

All across America, United Ways are on the frontlines of the response to the coronavirus and its economic fallout. We are in virtually every community in America, so it is not surprising that when this crisis hit, people called United Way for help. We responded immediately to community needs for food, shelter, and health care resources, in coordination with local governments and health officials. In March, calls to 2-1-1 emergency call centers broke records. In our region, calls for help doubled.

The greatest request for help?

Food.

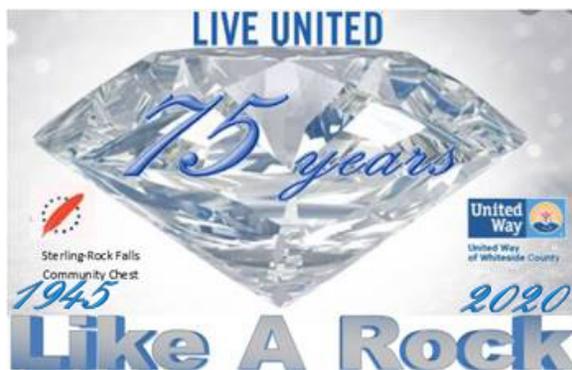
Here in Whiteside County, we are celebrating our 75th anniversary this year. Naturally, we had hoped for a more festive atmosphere to roll out this special year. But what we found instead of a celebration was:

One of our greatest challenges ever.

Hotels, restaurants, and other venues stand mostly empty across our state, and more than 1,514 workers filed for unemployment in Whiteside County in March. Our small staff knew that reaching out immediately to the thousands of local workers in our county-wide hospitality industry would be our first move. We want you to know what we did.

Our first emergency program, launched in a collaborative effort with Royal Neighbors Rock Falls Camp 100, was a delivery program for shut-ins. This program is still ongoing and we and our volunteers are available to deliver paid-for food from grocery stores or restaurants with curbside services.

Our second program provided gift cards for groceries. Launched March 16 at the behest of and aligned with the vision of one of our corporate partners, United Craftsmen Ltd., our COVID-19 Emergency Food Assistance Program has served hundreds of households in Whiteside County. We have issued more than 575 food gift cards to workers in need of help, to date and nearly 40 donors gave us their support.



WITHOUT YOUR PARTNERSHIP,

OUR HELP WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE.

THANK YOU, EVERYONE.

LIVE UNITED



**United Way
of Whiteside County**

AS ALWAYS, WE STAND READY.

LIKE A ROCK

Ultimately, through the generosity of those donors and the United Way Board of Directors, we collected over \$60,000 in pledges and cash to alleviate hunger and fill the gaps of – and the pantries of – those who were struggling to make ends meet. Card distribution is still ongoing and we anticipate it will continue through May.

We know our program has been a lifeline. Other needs we're seeing include assisting with rent, mortgage payments, and/or utilities, shelter, mental health counseling, and transportation. We are working collaboratively with several agency partners to address these needs, which are changing on a daily basis. We are actively seeking donations – large and small.

As you consider your ability to help, and wonder what you can do, give us a call at 815-625-7973. We can help you direct your donation to where it matters most. After all, we've been connecting people to services and bringing emergency programs to reality since the end of World War II.