



## 2017 Best of Award Winners

Each year, United Way recognizes outstanding local companies/organizations for their outstanding participation in the United Way Campaign and throughout the year. The Best of Awards showcases companies, employees and retirees who have demonstrated a commitment to enriching lives in the community.

Nine categories make up the Best of Awards including Best Year Round Partnership, Best Campaign Climber, Best Community Engagement, Best Campaign Innovation, Best Leadership Involvement, Best Ambassador, Pacesetter Award, and Special Recognition. 2017-2018 Winners are listed below:

### **UPS – Best Campaign Climber Award**

The Best Campaign Climber Award salutes campaigns that consistently demonstrate outstanding achievement in employee education, engagement and involvement with United Way.

This year's winner, UPS, is a Corporate Champion of Change, for using company assets and engaging employees in creative ways to drive lasting change around the world. Their partnership with United Way goes back 33 years. Over the past three years, their efforts have taken a steady climb. In 2017, employees and retirees pledged a record of \$11,000.

### **Mark White, First National Bank of Coleraine – Best Company Leadership**

The Best Company Leadership Award applauds organization leaders for demonstrating their commitment to the community through their involvement, leadership, and contributions to United Way.

This year's winner, Mark White from First National Bank of Coleraine, embodies the leadership, commitment and passion required of the Best Company Leadership.

### **Blandin Foundation – Best Campaign Innovation**

The Best Campaign Innovation Award recognizes outstanding achievement through innovation.

This year's winner, Blandin Foundation, knocked out the competition in this category. They've tried tactics like musical mashups that echo the campaign theme, repurposed lyrics to a superhero song, and choreographed synchronized dance scenes.

In 2017, they moved away from being a one-hit wonder to doling out one-two punches, literally. They hosted pop-up volunteer projects, an elimination Rock 'em Sock 'em Robot Tournament, dressing for a cause, and easy payroll deduction aimed at increasing participation and showing impact in a tangible way. Their efforts came down to a final match between avatar John the Electrifier Weyer and Traci the Mangl Gang!!

### **The Pickled Loon Saloon – Best Community Engagement**

The Best Community Engagement Award recognizes this company for outstanding achievement in engagement and involvement with United Way, and this year's award was presented to The Pickled Loon Saloon of Grand Rapids.

This year's award winner helped to create innovative and attention-grabbing events - like Dining United and the Shamrock'n Brunch on St. Patrick's Day - which engaged our community, and sparked interest in United Way activities, increased donor participation, and provided effective and consistent communications about United Way. Their combined efforts have helped raised over \$7,000 toward this year's annual campaign.

### **Essentia Health – Best Year Round Partnership**

The Best Year Round Partnership Award is presented to Essentia Health for their outstanding support of United Way and their year-round commitment to the community.

We've recognized this company as an outstanding partner, celebrating its leadership (and competitive nature), long-term commitment, volunteering and employee engagement. From their employee campaign to corporate giving, sponsorships to volunteering and event participation, including this year's United Way Lumberjack Mile and 5K.

### **Bill Sackett – Best Ambassador**

The Best Ambassador educates and energizes coworkers, participates in campaign activities – in and out of the workplace - mobilizes community members, and is passionate about United Way and helping others.

This year's award winner, Bill Sackett, was not only one of the first to join ASV's 5K team, he was the first to get family members to support their virtual fundraising challenge ("Go Uncle Billy"), and he was the top fundraiser for the team. His support for United Way did not end there. He signed up to be a contestant for the company's "pie in the face" competition. Little did he know he was the most sought after management - once again, earning the top fundraiser title.

He has been a longtime supporter for United Way and his involvement with this year's campaign has certainly been noteworthy.

### **ASV Holdings, Inc. – Pacesetter Award**

Each year, a company takes on the challenge to "set the pace" for the annual campaign by becoming a Pacesetter, and this year's award was presented to ASV Holdings, Inc. for their contributions, building excitement, and inspiring others.

This organization set the standard for leadership and community support by locking in their campaign donations early and ultimately setting the pace for the others to follow.

### **Blandin Foundation — Special Recognition**

Blandin Foundation and United Way share a commitment to building stronger communities -- and realizing possibilities for every person.

Blandin Foundation's approach is rooted in the things that help communities thrive: creating and supporting a vibrant community, investing in our leaders, and expanding the opportunities. In 2017, employees donated more than \$8,300 through the United Way and completed hundreds of volunteer hours during to United Way and our network of partners. As a whole, the foundation has contributes approx. \$63,000 annually through employee pledges, trustee matching program, and the foundation grant dollars.

### **Minnesota Power — Special Recognition**

For many years, employees and retirees of Minnesota power have helped transform lives across the region through United Way. The tradition continues as new people are hired and others retire. In 2017, combined United Way contributions topped over \$104,000. This gift includes payroll deductions, special fundraisers, sponsorships and a \$57,500 contribution from the Minnesota Power Foundation.

In addition to financial contributions, employees volunteer at United Way agencies, serve on non-profit boards, and give of their time and talent throughout the year.