

Albemarle Area United Way

**2024-2025
Annual Report**

Together We Thrive



From the Director

“Together We Thrive!”



Bill Blake
Executive Director

Dear Neighbors,

Welcome to our new annual report! As we reflect on another year of growth and transformation, we quite literally have transformed our annual report. You're holding a 12-page recap of our journey together over the past 12 months – a journey that celebrates you and your impact on our community and how, together, we are thriving!

Your local United Way achieved yet another record-breaking milestone in fundraising by securing over \$1.2 million in pledged funds. As of June 30, 2025, \$1,200,502 was pledged from thousands of individual donors, corporations, and grants. All of these monies are invested in local programs to improve the lives of our friends and neighbors.

Together, we are making a difference and have created a tremendous amount of positive momentum. Our generous donors understand the notion that giving doesn't subtract from you – it multiplies joy in our world. This was very evident when some of our neighbors were hit by an EF1 tornado on St. Patrick's Day. Hundreds of individuals and organizations quickly rallied around the survivors and helped them get back on their feet.

Our biggest event, Bocce, Beer & Bites, was another tremendous success. Make plans to join us on April 25, 2026, at Waterfront Park. Ping Pong Down Paradise Plunge at H2OBX was again a fun way to support AAUW during the height of summertime fun. Our special jersey night at the Edenton Steamers, complete with fireworks, surpassed last year's donations.

Make plans now to join us on Thursday, September 11th at Seven Sounds for “Cheers to 6 years!” as we celebrate six years of serving our neighbors through our flagship impact program, the Community Care Collaborative.

While we have accomplished much, the mission isn't completed. I encourage you to **LIVE UNITED**. Together, we can solve problems that are too big for any of us to solve alone. When you give – time, talent, treasure – good things happen. Albemarle Area United Way is dedicated to mobilizing people and resources so all can thrive throughout our region. United is the Way!

Yours in Service,
Bill Blake
Executive Director

Staff



Lorri Barrett
Outreach Manager



Alexandra Lekki
CCC Manager



Dr. Nancy Whitfield
Executive Assistant

Philanthropy Award Winners

2024

Our Honorees Andy & Karin Montero



Andy and Karin Montero with
Bill Blake, AAUW Executive Director, &
Tammy Sawyer, AAUW Board Chair

After graduating from Johnson and Wales in 1998, Andy and Karin stayed on at the school for another year as teaching assistants. They were engaged in May of 1999 and decided to make Elizabeth City their home. With big plans of opening their own restaurant in Elizabeth City, they decided to get married first. Luck was on their side because they were able to find the perfect place for both their restaurant and their wedding!

They were married on June 24, 2000, and held their reception in the grassy field that is now Montero's parking lot. Alvin and Peggy McPherson and their family called the house on the property home for more than 30 years, bringing a great deal of history, memories, and great stories. The construction and remodeling process of the McPherson home turned into a **long** process, but the Monteros kept themselves busy during this time with the birth of their first daughter, Emma, working in area restaurants, and planning. Five years later in November of 2005, they opened Montero's Restaurant and began what they call "this insane life that we love."

Through all the ups and downs, they share their pride in the fact that they have survived so long! Over the years, they also added two more beautiful daughters to the family, Claire and Anna. While they describe the journey as including some mistakes, they took those as opportunities to learn and, as a result, created a restaurant family that they love like their own. "It's a crazy life, but it's one that we love and have a passion for!" say the Monteros.



2024 - 2025

From Kickoff to Goal!

Total Pledges
\$1,200,502

In August 2024, AAUW celebrated its Campaign Kickoff at a luncheon with keynote speaker Dr. Jack Bagwell, President of College of The Albemarle. The year's efforts resulted in total pledges of over \$1.2 million!



Bill Blake, AAUW Executive Director, Dr. Jack Bagwell, President, College of The Albemarle, & Tammy Sawyer, AAUW Board Chair



"High Performer Award"
Presented to
Wilma Harris

Total Community Investment
\$781,942



"Spirit of Giving Award"
Presented to
Sentara Health Care



"Spirit of Community Award"
Presented to
Damian Dondero, H2OBX Waterpark



"Partner of the Year Award"
Presented to
Elizabeth Mitchell, Executive Director, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Albemarle

Fundraising Events



2024 Hoffer Flow Golf
Tournament Winners



2025 Ping Pong Down
Paradise Plunge at H2OBX
Waterpark



2025 Bocce, Beer & Bites



2025 Edenton Steamers Night



2024 Philanthropy Gala and
Awards Program Silent Auction

Together We Thrive!

OBX Room In the Inn

Due to generous grants and donations, The OBX Room In the Inn provided **1,643 safe room nights**, served **4,935 meals**, and helped **6 people secure permanent housing**. This season's impact is a testament to the power of community, compassion, and a shared belief that everyone deserves a place to call home.



The Albemarle Alliance for Children and Families assisted **over 200 families**, providing vision screening, car seats, childcare assistance, and parenting/referral programs.

Albemarle Hopeline presented the "Safe Dates" program in **3 schools** with **over 200 participants**. This program reduced teen dating violence and future exploitation through domestic or sexual violence.

The American Red Cross responded to **59 disasters**, helping **72 families**, **180 individuals**, and providing **over \$53,500 in support** to local communities.

Bertie County 4-H is building the next generation of leaders. Donations funded camp scholarships, equipped youth with skills for success, and provided supplies for after school programs for **more than 200 children**.

"Camp Happy," run by the **Bertie County YMCA**, gave **200 children** a fun and safe place to spend the summer where they enjoyed two meals each day and furthered their academic skills.

SOULS Ministry

"Hunger Hides in Plain Sight – Hope Doesn't Have To"

SOULS Ministry has been providing a meal **every evening, 365 days a year, for 17 years**. SOULS is staffed by **over 300 volunteers** and **serves over 10,000 meals** each year for those who enter its door. As a gateway for those in need, SOULS not only provided meals, but assisted in connecting individuals with community resources based on their needs.



Boys and Girls Club of the Albemarle (Elizabeth City & Edenton campuses) provided camp scholarships to **230 children** including two daily meals, field trips, and STEM and other education programs.

Carolina Rebuilding Ministry in Windsor assisted **88 low-income homeowners** with repairs for weather-related issues, indoor plumbing, heating systems, roofs, windows, and installation of safe flooring.

Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters delivered a host of medical and mental health services to **over 183,478 children**. The United Way gift funded desperately needed translation services.

Chowan County 4-H served **500 children**. **Three** attended the NC 4-H Congress at NC State and **several campers** received scholarships to attend Foodie Friends Cooking Class.

33 Partner Agencies Touching Thousands of Lives

Chowan County Smart Start summer program hosted **21 children** in its daily Jump Start “camp” to prepare them for kindergarten, thereby ensuring that all children have a bright beginning. Prenatal and parenting classes were also provided to families.

The Community Care Clinic of Dare formed a grassroots response to the needs of the under/uninsured in the community by providing medical, dental, mental health, and pharmacy services. In a recent nine-month period, it provided systematic oral health exams and dental treatment to **1,235 individuals**.

Currituck Kids provided camp scholarships, free school supplies, essential medical care such as dental and vision screening, and addressed other one-time needs for **over 3,000 local children**.

The Place of Possibilities

“Where Barriers Fall and Futures Rise”

The Place of Possibilities – led by Dr. Laura Early – empowered **over 500 children and strengthened families of at-risk youth through transformative support**. Through a United Way grant, **60 children** experienced the joy of summer camp. The Place of Possibilities’ ten-cent thrift store, food bank partnership, and senior classes reached **hundreds more individuals**, meeting critical needs with compassion and dignity. Its “Holy Cow” van also traveled to provide food, clothing, medical supplies, and spiritual support to the community.



A wish-granting program, **Dream Hunt and Fishing**, provided children who have critical illnesses and disabilities, children of fallen first responders, and “at risk” youth who are interested in hunting, fishing, or exploring the great outdoors a chance to fulfill their dreams. It also provided educational camps and classes to numerous youth from local schools, with **more than 25,000 lives touched** last year.

Elizabeth City Habitat for Humanity built **one complete home** for a family and helped **nine low-income senior homeowners** with repairs they could not afford on their own.

Food Bank of the Albemarle provided **over 80,000 individuals** with healthy food, thereby increasing access to those who experience food insecurity in the area.

Gates County 4-H provided hands-on, youth-led learning experiences that empowered young people to become confident, capable leaders in their communities. Through in-school, after-school, and community-based programming, 4-H offered education opportunities in STEM, agriculture, healthy living, and civic engagement for **more than 1,000 children**.

Just Girls Hearts of The Albemarle turned grants they received into scholarships for **42 girls’ attendance** at the “Phenomenal Me on the Move Summer Program.” This program encompassed activities and experiences that focused on media literacy, building positive relationships, budgeting, and other enrichment topics.

Together We Thrive!

Girl Scout Council of the Colonial Coast assisted **547 girls** with membership, camps, and programs to improve the health and well-being for girls.

Kids First delivered services to **over 200 children** who have experienced sexual assault, including medical evaluations, forensic interviews, three types of evidence-based therapy, and multi-disciplinary team (MDT) review of all cases. It also provided community-wide prevention training, victim/family advocacy, courtroom advocacy, and in-home therapy, all at no charge to the victim families.

Easing financial burdens for local families when tragedy strikes is the primary focus of **Outer Banks Relief Foundation**. It paid household bills, mortgage payments, automobile insurance, and loans with over **130 individuals** helped each year.

Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Raleigh

"Providing Hope for a Better Future"

Thanks to support from foundations, donors, and grants, the Catholic Charities Albemarle Regional Office helped **1,096 people** in 2024 through food and rental/utility assistance programs. Through the unwavering support of Catholic Charities, many in our community have rediscovered the strength to move forward with stability restored and hope renewed.



Pasquotank County 4-H provided educational experiences to youth through 4-H clubs, special interest clubs, summer camp, and school enrichment programs. Last year **over 2,500 youth** attended.

Donations through **Perquimans County 4-H** helped to equip **over 2,800 children** with supplies and scholarships for interactive camps, clubs, and learning opportunities.

Joseph Pilmoor Church Food Pantry, housed at Pilmoor Memorial United Methodist Church, provided **over 2,028 individuals** with much-needed food.

Scouting America – East Carolina Council, a positive youth development program, worked with local community service organizations (Boys & Girls clubs, churches, and civic groups) to provide a curriculum preparing approximately **75 boys and girls** for adulthood.

SPCA of Northeastern NC provided loving care for **1,719 animals** (1,214 cats and 505 dogs) using funds from the United Way for medical care, spay and neuter services, and vital vaccinations.

Scouting America – Tidewater Council provided extracurricular youth development programs for **over 500 boys and girls** ages 5-20 and their families. Its mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes.

Over 4,000 registered athletes (the largest number in the country) participated in sporting activities due to the support of **Special Olympics, NC**.

YMCAs of the Albemarle, Currituck, and Outer Banks furnished scholarships for educational and enjoyable summer day camps for **299 low income and foster care youth** in the region.

Community Care Collaborative



"Patty"



"Patty" experienced a stroke, which made it difficult to cover regular expenses and everyday necessities in addition to the medical bills. Facing such a situation, "Patty" was able to afford half of her February rent, but fell short on the remainder, putting her at risk of eviction through no fault of her own. CCC partnered with "Patty" to cover the remaining past due rent. She is now back to work and able to pay her full rent amount going forward.

"Jason"



A single parent, "Jason" must cover all household expenses alone, including those for his child. After paying the security deposit and first month's rent to move into a new home, he fell behind on the next month's rent due to the unrealistic upfront costs required to secure suitable housing. CCC assisted with the rent payment to allow "Jason" and his child to remain in their new home.

"George"



With the long, cold weather this winter, many families faced extremely high electric bills. "George" paid his January bill, which was over \$800; however, when February's bill arrived, it was in excess of \$600 – more than his budget could handle. He turned to CCC for help. CCC paid the bill, easing "George's" fear of losing power for his family home and allowing his family to remain comfortable and warm knowing there are brighter days ahead.



CCC Advisory Committee & Volunteers (L to R):
Lauren Spruill, Alexandra Lekki, Katherine Rogers, Bill Blake, Lorri Barrett, Pastor Jason Wise, Heather Raynor, Sylvia Holley. Not pictured: Tony Coley, Marjorie Hudyma, Sarah Lane, Deidre Moore, Wendy Overton, Toni Sawyer, Marsha Vanture, Holly White, & Fred Womble

\$213,426.61 Support Provided

436 Cases Serving 1,001 Individuals

Types of Assistance

Utilities	218
Rent/Mortgage	167
Gas Vouchers	35
Other	16

Serving Pasquotank,
Perquimans, Camden, &
Gates Counties

Who We Are

Leadership Donors



The **Keel Club** is comprised of 91 donors who have provided support of \$1,000 or more annually.



The **Tocqueville Society** is comprised of 9 donors who have provided support of \$10,000 or more annually.

Volunteers

2024 Day of Caring

The Day of Caring involved volunteer efforts of **84 people** who came out to paint, organize, clean, and make needed repairs for **13 local non-profit organizations**.



2024-2025 Board of Directors

Tammy Sawyer, Board Chair,
College of the Albemarle

Denise Brothers, Elizabeth City GMC
Colleen Brown-McKinley, Pasquotank County
Chief Chris Carver, City of Elizabeth City
Damian Dondero, H2OBX Waterpark
Becky Elliott, Community Volunteer
Brian Harvill, ECU Health
Jamie Koch, OBX YMCA
CDR Heidi Koski, USCG
Arthur Manigault, Riverside UMC
Annalisa Morgan, Truist
Dr. Keith Parker, ECPPS
Heidi Prentiss, Community Volunteer

Bobby Ramage, Publix Supermarkets
Tyler Russell, North Carolina Farm
Bureau
Bryan Spence, RW Towne Realty
Lauren Spruill, Duke Energy
Jesse Stallings, Albemarle Telecom
Ray Turner, Dixie 105.7 & Shark Radio,
CURB Rides
Clark Twiddy, Twiddy & Company
Melissa Verkuilen, TSO Armor & Training
Deborah White, Sentara
Holly White, Atlantic Union Bank

Giving Partners

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United is the way to create
the future we want for our
region...

Throughout our history, our ability to
adapt to the evolving needs and
challenges of the moment has been
instrumental to our success.

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