

These rewarding experiences are convenient ways for organizations and groups to make a difference in the lives of children and families in need any time of year. Groups can run collection drives for specific items and then meet to assemble the items into bags. Drives can range in size, take place at the location of your choice, and revolve around your schedule. All are great activities for corporate teams, community, or school groups.

Hygiene Drive

We have approximately 4,500 homeless students in the Treasure Valley. These kids are still going to school, but they do not have stable housing at night. They are often couch surfing, sleeping in cars, or sharing an apartment with multiple families. Can you imagine being in high school and not having access to a shower, washer and dryer, or deodorant? Help kids feel confident and comfortable when they go to school by running a hygiene drive.

List of urgent hygiene needs (full size)

- Shampoo
- Conditioner
- Soap or body wash
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Floss
- Feminine Hygiene Supplies
- Razor
- Deodorant
- Brushes
- Combs
- Laundry Detergent

Snack Packs or Basic Needs Drive

Over 85,000 households struggle financially in the Treasure Valley. Many of these people are families with parents working two or three jobs. Unfortunately, due to low wages and high housing costs, these folks are not able to meet their basic needs. United Way's Basic Needs Pantry is designed to fill the resource gap many families experience with items like shelf-stable foods, children's socks, and underpants. We've seen a huge rise in the need for snack packs! A snack pack is a re-sealable bag that can hold 5-6 snacks that are easy to just "grab and go"; things like granola bars, pop-top soup, tuna packets, nuts, applesauce pouches, and dried fruit. We rely solely on donations from the community to stock the pantry, so help families with basic needs by running a snack pack or basic needs drive!

Shoe Drive

Every October, we hear from our school partners that kids are showing up to school in flip-flops because their families can't afford proper cold weather footwear. Throughout the year, kids will wear shoes with holes and no soles. Host a shoe drive to ensure these kiddos have comfortable and proper footwear through all the seasons.

School Supplies Drive

In August, we see a huge need from our area schools for supplies. Many teachers purchase items for their students out of their own pockets. It's our hope to help every student finds success in the classroom without asking teachers to dip into their own bank accounts. Host a school supplies drive to give these kids the start they need for a successful school year!

Letter Writing (homeless students)

We like to distribute encouraging notes to students experiencing homelessness. We supply hygiene items or grab-and-go snack packs and support a variety of programs to help these students get out of poverty and succeed. Make a student's day with a note that lets them know their community cares!

Be an Advocate!

United Way fights for kids and families in a variety of ways, one of which is advocating for them at the local and state levels. Take a few minutes to learn about a community issue from United Way's 2017 Community Assessment and the possible solutions listed in the comprehensive report. Record yourself advocating for the affected population and a proposed solution and post to your social media accounts to spread the word! Don't forget to tag #UWTV and #LiveUnited.