

United  
Way



United Way of Anchorage

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## United Way of Anchorage announces retirement of long-time President Michele Brown

United Way of Anchorage has announced that President and CEO Michele Brown will retire this June after 17 years with the organization.

Since 2003, Brown has led United Way in an innovative role of both fundraiser and collaborator with dozens of partners across the spectrum of nonprofit work through its annual workplace community campaign and other programs. Brown, who was recently awarded the UAA Meritorious Service Award, has been instrumental in establishing United Way's mission toward housing and education outcomes in a career focused on serving the social well-being of the Anchorage community.

"Michele Brown has worked tirelessly to make Anchorage the community it is today—a community that takes care of its own, that doesn't shy away from a challenge and is always striving for improvement," said Diane Kaplan, president and CEO of The Rasmuson Foundation. "Michele has poured her heart and soul into her work and we are all better for it."

Brown has driven initiatives for long-range community impact and improvements, while still fulfilling United Way of Anchorage's goal to meet immediate needs.

"Michele has led United Way of Anchorage through a transformation that expanded its mission beyond collaborative fund-raising to community leadership," Belinda Breaux, Alyeska Pipeline executive and United Way board chairman said. "She has convened partners from all sectors to collaborate in solving complex problems and improving community conditions."

A prime example is the 90% Graduation by 2020 initiative, a partnership of United Way, the Anchorage School District, and numerous non-profit, private, public, and faith partners to raise the four-year high school graduation rate in Anchorage to 90 percent by 2020. The community's resolve to reach that ambitious goal led to comprehensive approaches and a steady commitment to be accountable no matter how bumpy the road was. The result: Anchorage has raised the graduation rate 25 points, from a disappointing 59 percent in 2005 to 84 percent in 2019.

"Michele Brown has been an asset to our community as she has championed the work for the education, health, and well-being of students in our city," said Anchorage schools Superintendent Deena Bishop. "Her vision and passion for young people will be truly missed."

On Brown's watch, the board and staff at United Way of Anchorage also:

- Launched Alaska 2-1-1, the statewide helpline that connects Alaskans to over 1100 providers from Utqiagvik to Ketchikan.
- Jumpstarted the Family Emergency Cold Weather Shelter system where volunteers from area churches provide a sanctuary during winter months for families experiencing homelessness when other shelters are full.

- Defied the national trend of decreased health care coverage by enrolling more Alaskans in health insurance with health care navigators under the Affordable Care Act.
- Took on the challenge to increase permanent supportive housing for the hardest to house with the Home for Good program, a new pilot project underway which also introduces a new way to finance the work through pay for performance contracts.

“I’ve worked with Michele while she served as UW President, and she has been an outstanding advocate for improving the lives of Anchorage citizens in need. I will miss working with her,” said Joe Marushack, president of ConocoPhillips Alaska.

The United Way of Anchorage board has formed a search committee for Brown’s successor and will begin recruitment later this month with hopes to name a new president in May.

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### **About United Way of Anchorage**

United Way of Anchorage is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners who fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. LIVE UNITED.

[www.liveunitedanc.org](http://www.liveunitedanc.org)