

*For Immediate Release: **March 17, 2022***

400 Volunteers to Assemble 4,000 “Shine Bright” Boxes for Local Students

More than 400 community members will come together next Wednesday and Thursday, March 23 and 24, to brighten local students’ days by assembling 4,000 “Shine Bright” boxes at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs.

Currently, thousands of students across the metro are lacking essential hygiene items like soap, shampoo, conditioner, clean clothes and dental products – impacting their health, academics and confidence. Each “Shine Bright” box contains the full-sized hygiene items these students need to feel good and succeed in the classroom and in life.

“Shine Bright” is part of United Way’s Good on the Go – Care Kits for Kids, a fundraiser in partnership with Omaha and Council Bluffs Public Schools. With the community’s support, “Shine Bright” partners will distribute approximately 4,000 “Shine Bright” boxes to Kindergarten, sixth- and ninth-grade students in need across both school districts.

“Twenty percent of households in Nebraska and Iowa have reported struggling to pay regular household expenses,” said Matt Wallen, SVP of Community Impact and Analytics at United Way of the Midlands. “That means many families are having to make tough choices with their finances, leaving them without hygiene products like soap or dental products. We are proud to partner with Omaha and Council Bluffs Public Schools to make sure students have the items they need to regain their confidence and shine bright in school.”

“Shine Bright” is proudly supported by presenting sponsor, Women United, and community sponsors, Baker’s, Bridges Trust, CHI Health, Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce, Firefighters on the Move, Lozier, Mariner Wealth Advisors, Medica, Mid-America Center, Nebraska Total Care, Turner Construction, Veridian Credit Union and Werner Enterprises.

Members of the media are invited to the “Shine Bright” box assembly event at the Mid-America Center on March 23 and 24. On the 24th, beginning at 9:30 a.m. Dr. Cheryl Logan, Superintendent of Omaha Public Schools, will be available between 9:30 – 9:45 a.m. and Shawna Forsberg, President and CEO of United Way of the Midlands, will be available from 9:45 – 10:00 a.m. for interviews.

About United Way of the Midlands

For the past 99 years, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) has used its community-wide perspective to identify local needs that are going unseen or unmet – and how it can partner with corporate, government organizations, nonprofits and donors to tackle them. Today, UWM remains committed to uniting our community’s caring spirit to build a stronger tomorrow. It invests donor dollars in more than 100 local nonprofit programs that, together, form a circle of support around our community. These programs are addressing pressing social and economic disparities and providing the essentials families need to thrive, such as healthy food, a safe place to go after school and job support.

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