



Working in a united way

October 30, 2018

Mary Beth Maassen, who became executive director of United Way of Northern New Mexico (UWNNM) in March of this year, is clear about the role the organization plays in the region.

“We work in a united way to improve the lives of children and families through service and collaboration in Rio Arriba and Los Alamos counties,” she says.

As a part of United Way Worldwide, an organization engaged in nearly 1,800 communities across more than 40 countries and territories worldwide, UWNNM focuses on creating and supporting community-based and community-led solutions that strengthen education, financial stability and health: the cornerstones of a good quality of life.

Through its Community Action Fund, UWNNM focuses on helping nonprofits in the region raise funds for their programs that address the most serious problems facing our local community.

Their work is supported in part by the Laboratory’s employee giving campaign.

“The generosity of the Laboratory and its employees is crucial as we come together to foster collaboration, ensure inclusivity, and honor the culture and traditions of the region we serve,” Maassen says.

UWNNM supports nonprofits working to:

Help families avoid financial disaster. [Self-Help](#) provided 1,060 people with financial aid to people who were hit the kinds of emergencies that lead to financial disaster. The money kept the lights and heat on, and a kept a roof overhead.

Keep kids safe. Last year [CASA](#) (Court Appointed Social Advocates) helped 171 abused and neglected children, many under the age of five. They speak up for their interests in court, keep an eye on them, get to know them and make sure they are safe. There are currently 50 children on the waiting list who need someone who will watch out for their best interests.

Help kids learn. [The Embudo Valley Tutoring Association](#) provided 1,500 hours of tutoring to 80 students in Rio Arriba and the surrounding areas last year. 90% of the students came from low income families and 60% had a learning disability.

Help cancer patients receive life-saving treatment. The [Cancer Foundation for New Mexico](#) makes sure that every patient has access to treatment. They reimburse patients for the miles they drive, provide overnight lodging, and provide gift cards so cancer patients and their families continue to have nutritious food to eat.

Give kids and teens a place to go after school. [Moving Arts Española](#) gives at-risk kids the opportunity to experience visual and performing arts in a nurturing environment. The Española Teen Center and the Los Alamos Teen Center provide a safe place for teens to go for recreational activities, mentoring, tutoring, sports and a variety of skill building programs.

Feed the hungry. Hunger is a growing crisis in New Mexico, with the [Food Depot](#) estimating that one in every four children experience hunger and food insecurity. In 2017, the Food Depot distributed 6.5 million pounds of food to people in need: children, seniors, grandparents raising grandchildren, people who often must choose between buying food, or paying utility bills, or buying medicine.

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