

The Hope Fund

Increasing aspirations and instilling hope for a brighter future.

United Way of the Tri-Valley Area established the *Hope Fund* in 2017 to provide assistance for unmet needs of children in Greater Franklin County. The emphasis of the fund is to remove barriers to enable low-income children to engage in a wide variety of enriching experiences in which they would not otherwise be able to participate.

Since the Hope Fund was established, 415 youth have received funding for a total of more than \$52,000. Two non-profits have also been funded as in the summer of 2021 the fund was opened up for non-profits. 26% of the requests have been from Farmington; 17% from Wilton; 15% from Jay; 15% from Livermore Falls; and 27% from other Greater Franklin County towns. 31% of requests have been for camp or recreational opportunities; 20% for sports related needs/opportunities; and 9% for University of Maine Farmington Fitness and Recreation Center programs or memberships; and 3% for field trips; 2% for supplies such as therapeutic weighted blankets or art supplies and 35% for miscellaneous other opportunities. 4% have been under 4 years of age; 44% have been ages 4 – 9; 38% have been ages 10 – 14; and 14% have been 15 – 17.

The Hope Fund has been transformative, providing many children with their first summer camp experience, their first instrument, or their first fishing, skiing or sports opportunity. Youth have been able to participate in college writing workshops, attend a youth conference and learn to swim. It has positively impacted children with various special needs as well by way of equine therapy, Pine Tree Camp attendance where participants “find their abilities,” a weighted blanket, and specialized headphones.

Assistance through the *Hope Fund* is determined by an application which is available on the United Way website: uwtva.org. Eight community members make up the Hope Fund Review Committee which meets monthly to review applications. The following are criteria for the Hope Fund:

- Applicants can receive funding twice per year and must be under 18 years of age or providing services to those under 18.
- Individuals may apply. Agencies, caseworkers, schools/teachers/guidance counselors, etc. are encouraged to apply to the United Way on behalf of the child/client with his or her knowledge. Generally, awards for individuals will not exceed \$200.00 per request.
- Non-profits may also apply (new as of summer, 2021). Maximum award is \$2,000.
- Parents must sign a waiver allowing the Hope Fund committee to review the application and share information with the committee. This form also gives permission for the child to participate in an activity or use equipment if funded.
- Applications are due by the last day of each month and will be reviewed on a monthly basis by the Hope Fund review committee **the first Thursday of the next month.** Funding for individual requests is paid directly to a vendor. Non-profits will receive payment directly.



I was providing case management services to a young man who was bullied. I applied for help to cover a fee so he could stay on campus at the Good Will Hinckley school. It was a perfect fit and he is now thriving. With the support of his family and the Hope Fund, my client is a new kid.

– Case Manager, Evergreen Behavioral