



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties Recognizes September as Attendance Awareness Month

Kennewick, WA — United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties is proud to join communities across the country in recognizing September as Attendance Awareness Month, a national campaign aimed at addressing chronic absenteeism and ensuring every student is present and engaged in learning every day.

Through United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties Attendance Matters® program, we place mentors in 6 local schools to work directly with students who struggle to get to class. We work in collaboration with these local schools, parents, and community partners to tackle the root causes of absenteeism and help children across Benton and Franklin counties succeed in school and in life.

“School attendance is one of the most important predictors of academic success,” said Asta Bonheyo, Community Impact Director at United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties. “When students miss too many days—whether due to illness, transportation issues, or other barriers—it can set them back academically and socially. That’s why we take a proactive approach to making sure kids want to be at school.”

According to national data, students who are chronically absent, missing 10% or more of the school year, are at higher risk of falling behind in reading and math, dropping out, and struggling long-term. The Attendance Matters® program provides mentors to students, resources for families, support for educators, and community-wide outreach to promote consistent attendance from kindergarten through high school.

Throughout September, United Way will promote the importance of “showing up”, share tips for families, and spotlight stories from local schools to raise awareness about the importance of showing up every day.

Parents and caregivers are encouraged to:

- Establish strong morning routines
- Schedule appointments outside of school hours when possible
- Reach out to schools for help when challenges arise
- Talk to their children about why attendance matters

“Attendance is a shared responsibility,” said Bonheyo “It’s not just a school issue—it’s a community issue. When kids succeed, we all benefit.”

To learn more about the Attendance Matters® program or how you can get involved or become a sponsor, visit www.uwbfc.org/attendance-matters or follow United Way of Benton & Franklin Counties on social media.

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