

## TUESDAY TOPICS

June 1, 2021

### Summary

The June 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday Topics was again held on zoom. President Carole Jordan provided updates on a variety of topics, including the municipal election in November and a LWVUS training opportunity. Carole also announced that beginning in September Tuesday Topics will be in-person meetings held at the Topeka & Shawnee County Library in Marvin Auditorium. She then introduced the speaker, Jessica Lehnherr, President and CEO of United Way of Greater Topeka.

Ms. Lehnherr began her presentation with a short video about United Way and Covid-related issues and their zoom meetings to discuss and solve problems with Topeka leaders, including Capitol Federal, Topeka Public Schools (Pineridge Prep), and Midland Care. She then explained that United Way of Greater Topeka, formerly Community Chest, has been in Topeka for over 85 years and serves Shawnee, Jackson and Jefferson Counties.

Impact Partners focus on

**Early Childhood** -- Pineridge Prep Preschool, TDC (formerly Topeka Day Care), YWCA Kindergarten Achievement Program, Child Care Aware, and USD 501 Parents as Teachers

**On-Grade Achievement** – USD 450 Tecumseh North, YWCA FEATS (Families Empowered by Additional Teaching of Students), and Communities in Schools

**Financial Stability** -- Topeka Rescue Mission CARE (Career Education Program), Housing & Credit Counseling, Inc., Hope Program, Communities in Schools Future Now Finance program, and Junior Achievement in Kansas

**Health** – Social Determinants of Health, Heart Healthy Neighborhoods, Advocacy work, and Single Care (prescription card for 80% discount)

**Response to Covid** – Weekly Covid 19 Response Calls and Covid Relief Fund

To help United Way people can....

**GIVE** (United Way Day of Giving), **ADVOCATE** (on social media) **VOLUNTEER** (TopekaVolunteers.org lists nearly 100 organizations advertising opportunities to volunteer that can track volunteer hours and their dollar value to the community.)

The Young Leaders Society (40-year-olds or younger or young at heart) is committed to advancing the United Way goal in education, income and health. Most of their work is focused on Early Education. Their Junior Leader Reader program, which began in 2010 with corporate and individual support, has distributed 41,783 books to pre-k and kindergarten students in Shawnee County.

Ms. Lehnherr answered several questions from the audience. Regarding graduation rates and On-Grade Achievement, she said they would know more next year when third grade students who participated in the On-Grade Achievement effort graduate high school. Topeka Public Schools graduates did improve this year, but she couldn't say that was connected to the United Way. In answer to a question about Child Care Aware, she said CCA has fewer preschools and fewer childcare educators. When asked about United Way grants, she said the largest grants are \$55,000-\$60,000. Smaller grants run \$7,000-\$45,000. The smallest grants are \$1,500 and are related to Covid. United Way works with the Topeka City Council as a facilitator and grant manager. Responding to a question about engaging young people who are aging out of the foster care system in voting Ms. Lehnherr shared that United Way's Angel Romero is engaged in voter registration using social media.

For more information about the work of United Way of Greater Topeka, please go to the [website](#).