

# community UNITED

updates &  
opportunities



Brookings Area  
UNITED WAY

A Quarterly Peek at Just a Few Ways We're Making a Difference....Together!

## 70 Years of Impact!!!

By Heidi Gullickson - Executive Director 2014 - present

As the Executive Director of Brookings Area United Way, I am thrilled to announce the 70th year of our organization's commitment to the community!

It started in 1955 as the Brookings United Charities Fund, thanks to familiar names like Fishback, Kendall, Sexauer, Dalthorp, Blauert, McCann, and Chapman. Later, the organization became known as the Brookings United Fund, before finally resting on their final name - Brookings Area United Way.

During the past seven decades, Brookings County has increased in population from 17,000 to 36,000. Multiple elementary schools have been added as families grew in number. The College became the University, welcoming even more students and educators. Industries have opened and brought jobs. In short, the area has grown.

And so have both the needs and our efforts to meet them.

One thing has remained constant: this organization has continued to improve lives across Brookings County by addressing critical needs in education, health, financial stability, and much more.



Executive Director Gullickson updates a United Way fundraising sign in more recent years.

Over the years, the number of non-profits receiving funds has significantly increased. In addition, the United Way began spearheading programming to fill the gaps not covered by other non-profits ranging from dental visits for children to food assistance for seniors. We've created collaborations with community leaders, elected officials, volunteers, and more to address issues impacting the well-being of our youth, mental health needs, and more.



State Theater on Main Street in Brookings (now Powershop Gym) displayed the United Charities fundraising progress above the marquee.

We have continued to meet the challenges brought forth in our growing community.

This 70<sup>th</sup> milestone is a testament to the dedication of our community members and their unwavering support. It's also a reminder of the continued need for involvement and generosity. I encourage everyone to be grateful for our past, and [make a donation](#) to help ensure our future. THANK YOU!

## Program Recognizes Volunteers



January recipients Melvin & Kathy Schlemmer

United Way recognizes volunteers with a special proclamation each month based on nominations from the community. Pictured are recent recipients (above) January recipients Melvin & Kathy Schlemmer, (top right) February recipient Mary Held; (bottom right) March recipients Leadership Brookings Taskforce.



February recipient Mary Held



March recipients Leadership Brookings Taskforce

Do you know somebody who volunteers in Brookings County? Have you seen them make a difference? Let us know, and they may be named Volunteer of the Month!

Are YOU looking for volunteer opportunities for yourself? Non-profits often rely on such assistance from individuals or groups.

[Click Here for Volunteer Opportunities or Nominate a Volunteer of the Month](#)

## Prevention Program Brings Community Together

Brookings Area United Way, in partnership with Resilient Communities and the Brookings County Mental Health Coalition, welcomed community members to "Stronger Together: Building



Assets for Brookings, A Day for Suicide Prevention" on February 19th at the Dacotah Bank Center. (See the quick wrap up below.)

We encourage you to check out all of our community collaborations. Our efforts with [Brookings Council of Nonprofits](#), [Brookings Communities That Care](#), [Early Learner Brookings](#), [Brookings Mental Health Coalition](#), and [Resilient Community Brookings County](#) take on large efforts to better serve our community. The classes, programs, trainings, discussions, and events are more ways Brookings Area United Way helps focus and guide efforts around important topics of concern.

# 2025

## Stronger Together: Building Assets for Brookings, A Day for Suicide Prevention

 Dacotah Bank Center:  
February 19, 2025

 Attendees: 79+

 Resource Booths: 14

A day focused on how all of us can help increase concrete supports throughout Brookings and surrounding communities to instill hope, safety and healing.

Organized by:



### The Lineup:

- Tifanie Petro - Pennington County State's Attorney's Office: "Hope is an Action"
- Betsy Schuster - CEO Active Generations: "Building Mental Flexibility: A Non-Runners Journey Running in The 437 Project"
- Dr. Mo - University of South Dakota: "Harm Reduction for All- Building Safer & Healthier Communities"
- Emotional Wellness Breakout Sessions

### Thank You to Our 2025 Sponsors:



### Attendee Takeaways...

- "I plan on sharing these events with my co-workers and school staff members that I work with! Awareness of mental health is a much-needed thing in today's society!!!" - First time attendee
- "Stronger Together reminds me that no one has to face their struggles alone. It's more than an event, it's a community of hope." - Multi-year attendee

### Event Photos



## Program Spotlight: Senior Boxes

Senior citizens are often overlooked in terms of need. They may be more isolated, so others are unaware of their situation. And many are on fixed and limited income.

Food is a basic need, and we encourage you to reach out to the seniors you know to let them know about this program. Monthly food pick up is at the United Way office. Box delivery may be available for those in need.

Learn more about other United Way programs by visiting the "Our Work" tab on our website.

**Senior Boxes LEARN  
MORE**

**Visit our  
Website**

# Senior Boxes

Eligible seniors receive a pre-packaged box of non-perishable food items each month that is specifically designed to supplement nutrients typically lacking in their diets.

**This program is available at Brookings Area United Way. Income based eligibility. Age 60+ only.**

## How to sign up:

Call the Brookings Area United Way office at 605-692-4979 and ask to speak with our Community Care Coordinator.

Please note that you must have an approved application in order to receive a box.

**Learn more about  
this opportunity  
here!**



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# In Case You Missed It

Per Brookings Register, March 21, 2025

## Stand with Brookings — support United Way

As former board members of the Brookings Area United Way, we have seen firsthand the life-changing impact this organization has on our community. We have witnessed struggling families receive the support they need, children find support and mentorship, and local nonprofits thrive because of the resources Brookings Area United Way provides. But today, that impact is at risk. National disruptions potentially place vital programs in jeopardy, threatening the very support systems that help our neighbors in times of crisis.

The services United Way funds — from food assistance to mental health resources to after-school programs — are not luxuries; they are necessities. Without them, too many in our community will be left without a safety net.

Now, more than ever, we must come together to bridge the gap. Whether you can give \$5, \$500, or \$5000, every contribution makes a difference. If a financial gift isn't possible, you can still help by volunteering, spreading the word, or advocating for those in need.

The Brookings area is filled with communities that care, and who have always stepped up when challenges arise. This is one of those moments. Let's show that we will not allow disruptions define our future—we will define it with generosity, compassion, and action.

Join us in standing with the Brookings Area United Way. Because when we lift others up, we all rise together.

**Dan Svobodny, Solventum**  
**Spencer Degen, Daktronics**

**Your Help Matters. [CLICK to DONATE](#)**

### Other Ways to Give:

#### Give by Check

Mail a check made payable to:  
Brookings Area United Way  
PO Box 750 Brookings, SD 57006

#### Give by Phone

You can make a credit card contribution over the phone by calling Randy at the United Way office at 605-692-4979

#### Give Stock

You can make a gift of securities directly to United Way. Please call Randy at 605-692-4979

#### Give Through Your IRA

Contact your IRA custodian to make a minimum required distribution.

#### Honor a Loved One

You can recognize a special friend or

## Donor Advised Fund

You can make a gift through your Donor Advised Fund by designating a donation to Brookings Area United Way.

family member by making a gift in their honor or memory.

## Leave a Legacy

You can leave a legacy of your local support with a gift to United Way in your will or estate plans.

# Guest Article: QCDs

## Giving Through Your IRA: How Qualified Charitable Distributions Can Maximize Your Impact and Minimize Your Taxes

By Devan Schaefer, M.S. Wealth Management Officer at First Bank & Trust



Read this special guest article to learn more about one great way you can donate to Brookings Area United Way!

[Click here to READ MORE!](#)

## Survey Responses Needed

We are conducting a community survey to get a better understanding of how to support local mental health and substance use treatment, education, and prevention efforts to build a healthier Brookings County. Please fill out this anonymous 5-minute survey by April 28.

[Take the Survey](#)

# Upcoming Opportunities



Brookings Area  
**UNITED WAY**

SD  
**RESILIENT**  
COMMUNITY  
BROOKINGS COUNTY

## The Power of Developmental Relationships

- Learn how every adult can build intentional relationships with youth in Brookings County.
- Hear from Miss Rodeo South Dakota 2025 on “Mental Health Matters” in recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month.

### Speakers:

**Ali Teesdale**

Brookings County Youth  
Mentoring Program

**Darla Biel**

Center for Prevention of  
Child Maltreatment

**Jordan Jensen**

Miss Rodeo South Dakota



**May 21, 2025**  
**10:30 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Ascension Lutheran Church**  
**(2030 3rd St)**

Register here or by calling Brookings Area  
United Way at 605-692-4979





### When:

Wednesday  
June 11, 2025  
8am - 5pm

### Where:

Dakota Prairie  
Elementary School  
111 26th S. St.  
Brookings, SD



Scan to  
Register!

#### What it covers:

- Common warning signs and risk factors in adolescents ages 12 -18.
- How to interact with a youth in crisis.
- How to connect a youth to help.
- Expanded content on early intervention, trauma, substance use, and self-care.

#### This training is intended for:

- First responders
- Social service providers
- Teacher and school faculty
- Youth activity leaders
- Impacted community members
- Caring adults



Brookings Area  
**UNITED WAY**



**NEPRC**  
NE PREVENTION RESOURCE CENTER  
Human Service Agency

For questions or to register, please email [uw@brookingsunitedway.org](mailto:uw@brookingsunitedway.org)

Learn more about these and all of our other upcoming events by searching our Community Calendar.

**Visit Community Calendar**





Brookings Area  
**UNITED WAY**

1955 - 2025

**70 YEARS OF  
IMPACT**

**Donate Now**

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Website**



Brookings Area United Way | 908 Hope Drive | Brookings, SD 57006 US

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