

YOUNG LEADERS UNITED

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



UNITED WAY
Southeastern
Connecticut

VOL.
3

JULY 2026

Young Leaders United is a network of people aged 21-40 in New London County who support United Way of Southeastern Connecticut's mission through fundraising, volunteering, and community leadership.

CHAIR MESSAGE:

We're excited to share another strong quarter with you! Thanks to your generosity and engagement, we exceeded our fundraising goal and brought our community together through events like Celebrity Bartender Night, Disney Trivia, and Day of Caring. Your continued support and passion make all the difference as we continue to create a lasting impact across Southeastern Connecticut.

With gratitude,
Aaron Austin
Steering Committee Chair



VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT: SPRING 2026



Quarterly Day of Caring



2,000 Onions Planted



Twelve Farm Beds Tended

On April 25, **32 volunteers** joined us at **Coogan Farm** to support the **Giving Garden**. The group brought **incredible energy and teamwork** to a **hands-on day** encompassing weeding, planting, fertilizing, and converting soil into sustainability, helping cultivate community harvest from the roots up.

A special thank-you to the **Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center** for hosting, **Wondr Nation** for sponsoring, and local radio station **WBMW/106.5** for keeping spirits high with music throughout the day!





How Did You Hear About Young Leaders?

Family/Friend

Colleague

United Way Staff

Social Media/Website

Your Canva profile name won't be shared

KEEP UP WITH ALL THINGS YOUNG LEADERS:



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

VIEW UWSECT'S 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: MEET LAUREN

Lauren Willard-Fergusen is the **Director of Special Events at Mohegan Sun**, a **former Co-Chair** of Young Leaders United, and has been an active member of the affinity group since **2017**.

She brings strong leadership experience and a consistently positive attitude to the Steering Committee, helping **foster collaboration, spark new ideas, and strengthen connections** among members.

Lauren believes that **United is the Way** because it brings people together around a **shared goal of improving their community**, proving that **when like-minded individuals come together, they can achieve meaningful results**.

She originally joined Young Leaders out of curiosity, inspired by her President and General Manager's involvement. Already passionate about volunteering, she was drawn to the group's **structure, consistency, and opportunities** to connect with new people.

One of her favorite experiences was the first **meal-packing event**, which combined hands-on service with **education around nutrition and food insecurity**. Volunteers packed more than **18,000** servings of mac and cheese for Southeastern Connecticut.

This year, Lauren aims to continue supporting the team's initiatives while **maintaining the flexibility that makes the group so unique** – allowing members to balance their professional, personal, and philanthropic commitments **in a way that works best for them**.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE

Cheers to our accomplishments!

FY Fundraising Goal

15,000

Fundraised To-Date

16,245

108%
of Our
Goal!



We earned \$1,440 towards the 2026 Tommy Toy Program from the Sun Tequila Tasting. PLUS, we raised over \$400 at the Tox Brewnited Way through a ticketed prize giveaway fundraiser.



UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Young Leaders United Food Sort at Food Center** (7/20, 5:30 P.M. to 7 P.M)
- **United Way Christmas in July Events** - a month's worth of events to support Tommy Toy.
- **Young Leaders United Softball Tournament** (8/23 @ 8:30 A.M.; Washington Park, Groton) Open signups for co-ed/women's teams; various sponsorships available. **Proceeds support Project Warmup.**
- **Cuts for Kids** (Month of August; Adrian Vega Hair Co., New London) a portion of every haircut will supports **Youth Opportunity Impact Area** to help young people realize their full potential. **CLICK HERE** for **Mobile Food Pantry Volunteer Sign-Up**
Email **Elke** for specific questions!

