

WHY UNITED WAY?

By: Brittany & Matt Ashby

United Way
of Laramie County



Recently, Matt and I were asked to write a story about why we are involved with United Way of Laramie County. As members of the United Way family we donate, Matt serves on the board, I serve as a Pacesetter volunteer, and both of us have coordinated United Way campaigns in our offices. The short answer for why we are involved with United Way is that it is a good way for us to give back to our community through people and processes we trust. The long answer, however, is a little more detailed.

Matt and I were both raised in strong middle-class families that believed in giving back to the community: Matt's through his church and mine through the very small rural community in which I was raised. Volunteering and giving of resources was never really an option for either of us, it was just something we were expected to do. It was important to our families that we contribute to our community and find ways to help those who need it.

After moving to Cheyenne and setting down roots in this community, we decided to look for ways of continuing the tradition of giving back in our new home. While we both have passions in specific areas, we understand that there are needs in our community that go far beyond our immediate knowledge and beyond our ability to understand what is needed where. Shortly after moving to Cheyenne, I was lucky enough to find a job at a company that shared my value for giving back. The executives at my new job introduced me to the United Way of Laramie County, and Matt and I almost immediately agreed that this would be the ideal organization to help us share time, talent and resources.

Why United Way? Well, for a number of reasons. First, as busy professionals with two children, Matt and I really don't have time to do research about what organizations are really making a difference and how well those organizations are operating. We want any money and time we give to be used wisely and to really make a difference. United Way uses committed community volunteers that take time to thoroughly understand the needs in the community and then to make sure each of the organizations that are funded have strong operations and governance. The organizations are then held accountable for their outcomes and where they spend the money. I appreciate that I can give my money in one spot and it can be distributed to where it is most needed and it can be tracked to be sure it is making a difference.

In addition to spending dollars wisely, United Way also has a strong board of directors and volunteer program, thanks in large part to an outstanding and dedicated team of staff at UWLC. Matt and I are happy to give of our time in serving on the board and as volunteers.

Because we believe so strongly in the mission of the organization and because we see that the organization is run well from both the staff and board level we know that our time is being spent wisely and, again, making the impact we want to make.

As you can imagine, we live life at a frenetic pace. From kids activities to after-hours meetings, we don't have time to worry about the impact our community investments are making. With United Way, we are confident that the vision of 'nobody in need' becomes a reality.