

*For Immediate Release: **March 3, 2022***

UWM Emerging Leaders to “Build the Shelves” for Local Students

To encourage reading at home and give children the opportunity to create their own home library, members of the United Way of the Midlands (UWM) Emerging Leaders group – along with volunteers from HDR – will be building bookshelves for and gifting books to students at Lothrop Magnet Center (3300 N. 22nd St.) on Thursday, March 10, 2022, from 2:15 – 3:25 p.m.

Funded by a grant from the HDR Foundation, the “Build the Shelves” event will give students the opportunity to select their own books and decorate the bookshelves the volunteers will be building for them. “These bookshelves will help inspire curiosity, imagination and aspiration by giving young students a permanent place in their lives for reading,” said Rex Fisher, chair of the HDR Foundation Board of Directors. “We frequently find ourselves in awe with the passion our young professionals have to volunteer for meaningful causes, and our YP Action Grant program is designed to support their leadership through projects like this.”

In addition to building the bookshelves and distributing books, members of the Emerging Leaders group will also read with students at the school. UWM’s Emerging Leaders are a dynamic group of young professionals who are all about making connections with a purpose. They participate in events and volunteer projects to create positive change in the community.

“Every child deserves the chance to fall in love with reading, but the reality is that many students from low-income families have fewer or no books to read at home,” said Jessica Heidebrecht, Emerging Leaders Chair. “Through this event, we’re giving children the opportunity to select and love their own books -- enabling them to bring home the culture of literacy being modeled at school, and to make reading a family practice.”

We hope you’ll save the date and join us for this meaningful outreach event! For additional information about UWM’s Emerging Leaders, visit unitedwaymidlands.org/emerging-leaders.

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 food, a safe place to go after school, and job support.

About the HDR Foundation

The HDR Foundation provides grants to qualified organizations that align with HDR’s areas of expertise: education, healthy communities and environmental stewardship. As an employee-funded and employee-driven foundation, preference is given to organizations located in communities in which HDR employees live and work, and those with strong employee involvement. Since its inception, the HDR Foundation has provided more than \$4 million in grants to over 200 organizations. You can learn more at hdrinc.com/foundation.