



Sioux Empire United Way

News Release

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New Mentoring Program Launched for High School Students

Sioux Falls, SD – Earlier today the Sioux Empire United Way hosted its 7th Annual *WomenUnite!* Event at the Ramkota Exhibit Hall. The room was filled with enthusiasm as more than 700 women united to learn about the struggles faced by local unaccompanied and at-risk youth and what they can do to help.

The WomenUnite Event has successfully served as a launching point for several of Sioux Empire United Way's most recent initiatives and new programs, including Girls on the Run and the Backpack Program. At this year's event, women learned about United Way's newest initiative, USucceed.

"Last year, a local survey of 154 at-risk youth was conducted and found that 51% were not living with their parents or guardians. High school is a pivotal time of life for many youth, and a strong support system is important," said Pam Hanneman, WomenUnite Co-Chair.

USucceed will target at-risk high school students with a new long-term mentoring program, facilitated by Lutheran Social Services. The goal of the program is for mentors to build relationships with students, helping them to tackle the many issues today's high school students face. Mentors will assist with education and basic needs items, encouraging their students to graduate from high school and explore future education and career options.

"As we've seen with our current school-based mentoring program, mentoring does work," said Betty Oldenkamp, President of Lutheran Social Services. "We're excited to partner with United Way for this new program and provide committed and experienced mentors to our community's youth at a time when they need a strong supporter."

Volunteer mentors will commit to a full four years, to maintain their mentoring relationship with a student throughout high school. Mentors and students will work together to set and meet goals in: money management, college and career exploration, social relationships, daily living, and more.

“What’s exciting about this program is United Way has researched similar programs in Minnesota and Texas, and their results have been amazing,” said Kimber Severson, WomenUnite Co-Chair. “Student participants increase their self-esteem, increase their living skills, pursue their education, and maintain safe living environments. We hope to bring those same successes to the Sioux Empire.”

To learn more about the WomenUnite event or USucceed, please visit www.seuw.org or call Sioux Empire United Way at 336-2095.

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Contacts & Information

What: 7th Annual *WomenUnite!* Event
Opportunity to educate, inspire, and unite women to a cause they can relate to.

Sioux Empire United Way’s newest initiative, USucceed, will provide long-term mentors to at-risk high school students

Possible Story Contacts:

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