



Message from the President and CEO

Katherine von Haefen

Dear Friends,

Across Berkshire County, I am continually inspired by what happens when people come together with purpose. At Berkshire United Way, our work goes beyond funding nonprofits – we serve as a connector, a convener, and a catalyst, helping individuals and organizations align around shared solutions that strengthen households and build a more resilient community.

This month's newsletter highlights the power of collaboration in action. From convening early childhood educators, community navigators, nonprofit leaders, and business partners, to hosting site visits that bring donors closer to the work they make possible, we are intentionally creating spaces where trust grows and impact deepens. These gatherings are not one-time moments – they are part of an ongoing commitment to learning, adapting, and responding to the evolving needs of our neighbors.

You'll also read inspiring stories of generosity and leadership – from employers who unite their teams around collective giving, to individuals whose decades of service and compassion remind us what community truly means. Each story reinforces a simple truth: lasting change happens when we invest together, guided by data, shared goals, and a belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive.

Whether you choose to volunteer, join us at a community event, participate in a site visit, or make a financial gift, your engagement matters.

Together, we are strengthening the systems of care that support households, improve outcomes for children and youth, and ensure that every resident of Berkshire County has access to the resources they need – today and in the future.

Thank you for being part of this collective effort. I hope you'll explore the stories below and find a meaningful way to stay connected.

With gratitude,

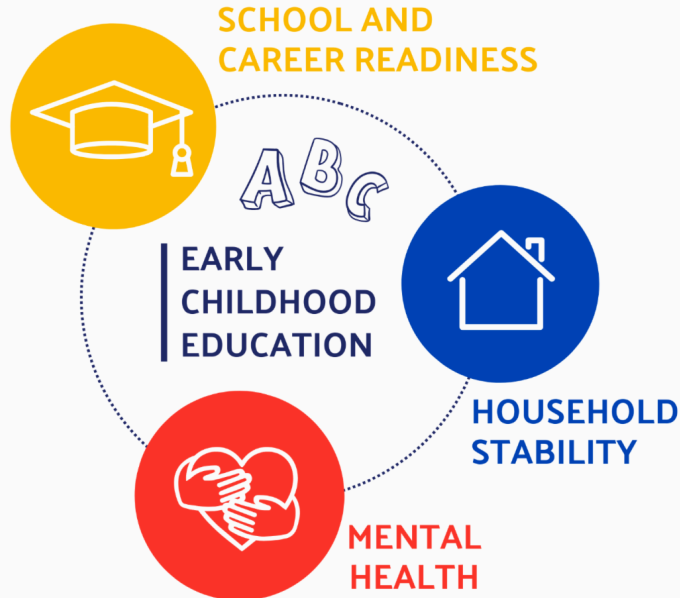
A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Katherine".

P.S. We know your inbox is busy and we don't want to overwhelm it. That's why we're shifting to a quarterly newsletter, where we'll share highlights from the past three months and a preview of what's ahead. Please add us to your safe sender list and keep an eye out for our new quarterly updates!



Connect with Katherine

BERKSHIRE UNITED WAY'S CORE FOCUS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



Community Impact

Katherine von Haefen and Chloe Rychcik

Strengthening community through convening and collaboration

Berkshire United Way does more than invest in high-quality organizations. We actively bring together people and organizations to strengthen the region's social support network. Our convening work is a central part of our mission to ignite collective power and help the community thrive.

BUW regularly gathers early childhood educators, frontline program staff, nonprofit leaders, community navigators, and business professionals to build connections, exchange resources, and share innovative practices that break down barriers for local families. These sessions foster deeper collaboration and help us all work toward shared solutions to improve household stability, learning outcomes, and overall well-being across Berkshire County.



A recent convening brought together over 45 community navigators and coordinators to learn more about food insecurity in the county and how to help.

By hosting dedicated convening spaces, BUW helps educators, navigators, and leaders deepen their knowledge, expand referral networks, and enhance their ability to guide residents toward the right resources at the right time. This collaborative approach ultimately leads to stronger outcomes for families across the county.

These gatherings are not one-time events. BUW continues to unite experts, community partners, and navigators to address emerging needs and adapt to changing conditions. This commitment aligns with our broader vision of fostering household stability, school and career readiness, and mental health.

Through ongoing convenings and collaborative leadership, we help strengthen the community's capacity to respond effectively and compassionately to challenges, ensuring that every resident has access to the support they need to flourish.

Join us on a funded partner site visit

In a rural community like the Berkshires, relationships are at the heart of lasting change. A site visit is a chance for funders and donors to step into our work – touring a local program, meeting community partners, and hearing directly from the people involved. Grounded in trust-based philanthropy, we host site visits to build understanding, deepen trust, and move beyond reports to make real connections.

Seeing our strategic priorities in action – helping young people build a strong foundation for future success, supporting families in achieving a secure and stable household, and ensuring residents are healthy and supported to strengthen their quality of life – often sparks curiosity, confidence, and long-term engagement.

We invite you to volunteer with us from March through early May to experience this community-centered work firsthand and help strengthen and build a thriving Berkshires. If you are interested in joining us on a site visit, contact Chloe Rychcik.



Connect with Chloe | Data Analytics and Training Manager

Upcoming Events and Important Dates

**10X^{THE}
FUN**

Saturday, February 21

3:30 - 5:30 p.m.

Zion Lutheran Church

74 First Street, Pittsfield

Berkshire United Way welcomes families to this free festival, offering networking opportunities with funded and community partners offering resources and information for the adults and activities for the kids. Featured activities include Paint and Sip with Downtown Pittsfield Inc., photo booth with 18 Degrees, and mini dance classes with Berkshire Pulse. Berkshire United Way will be handing out free books!

10x the Fun

 **BERKSHIRE
BABY
BONANZA**

Saturday, April 18

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

The Stationery Factory

63 Flansburg Ave, Dalton

A free community event connecting planning, expectant, and new parents, as well as caregivers and families, to over 50 organizations, agencies, and practitioners providing information and resources related to prenatal and postnatal care, financial services, health and well-being, and basic needs.

Presented by Berkshire United Way, Berkshire Area Health Education Center and the 2026 Planning Committee.

Berkshire Baby Bonanza

BUW Community Celebration

May 2025 – date TBA

Shred Day

Saturday, May 16, 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Corner of South Street and Clinton Avenue parking lot

Red Tee Tournament

Monday, June 1

Berkshire Hills Country Club

Fundraising

Jennifer Baril, Gretchen Weber and Szofia Lewis

Why give to Berkshire United Way?

When you give to Berkshire United Way, you're choosing to make your impact bigger. Your gift brings nonprofits, businesses, government, and neighbors together – so help reaches further, gaps are closed, and change lasts.

Your donation powers the collaboration behind the scenes: shared strategies, smart use of data, and the ability to respond when new needs arise. Give today and you're not just supporting one program – you're strengthening the entire system of care in Berkshire County and helping our community move forward, together.

[DONATE](#)



[Connect with Jennifer](#) | Director of Development

GIVING SPOTLIGHTS

EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN | HILLCREST EDUCATIONAL CENTERS

Collective generosity has far-reaching impact

Hillcrest Educational Centers delivered an exceptional employee giving campaign this year, showcasing the power of collective generosity. As one of the region's leading employers with a predominantly younger workforce, Hillcrest provides specialized care and individualized treatment and education services for children, adolescents, and their families.

Their campaign saw significant growth – 133 to 205 donors and an impressive 62% increase in dollars raised. Hillcrest also hosted three in-person presentations across multiple campuses featuring BUW-funded partners Greenagers, the Pediatric Development Center, and Barrington Stage Company's Playwright Mentoring Project. Nearly 150 staff members attended these presentations, gaining deeper insight into the impact Berkshire United Way and its partners have throughout the county. Hillcrest's commitment extends beyond the annual campaign through event sponsorship and leadership representation on our board of directors; Melissa Orazio, a Hillcrest program director, currently serves as vice chair.

This year's success was driven by the outstanding leadership of Employee Campaign Coordinator Tresa Devereux. Her organization, creativity, and dedication elevated every aspect of the campaign. She helped make pledge

forms easier for staff to use, coordinated materials across four campuses, and carefully selected funded partners whose missions would resonate with employees.

As Tresa explained, “I continue to organize and give because of the far-reaching impact on the community... Working for one of the largest employers in Berkshire County, I would hazard a guess that one or more of my colleagues likely benefits from or knows someone who is supported by the services made possible through campaign endeavors.”



She was joined by Eliyah Feek, whose enthusiasm and one-on-one outreach inspired many colleagues to participate. “I enjoyed sharing specific programs and highlighting what they do and how they can help; either for staff to pursue for their own families or share with the community and those in need.”

Together, Tresa and Eliyah fostered a culture where every contribution – no matter the size – was valued and celebrated.



Connect with Szofia | Development Coordinator

INDIVIDUAL DONOR | CINDY SHOGRY-RAIMER

In every community, there are people whose dedication lifts others in ways seen and unseen. Cindy Shogry-Raimer is one of those remarkable individuals – a steadfast supporter of Berkshire United Way and a leading example of service in action.

For more than a decade, Cindy has been a Greylock Society donor, contributing generously through Greylock Federal Credit Union’s Employee Giving Campaign. Yet her impact extends far beyond philanthropy. A tireless community volunteer, Berkshire United Way honored her in 2019 with the Robert K. Agar, Jr. Volunteerism Award, celebrating her exceptional commitment to the spirit of service and the well-being of Berkshire County.



Cindy Shogry-Raimer receives the volunteer award from Rich Rowe, a BUW board member in 2019.

Cindy’s professional life reflects the same devotion. As VP/Director of Community

“I have been actively involved with Berkshire United Way for most of

Development at Greylock Federal Credit Union, she has served the community since 1986, shaping programs and partnerships that strengthen our region.

Her leadership has touched countless organizations, including:

- BCC Alumni Association, where she served as Board President 2014-2016
- Coolidge Hill Foundation (currently serving as Clerk and Communications Director)
- PCTV Board Treasurer
- Berkshire Training & Employment Inc. Board Treasurer
- Inclusiv's Juntos Avanzamos Selection Committee
- 18 Degrees PCC/WMC Steering Committee
- 1Berkshire and multiple scholarship review committees

my adult life in numerous roles, such as donor, volunteer, loaned executive, grant reviewer, and even a trainer for new campaign volunteers. I support BUW because being able to give back to my community feeds my soul. The funds stay in Berkshire County and get distributed to organizations and special programs that directly serve my friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues. In a world that is unfortunately getting more divided each day, I want to do my small part to make my community closer, healthier, and welcoming, and BUW is a wonderful conduit to make that happen. Thank You BUW for all that you do."

– Cindy Shogry-Raimer

She is also the founder of the deeply meaningful Lenten Labor of Love Project, which will host its 14th annual event in 2026. Through this initiative, she assembles health and hygiene care packages for individuals in Berkshire County homeless shelters, offering dignity and comfort to neighbors in need.

Cindy's service is woven into the fabric of the community she loves. Thank you for your dedicated support of our community; your generosity inspires and your impact strengthens our community so that everyone can thrive.



Connect with Gretchen | Donor Relations Manager

WAYS TO SUPPORT BERKSHIRE UNITED WAY



Donate Online

Make a secure gift easily and efficiently at berkshireunitedway.org/donate. You can choose to make a one-time or monthly donation amount. Consider covering the processing fees so 100%



Donate by Check

Send a personal check made payable to *Berkshire United Way* and mail to 200 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201. Be sure to note any important designation information.



Through a Donor Advised Fund (DAF)

Designate Berkshire United Way as the recipient of gifts from your donor advised fund – a flexible way to give now while receiving an immediate tax benefit. BUW's EIN is **42-104841**. Contact your DAF

of your gift goes to support the community!

administrator for specific instructions.



Gift of Stock and Securities

Donating appreciated stock lets you **give more, avoid capital gains taxes, and potentially receive a larger charitable deduction**, making it a powerful strategy for both philanthropy and tax planning. Call (413) 442-6948 x12 for BUW's account information and other details to make a transfer.



IRA Charitable Distribution (Qualified Charitable Distribution, QCD)

If you are age 70½ or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year directly from your IRA to Berkshire United Way without paying income tax on the distribution. Talk to your advisor on how to direct a charitable gift directly from your IRA.



Leave a Legacy of Caring in Your Will

When you include **Berkshire United Way in your will**, you make a powerful statement about the kind of community you believe in – one where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. A gift in your will costs nothing today, yet it can have an extraordinary impact tomorrow.

If you have already included BUW in your estate plans, please let us know! We would love to celebrate your generosity.

[Email Jennifer](#)

As with all planned giving strategies, donors should consult a financial advisor or estate-planning attorney to determine the tax and financial implications specific to their situation.

OUR MISSION | Berkshire United Way ignites the collective power of our community to support individuals and strengthen families. Together, we can build a stronger and more equitable Berkshire County where everyone can **THRIVE**.

[Visit our website](#)

Berkshire United Way can match you with volunteer opportunities.

[Sign up in our Volunteer Center](#)

Connect with other members of the Berkshire United Way team



Jack Twaddle | Director of Finance and Administration



Gretchen Fairfield | Finance and Administration Manager



Karrie Buratto | Marketing and Communications Manager

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Krystle Blake, Chair
General Dynamics Mission Systems

Jaime Campbell, Treasurer
Williams College

Melissa Orazio, Vice Chair
Hillcrest Educational Centers

David Reinhart, Clerk
Community Volunteer

DIRECTORS

Dr. William DeMarco
Berkshire Medical Center

Chris Montferret
General Dynamics Mission Systems

Laurie Gallagher
Community Volunteer

Tiffany Moreno
Berkshire Community College

Stephanie Ham
Adams Community Bank

Michael Obasohan
City of Pittsfield

David Harrington
Lee Bank

Timothy O'Donnell
Guardian Life

Jennifer Kerwood
Education at Work

Kristin Pedrotti
Beacon Bank

Bethany Kieley
Community Health Programs

Stephanie Storie
Lenox Library

Rachel Melendez Mabee
Greylock Federal Credit Union

Daltrey Turner
Austen Riggs Center

Arthur Milano
Milano HR Consulting





Berkshire
UNITED WAY

UNITED IS THE WAY™

Check out our branded merchandise at [413Fundraising.com](https://www.413Fundraising.com)

Berkshire United Way | 200 South Street | Pittsfield, MA 01201 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!