

*Always Giving. Always Advocating. Always Volunteering.*



## MEMBER TO MEMBER

# generous & active

*A Short Successful History*

The last 18 months have been a time of growth and activity for Always United. Our membership has grown to 316 retirees and those still working but nearing retirement.

Our generous members have contributed more than \$509,000 to United Way's 2018-2019 annual campaign.

This generosity is topped by the time and talent volunteered by our members to engage and positively impact our community under United Way's mission to improve the quality of life for every person in the Midlands. Always United has also allowed our members to stay active in the community, meet others and maintain relationships into retirement.

In the last year, Always United members have made many strides to develop the newest affinity group of United Way. In fact, United Way Worldwide has asked our group to share its best practices, activities and plans at an upcoming conference.

### LAST YEAR, ALWAYS UNITED...

- Volunteered with Meals on Wheels to provide hot, nutritious meals for those without these resources or abilities and helped run children's summer programs at EdVenture.

- Toured WellPartners Dental and Eye Clinic and saw the impressive work it is doing to provide services to underinsured or uninsured adults and children.
- Realized the need for easy, affordable and reliable transportation for the community to access services providers.
- Piloted the Mentor Match program with 21 Always United members and Young Leaders Society donors.
- Partnered with AARP to host informative seminars and workshops.

### HERE'S A LOOK INTO 2019...

- Kicking off the second Mentor Match program with the Young Leaders Society
- Hosting AARP's Job Search and Networking Skills seminars
- Learn about youth between ages 17-24 experiencing homelessness and how United Way plans to eliminate this issue
- Various opportunities to engage with United Way's adult and children's eye and dental clinic, WellPartners
- A fall fundraiser that will take you back to your high school days!

## SAVE the DATES!

### FEBRUARY

**FEBRUARY 13 | 5:30 - 7 PM**  
Evening with an Author: Aida Rogers and others discuss State of the Heart: South Carolina Writers on the Places They Love - See page 4

**FEBRUARY 23 | 11 AM - 3 PM**  
Always United Hosts Two AARP Job Search Workshops - See page 4a

### MARCH

**MARCH 12 | 2 - 4:45 PM**  
Community Impact Behind the Scenes: Youth in Transition

**MARCH 19 | 5:30 - 7 PM**  
Evening with an Author: William Gravely, author of They Stole Him Out of Jail

### APRIL

**APRIL 2 | 5:30 - 7 PM**  
Always United Travels

**APRIL 8 - 13**  
United Way of the Midlands Volunteer Week

**APRIL 27 | 11:30 AM - 1 PM**  
Always United hosts AARP's CAREversations

### MAY

**MAY 23 | 11:30 AM - 1 PM**  
Member Enrichment: How to Downsize & Feel Good About It

Mark your calendars for the upcoming events listed to the right! Visit [www.alwaysunited.org](http://www.alwaysunited.org) to stay up-to-date on Always United events and news. Questions? Email [alwaysunited@uway.org](mailto:alwaysunited@uway.org) or call 733-5112.

# WINTER IS COLD. ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE A PLACE TO CALL HOME.

At the end of January, United Way led its annual Point-in-Time Count (PIT Count) with the partners and volunteers of the Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless (MACH) to estimate the number of Americans without safe, stable housing to produce a snapshot of community needs. In addition, communities must identify if a person is chronically homeless, indicating long-time or repeated homelessness and the presence of a disability during the count.

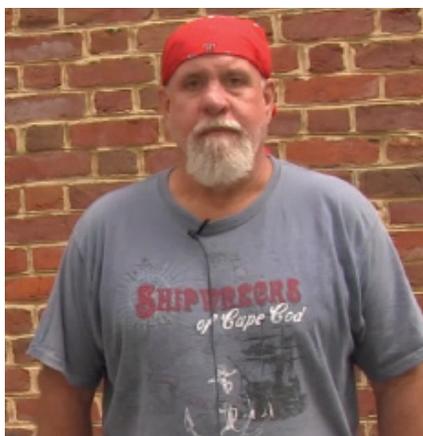
“Over the past five years, the Point-in-Time Count has shown an overall decrease of 40 percent of individuals experiencing homelessness in the 13-county region and a 35 percent decrease in Richland County,” said Sara Fawcett, President and CEO of United Way of the Midlands. “The annual count is necessary for us to truly understand the gaps in services and housing, so we can continue to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness in our community. With successive counts, we can measure our progress in ending homelessness in our community.”

One resource United Way has been instrumental in creating and maintaining is the Inclement Weather Center. The Center operates from November 1st to March 31st on nights when the temperature is expected to be 40 degrees or below (according to the National Weather Service), during severe weather and on the holidays.

The IWC provides a safe place for adults experiencing homelessness since our nightly shelter bed capacity does not meet our community's needs. The IWC has a nightly capacity of 240 people and provides adult women and men with a bed, food, shower, clothing, hygiene products, outreach and links to community resources. However, in order for clients to stay at the IWC, they must take the prearranged van transportation provided by Clean of Hearts. Walk-ups are not allowed due to the dangerous nature of crossing Huger Street to access the shelter. United Way partners with Transitions Homeless Center who provides support for the center's day-to-day operations, The Salvation Army for meals and other private vendors for security and transportation.

The Inclement Weather Center would not exist without United Way collaborating with city officials and local agencies to convene the necessary resources it takes to operate a shelter.

For people like Michael Deese, the Inclement Weather Center was a safe haven for him during his years of struggle.



*“you do what you have to do in life”*

That's how Mike Deese described the period in his life beginning in 2002 when he was homeless. It was a shock compared to what his life had been like before.

Sleeping between bushes and waking up to leave before daylight became his norm. So did missing his son. Though, those thoughts of family were often what kept him going until he was able to get the help he needed.

In 2014 with assistance from United Way Community Partners, Mike regained a place to call home. “People say miracles don't happen, but they should be here to see this because it's a miracle,” he said, describing his new home. for his life, and that has given me so much peace,” he said.

Taking a shower in his home for the first time and sleeping indoors was a comfort that Mike had previously only dreamed about having again. But the biggest comfort Mike gained was knowing his own son would not end up like he did. “He has a plan for his life, and that has given me so much peace,” he said.

His own struggle gave Mike a passion for helping others in similar situations. Mike volunteered with United Way of the Midlands helping make grant funding decisions. He believed in doing everything he could to help others, while continuing to take steps to help himself.

Mike felt grateful to have what he needed – a home. “I guess I know how King Arthur felt now because I have my castle.”

Mike remained in his castle for the rest of his life.

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## Always United Members Volunteer

In late November Always United members volunteered to assist in setting up and completing initial intake information for people who are using the Inclement Weather Center this season. Volunteers are needed each evening the IWC is open to serve meals and check in guests.

Visit [volunteer.uway.org](https://volunteer.uway.org) to learn more

# ALWAYS UNITED VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Volunteering is important in many ways. It helps organizations do vital work. People in need receive care and support. Individuals giving their time stay connected to the community and make new and stronger personal connections. Always United membership offers opportunities to participate in activities that helps to keep skills sharp.

## WellPartners Dental and Eye Clinic needs...

1. Translators to assist with creating dental materials in Arabic and other languages.
2. Graphic designers to refresh and create materials in English, Spanish, Arabic and other languages.
3. Ambassadors who are available to attend community health fairs and events, distribute materials and answer basic questions about WellPartners services. Training will be provided.
4. Material delivery to organizations who refer clients to WellPartners for care.

## Mentor Match 2019

We've kicked off the 2019 Mentor Match program with YLS! This year, we decided to make this a rolling program where mentors and mentees will be matched upon request. In addition, we are offering mentorship opportunities to younger United Way staff and supporters. This way, you have the chance to mentor at a time of year that is convenient for you and your mentee!

## Volunteer Week Projects - Deadline to sign up is March 5 to participate with Always United!

Volunteer week is April 8-14. Always United members can sign up to participate as a group for the following projects:

1. Deliver Meals on Wheels - 10:30 AM-12:30 PM Tuesday, April 9
2. Pack Dental Kits for WellPartners - 2:00 to 4:00 PM Tuesday, April 9
3. Deliver Meals on Wheels - 10:30 AM-12:30 PM Thursday, April 11

**To participate in any of these Always United group opportunities, contact Claudia Brooks at 733-5112 or [AlwaysUnited@uway.org](mailto:AlwaysUnited@uway.org).**

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## WANT TO STAY UPDATED ON VOLUNTEER PROJECTS BASED ON YOUR INTERESTS, TIME & TALENT?



United Way of the Midlands' online Volunteer Center is the go-to place to find volunteer opportunities to help over 60 local nonprofit agencies in our community.

The Volunteer Center allows you to create a profile based on your personal volunteer interests. Here, you can indicate the causes, interests and local agencies you are passionate about serving. Once you have completed your profile, you can set your preferred communication settings to receive e-mails about volunteer opportunities based on your interests.

Visit [volunteer.uway.org](http://volunteer.uway.org) to create your Volunteer Center profile now!

# ALWAYS UNITED ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE OFFERS EVENTS WITH A PURPOSE

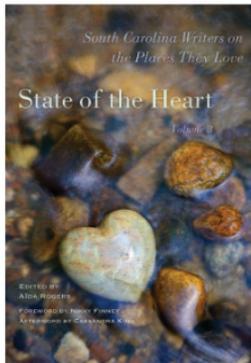
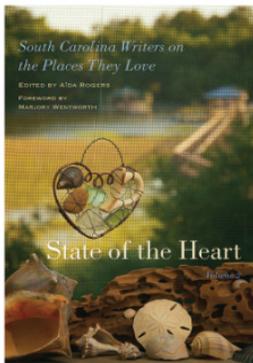
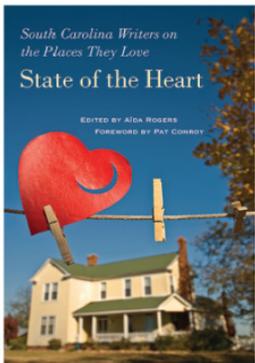
As a member of Always United, you have opportunities to participate in many types of activities.

**Community Impact Behind the Scenes** - This is not a traditional “agency tour” or “fundraising” conversation. Instead, these Behind the Scenes activities focus on figuring out ways to leverage the skills, experience, contacts and other resources that Always United members can bring to the table. This process allows Always United members to consider some of the challenges facing United Way partnerships that are making an impact in the Midlands and determine ways to help.

**Member Enrichment** - Topics suggested by members for lunches and after-business hours events that offer information and an opportunity for members to get to know each other. These include the newly-created Evening with an Author plus partnerships with organizations like AARP, AAA, Seniors on the Move, Home Instead Senior Care and University of South Carolina Press, to name a few.

**Member Luncheons** - These semi-annual events offer opportunities to come together to learn about the work of United Way of the Midlands, Always United membership reports and are typically held in December and June.

## UPCOMING EVENTS



**EVENING WITH AN AUTHOR** featuring **AIDA ROGERS**

**Wednesday, February 13 | 5:30 - 7:00 pm**

## State of the Heart

*South Carolina Writers on the Places They Love*

Join Aida Rogers, editor of *State of the Heart: South Carolina Writers on the Places They Love*, and other authors whose work has focused on their expert knowledge on all things in The Palmetto State and their deep ties with South Carolina.

**Aida Rogers** is a writer and editor whose feature journalism has won national and regional awards. After many years of working in newspapers and magazines, she now writes, edits, and teaches at the Honors College at her alma mater, the University of South Carolina. A Lexington native, she lives in Columbia and McClellanville with her husband, his boats, and their dogs.

**SIGN UP**

Purchase paper or hard back editions at [USCPress.com](http://USCPress.com) and save 20% with promo code **JAROG19**.

## ALWAYS UNITED HOSTS AARP JOBS Saturday, February 23

**11:00 AM - 1:00 PM: JOB SEARCH IN THE DIGITAL AGE**

Members will discover how to search and apply for great jobs online by exploring the latest job search websites and apps, learning how to set yourself apart from the competition, and how to age-proof your resume and boost your online presence.

**SIGN UP**

**1:30 - 3:00 PM: SHARPEN YOUR NETWORKING & INTERVIEW SKILLS**

Refresh your image and put your best self forward. In this workshop, members will discover how to effectively network, create a winning “elevator pitch” and learn tips to ace your interview.

**SIGN UP**

**AARP**<sup>®</sup>  
Real Possibilities

## COMMUNITY IMPACT BEHIND THE SCENES : YOUTH IN TRANSITION

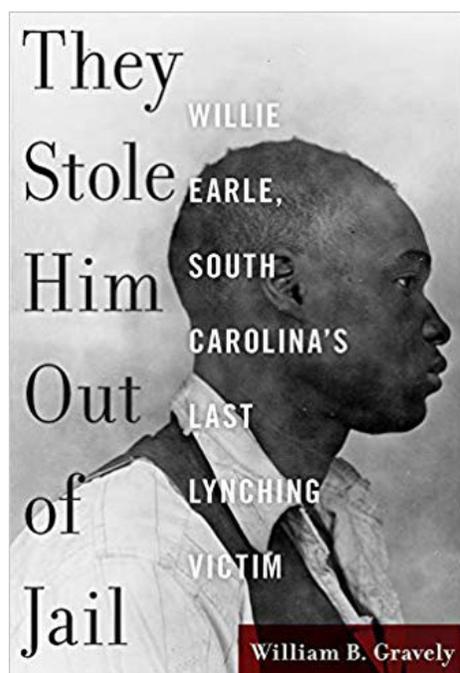
TUESDAY, MARCH 12 | 2:00 - 4:45 PM

Homelessness among youth has emerged as a community crisis with dramatic increases in recent years. This past year, 749 individual youth were identified seeking emergency shelter or homeless services, representing a 146% increase over the past three years. Additionally, our local law enforcement reported over 300 missing or runaway youth in 2017, and our school districts reported 442 children as unaccompanied youth not in the physical custody of a parent or guardian, which is 42% of the entire state's population of unaccompanied youth identified by districts.

To address this emerging need, United Way of the Midlands formed the Youth in Transition Initiative to focus on young people, ages 17 to 24, who are homeless or vulnerable to homelessness or are at risk for other poor outcomes due to a lack of social and financial support. This includes youth transitioning out of foster care or juvenile or adult justice; runaway youth; unaccompanied youth or other youth who fall through the cracks in our system of care. In fall 2017,

we rallied the community to address our crisis of youth experiencing homelessness and released the Midlands Youth Plan with ambitious new goals to create affordable housing with services to meet these emerging and urgent needs.

Join other Always United members as we visit and learn more about United Way's partners, MIRCI Youth Drop In Center, MIRCI Youth Home, Transitions and Palmetto Place Teen House.



### EVENING WITH AN AUTHOR featuring WILLIAM B. GRAVELLY

Tuesday, March 19 | 5:30 - 7:00 pm

#### *They Stole Him Out of Jail*

##### *Willie Earle, South Carolina's Last Lynching Victim*

William B. Gravelly, professor emeritus at the University of Denver, is the author of *Gilbert Haven*, *Methodist Abolitionist*, as well as numerous articles on religion and social change. He is a native of Pickens County, South Carolina, where the murder of T. W. Brown occurred and where Willie Earle was jailed before his abduction.

*In They Stole Him Out of Jail*, William B. Gravelly presents the most comprehensive account of the Earle lynching ever written, exploring it from background to aftermath and from multiple perspectives.

**SIGN UP**

Always United events are free, but we request advanced registration. Members can sign up for events at [uway.org/events](http://uway.org/events). All events are held at United Way of the Midlands, 1818 Blanding St.



# BE A SANTA FOR A SENIOR

*spreading cheer to all*

Always United members teamed up with Home Instead Senior Care for their Be a Santa to a Senior program dedicated to identify seniors who typically fall through the cracks during the holiday season - especially those seniors between 50 to 64 years old who do not qualify for other programs.

Home Instead Senior Care partnered with Project HOPE, AHEPA Senior Apartments, Senior Resources, Open Door Christian Ministries and the SC Vulnerable Adult Guardian Ad Litem Program to identify the needs and wishes of seniors who are isolated, have low income and who would not otherwise receive gifts for the holiday season.

After hearing about this program, our Always United members immediately got working on making sure as many seniors as possible were adopted.

***Because of your generosity, 115 of the 300 identified seniors—the largest amount of seniors adopted by any single group in the Midlands—received gifts, but more importantly, they received cheer from a friendly, warm face this holiday season. Thank you to our members who took their time and treasure to make the holidays a happy memory for these often lonely, seniors.***



We thank Always United Activities Sponsor



# SAFE AT HOME & AWAY

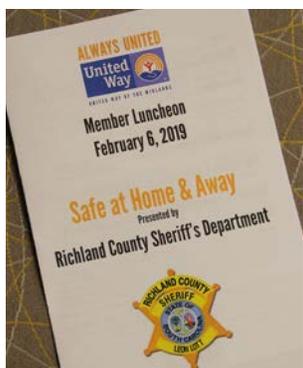
## MEMBER ENRICHMENT LUNCHEON, LED BY RICHLAND COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Corporal Marcus Kim of Richland County Sheriff's Department spent time with our Always United members to teach the best practices and rules to follow when it comes to personal safety while you are at home and away.

Corporal Kim also shared an informative active shooter video simulation and left us to always remember the acronym A.D.D. - AVOID, DENY, DEFEND - if ever in an active shooter situation.

### Personal Safety Suggestions

1. Report all suspicious activity, persons and cars to the police immediately. Nothing is too small to be reported.
2. Never open your door to anyone you do not know.
3. Do not leave valuable items in vehicles or at home in plain sight.
4. Put your street number on your mailbox or at the street for emergency personnel.
5. Leave outside flood lights on from dusk to dawn. REMOVE motion detectors and put in timers
6. If you arrive at home and find an open window, door or see a suspicious person or vehicle, call 9-1-1 from a cell or a neighbor's phone. DON'T GO INSIDE.



## Avoid Home Accidents and Injuries

CONTRIBUTED BY DEE DEE NORTHCUTT, Home Care Consultant, Home Instead Senior Care

Nearly 20 million seniors ages 65 and older visit the emergency room each year with almost a third of the visits related to injuries, many of which are sustained in the place seniors are meant to feel the safest: their home. In fact, 65 percent of senior homes have at least one potential safety issue, according to adult children of seniors surveyed by Home Instead, Inc. However, almost half of all home accidents by seniors (48 percent) can be avoided according to a recent survey of emergency room doctors.

Below are just a few quick things you can do to ensure safety!

- Night lights are a good option for dark rooms at night. Make sure the bulb wattage is high enough and placed in the rooms used most at night.
- Add a rubber mat or adhesive non-stick decals to the bottom of a tub.
- Remove throw rugs throughout house to avoid falls.
- Move items in the kitchen to the shelves closest to the counters that are the easiest to reach.
- Make sure all railings are secure, and if they are damaged, ensure they are replaced or repaired.

# PURPOSE

Always United is an action-oriented group of diverse, experienced United Way supporters who are committed to bringing together the people, resources and expertise needed to solve problems in the Midlands. We help realize the Education, Financial Stability and Health mission of United Way. Always giving to those in need. Always advocating for those without a voice. Always volunteering to lend a hand. Always United.

# WHO JOINS

There is no age restriction to become a member of Always United, but most members are late-career individuals or retirees and their spouses and partners. Many members have been contributing to United Way for years, even decades, and continue to donate, but donations are not required for membership. Always United offers personal enrichment and social activities, Community Impact Behind the Scenes experiences and volunteer opportunities.

# LEADERSHIP

**Eizabeth Anders, Co-chair**

**Michael Biediger**

**Morris Blachman**

**Bruce Bondo**

**Frank Brown**

**Paul Fant, Co-chair**

**Ann Henry, Activities Committee Chair**

**Rosemary Knowlton, Secretary**

**Hayes Mizell**

**Elizabeth Patterson**

**Roger Schwind**

**John Spade, Communications Committee Chair**

**Odell Stuckey**

**Phil Waddell, Membership Chair**

**Candy Waites**

**Claudia Brooks, Director**

# OPPORTUNITIES

Always United is organized to mirror United Way of the Midlands fiscal year, which is July through June. New committee appointments are announced in June. As this is just our second year, participation in Always projects are created and volunteers are needed to assist throughout the year. The ongoing committees include:

Steering Committee | Activities Committee | Membership Committee | Volunteer Committee

# CONTACT INFORMATION

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