

WOMEN UNITED LEADS THE CHARGE TO IMPROVE CHILDREN'S LIVES.

We raise our voices to represent our community's children. We roll up our sleeves to give our youngest learners the best start. We leave a legacy of change that makes central Iowa better for everyone.

Women United—formerly known as Women's Leadership Connection—is for any woman who believes that all children deserve quality early care and learning opportunities from birth. Each year, we invest more than \$1.6 million in research-based strategies and programs that create a lasting impact on the next generation.

"More people in this world should have the opportunity to drop their kids off and pick them up at the end of the day and know that they will be safe, cared for, and have a great day. By lifting up all families, we are enhancing the experiences of our own children as well."

Jess McCulloh
Women United member
(pictured on cover)

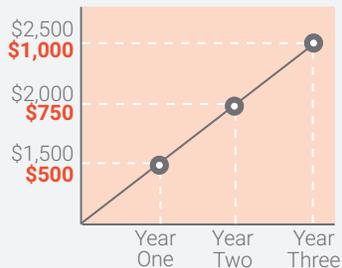
JOIN WOMEN UNITED

Nothing is more important to our community than ensuring that every young person is on a path to success from the start. Your investment directly impacts central Iowa students for their entire lives. As a Women United member, you can also enjoy these benefits:

- See firsthand how your investment improves young children's lives.
- Share your talents on committees and by volunteering.
- Network with like-minded women and community leaders.
- Be part of an internationally recognized group of dedicated female philanthropists.
- Gain new business and career opportunities by demonstrating community leadership.
- Benefit from charitable giving tax savings.

STEP-UP PROGRAM

Enjoy the benefits of Women United membership by joining a three-year step-up program. Step-up is also available for Lead Woman membership (\$1,500/\$2,000/\$2,500) and Women of Tocqueville (\$5,000/\$7,500/\$10,000).



FOR MORE INFORMATION

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WE ARE WOMEN UNITED

We are a diverse, vibrant group bound together by the mission to improve the future of our youngest central Iowans.

GIVE

Each member gives \$1,000 or more annually to invest in 17 early learning centers and 200 in-home care providers. Our resources ensure that children have a safe and enriching environment in which to learn and receive wraparound services that improve their health, well-being, and development. We also support teachers and staff in their professional growth and in earning a living wage.

ADVOCATE

Members give their voices and their time to engage elected leaders around issues that improve children's health and development. We fight for affordable, quality child care for families of all income levels, allowing parents to advance in their careers. We mobilize our community to help all children read proficiently by third grade through United Way's READ to SUCCEED campaign.

VOLUNTEER

Members can get involved in many hands-on activities, including reading with kids in the critical year before kindergarten, building literacy kits to improve students' reading skills, and donating books and supplies for backpacks.

DID YOU KNOW?

In central Iowa, 30 percent of kindergarteners start school without the skills needed to learn (Iowa Dept. of Education).

Most children who start behind, stay behind in school, leading to an increase in dropout rates, especially among low-income and minority students (America's Early Childhood).

OUR IMPACT

Women United members leave their fingerprints on a legacy of change that benefits a generation. Here is what we have accomplished in the past year:

3,321 children ages 0-5 participated in high-quality early literacy programs funded by Women United.

1,305 children had a developmental screening to assess age-appropriate skills and identify developmental delays, with 11 percent receiving additional resources to improve school readiness.

161 preschool children at Women United-supported centers partnered with a mentor to develop reading skills through Book Buddy. 74 percent of the children showed growth in literacy.

72 percent of central Iowa kindergarteners were proficient in literacy skills in fall 2016, up 16 percent from two years before.

WE SUPPORT FAMILIES

Cecelia Fink wants to be the parent her son, Ezequiel, age 1, looks up to.

Growing up, Cecelia says her mother did drugs and was mean to her and her brothers. She encouraged Cecelia to fight, drink, and do drugs at a young age. Eventually, Cecelia turned to foster care, so she could get her life on track. She continued to make mistakes, and eventually, dropped out of high school.

Then she became pregnant with Ezequiel. She decided to return to school not just for her future, but also to be a model for her son. Scavo's Teddy Bear Town child care, funded by Women

United, made it possible for her to start taking classes one month after her son was born. Six months later, she'd earned her diploma.

"Who my mom was when I was with her made me realize that I don't want to be like that with my son," Cecelia says. "I'm not going to be like that."

Not only did Teddy Bear Town provide quality child care that made Cecelia feel safe leaving him in his first months of development, but the center also helped Cecelia make sure he was on track developmentally and had support. She took parenting classes before he was born, and she still returns to the center to ask questions.

"I'm young so I don't really know what kids are supposed to do, and they made sure he's on track," she says.



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