

LEAP
Campaign “Whatever it Takes” Award
Executive Director Darryl Wood

I sat down with Darryl Wood, the executive director of LEAP, which is a local nonprofit that provides residential services and case management for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. LEAP is being honored by United Way of the Tri-Valley Area with the *Whatever it Takes* Award, which recognizes individuals, businesses, and organizations that have significantly gone above and beyond in their support for United Way in the past year.

LEAP has been incredibly active, despite the significant event in the fall of 2019 where they lost their new administrative headquarters, an employee was critically injured, and where Captain Michael Bell, a firefighter, died a hero. They have consistently shown to be a community of resilient and tenacious individuals, undeterred from spreading their messages of love and positivity. Over the past year, we have seen significant workplace contributions from LEAP employees, heavy involvement in our events such as our annual Dodgeball Tournament, Packs for Progress, and having the largest team at our annual COLOR ME UNITED 5K. Members like Darryl have contributed to our auction, and the United Way has witnessed LEAP to be a champion for all things regarding our programs, services, and events.

I asked Darryl why LEAP is such an avid supporter of what we do. “I think that LEAP supports the United Way because of how similar our missions are,” he says. “I know I have personally been impressed by the amount of *local* resources the United Way has been able to pull from and distribute. We both work to aid folks on gaining their independence and improving their lives.”

Most people give me a similar response when asked what it means to be recognized by United Way for their hard work--most told me that it’s just part of their job. Darryl sums this question up similarly by stating, “It’s always nice to be recognized; but of course that’s not why we do it. However, the recognition allows me the opportunity to share with my staff the importance of the work that they do, and to encourage them to continue.”

We at the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area are proud to recognize LEAP for its perseverance, compassion and optimism this past year. “I think when you give to others, you also receive,” says Darryl. “When you donate to the United Way, you are donating resources directly to the community. These resources help to make us stronger, and strong communities help all of us.” We thank LEAP for working with us this past year to build better futures for those living in the Greater Franklin County Area.