-one intervention session for an at-risk youth, home-care visits for 20 seniors, a medical appointment for two people without health insurance and an hour of legal representation for someone fighting to avoid eviction and homelessness all of this with a \$100 donation.**
- **A \$500 gift will provide five meetings with a caseworker to improve a student's attendance and academic success, resume writing and interview training for 10 homeless people, three months of psychiatric services for a low-income person experiencing mental illness and disaster relief for one McLean County family in need - all of this with a \$500 Leadership Giving donation.**

**Your gift, no matter the amount, helps create opportunities for a better life for everyone in McLean County.**

**\*Donations made to United Way of McLean County are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.**



### **Town of Normal Employees Workplace Campaign Month**

Town of Normal employees enjoyed one of several food functions to raise funds and create an awareness of the United Way of McLean County and continued their long-time support of our 28 partner agencies and the 48 programs we help to fund.

Representatives from several of the agencies, including leadership from the United Way, joined in the festivities to help LIVE UNITED!

Special thanks to Nicole Kelley and Troy Sondgeroth for all their work as this year's Town of Normal United Way of McLean County's Employee Campaign Coordinators.



**Leni Kuntz with Marcfirst, and Trevor Brothers and Sean Fagan with Bridgestone helped kick-off their annual Workplace Campaign on October 30, 2017**

## Commerce Bank - Long Time Supporter of United Way of McLean County

Commerce Bank employees once again kicked off their annual Workplace Campaign for United Way of McLean County the week of October 16th with visits to all of their local branch offices along with representatives from United Way and The Baby Fold. Several events took place to help raise funds for their campaign including a Chili Cook-off with Sarah Larsen as the Award Winner.



Meghan Meyers and Michael Meyers served as this year's Bank Employee Campaign Coordinators and personally presented this year's corporate gift to David Taylor, President and CEO along with Pat Grosso, Resource Development Director with the United Way.



Bernie Anderson with Nicor Gas presents corporate gift to Pat Grosso, Resource Development Director and Gloria Spinks with United Way of McLean County.

The gang at East Central Illinois Agency on Aging celebrated Halloween with kicking off their United Way of McLean County Workplace Campaign with a chili cook-off in full costume!

