

For Immediate Release
December 9, 2024

Contact: Ashley Johnson
812.421.7481
ajohnson@unitedwayswi.org

United Way of Southwestern Indiana Awards Thriving Next Gen Grants

\$1.68 million distributed to eight nonprofits improving school engagement for high-need students

Evansville, IN – United Way of Southwestern Indiana (UWSWI) today announced distribution of \$1,681,005 in grant funds as part of its Thriving Next Gen Pathways to Potential initiative.

The goal of this Pathway is to support initiatives which help students engage in their education. School engagement focuses on building healthy relationships at school, practicing productive learning habits, and promoting positive attitudes about the value of education towards students' futures. While it is tempting for schools and youth programs to aim exclusively at promoting academic achievement in the short-term, extensive research and consultation with local school districts confirmed prioritizing school engagement leads to academic and life success in the long term. This long-view approach to educational initiatives is essential for creating thriving schools and students, particularly in under resourced communities.

Eight local, nonprofit organizations were selected to receive grant funding because they demonstrated the ability to work collaboratively with schools to foster strong school engagement in K-12 students.

Grant Recipients

- **Southern Indiana Mentoring Academy (SIMA 100) - \$267,400**

This program provides trained mentors in the classrooms of partner schools to support teachers, assist with student behavior management, improve attitudes toward school, increase academic performance, and build relationships with students. Recruiting mentors who are People of Color is a priority. TNG grant funding will expand the in-classroom presence of mentors at 3 EVSC schools and begin the process of adding mentors to all EVSC elementary and middle schools.

- **Immigrant Welcome and Resource Center - \$255,080.70**

This newly formed nonprofit organization will partner with EVSC and other local organizations to provide a variety of services to immigrant and English Language Learner students. Services include mentoring, tutoring, after-school programming, workforce readiness coaching, leadership workshops, and summer programs.

- **Koch Family Children's Museum of Evansville - \$236,480.30**

The museum will partner with Glenwood Leadership Academy to execute three programs designed to foster critical thinking and development – the Pre-K Early Learning Academy,

focused field trips for grades K-5, and Afterschool Enrichment for grades 3-5 focused on Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math (S.T.E.A.M.) and Entrepreneurship.

- **The Potters Wheel - \$250,000**
Grant funding from TNG supports cradle-to-career social and educational interventions at Bosse High School and its feeder schools. This includes a kindergarten readiness program, summer and afterschool programming, and places a staff member inside the school to provide additional student support.
- **Southern Indiana Resource Solutions, Inc. (SIRS) - \$135,424**
Grant funds will support a full-time resource navigator for Spencer County middle and high school students with disabilities. The program offers job exploration counseling, work-based learning, counseling on postsecondary opportunities, workplace readiness training, and instruction in self-advocacy as well as helps families access public disability resources.
- **YWCA – Live Y’ers Program - \$200,000**
The Live Y’ers program provides afterschool learning and activities for girls at Glenwood Leadership Academy and Lodge Community School in grades 3-8 and mentoring opportunities beginning in grade 6. Per the school’s request, Live Y’ers added mentoring services for boys in grades 6-8 at Glenwood Leadership Academy in 2023.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of SWI - \$186,620**
This program will train high school students to serve as mentors to middle school students. Initial programming will take place at Helfrich Park STEM Academy and Cedar Hall Community School. BBBG staff will recruit and enroll mentors, communicate with school administrators, and provide quality support to all mentors, mentees, and their families.
- **Dream Center Evansville - \$150,000**
Funding enables Student Success Coaches at Delaware Elementary, North Junior, and North Senior High School to partner with students, teachers, parents, and Dream Center staff to understand a student’s academic needs and deliver on interventions to promote positive and sustainable growth in the school environment and out of school time.

All TNG grant proposals were evaluated by United Way’s Thriving Next Gen Expert Taskforce. Taskforce members were selected for their professional expertise related to the grant topic. The team consisted of retired elementary, middle, and high school teachers, a school principal, a special education teacher, and an English as a Second Language teaching specialist.

This is the second round of funding for the youth-focused pathway. Three organizations received a total of \$468,000 in 2022. United Way of Southwestern Indiana’s Pathway Grants are designed to address root causes of poverty and are made possible through the generous donations of individuals and businesses in our community. To support this work, please visit unitedwayswi.org/give.

###

United Way envisions communities where all individuals and families have the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The nonprofit organization serves at the center of a network of partners and programs who are working to improve the upward mobility of low-income and disadvantaged individuals and families in Vanderburgh, Warrick, and Spencer Counties. To learn more about United Way’s work, visit unitedwayswi.org.