

Editorial | Support United Way's mission to enhance region

The Tribune-Democrat
9/21/2016



Keynote speaker Craig Zettle of Botvin talks about "The power of prevention" in his speech to the attendees. Wednesday, September 14, 2016.
Todd Berkey/The Tribune-Democrat, Johnstown, Pa.

The United Way of the Laurel Highlands has set a lofty goal: raising \$1.5 million during the 2016 campaign. But the organization has always had a significant mission – making our region better by addressing issues such as education, hunger and addiction through the work of local agencies.

The United Way announced its campaign goal last week while confirming that the 1889 Foundation would again provide a \$500,000 matching grant to help kick-start the effort.

"The United Way ... is changing our communities for the better and making them places people want to live in, places people want to come back to, and places where people want to continue to raise their families," Craig Zettle, vice president of Botvin LifeSkills Training, said during a presentation about his United Way-supported program. United Way CEO Bill McKinney reiterated that the organization would use money raised to help fund evidence-based programs, and especially those serving three key areas: early childhood development, parental engagement and drug-and-alcohol abuse prevention.

Botvin works to strengthen students in areas such as self-management, social skills and drug resistance, Zettle said. McKinney said the Botvin curriculum is now used for middle school students in 24 school districts across Somerset and Cambria counties. The long-term goal is to expand its impact to third through eighth grades.

“In my opinion, we need to do everything possible to make our community safe, and starting to focus on young people, early in life, is a good thing,” said Ed Sheehan Jr., president and CEO of Concurrent Technologies Corp. and former chairman of the United Way of the Laurel Highlands board of directors.

On its website – www.uwlaurel.org – the United Way lists these member organizations that receive financial support for their programs:

- Alternative Community Resource Program Inc., Johnstown
- American Red Cross PA Mountains Chapter, Johnstown
- Behavioral Health Services of Somerset and Bedford Counties Inc. (Health Choices), Somerset
- Beginnings Inc., Johnstown
- Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center, Johnstown
- Boy Scouts of America Laurel Highlands Council, Johnstown
- Boys & Girls Club of Somerset County, Somerset
- Cambria County Prevention Coalition, Johnstown
- Catholic Charities Inc. of the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Johnstown
- Coal Country Youth Center, Northern Cambria
- Easter Seals of Western and Central PA, Johnstown and Somerset
- Family Center, Salisbury
- Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania, Johnstown
- Goodwill Industries of the Conemaugh Valley Inc, Johnstown
- Home Nursing Agency, Ebensburg
- Johnstown Free Medical Clinic, Johnstown
- The Learning Lamp, Johnstown
- Mom’s House, Johnstown
- Next Step Center, Somerset
- Peer Empowerment Network, Johnstown
- Salvation Army, Johnstown and Somerset
- Somerset County Blind Center Inc., Somerset
- Twin Lakes Center/Somerset Country Drug-Free Communities, Somerset
- United Way of the Laurel Highlands Food Pantry Services, Johnstown
- United Way of the Laurel Highlands Community Outreach Services, Johnstown
- Victim Services Inc., Johnstown
- Women’s Help Center Inc., Johnstown
- Greater Johnstown Community YMCA, Johnstown

Those donating to the United Way are, in turn, aiding these agencies that work with the people of our region.

Let’s help the United Way surpass that 2016 goal.