

# Accounting for people: Why RKL gives back to the United Way

by OUR YORK MEDIA

Twenty-plus years ago Keith Eldredge sat in a meeting in Hanover one evening, his mind drifting for a moment to his two young daughters tucked in tight at home. The meeting, Keith recalls, addressed why the state would only fund one women's shelter per county and what to do about it.

At the time, frightened women with nowhere else to go would stay on the streets, unable to reach the state-funded shelter in York.

United Way of York County helped solved the problem.

Partnering with the local YWCA and others in the community, United Way worked to open Safe Home in Hanover, creating a haven for women in crisis.

Keith, a partner with accounting and business consulting firm RKL, looks back on that success as a clear illustration of United Way's positive impact on the community, and of why he volunteers.

Two decades later, he leads the annual United Way campaign at RKL's York office each year, helping to foster a work environment focused on community involvement. And those two little girls? They're grown and gone — off doing volunteer work of their own now and making Dad proud.

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*"That's what United Way is about for me — people helping one another. It's so much more than just the money."* Keith Eldredge

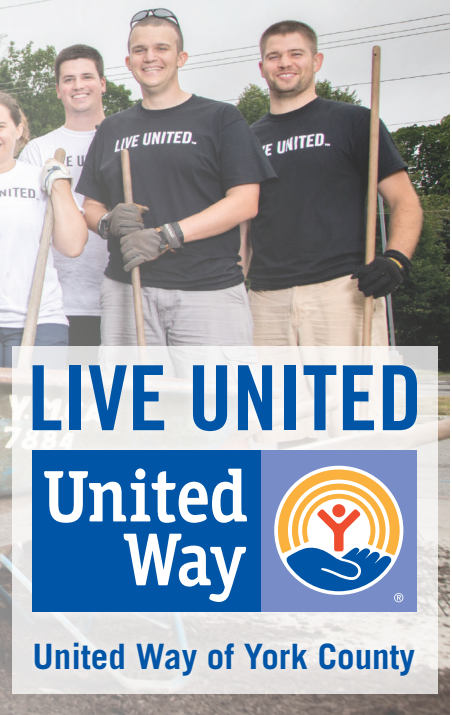
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On a spring day outside WellSpan's York Hospital, plastic pinwheels dance and spin in the breeze, shimmering in the sun. But, where did they come from?

Natalie Fuhrman can tell you that story, about what it takes each year to get those symbols of National Child Abuse Awareness Month in place in York. Natalie, a manager at RKL, has sat with other United Way volunteers among those fragile flags, separating the torn, mud-crusted pinwheels from those that will be used the following year.

Fixing each one, just so.

"When you see the good that you can do for the community, it feels almost like a calling," she says. "It just gives you a really good feeling."



Pictured: Natalie Fuhrman and Keith Eldredge



**LIVE UNITED**

Bob Bentley, left, Campaign Manager at the United Way of York County, presents to staff at RKL during their annual campaign kickoff event. It's because of employee contributions that the United Way is able to have an impact on the community.

Each year, RKL raises money for United Way of York County, working to surpass prior years' totals. But beyond the money, what you remember are the moments, Natalie says, snapshots in your mind of a community coming together.

Natalie's also found a place to become inspired and refueled as she actively participates in Women United, a segment of the United Way of York County that empowers women to have an impact. On the annual Day of Action event, they've pulled weeds and painted rooms at local shelters, too, helping to create for those in trouble somewhere to find their feet again, a place to come home to.

"It doesn't cost anything but your time," she says, "and RKL is always very supportive."

RKL's relationship with the United Way is one of the more significant ways the firm lives its mission of enriching the lives of its clients, team and communities. Community involvement and giving back is embedded in the firm's DNA, and firm leadership instills this attitude in younger associates.

"We're blessed to have what we have, and it's our responsibility to step up and support the community," he says. "That's what drives us."

Scanning the pages of a community partner's accounting books, it's easy to pick out profit and loss, revenue and expenses.

What matters, though, Keith says, is deeper: programs that provide food and a foothold in the job market, sanctuary and safety for those in need.

Once you understand that, the job changes.

The figures that matter aren't found on a spreadsheet, the accountant says. Rather, they're spread across York — people hurting, or hoping, or waiting to help.

"If you just start out by trying to make sure someone else is taken care of," Keith says, "that's when a community truly works."



Employees at RKL volunteer during United Way's Day of Action.