



## Stuff the Bus

Collecting School Supplies from June 17 - July 30

Every year, United Way of Frederick County teams up with local businesses, community partners, and individual community members to gather and distribute school supplies, ensuring that students in our community are well-prepared for the new school year.

Now more than ever, kids in our community need the tools and support to learn. United Way's Stuff the Bus program aims to ensure that every student in Frederick County has the resources they need for a successful academic year.

In 2023, we collected over 250 bins of school supplies and purchased thousands of items with donor contributions. **These supplies were distributed to over 3,000 Frederick County students in ALICE households.** With your help, we are confident we can exceed this number in 2024!

Stuff the Bus would not be possible without the generous support of local businesses that host school supply collection drives. These businesses play a crucial role in our mission, helping us reach more students and providing them with the tools they need to excel in their studies. We need your help to ensure every child in our community has the supplies they need to succeed in school. If you or your business would like to host a collection drive, please fill out the interest form on our website, and a United Way staff member will reach out to you. **Hosting a drive is a fantastic way to engage your team, give back to the community, and support local students.**

This year's school supply drive will take place from June 17 to July 30. On Tuesday, July 30, 2024, several big yellow school buses will visit participating local businesses, allowing their employees to Stuff the Bus with much-needed new supplies for FCPS students. This event is not just about collecting supplies; it's a powerful demonstration of our community's commitment to education and support for our young learners.

Additionally, if you would like to make a donation to Stuff the Bus and help provide students in Frederick County with the school supplies they need, you can do so easily. Every donation, no matter the size, makes a significant difference in the lives of our students. **To make a donation in support of local students, please visit [uwfrederick.org/stuffthebus](http://uwfrederick.org/stuffthebus).**

Special thank you to our Stuff the Bus partners: Frederick County Public Schools, Beyond Shelter, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Brunswick Ecumenical Assistance Committee on Needs (BEACON), Middletown Valley People Helping People (MVPHP), Glade Family Community Services (GVCS), and Catocin Area partners.

Support for this year's Stuff the Bus program is provided by M&T Bank, LSWG, and Homewood at Frederick.

# Mission Measures

Mobilizing the caring power of the community to improve lives

4,582

Donors

2,470

Advocacy Hours

22,134

Volunteer Hours

\*Data from FY24 July 1, 2023 - May 23, 2024

## You're Invited to the 2024 BRAVO! Awards

Join us June 25th to celebrate volunteers, advocates & supporters for their commitment to the ALICE community.

**Date:** June 25, 2024

**Time:** 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

**Location:** The Delaplaine Arts Center, 40 S. Carroll Street

Join us on Tuesday, June 25th for our annual BRAVO! Awards as we recognize members of our community for their exceptional role in serving our ALICE neighbors! BRAVO! is an annual special event hosted by United Way of Frederick County to celebrate volunteers, advocates, and supporters for their commitment to our mission of mobilizing the caring power of our whole community to improve lives.

### 2024 Awardees

#### *Digital Inclusion Advocacy Award*

Frederick County Government, The City of Frederick & DALY Computers

#### *Outstanding Volunteer Award*

Phoenix Mecano

#### *Spirit of Community Award*

Plamondon Companies

#### *ALICE Community Leadership Award*

Shinea Weedon

RSVP to attend the 2024 BRAVO! Awards by June 16th at [tinyurl.com/BRAVO2024](https://tinyurl.com/BRAVO2024)!



# LEADERS UNITED

Thank you for  
your support!

Thank you to our **LEADERS UNITED** donors  
who have contributed or pledged a gift of  
**\$1,000 or more between July 1, 2023 and May  
23, 2024**

Alma Aaron	Stephen Heine
John Abbott	Michael R. Henningsen
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Edmond Gregory	Donor-Advised Fund
Gail & Joyce Guyton Fund	Michael & Marlene Young
Michalann Harthill	Ryan Yu *

\*Denotes Tocqueville Society gift of \$10,000 or more

## VITA Returns Over \$1.1 Million to ALICE Families

This spring, the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program offered FREE tax return preparation for qualified individuals who had income less than \$64,000 in 2023. Each year, we remain committed to helping our ALICE neighbors with low and moderate incomes receive the refunds and tax credits they deserve.

The VITA program has operated for over 50 years! United Way of Frederick County's Prosperity Center is Frederick County's largest VITA site. We are committed to providing 100% FREE tax preparation support so ALICE households can get back their maximum refund and save more of their hard-earned money. VITA is a critical stop along the Pathway to Financial Stability!

**During the 2023 tax season, we successfully completed around 673 tax returns for the Frederick community, resulting in a total of \$1,127,994 in refunds.** This marks an increase from last year, when we completed 612 tax returns, also resulting in a total of approximately \$1.1 million in refunds. With federal tax credits reverting to pre-pandemic levels and stimulus payments gone, a family of four is eligible for nearly \$15,000 less than the last few years. This challenge for ALICE families is highlighted in the 2023 tax season numbers with the increase in returns year-to-year, but stagnant refund total.

In addition to the money returned through tax refunds, many VITA clients indicated that they would have paid a tax preparer to complete their taxes if VITA was not available. **Thanks to the VITA program, these ALICE households were able to save an average of \$306 on this expense, receiving their tax refunds at no cost.**

The VITA program's assistance goes beyond just preparing tax returns. It significantly alleviates the financial burden on ALICE households, enabling them to save the money they would otherwise spend on tax preparation services. This program ensures that these households can receive their full tax refunds without incurring additional costs, helping them to better manage their finances and improve their economic stability.

This program would not be possible without the incredible work of our 12 dedicated volunteers! If you or someone you know would like to join the VITA volunteer team, please reach out to John Romani at [jromani@uwfrederick.org](mailto:jromani@uwfrederick.org). We provide our volunteers with free law training, e-file software training administrative support and a great volunteer experience.

This program was made possible by our sponsors: The City of Frederick, Women's Giving Circle, and CASH Campaign of Maryland.



## Upcoming Events

Stuff the Bus - June 17 - July 30, 2024  
BRAVO! Awards - June 25, 2024  
Leadership Breakfast - September 19, 2024  
Day of Action - October 4, 2024

### UnitedWayFrederick.org

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 @UnitedWayFrederick  @UnitedWayFrederick  @UnitedWayFred  youtube.com/UnitedWayofFrederick

## Who is ALICE?

ALICE are individuals and families in Frederick County who are:

### Asset Limited

Don't have a safety net for emergencies.

### Income Constrained

Income falls short of covering basic necessities like food, housing, healthcare, child care and transportation.

### Employed

Work but cannot afford a basic cost of living.

*Our biennial ALICE Report provides critical data about who cannot afford a basic cost of living in Frederick County.*

**Scan the QR code to help our struggling neighbors continue Moving Forward United!**



**Give Today!**



### SARAH'S PATHWAY TO FINANCIAL STABILITY: PATHWAY TO TRANSPORTATION

As an ALICE household, Sarah faced significant challenges in her pursuit of financial independence.

United Way's Prosperity Center provides hope through the Pathway to Transportation program, which enabled Sarah to purchase a car and secure a better job.

Engaging in free budget coaching and credit counseling equipped Sarah with essential financial management skills, allowing her to navigate her journey towards stability with confidence.

*The impact of these programs has been profound, giving Sarah the tools and support needed to overcome obstacles and advocate for a more equitable community.*

