



A fresh coat of paint, and a long-term partnership

This volunteer project is one of many ways United Way is making an impact



United Way
for Southeastern Michigan

If you take a peek inside the Furniture Bank warehouse, you'll find it to be a bright, beautiful and a more inviting space. This is thanks to the enthusiastic efforts of 20 staff members from the

United Way for Southeastern Michigan, who volunteered to come out and paint our warehouse this past August.

The Furniture Bank "Painting Party" was one of seven major volunteer

projects tackled by 125 United Way staff in total. All of these projects were in keeping with the United Way's mission: "to mobilize the caring power of Detroit and Southeastern Michigan to improve communities and individual lives in measurable and lasting ways."

"The families we serve have endured many hardships, which is why we want them to have an uplifting experience when they come to pick out their furniture," said Furniture Bank Executive Director Rob Boyle. "United Way understands this in ways many organizations wouldn't, so they were all-in with us on this project."

Boyle is quick to add this is only one way that United Way is helping the Furniture Bank bring about positive change. "We've been a United Way partner for years," Boyle said. "And when we wanted to expand our mission into Wayne County and Detroit, their support was instrumental, which is why

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Furniture Bank Executive Director Rob Boyle (center, rear) sticks out like a sore thumb without a stylish orange "Live United" t-shirt worn by volunteers from the United Way of Southeastern Michigan. To Rob's immediate left, wearing her cool shades, is Volunteer Engagement Specialist Jessica Brooks, who went above and beyond in organizing the project.



No detail is too small for Caitlin Kelly (left), Nick Piper (center) and Holly Bresson (right), who unpack new wall plates complement the new coat of paint.



With paint cup in hand, Stephanie Krause spruces up some piping.



Ammara Ansari is all in, as evidenced by the smile on her face (and the smidge of paint under her eye!)



Supporters raise \$47,000 for Furniture Bank programs at 8th Annual Comedy Night



PNC Bank Vice President and Community Development Manager Jason Paulateer and Furniture Bank Executive Director Rob Boyle share a moment just before the laughs begin at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle.



Enjoying drinks and hors d'oeuvres at the 8th Annual Furniture Bank Comedy Night are (from left) Board President Bruce Gleba, Natalie Larkin, Rob Boyle and Board Member Steve Briggs.

Thank you to everyone who helped make our 2017 Comedy Night Fundraiser sponsored by PNC Bank a huge success! The event raised \$47,000 to provide beds and furniture to local children and families in need.

The 8th Annual event was held at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle in Royal Oak on Thursday, Oct. 5 and included a full buffet dinner, 50/50 raffle, live auction and comedy from headliner Michael Harrison, who has performed his comedy at festivals and clubs throughout Canada and the U.S.



Presented By PNC BANK

Planning for the 9th Annual Comedy Night is already under way. Mark your calendars for Thursday, Oct. 11, 2018 from 6-9 p.m., also at Mark Ridley's Comedy Castle. Featured will be Don Friesen, a California-based comic originally from the Detroit area. For information about attending or sponsoring this upcoming event, visit www.furniture-bank.org/events/comedy-night or email events@furniture-bank.org.



MEET OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Pat Whittedge

What sort of volunteer work do you do for the

Furniture Bank and how long have you been doing it?

I have been a volunteer at the Furniture Bank since April, 2016. I contribute 6-9 hours each week. My duties are comprised of computer input of donations, accepting phone calls from donors and clients, completing daily reminder calls to both donors and clients for their donation pick-ups and deliveries. (Pat was the Furniture Bank's Volunteer of the Year in 2016.)

Why did you start volunteering for the Furniture Bank?

My first introduction to the Furniture Bank was many years ago when our Human Resources Senior Vice President at Standard Federal Bank talked of being a Furniture Bank volunteer. He shared heart-warming stories about the mission and wonderful accomplishments of the Furniture Bank and I always thought that one day I would look into being a volunteer. After retiring, I found that I needed a commitment and a way to give back to our community.

Would you share a story about a Furniture Bank client that especially touched your heart?

The client stories at the Furniture Bank are all touching. The appreciation felt by our clients is overwhelming. To see children who are receiving their very first beds and linens is something everyone should experience!

Why do you think the Furniture Bank is important to the community?

The Furniture Bank provides services in the community that no other agency in Michigan can offer. Our generous donors give gently used furniture and bedding so that people with profound need have the comforts that many of us take for granted. The mission is that no family should be without bedding,

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

● **Painting with a Purpose:**

Bring out your artistic side on Wednesday, Jan. 17 from 7-9 p.m. at Painting with a Twist in Rochester Hills. Those signing up will enjoy a fun night of painting, wine and snacks and time with friends. Fifty percent of each seat purchased will go to the Furniture Bank. This is the second annual painting event!

For information about these events or to sponsor, email events@furniture-bank.org

● **Wine Tasting Fundraiser:**

This 3rd Annual event will be at downtown Detroit's historic Guardian Building on Saturday, May 19. Participants have a chance to enjoy wine and cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a live auction, music and a tour of the landmark building.



Podina family makes a house a home with items from the Furniture Bank

Patricia and Chad Podina and their 11-year-old son, Jacob, are recent beneficiaries of the Furniture Bank, its generous donors and the compassion of the nonprofit's staff.

This Auburn Hills family received a kitchen table and chairs, a recliner and second living room chair, a sofa and two "gorgeous dressers," in Patricia's words. The family is now getting settled into their new home, where they finally have a place to sit, watch TV and eat.

"The people there are so kind and non-judgmental," she said. "It's hard to go someplace when you're feeling down. You leave there feeling so much better."

The family found out about the Furniture Bank while working with Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Auburn Hills and the St. Vincent DePaul Society. Once they received a referral, they were able to visit the Pontiac nonprofit's warehouse and select their furniture. They also received help in the form of beds from church members.

Patricia is settling into working two jobs and Chad works for a local landscape company. They are happy to have found



Patricia and Chad Podina with their son, Jacob, on their new sofa from the Furniture Bank. "It's so much nicer to have a place to sit," she said.

and furnished their home after relocating from Kentucky.

Jacob has autism and Patricia said her son particularly appreciated the furniture. "Not having furniture really affected Jacob. He didn't want to live here (without furniture)" she said. "He loves it now". Staff at the Furniture Bank are "heroes to him," she added.

Patricia said she appreciates the help given by the Furniture Bank. "It was a great experience," she added.

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sofas or dining facilities. The mission is impactful when we realize how many children do not have beds to sleep in, sofas to sit on or tables/chairs for meals. There is not a finer mission to help the people in our communities who are in need.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I was raised in Grosse Pointe, Michigan and attended Western Michigan University, receiving a degree in education in 1964. I taught at O.E. Dunkel Junior High School in Farmington. I was married in 1964 and my husband, Jim, and I have two wonderful daughters and four cherished granddaughters. I returned to work

when our daughters were in their teens and spent 29 years at the bank before retiring.

Is there anything else you would like to share?

The staff at the Furniture Bank is comprised of amazing people with hearts of gold. Their devotion to helping people in need is inspiring to me every day.

▶ **United Way**, continued from page 1

we're proud to display the United Way logo on the truck we purchased for our expansion."

United Way for Southeastern Michigan focuses on strategies in Education, Economic Prosperity and Health that change individual lives and benefit the entire community, so everyone has the same opportunities to succeed. "The Furniture Bank provides a vital service to our community by providing what so many of us often take for granted: beds, kitchen tables and even silverware," said Kerri Gentry, director of United Way for Southeastern Michigan's partner network. "We're proud of our longstanding partnership with the Furniture Bank to help families on their journey to stability."

Over the past 10 years, the Furniture Bank has provided more than 15,000 families with more than 100,000 items of furniture. "No child will be ready for school if that child is sleeping on a cold, hard floor," said Boyle, "and no family can have a healthy, prosperous life if they are living in an empty shell of a house.

"United Way played a key role in our ability to help families," Boyle added. "We cannot thank them enough for all their support and partnership."



Tina Lucas, Tiffany Stewart, Kristen Bolds, Ronda Alexander, Kim Slappy and Ammara Ansari even find time to stain the deck!



The Furniture Bank has a "Beds for Kids" program that accepts gently-used twin beds or purchases new ones with a donation of \$100 so a local child will no longer have to sleep on the floor. Tax-deductible donations (beds or money) can be made at www.furniture-bank.org/beds-for-kids.



Furniture Bank of Southeastern Michigan

333 NORTH PERRY STREET
PONTIAC, MICHIGAN 48342

Fall/Winter 2017

newsletter

*Providing beds and essential home
furniture to children and families in need*

CALL
US AT **248-332-1300**

or visit furniture-bank.org to donate. Ask about our FREE pickups or take advantage of our "We'll Take It Out for You" service for only \$20.

Essential items needed:

MATTRESSES and/or box springs of all sizes

Kitchen/dining room
TABLE and **CHAIR** sets

DRESSERS

SOFAS



OUR MISSION:



The Furniture Bank of Southeastern Michigan (FBSEM) has a mission to provide beds and essential home furniture to children and families in need.

One of more than 120 independently operated furniture banks throughout North America, FBSEM receives referrals from a network of more than 70 local health and human service agencies and has provided furniture to more than 60,000 families since its inception. This year, we are on target to provide 1,400 local families with more than 12,000 items of furniture and other housewares.

DETAILS: www.furniture-bank.org