



Message from the President and CEO

As I reflect on my first year as President and CEO of Berkshire United Way, one feeling rises above all others: gratitude.

This has been a year of growth, responsiveness, and renewed momentum. We strengthened our fundraising team by welcoming Jennifer Baril and Lindsey Rosa, adding new energy and expertise to our work. We also celebrated a transformational \$400,000 state grant that will allow BUW and our partners to pilot innovative, employer-supported childcare solutions – helping more Berkshire County families access affordable, reliable care while strengthening our local workforce.

When federal changes significantly affected eligibility for SNAP benefits, we responded to the urgent needs of residents facing food insecurity. At the same time, we continued investing in the relationships and collaboration that help our community address challenges together. Our first United in Conversation series last fall created space for thoughtful dialogue, shared learning and connection. We look forward to building upon that momentum this year and look forward to partnering with new organizations.

None of this work would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our community. Employee donors once again led the way, collectively raising the most dollars than any other donor cohort! Companies such as Unistress deepened their commitment, making their largest gift to BUW to date. And our individual donors continued to give with remarkable abundance, trust, and consistency.

To every donor, workplace partner, volunteer, nonprofit partner, Board member and community advocate: thank you. Your generosity does more than fund individual programs. It strengthens the people, partnerships, and network of support that help our neighbors – and our entire Berkshire County community – thrive.

I am deeply grateful for all we accomplished together this past year and excited for what we will make possible in the year ahead.

With gratitude,

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



Connect with Katherine | President and CEO



You're Invited: Community Campaign Kickoff

It's almost time to kick off a new year of community, generosity, and impact!

Join Berkshire United Way for our Community Campaign Kickoff, bringing together employees, business leaders, nonprofit partners, donors, and neighbors to celebrate the incredible generosity of our community — and the power of working together to help every person in Berkshire County thrive.

New this year: Registration for Employee Campaign Coordinators and representatives from BUW-funded nonprofit partners is complimentary!

ECCs are the champions who bring our campaign to life in workplaces across the region, and our funded partners are doing vital work every day alongside our neighbors. We believe they belong at the heart of this celebration.

Come connect, celebrate, learn, and help us launch another year of collective impact across Berkshire County.

[Registration and Sponsorships](#)

GIVING SPOTLIGHT

EMPLOYEE GIVING CAMPAIGN | Berkshire County Head Start

Last year, Berkshire United Way welcomed **Berkshire County Head Start** back to our annual community campaign. It had been six years since their workplace

campaign was active, but they made an impressive comeback – their contribution total was one of the highest in their campaign history.



BUW President and CEO Katherine von Haefen talks about our work during Berkshire County Head Start's campaign kickoff last year.

"Berkshire United Way not only invests flexible funding into high-quality early childhood providers, like ours, but they also invest time and resources to convene early learning educators, program staff, and CEOs, and offer free professional development and data training," said Brett Random, Executive Director of Berkshire County Head Start. "It felt right to reinvigorate our campaign to support BUW and all the work they do to support nonprofits beyond the funding."

Brett has also been working closely with BUW President and CEO Katherine von Haefen to advocate for affordable and accessible childcare in Berkshire County. Together, they co-lead the [Berkshire Early Childhood Collaborative](#) (BECC). (Read more about this state-funded project below!)

"I am so proud to be a part of BECC and to work alongside Katherine to advocate for our working families," said Brett. "Providing consistent and quality childcare means stability for the employee, employer, and child, and it also contributes to a thriving economy."



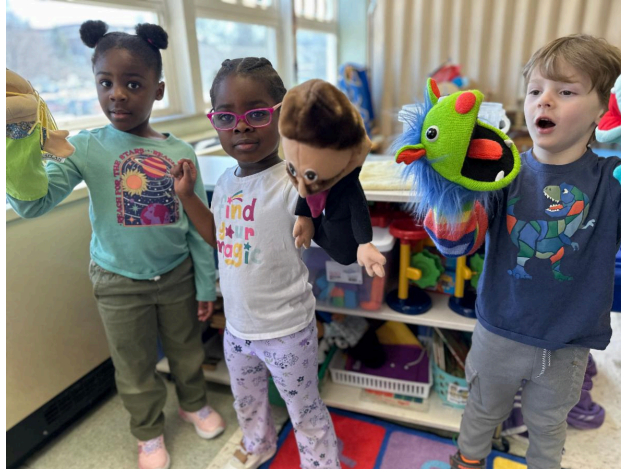
Connect with Jennifer | Director of Development

Community Impact

BUW awarded \$400K to help expand employer-supported childcare

The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced \$400,000 in funding to Berkshire United Way through the Employer Child Care Innovation Fund (ECCIF) pilot.

The ECCIF pilot is intended to support partnerships between employers, childcare providers, and local organizations with the goal of increasing access to affordable childcare. The pilot program was launched in 2024 to encourage employer-led childcare solutions and advance family-friendly workplace policies.



This pilot funding will enable the implementation of employer-supported childcare models tailored to the needs of Greylock Federal Credit Union and the hospitality industry, and their employees. This includes expanded child-care, coverage for non-traditional business hours, and employer-funded childcare assistance.

[Read more about this announcement](#)

Fundraising

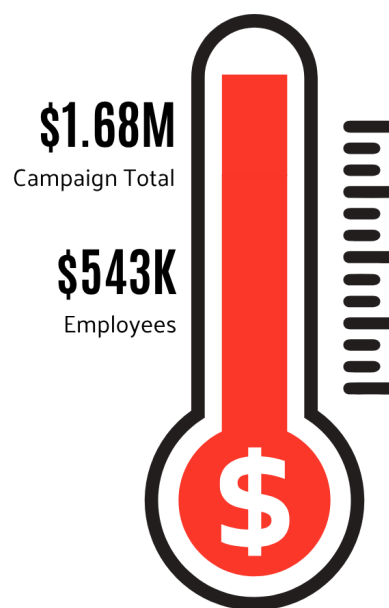
Generosity that adds up to community impact

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of our community, Berkshire United Way raised more than \$1.68 million during the 2025-26 campaign year – including more than \$1.55 million in unrestricted campaign support.

This accomplishment belongs to thousands of people and partners across Berkshire County: employees who gave through workplace campaigns, individual donors, local businesses and organizations, foundations, legacy donors, and community members who organized fundraisers on our behalf. Employee donors once again led the way, contributing more than \$543,000.

Why does this generosity matter? Because every gift becomes part of something bigger. Together, these contributions strengthen the network of organizations, partnerships, and community-led solutions helping our neighbors achieve household stability, succeed in school and prepare for careers, and access support for their mental health and well-being.

To everyone who gave, volunteered, hosted a campaign, inspired a colleague, or championed this work, **Thank You**. Your generosity demonstrates what is possible when an entire community comes together to help every neighbor thrive.



UNITED IN CONVERSATION

Real Stories. Real Impact.

Coming this fall!

Berkshire United Way will host another series of community conversations to foster a positive and constructive dialog on how some of our neighbors experience the Berkshires and how experts in the field support them. These conversations are free and open to the public, and are held in a brave space.

Topics, dates, and locations to be announced.

DONATE

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



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Gretchen Fairfield | Finance and Administration Manager



Lindsey Rosa | Individual Giving and Development
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Karrie Buratto | Marketing and Communications Manager

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Berkshire
UNITED WAY

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