



***A Message from:
United Way of
McLean County's President
& CEO:***

David Taylor

My Mom Taught Me to Take the High Road...But Speak Up Along the Way

This weekend will mark 4 years for me on the job here at United Way of McLean County. I think when most people hit an anniversary or milestone, be it in their marriage, their work, their birthday, what have you, it's a time for reflection. Accepting the responsibilities and pressures that come with a job so much in the spotlight at times was both the easiest and most difficult decision that I've made in my life.

It was easy because I knew I could bring my skills, experience, and passion to bear in a more meaningful way in our community. It was hard because change can be overwhelming, generating waves of fear, uncertainty, and doubt. I was leaving relative security, a promising career, and the familiar faces for a new challenge.

And at the same time the unknowns and the possibilities created then, and still do now, a sense of excitement. For me, though, transitioning into the role of President & CEO at United Way also represented a new chapter in my life. Just days before the final interview (a day long affair), I unexpectedly lost my mother, Kathy. Some of our 2,700 odd recipients of this newsletter, may have known my mom either through her work as a decade-long Board Member for Octavia/Ridgeview School District, or her nearly 26 years at the College of Business at ISU...many of those serving Dr. Dixie Mills.

My mom instilled in me a myriad of life lessons, in both her life, and also the days leading up to her death, a fact that my family reflects on and realizes that she knew what was coming, even though we didn't at the time. To the very end, my mother walked the walk, even as she realized the end was near and while she didn't need to continue along the high road, she modeled that behavior for her family her entire life right to the finish line.

I share this not for sympathy, and certainly, I'd be remiss if I didn't point out, my mother, as the 8th in a farm family of 10 growing up in World War II, was not afraid to speak her mind. Having lost her father at 16, and graduated ISNU in 3 years in an era where women completing post-secondary education wasn't always the norm, my mother would speak up when she felt it appropriate, particularly in a situation that she felt passionate about and frequently, it would be a matter of principle.

At a meeting earlier this week, one of my volunteers expressed frustration about the lack of attention drawn to our good work in the community. Some of that good work he referenced includes:

- Our 4th Annual Rock the Block celebration drew thousands of people on an overcast night with temperatures in the low 50's last Saturday (4/21).
- Nearly 900 contributed a \$5 donation as they entered.
- 48 in 48 Bloomington - In a little over a week (5/4 - 5/6), 200+ volunteers will descend on the Rivian Automotive Plant on the far west side.
- In true "hack-a-thon" style, they'll remake 48 websites for 48 local non-profits in our 48-in-48 event.
- As a catalyst for this event, we're thrilled to help pump \$1.5 million in value through the event into making our community and our social services infrastructure that much stronger.
- Kite Fest - We're the primary sponsor for Kite Fest (5/6), an event run by For a Better Tomorrow that last year saw more than 1,400 people raise funds (and of course, kites!) for both our local and global partners.
- Power of the Purse - Finally, our 3rd Annual Power of the Purse event (5/31) will close out May with nearly 500 women bidding on purses to raise money for the community.

I think many of you would agree with my volunteer, that these efforts represent a significant win for McLean County, demonstrate how United Way is a catalyst and community partner, and represent an impact in excess of nearly \$1.6 million dollars immediately. In the case of 48 in 48, this will likely continue to add value in the months and years ahead through the enhanced platforms these agencies will have to connect with our community and share their story.

We're appreciative of partners like WGLT, Radio Bloomington, and WEEK-TV for their coverage of these local stories of significant, positive impact.

Yet, doing a Google search, here are a few snippets of what's out there over the last year or so:

- "Not all United Ways struggling like McLean County"
- "United Way grappling with plummeting donations"
- "United Way rebuts allegations"
- "United Way slashes funding"

Paints a pretty grim and one-sided picture, doesn't it? It sounds a bit like a horror movie, and I'm Freddy Krueger.

You might never know the good things that we do, and the ways we're working tirelessly to make this community a better place. And this lopsided, self-aggrandizing point of view from some captures the frustration shared by my volunteer.

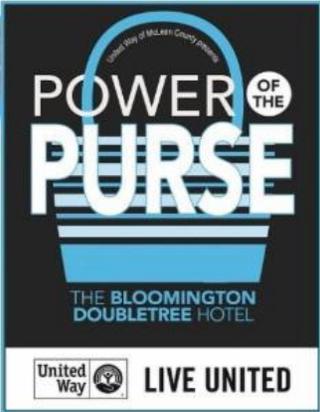
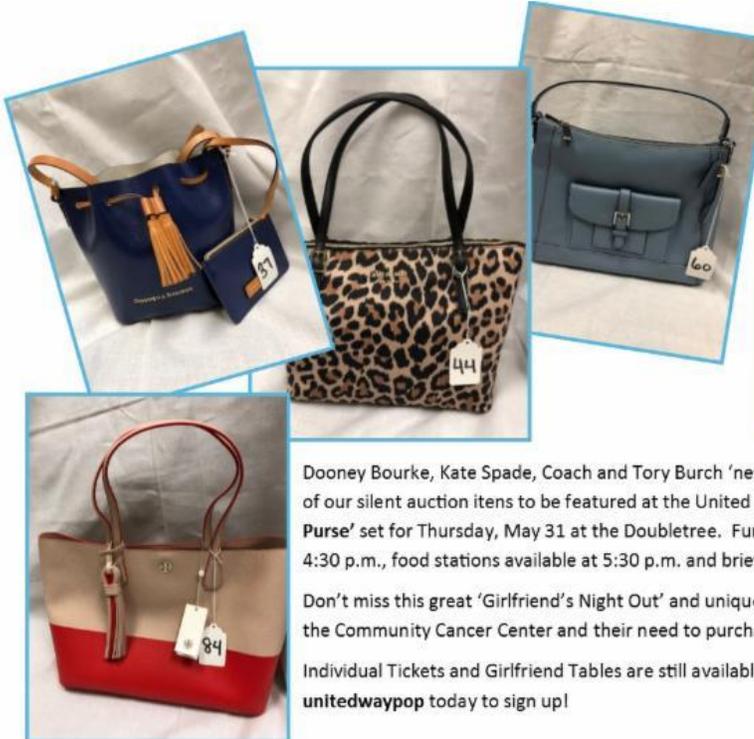
Mom never said the high road would be easy. But she did teach her three boys to speak up and speak out when justified.

If you agree, please like this post and share with your friends.

3rd Annual United Way of McLean County's
"Power of the Purse"
Thursday, May 31, 2018
Doubletree by Hilton Hotel

To make your reservation, go to:

www.BidPal.net/unitedwaypop



Dooney Bourke, Kate Spade, Coach and Tory Burch 'new' handbags are just to name a few of our silent auction items to be featured at the United Way's '3rd Annual Power of the Purse' set for Thursday, May 31 at the Doubletree. Fun begins with doors opening at 4:30 p.m., food stations available at 5:30 p.m. and brief program starting at 6:00 p.m.

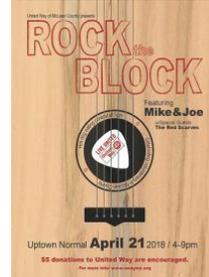
Don't miss this great 'Girlfriend's Night Out' and unique fundraiser with proceeds benefiting the Community Cancer Center and their need to purchase a new PET/CT Scan.

Individual Tickets and Girlfriend Tables are still available. Go to: www.BidPal.net/unitedwaypop today to sign up!

Rock the Block 2018

The United Way's annual Rock the Block was held Saturday, April 21 in Uptown Normal with over 2,000 joining in this fun day to celebrate volunteerism in McLean County.

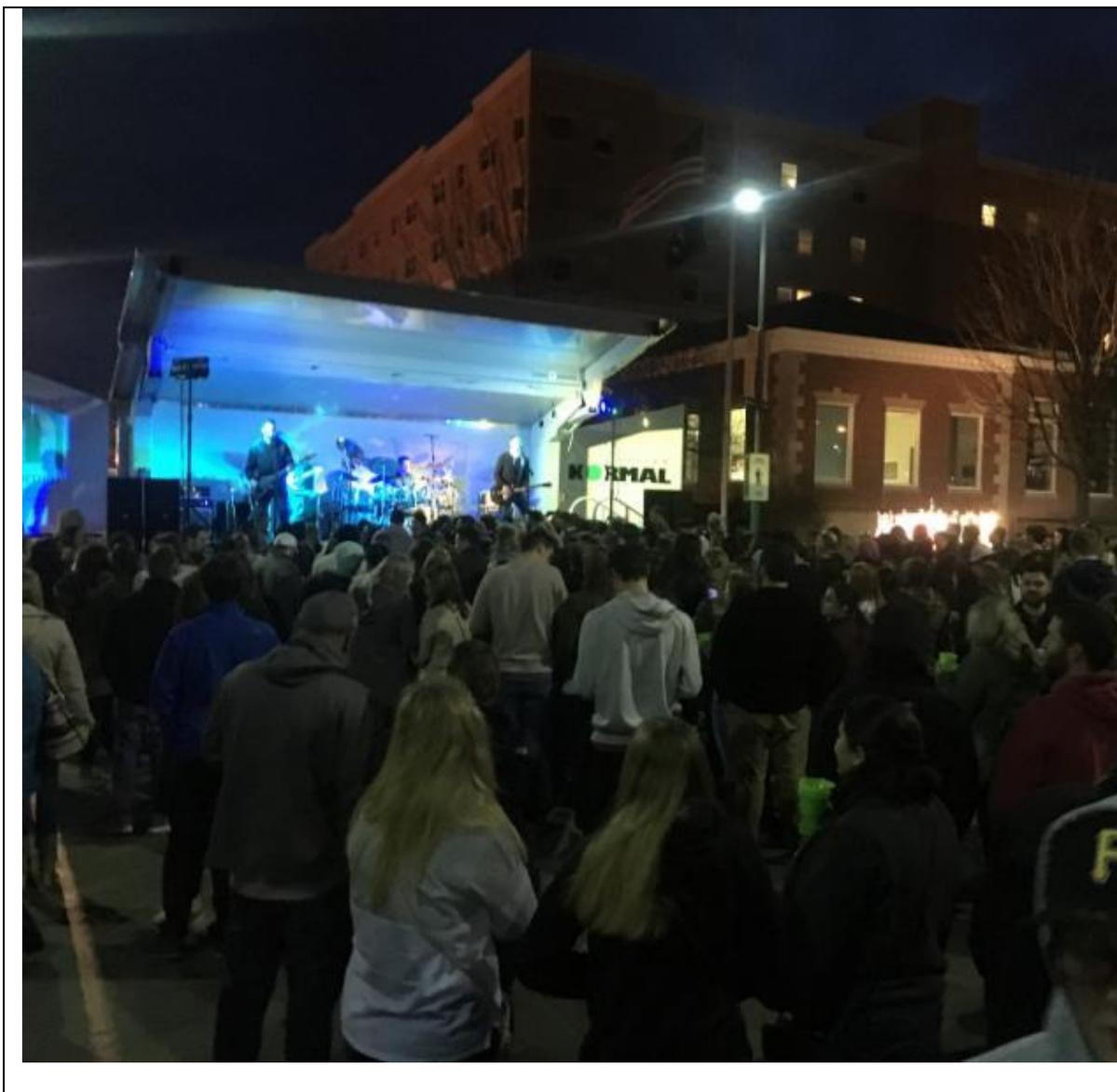
Special thanks to our media sponsor, Radio Bloomington and our MC Faith Rinker from B104 as well as the Uptown Normal crew, Medici's, STAVE, Windy Cities Wieners, our IWU Fraternity Volunteers and their family and all of the Uptown Normal businesses who opened their stores and hospitality to our guests.













48in48

A "Hack-a-Thon" Creating Websites for Area Non-Profits

May 4,5 & 6, 2018

Location: Rivian Automotive

3rd Annual Power of the Purse

Raising Funds for Community Cancer Center's PET/CT Scan
Machine

Thursday, May 31, 2018

Location: Doubletree Hotel & Conference Center

Ticket Now on Sale / Go to: www.BidPal.net/unitedwaypop