

YOUNG LEADERS UNITED

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



UNITED WAY
Southeastern
Connecticut

VOL.
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Welcome to the first edition of the Young Leaders United newsletter, where we celebrate community impact and inspire future action.



June 2025 MEAL PACKING EVENT

VOLUNTEER UPDATES

Young Leaders United had a fun, high-energy year of service in 2025, contributing over 170 volunteer hours across nine activities. Members stayed engaged all year, supporting the community in meaningful ways.

Highlights from the year included:

- Collecting 617 cans during Soup-er Bowl III canned soup drive
- Sorting food (twice!) at the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center in New London
- Volunteering at the East Lyme Giving Garden during a Quarterly Day of Caring

The biggest highlight came in June, when 25 volunteers packed 18,000 macaroni and cheese meals for the Gemma E. Moran United Way/Labor Food Center. It was a wonderful morning filled with teamwork, enthusiasm, and real impact.

We wrapped up the year by helping Student United Way polish their elevator pitches, then by transforming the Food Center into a festive winter wonderland for the annual Tommy Toy program distribution.

Overall, Young Leaders continue to enjoy getting involved and giving back.

JANUARY 2026

Young Leaders United is an affinity group for people aged 21-40 who support United Way of Southeastern Connecticut through volunteering and fundraising.

CHAIR MESSAGE:

We're thrilled to have you as part of this network of emerging leaders supporting United Way of Southeastern Connecticut through volunteerism, fundraising, and advocacy. This newsletter is designed to keep you connected and inspired. Thank you for your time, resources, and dedication where together, we make a lasting impact in our community.

With gratitude,
Aaron Austin
Steering Committee Chair

FUNDRAISING UPDATES

This group truly shines at creating fundraisers that bring our community together in support of United Way, making meaningful impact across multiple areas.

Since the fiscal year began on July 1, the group has launched several fundraisers. Highlights include:

- Annual Cuts for Kids event at Adrian Vega Hair Co. donated \$1 per August haircut
- Celebrity Bartender at A.T.Y. Bar & Bonbons Mystic, featuring Fox61 News' Rachel Piscitelli and Bridget Bjorlo.
- Brewnited Way at Tox Brewing
- Little Caesar's Pizza Kit Fundraiser

Through these events Young Leaders were able to support United Way's Youth Opportunity and Financial Security Impact Areas.

Our biggest event was the sold-out Adam Sandler ticket fundraiser which raised \$7,874 for Project Warm-up, a United Way Program that provides emergency heating assistance for families experiencing a short-term crisis. Many thanks to the Mohegan Tribe's generous Earth Suite donation to make this fundraiser such a success!

Moving forward to 2026, we are committed to building on this momentum to support the community.



Young Leaders sorted through frozen meat at the Food Center this fall.



Ashley and Taylor greeted guests at ticket table for Adam Sandler show in September



Aaron and Renee present United Way with a check for Project Warm-up

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: AARON AUSTIN

Aaron Austin, Chair of Young Leaders United, is the Publicist at Mohegan Sun and has been involved with the group since October 2023.

Aaron was introduced to the organization by fellow member, coworker and longtime friend, Lauren Willard. He says getting involved is simple: you have to want to get involved, and the rest takes care of itself.

Aaron found his passion to lead the group early, when a stranger thanked him during a public-facing volunteer event, giving him his "why."

One of his proudest moments on the Steering Committee was helping plan the Adam Sandler fundraiser, which sold out all 75 tickets for the first time.

Looking ahead, Aaron hopes to grow the YLU membership, increase participation, and help United Way continue expanding its vast impact.

Aaron believes United is the Way to support others in the community that we all call home.

-by Julia Florence

Did you make a New Year's Resolution?

YES! New Year, New Me!

Yes, I give it a month, two max.

Yes, but I already broke it.

No, I'm already amazing!

Submit

Your Canva profile name won't be shared

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Soup-er Bowl IV - Young Leaders' Annual Canned Soup Drive - January 26-February 9 - watch your email for more information.

VOLUNTEER WITH UNITED WAY:

CLICK HERE to see the current volunteer opportunities, including Mobile Food Pantry volunteers, allocations volunteers and the January 14 Day of Caring at Madonna Place in Norwich.



JOIN YLU FACEBOOK GROUP TO KEEP UP TO DATE!