

United Way of Greater Milwaukee and Northwestern Mutual Foundation Launch Joint Effort to Support Milwaukeeans with Special Needs

MILWAUKEE ([BUSINESS WIRE](#)), July 07, 2011 - [United Way of Greater Milwaukee](#) – our community’s largest investor in education, income and health – and the [Northwestern Mutual Foundation](#) – the largest corporate giver in the state of Wisconsin – are announcing the “Disabilities Solutions Collaborative,” a multi-year strategy to improve access to quality care for individuals with cognitive and physical disabilities in the Milwaukee-area and support resources for their families.

Collaborating with greater-Milwaukee-area nonprofits, the Foundation and United Way will host a series of roundtable events to develop a strategic, communitywide plan including short- and long-term goals.

“Bringing the best community organizations and the state’s largest grant makers to the table enables us to synchronize efforts and deliver maximum results to Milwaukeeans with special needs,” said Nicole Angresano, United Way of Greater Milwaukee vice president. “United Way of Greater Milwaukee is exceedingly grateful for the ongoing commitment of Northwestern Mutual to enhance the health and well being of individuals with disabilities and their families.”

“All Milwaukeeans, especially children with special needs, deserve the chance to achieve their full potential, regardless of circumstances,” said Deanna Tillisch, Northwestern Mutual Foundation vice president. “The number of children with disabilities in southeastern Wisconsin is growing at an alarming rate, and support and resources are needed more than ever to help individuals with disabilities and their families build secure futures. The challenge is growing, but we know the solution is collaboration with best-in-class organizations like United Way and other exceptional agencies and funders.”

Children’s Service Society is among more than 20 early adopters

Among many early advocates is Ellen Anderson, Coordinator of Volunteer Respite Programming for [Children's Service Society of Wisconsin](#), a member of Children's Hospital and Health System, is the state's largest private, not-for-profit provider of child welfare services. Her organization – funded in-part by both United Way and the Northwestern Mutual Foundation grants – provides parents, children with special medical or emotional needs and siblings a much needed break at no cost to the family through its [Respite Care program](#).

“The Disabilities Solutions Collaborative allows providers and the community to surround our families with services now, and as the children start adulthood,” Anderson explained. “Milwaukee is a very giving community with so many resources and the Collaborative is where we say: your families are our families; your children are our children and we all work together for excellent care in our community. What cannot be accomplished?”

The Respite Care program provided 894 children with care in 2010. More than 1,600 people volunteered for seven-hour days at these respite care events.

By the numbers: the impact of disabilities on Milwaukee-area families

Nearly 1 in 10: The number of children born each year in the seven-county region that will develop a disability, according to a study by Milwaukee Center for Independenceⁱ.

\$15 billion: The costs associated with their care throughout their lifetimes, including residential care, medical care, education, and home and vehicle adaptation costs, according to the Milwaukee Center for Independence studyⁱⁱ.

13 percent: Proportion of 16 to 64 year olds in Milwaukee County (76,525 people) have a disability, according to the most recent U.S. Census Bureau dataⁱⁱⁱ.

27.1 percent: Proportion of people with disabilities in Milwaukee County living below the poverty level^{iv}.

One in three: Approximate number of families in the United States including someone with a disability, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.^v

Northwestern Mutual Foundation and United Way of Greater Milwaukee are two of the largest grant makers in the state of Wisconsin. Both organizations have a deep history of supporting community programs for people with disabilities. Every year since United Way of Greater Milwaukee’s inception in 1909, Northwestern Mutual has consistently been a proud partner and a top supporter.

About United Way of Greater Milwaukee

United Way of Greater Milwaukee advances the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. Our focus is on education, income and health – the building blocks for a good quality of life. Learn more about our community-changing strategies and goals at: <http://www.unitedwaymilwaukee.org/Newsroom.htm>.

Join us. Advocate for change at:

<http://twitter.com/UnitedWayMilw>

<http://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayGreaterMilwaukee>

About the Northwestern Mutual Foundation

The mission of the [Northwestern Mutual Foundation](#) – the largest corporate giver in the state of Wisconsin – is to build strong, vibrant communities that serve as a legacy to future generations. The Foundation's giving is designed to create an impact on the communities where the company's employees and financial representatives live and work. In fiscal year 2011, the Foundation contributed more than \$15 million to nonprofit organizations across the country.

ⁱ Milwaukee Center for Independence, *Children with Disabilities: A Hidden Health Care Crisis*, 2008.

ⁱⁱ Milwaukee Center for Independence, *Children with Disabilities: A Hidden Health Care Crisis*, 2008.

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2006.

^{iv} <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/managedltc/grants/pdf/milwcofinalrpt.pdf>

^v U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

<https://news.northwesternmutual.com/news-releases?item=122575>