

# Community Initiatives



Welcome! Brookings Area United Way offers this monthly newsletter as a way to connect some of the many community initiatives that work together in Brookings County to support residents, youth, and families.

## Happy 2-1-1 Day!

Today, February 11th (2/11), Brookings Area United Way staff is celebrating 211 Day, highlighting the free, confidential 211 resource line that connects Brookings County residents to local support like food and financial services. Brookings United Way connects our County to the 211 service daily, and this week alone, the team shared 80+ 211 resource folders to spread awareness.

The Helpline Center, which answers South Dakota's statewide 211 line, remains a valued Brookings Area United Way-funded partner. Learn more at [helplinecenter.org/2-1-1/](https://helplinecenter.org/2-1-1/) and follow Brookings Area United Way on social media to see how we're celebrating!



Brookings Area  
**UNITED WAY**



## CTC Funding Update:

Brookings Area United Way has received a \$20,000 grant from the South Dakota Community Foundation, along with an additional \$5,000 from Brookings County on behalf of the Brookings Communities That Cares (CTC) Initiative.

These funds will allow Brookings CTC to continue our work in advancing youth prevention strategies and successfully move through the first round of the CTC framework.



## Board Milestone & Celebration!

The entire CTC Board is incredibly grateful for this support and investment in our community's youth!

The CTC Board held its monthly board meeting on January 22nd, where they celebrated several exciting milestones, including the CTC initiative in Brookings and the Board officially reaching its one-year anniversary! To mark the occasion, board members celebrated with cake featuring their new CTC logo and received one-year certificates of appreciation for those who have served on the board since January 2025.



### CTC's New Look!

Thanks to the Community Outreach PR Workgroup- who created logos, researched color theory, explored Brookings' color themes, and surveyed CTC board members, key leaders, and youth - The Brookings CTC Initiative now has a fresh new look shaped by youth and stakeholder feedback!

### Welcome Our Spring Intern, Natalie!

## MEET NATALIE!

A portrait of Natalie, a young woman with long, wavy brown hair, smiling. She is wearing a light pink sweater. The photo is framed by a blue and yellow geometric border.

Hi! I'm Natalie the Community Initiatives Intern at Brookings Area United Way!

I am originally from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. I am currently a student at SDSU studying Human Development & Family Studies with minors in Psychology and Sociology.

I'm most excited to work with and support this community! The community of Brookings has always been so welcoming, supportive, and kind to new faces. I cannot wait to work through United Way to connect with and serve Brookings County!

The logo for Brookings Area United Way features a stylized human figure in blue and red, with the text "Brookings Area UNITED WAY" to its right.

### Annual 2026 Stronger Together Event!

Registration for the [2026 Stronger Together](#) event is open until **February 13th!** Registration is required to attend. Scan the QR code or click the flyer below to register.

# 2026

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

Join us to learn how all of us can help increase concrete supports throughout Brookings County to instill hope, safety and healing. This event is free and open to the public.

**Dacotah Bank Center**  
**February 18th, 8 AM - 1 PM**



**Machel Kocer, MSW, CSW-PIP**  
Community Engagement Partnership  
Coordinator, Sioux Falls VA Healthcare System  
Conversations on Access to  
Lethal Means (CALM) Training



**Nikki Eining, CSW-PIP, QMHP**  
USD Sanford School of Medicine

Creating Safe and Supportive Environments:  
Trauma-Informed Care

### First Responder Interactive Panel

**Diana Leal, MPH:** Post Overdose Response  
Team Program Manager,  
Emily's Hope

**Karen Weber, RN:** Emergency Department  
Director, Brookings Health  
System

A Collaboration on Post-Overdose Response



Call Brookings Area United  
Way at 605-692-4979 to  
register or scan QR code

Registration for this  
event is free.



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**BASIC NEEDS  
TASK FORCE**

### Summer Donation Drive!

The Basic Needs Task Force, led by the Brookings Area United Way, unites community partners to ensure individuals and families across Brookings County have access to essential food and personal care items.

This summer, Task Force members are gearing up for a June donation drive with Brookings Area United Way as the centralized donation drop-off site to make giving easy and effective. Be on the lookout for more details coming in May and get ready to help meet basic needs in Brookings County together!



## BCNP

BROOKINGS COUNCIL  
OF NONPROFITS

Next BCNP meeting is Monday,  
**February 23rd** from 10am - 11am at  
Cottonwood - Downtown location.  
The Multicultural Center is the  
nonprofit highlight of the month, and  
exciting updates on the Generosity  
Project will be shared!

\*All BCNP 2026 members and non-  
members are welcome to attend!

**Meeting Dates & Events**



## Week of The Young Child Celebration - Save The Date!

For any questions or information about this event, please email Brookings Area United Way, [uw@brookingsunitedway.org](mailto:uw@brookingsunitedway.org).



# THE WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD COMMUNITY CELEBRATION

**FREE  
MUSEUM  
ENTRY  
4-7PM**

**TUESDAY, APRIL 14TH**

**4-7PM: FREE EVENING OF PLAY!**

**CHILDREN'S MUSEUM OF SOUTH  
DAKOTA**

All ages are welcome! Local area resources will have booths from 4-6pm. Children must be accompanied by a caregiver.

Proclamation promptly at 4:30pm.

**\$5 MEALS AVAILABLE THROUGH CAFE COTEAU**



Parking for event also available at 5th street gym.

For more information contact  
Brookings Area United Way @ 605-692-4979.

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

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