

Change is never easy. But, sometimes it is necessary.



Story by Nancy Lassen

I have been a volunteer with United Way of Greater Battle Creek for about 15 years. During this time, I have seen many changes, including staff, volunteers, programs, agencies and more. What I love about my most recent volunteer experi-

ence is that I see the embodiment of an organization that continues to evolve and strengthen with time.

Recently, I had the pleasure of working with some incredible community volunteers. (See photo and caption.) For months, we devoted two-hour blocks of time at least once and usually twice a week to assessing and evaluating proposals in the Health area. Our work was started only after months of hard work by other volunteers, staff and agencies.

United Way is changing the way it invests in community needs. The organization is centering on "Advancing the Common Good" by creating opportunities for a good life for all by focusing on Health, Education and Income. The first area to be addressed through the new investment process is Health.

To start the process, United Way convened numerous area health leaders to create the Health Vision Council. The council spent

months identifying priority areas and selected the following as the top community needs: Access to Health Care; Maternal and Infant Health, Healthy Lifestyles; and Basic Health Needs.

Next, area agencies involved in health programming began attending trainings on the new computerized, electronic format for proposal submission. Yes, United Way has stepped into the next century embracing technology and the common good.

Finally, it was time for the Health Investment Team to do its part by evaluating proposals in the Health focus area. After spending time learning the new electronic system, and all of its available bells and whistles, team members spent many hours assessing the submitted proposals and providing the most complete review possible.

In the end, it was the time we spent together discussing and debating the merits of each proposal that

provided the greatest value. Good old-fashioned interaction led us to some difficult decisions, but we know that we were thorough, thoughtful and intentional in our decision-making.

I am proud of United Way for its continued commitment to our community, to continually challenging itself as an organization to grow, and to taking advantage of technology and other tools to strengthen a critical process in funding programs that serve Battle Creek.

But, most importantly, I want to thank United Way for valuing and respecting the human element needed to make important decisions about the people of our community. By joining together in this newly created process, I know that the Health Investment Team believed we were truly helping to "Advance the Common Good" here in Battle Creek. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.

Health Investment Team



(L to R) Victoria Reese, Linda Fields, Jill Wise, Rick Odden, Nancy Lassen, Richard Brown, Sandy Hall and Rick Tsoumas

Our Mission:

The mission of United Way of Greater Battle Creek is to mobilize the caring power of our community to Advance the Common Good by measurably improving lives.

Our Vision:

A vital, caring community supporting the building blocks for a good life - a quality education that leads to a stable job, income to support a family, good health and access to basic human needs.

United Way



United Way of Greater Battle Creek

Health Vision Council

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Kellogg Company

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Family Health Center
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Ruth Clark
Pathway to Health

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