Title: Media Models and United Way Story Telling

Community Partner: Chenango United Way

A Fellow will research the effectiveness of various media models and will create content for the Chenango United Way using multimedia skills like video editing and digital storytelling.

Project Description:

The Chenango United Way would like to build on the successes achieved by Field School Fellow Susie Waltz, '18, last summer. Susie created a campaign fundraising video for the United Way to use in community presentations. This video focuses on donor accountability and emphasizes the programs and issue areas that the Chenango United Way invests in: income, education and health.

This summer, Chenango United Way asks the Fellow to look at the impact of different types of media models, such as video, TED talks, presentations, panel discussions, and WebEx presentations, on those who “view” them. The Fellow will conduct a literature review to determine what other nonprofits have used successfully, and to assess how the Chenango United Way can most effectively use one or more media models to engage and motivate a community toward action, by giving, volunteering, advocating, and collaborating. This research on best practices from other nonprofits and United Ways will help to define the range of media models that exists to encourage engagement in both fundraising and collaborative efforts.

Based on post campaign feedback from United Way donors, the Fellow will create one updated media model for campaigning and fundraising purposes to highlight the needs in Chenango County and the importance of Chenango United Way contributions in addressing those needs. The Fellow will also create a second, more generalized media model to educate the community on “who” the United Way is as an organization and what they have to offer to the community beyond the traditional fundraising model. This second piece would be used to introduce the United Way concept to companies and/or communities that have no prior affiliation or experience with United Way and are considering developing a relationship with the organization: not only for fundraising purposes, but also for partnership/collaborative purposes to work on critical community problems. As the Chenango United Way explores strategic alliances and shared service conversations with United Ways in surrounding communities, having a mechanism to highlight their history and accomplishments as a United Way would be a dynamic way to tell the organization’s “story.”

About the Community Partner:

The Chenango United Way builds partnership and maximizes resources to improve the quality of life for local residents by focusing on three areas of local impact: education, income and health. The Chenango United Way's vision is to engage the community on a community agenda that focuses on identifying local issues and enables the United Way and its partners to take action on these key community issues. The Chenango United Way serves the Chenango community-at-large and a portion of Madison County as a fundraiser, fund grantor and as a community convener around identified critical needs. For the fall 2017 annual campaign, the Chenango United Way raised $421,433 in local funds from payroll deduction campaigns and individual, business and corporate gifts, almost meeting its goal of $419,000. Based on this campaign total, they are able to provide more than $314,691 in funding to 23 local health and human service programs as well as 14 food pantries and soup kitchens and more than four community impact initiatives in Chenango County for 2018. The Chenango United Way also plays a key role in facilitating and participating in local collaborations, including the Chenango County Emergency Food and Shelter Program (national FEMA funds), the
FamilyWize Prescription Discount Program, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library, the Chenango Substance Abuse Task Force, the Chenango County Building a Healthy Community Coalition and the Chenango Housing Council. The Chenango United Way also played a lead role in disaster relief and recovery after the devastating floods of June 2006, November 2006 and September 2011. The Chenango United Way was the lead agency for the Greater Chenango Cares IRT project that provided no-cost basic dental, vision, veterinary and medical services to over 1,850 people in 2015 and 2016, in collaboration with US service members.

The Chenango United Way is the convener of three volunteer led Community Impact Teams (CIT’s) around the critical community issues of income stability, education and healthy living. Each CIT is responsible for developing a shared knowledge and understanding of its impact area, identifying and prioritizing community issues into a community impact agenda, analyzing various program strategies relative to these issues and developing innovative and collaborative initiatives to address them. To date, one of the largest accomplishments of these collaborations was the 2017 creation of the Chenango Dental Task Force: a partnership convened and facilitated by the Chenango United Way to address the un-met dental needs of the uninsured and underinsured families of Chenango County. The group is currently working on increasing education and awareness around child dental health in the schools by providing all 4,000 elementary school students in Chenango County with toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss and piloting classroom tooth brushing in several schools around the county.

**Required Skills:**
The Fellow should have excellent skills in interviewing and video editing, and should be able to think creatively about using social media for advocacy. The Fellow will need to work well with a team of volunteers as well. Through this experience, the Fellow will gain an in-depth understanding of regional community health and human service needs during the Fellowship, as well as a thorough understanding of how a small nonprofit operates and how a staff of two multi-tasks to accomplish a variety of duties every day. Additionally, the Fellow will have the opportunity to shadow the Executive Director and attend multiple meetings within the Chenango community throughout the summer.

**Logistics:**
This is a full-time paid research position (35 hours per week) to last approximately 10 weeks, conducted under the joint supervision of the Upstate Institute and the Chenango United Way. The Fellow will work both at the Chenango United Way office in Norwich, within the Chenango County community, and at Colgate in order to utilize services at the DLMC. Elizabeth Monaco, Chenango United Way Executive Director, and Victoria Mitchell, Executive Assistant will provide oversight to the Fellow.

Field School Fellows receive a research stipend of $4500 plus reimbursement for any costs associated with transportation for this project. A car is not required for this project, but may be helpful. A Fellow will need a U.S. drivers’ license to complete this work.

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