

Dear colleagues,

This year, once again, we at {BUSINESS NAME} will be hosting a United Way workplace giving campaign from {START DATE} to {END DATE}. As you all know, this past year our communities have seen challenges more difficult than many of us have experienced in the recent past. Many of our friends and neighbors have lost their jobs or had to limit their work hours, have found themselves unable to make ends meet or to make hard choices just to put food on the table, or we have been challenged to simply connect to the internet in order for our children to do something as regular as attend school. While none of us have been untouched by this past year, many of our neighbors have struggled in ways that are more difficult than others.

Green Mountain United Way's workplace campaign is an opportunity for each of us to contribute to the work that supports our friends and neighbors in the community who are struggling. For just a small amount, as little as \$1.00 each pay period, we are able to support United Way's work and partnerships with organizations in our community throughout the year. I encourage you to consider supporting this work through a payroll deduction – for the cost of a cup of coffee each week you could help those in our communities who need support and services.

I've attached the pledge form. Please fill out the form, sign it and return it to {CONTACT NAME} by {DUE DATE}. If you have questions, please email {CONTACT PERSON'S EMAIL}.

(If you are running a raffle add this information to your email)To be entered in our raffle for {PRIZE}, simply return your completed form by email or inter-office mail by {DATE} and you will be entered to win! The drawing will be held on {DATE} and winners will be announced in an office-wide email. Prizes will be sent directly to the winners.

Thank you for joining in the work to support our communities, we are all part of the community and have a role to play in supporting our neighbors!

Sincerely,

{YOUR NAME}

## What a Dollar Can Do Stories

### A Working Bridges Story:

As a mother, a graduate student, and a healthcare worker, Candace normally carefully plans her time and her finances, but this year, COVID-19 upended her careful plans.

After an illness in her household, Candace had to quarantine for 14 days - using what time off she had. She then had to go without pay for several weeks at the end of the year, just when she had been planning to use her saved time-off to help pay for holiday gifts for her kids! "The kids and I were sick - not with COVID-19 but something else - but that didn't matter because any illness required staying home and awaiting negative test results which at that time were taking up to a week!" Candace recalled.

"After paying our bills and mortgage, our household checking account went into the negative for the first time ever! It was so scary! My husband and I were budgeting food just like we did when we were first married but that wasn't enough."

Fortunately, Candace's employer offers the Working Bridges program and Candace has access to the Income Advance Loan. Her loan helped her bring her account back up into the black, get winter tires - which she needs to get to work - and made it possible to purchase Christmas gifts for her three children.

"Since then, we have cut down our monthly bills and made ourselves much more financially secure to avoid that happening again! I've even paid ahead on my loan and am excited I will have the money already saved for Christmas this year!"

It took your support for all three program elements, Resource Coordination, the Income Advanced Loan, and Financial Coaching, to help Candace and her family not only get back on their feet, but get ahead of future life challenges!

### A Tatum's Totes Story

"Socks! I haven't had socks all winter!" a young boy exclaimed to his social worker when he was handed his Tatum's Totes backpack. Last winter, a child was entering emergency foster care. He was so excited to receive a Tatum's Totes backpack when he arrived at the Department for Children and Families to get ready to meet his new foster family. These backpacks are filled with books, games, a toothbrush, comb, water bottle and school supplies. But he wasn't excited for the toys, books, water bottles, new school supplies, or the bag itself – no, he was excited about the warm, wool socks tucked into the side pouch of the backpack.

Children in our communities need our help, and because of your support for our Tatum's Totes partnership and because of the donations from caring community members just like you, each

backpack can be tailored to a child's age and gender to ensure that they have something of their own to take with them throughout their time in foster care, and beyond. Your gift helps to provide a Tatum's Totes backpack giving children living right here in your county the items they need to transition into a healthy, loving foster home.

***A gift of just \$1 per pay period (\$26 per year) helps to create one fully stocked backpack for these children, and a gift of \$100 (\$4 per pay period) helps to pack 4 Tatum's Totes backpacks for children.***

## **A K.E.E.P. Financial Coaching Story**

Jeanna had big goals. As a recent college graduate and a full-time childcare provider at a center near her parent's home, she was well on her way to success. But, she was having trouble saving enough for her own apartment. That's why she came to see the United Way Financial Coach – she wanted to figure out how to make her life work on her current income and make plans for her future! After sitting down to look at Jeanna's spending and help her create a budget, the financial coach helped Jeanna think through her current spending vs. her goals. They weren't matching up and Jeanna had some choices to make to align her actions with her goals. After some work, and some big choices, Jeanna has now saved enough to move into her own apartment, not too far from her parents, and has been practicing aligning her money choices and her future goals!

***A gift of just \$1 per pay period (\$26 per year) helps a family receive one hour of Financial Coaching through our K.E.E.P. Financial Coaching Program.***

## **A Community Caring Story**

Recently we had the pleasure of spending a bright sunny spring-like afternoon working side-by-side with Angela\* and the other residents of the Spring View\* Apartments. Alongside Angela and our partners at the Vermont Foodbank and Rural Edge (the low-income housing agency in the Northeast Kingdom), we helped restock their struggling food shelf with much-needed healthy food. As we worked together unloading donated provisions onto the neat and tidy shelves in their small community food pantry, Angela and I watched as other residents shopped for fresh, healthy vegetables at the Veggie-Van-Go.

It was inspiring to see the progress that had been made in just 12 months. Because of your support for work in the areas of Health and Community Caring, Green Mountain United Way has been fortunate to be part of a small team working to empower Angela and other leaders among the residents learning to manage their own food shelf and improve the food security of their entire community. A well-managed food shelf will ensure the children, parents and grandparents who live there have enough to eat; kids will have full bellies and parent's stress will be lower because they have better access to healthy, nourishing food, all because of your

gift and your care for your community. We could not make this happen without your pledged support.

***A gift of just \$20 per pay period (\$520 per year) gives residents the training they need to operate a community-led food shelf that includes fresh fruit and vegetables at their low-income housing site and to hold healthy food cooking demonstrations for residents.***

## **A Volunteer Connection Story**

During the height of the COVID-19 epidemic, Vermont organizations across our region were struggling to find volunteers to support critical essential work. The United Way Volunteer Connection went to work connecting Mutual Aid Societies that popped up in cities and towns across our region seemingly overnight, with nonprofit volunteer opportunities delivering meals, making masks, distributing food, picking up prescriptions and groceries, and helping Vermonters get connected to the internet.

Hundreds of people, many who were not regularly able to volunteer or work in their communities, came out to allow many of our “usual” volunteers who are older, retired Vermonters, to stay home and stay safe. Over the course of the year, United Way volunteers made sure school meals got to families, ensured seniors continued to receive meals on wheels, connected families to the internet when they could not manage, helped to deliver 3 meals a day to Vermonters experiencing homelessness housed in hotels, and as Vermont has reopened, Volunteers have continued to come out and support all of the incredible work our nonprofits do by planting community gardens, coaching sports teams, working to get community facilities back up and running after pandemic dormancy, and so much more! Your support ensures that volunteers and nonprofits are able to use their time to meet their mission!

***A gift of just \$10 per pay period (\$260 per year) helps to recruit volunteers for projects like this and for non-profit's throughout the community so they can accomplish their missions.***

## **A Community Caring Story**

Two years ago a community got together to figure out how they could improve their town to support children ages 0-5 and help make them more kindergarten ready. The State of Vermont was willing to fund a project, but first this group of residents was required to go through a community-led process to gather input, understand the factors facing children in their community, collect ideas and present a comprehensive project plan to the State. While there was enthusiasm to make something great happen, it was hard to get everyone around the table and hard for this community group to understand where to begin. That's when they asked Green Mountain United Way to join the discussion. As a community convener, United Way could help guide the community's enthusiastic residents through a process to help gather ideas, channel enthusiasm, and gather the relevant stakeholders, as well as work with active community members to make sure that they had all of the information they needed to submit a proposal.

After community meetings and idea sessions, a vision began to take shape. This community wanted a playground, a safe space where children and their parents could go to be outdoors and spend time with

other families in the community. There they could build relationships that would grow and flourish in kindergarten, children could get outside, get exercise, and have fun. The plan was put in place. Community members stepped up. The State of Vermont and the town gave their okay and the ideas were put into action.

On the Community Building days, over 50 community volunteers came together. Tractor owners drove their tractors to the site to help spread dirt, stone and mulch. Volunteers brought rakes, shovels, and lots of homemade snacks to keep everyone's energy up. After 3 days of all-out effort, under the guidance of the community committee who had crafted the plan, and Green Mountain United Way, the playground was completed and opened on September 28<sup>th</sup> with children rushing the gates to be the first to climb, swing, and play. You can visit this new community gem in Northfield Falls near the ball fields, and see the result of the power of a community UNITED for children.

***Your gift of any amount helps Green Mountain United Way in our role as a community convener to help communities throughout our region realize their potential!***

## **A Working Bridges Story**

A young employee requested a meeting with our Resource Coordinator with a housing challenge. When and her boyfriend had a nice apartment together with a roommate, but in the last week the roommate had moved out with little notice and had left the couple with an apartment they could not afford alone. She and her boyfriend were able to find a new, more affordable apartment in the tight housing market they live in, but because their original security deposit was still tied up with the apartment they were leaving, they needed the Working Bridges loan to pay for the security deposit until they could sort things out with their landlord.

Because of your support, the Resource Coordinator was able to process their loan quickly and help them get into new, more affordable housing, and to follow-up with them to give them more financial coaching. She took the Resource Coordinator's advice and after the loan was paid back she kept the deductions going into a savings account to build up her savings for any future expenses. Thanks to you and donors like you, she was able to see her credit score improve and make a plan to continue to build her credit, since she was headed in the right direction after the loan was repaid.

***A gift of just \$5 per pay period (\$130 per year) helps 6 working Vermonters & their families get the help they need to face life's challenges and thrive.***

\*Indicates names have been changed to protect individual's privacy.