



# EASY WAY TO DO GOOD

## OUR IMPACT

Sioux Empire United Way addresses many needs across the community. Needs that are ever present.

- Approximately **84%** of Sioux Falls school-aged children live in households where all parents work outside the home.
- The US Census Bureau estimates that **27,680** in the Sioux Empire four-county area are aged 65 or older, while **31%** of older adults have a disability and **28%** live near the poverty level.
- In South Dakota, **54%** of adults in need of mental health services do not receive counseling or other types of treatment.

In 2020, our community has rallied together to help one another. The spirit of the Sioux Empire is a generous one – looking out for friends, families and neighbors. That is also the core spirit of Sioux Empire United Way.

We unite our community together to tackle our community's needs head on. Our agencies quickly respond to help meet the needs of children, vulnerable adults, and people in crisis. Thanks to Sioux Empire United Way:

- Children of essential workers and parents working outside the home are provided continuous quality childcare, with school-aged afterschool care quickly shifting into all day care when our community needs it. **1,140 children are in safe, quality childcare setting** through Boys & Girls Clubs of the Sioux Empire, Embe, KIDSTOP, Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota, United Childcare and Preschool, and Volunteers of America, Dakotas.
- Vulnerable adults are provided solutions to meet their basic needs and combat loneliness felt by physical distancing. **500 nutritious meals are delivered to older adults' homes daily** and 120 older adults remain in contact through phone, letters and video chats through Active Generations, Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota, and Helpline Center.
- People in crisis have a centralized resource in our community to turn to. In the months of March and April, Helpline Center experienced a **150% increase in calls to 2-1-1**. Callers were provided resources for health care, food, financial assistance, and other needs. This created a uniformed approach to a community health and economic crisis.



# WE'RE FIGHTING FOR

## CHILDREN

Sioux Empire United Way invests in our community's youth. We provide quality, early childhood education and ensure that school-age youth have a safe place to be when they're not in school, but cannot be at home. Mental health care is a priority and available to students through their schools. Investing in children is investing in our community's future. Your gift to Sioux Empire United Way helps:

**1,140 children** are provided with a quality childcare program that provides age-appropriate care and education. The Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis documents that early childhood education is an economic investment – **for every \$1 spent on early education, you see a \$7 return later in life.**

*"We love Boys & Girls Clubs so much. The staff is part of our family and I can't imagine the girls not being here." Alice is now thriving in the pre-k room and on target developmentally. Dahlia is also experiencing gains particularly in her vocabulary, talking in full sentences. She also is recognizing shapes and colors.*

**10,263 books** are mailed to children under the age of five each month. One study reports how **when children are read to for one hour per day, they enter school with a vocabulary three times larger** than students who are only read to 30 hours total during their first five years.

*"This kid loves to read," mother Kendra noted about her son Brantley, just before Brantley was presented with Sioux Empire United Way's 2,000,000th book through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library program.*

*"As a new grandpa whose granddaughter has now received six books from Imagination Library, I love those moments of sitting and reading to her," stated Dr. Dan Heinemann, 2019 Sioux Empire United Way Board Chair. "We learn to read, so we can then read to learn, and that is why this program is so important, to create that love of reading at an early age."*

**408 students** were provided with access to mental health counseling services directly through their schools. This enables students to have **mental health care** in their school or, now, through telehealth options.

*"We are so excited about the opportunity to provide access to mental health care in our local schools through this innovative program. PATH is a great example of people in our community working together to solve local programs and of what makes our local United Way so special," said Rebecca Kiesow-Knudsen, Vice President of Community Services at Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota.*



# WE'RE FIGHTING FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

“Before my husband got sick, I took good care of myself, but when he couldn’t take care of himself anymore – I forgot about me.”

A caregiver noted her appreciation of the support she has found. United Way is committed to providing assistance to help vulnerable adults maintain their independence and their sense of community.

**219,947 meals** are provided to people ages 60 and over in a congregate or home-delivered setting. Older adults require nutrient-rich foods for **healthy aging** and prevention of chronic disease.

*“My mom is 99 years old and still lives alone in her own home. She loves being here, but can barely get around even with a walker. She is on a limited income so Meals on Wheels has been a Godsend. These nutritious tasty meals provide her with usually enough food for two meals. She looks forward to them and the interaction with the delivery people. Thank you for the much needed service from the bottom of our hearts!” – Daughter of Home Delivered Recipient*

**124 older adults** are paired with a volunteer for social and recreational purposes or receive routine phone call checks – which helps **reduce feelings of loneliness and increase their connection to our community.**

*Sharon has expressed on several occasions how thankful she is for the Better Together program. Thanks to her volunteer, she has been able to experience her new community. She has been to Falls Park, Christmas at the Cathedral, the Sculpture Walk, and various concerts. Sharon was even able to visit her family’s homestead in Madison with Donna. She has shared that she never would have been able to do any of these things as she did not know anyone who would be able to take her, let alone someone who would enjoy the experiences with her.*

**245 individuals** with disabilities are provided with social, recreational, and quality of life activities to improve their relationships with peers and our community. Inclusive recreation allows for **improvements in physical well-being, prevention of secondary conditions, and social growth.**

*Natalie has been assisting Shirley in working on the garden together for two years. They love working on the garden, not only growing vegetables, but also growing a friendship. Their time together is enriching to everyone involved. Natalie enjoys volunteering and being a mentor because she loves to teach Shirley how to grow items in the garden. Shirley loves working on the garden and seeing all the harvest at the end of the season!*



# WE'RE FIGHTING FOR PEOPLE IN CRISIS

In times of uncertainty, at-risk populations need a place to turn. Stable housing, access to food, and mental health services are all made possible through your support of Sioux Empire United Way.

**1,811 households** received one-time financial assistance to **maintain or achieve housing** or to assist with utilities.

*“From the first day I went in there and talked to staff, I felt like I mattered, and my situation wasn’t ignored. It was a huge relief to get help when I needed it the most,” said Jennifer, who received financial assistance and a mentor through Genesis.*

**3,108 individuals** had access to **mental health** counseling services and mental telehealth services.

“I want people to know that no matter your circumstance, it is always ok to reach out and talk to someone, even if it’s just one or two sessions. Sometimes that’s all you need, a non-biased person to help you figure out your next steps,” said April Bolton, Associate Director for Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota.

**150% increase in calls** for information and resources were received by 2-1-1 in March and April 2020. Callers can find **listening and support**, as well as resources for a variety of needs.

*“It would be great if we can all hold onto the true importance of community and never take that for granted again,” said Janet Kittams, CEO of Helpline Center in regards to her our community’s response to COVID-19.*