



## 2018 Best of Award Winners

Each year, United Way recognizes outstanding local companies/organizations for their outstanding participation in the United Way Campaign and throughout the year. The Best of Awards showcases companies, employees and retirees who have demonstrated a commitment to enriching lives in the community.

Seven categories make up the Best of Awards including Best Year Round Partnership, Best Community Engagement, Best Employee Engagement, Best Campaign Innovation, Best Leadership Involvement, and Special Recognition. 2018-2019 Winners are listed below:

### **Marsha Green, Essentia Health – Best Leadership Involvement**

The Best Leadership Award applauds organization leaders for demonstrating their commitment to the community through their involvement, leadership, and contributions to United Way, and we gladly present this award to Essentia Health's Administrator and United Way Board Member, Marsha Green.

This year's winner is no stranger to United Way's work. A longtime donor and campaign champion at her workplace, she has consistently demonstrated dedication, leadership, and commitment to the United Way and her community. Whether collecting donations for events like our annual Hygiene Drive to volunteering at Day of Action or encouraging participation of others in United Way activities, she has always been a reliable source.

### **Grand Itasca – Best Campaign Innovation**

The Best Campaign Innovation Award recognizes outstanding achievement through innovation, which was awarded to Grand Itasca Clinic & Hospital.

This year's winner has been a strong supporter of United Way since the beginning and in recent years gained momentum. To build on their success they added a couple new elements to their proven strategies, they jumped on the innovation bandwagon by being the first company to pilot our new e-pledge platform. They also created an internal Facebook page to keep staff and providers informed throughout the campaign. The tools gave their staff a quicker and easier option for pledging online and resulted in increased participation and support for United Way.

### **Deerwood Bank – Best Community Engagement**

The Best Community Engagement Award recognizes Deerwood Bank for outstanding achievement in engagement and involvement with United Way.

We've recognized this company as an outstanding partner in 2018 for being an ambassador for United Way as well as many other organizations. They have invested resources -- both financially and through their employee volunteer program -- to United Way projects and initiatives, including Day of Action, Lumberjack Mile & 5K, and this past week-ends Shamrock'n Brunch. They also have a representative on the 2019 Community Investment Panel.

### **Minnesota Diversified Industries – Best Employee Engagement**

The Best Employee Engagement honors Minnesota Diversified Industries for their outstanding achievement in employee education, engagement, and involvement with United Way.

Spin the wheel. Themed dress-up days. Frosted cupcakes. Prize Vault. Pie in the face. These are just a few of the tactics that this company uses to engage their employees in making a difference in their community and raising funds for United Way. Thanks in large part to the company's leadership, their charitable activities don't stop there. Company employees serve as allocations volunteers, as leaders on United Way's Board of Directors, as pancake grill masters, and as Day of Action taskmasters.

### **Klockow Brewing Company – Best Year Round Partnership**

The Best Year Round Partnership Award is presented to Klockow Brewing Company for their outstanding support of United Way and their year-round commitment to the community.

Even before their doors officially opened, a partnership with United Way was brewing. Over the past 12 months, they have countlessly demonstrated their commitment and passion for United Way as well as the community as a whole. From Meet the Brewer networking events to hosting the Day of Action post party and packing event, to helping raise funds through the Shamrock'n Brunch, to volunteering for issues that they care about, like hunger and homelessness.

### **Blandin Foundation – Special Recognition**

Blandin Foundation's approach is rooted in the things that help communities thrive: creating and supporting a vibrant community, investing in our leaders, and expanding the opportunities. In 2018, the foundation contributed approx. \$56,600 annually through employee pledges, trustee matching program, and grant support.

### **Minnesota Power – Special Recognition**

Minnesota Power's employees and retirees have helped transform lives across the region through United Way. In 2018, combined United Way contributions topped over \$95,000. This gift includes payroll deductions, special fundraisers, sponsorships, and a \$58,500 contribution from the Minnesota Power Foundation.

In addition to financial contributions, employees volunteer at United Way agencies, serve on non-profit boards, and give of their time and talent throughout the year.