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DELAWARE

United Way  
United Way of Delaware

# Feel Good Friday Update

A collection of uplifting stories when we need them the most.

**Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month** ..... **September 30, 2022**



## **In Memory of Rysheema Dixon** 1987 - 2022

All of us at United Way of Delaware (UWDE) were shocked and deeply saddened to learn of the untimely passing of Rysheema Dixon, 35, a long-time friend and supporter of UWDE.

Rysheema was a dynamic, caring, passionate leader whose commitment to this community shone in ways big and small.

During the formative stages of the Wilmington HOPE Commission, she helped develop many of the processes and systems that are still today helping formerly incarcerated citizens return to productive lives.

The youngest woman ever elected to the Wilmington City Council, Rysheema led the first study of disparities in the city's procurement system. She later sponsored legislation updating the sex education curriculum in schools statewide. In her business life, Rysheema was the CEO & Founder of RD Innovative Solutions, a successful management consulting company that recently celebrated 11 years in business. And if all that wasn't enough, earlier this year she launched the Global Social Entrepreneurship program in Monrovia, Liberia, sharing her passion for social entrepreneurship with the people of that African nation.

I recall being invited recently by Rysheema to speak with a group of women who had completed a training program leading to a career in the trades. Programs like that are "so Rysheema." She never settled for the status quo. She was a fighter and an advocate for the underserved. But more than that, Rysheema Dixon knew how to get things done. An entrepreneur at heart, she used her business skills to break down barriers and to connect people around a shared purpose. I will miss her authenticity, her smile, her good heart and her

commitment to bettering the lives of those who are too often overlooked or left behind.

Rysheema Dixon's flame will burn brightly in our memories. On behalf of the entire UWDE team, I extend heartfelt condolences to Rysheema's family and to her many friends and colleagues throughout this community.

Michelle A. Taylor, Ed. D.  
President & Chief Executive Officer  
United Way of Delaware

## **A trailblazer, Advocate, and Shining Light**

By Regina Sidney Brown  
Director,  
Delaware Afterschool Network



I had recently relocated to Delaware and was feeling lost. I was longing to connect with like-minded professional women. In 2012, I applied and was accepted to United Way of Delaware's Women In Action (WIA) Mentoring Initiative. WIA matched me with a fantastic mentor, Dr. Lisa Lynch. WIA and Dr. Lynch came into my life at a critical time; to help me find my way.

In 2014, I became a WIA mentor, and a great blessing was bestowed upon me; I was matched with Rysheema Dixon. She was already a great businesswoman and leader. She was building her business while dedicating her time and talent to City of Wilmington residents, youth, and community-based organizations. We primarily focused on work/life balance and self-care.

Our mentor/mentee relationship turned into both a professional and personal friendship. Rysheema was an out-of-school-time partner and champion. She attended several Lights On Afterschool celebrations and was instrumental in obtaining our first proclamation from Wilmington City Council.

She was a trailblazer, advocate, and shining light who made the most of her time on earth. She led by example and wouldn't ask you to do anything she wasn't willing to do. She had a beautiful smile and a great laugh.

We were together in July; she presented at the Community Development Institute Training at the Community Education Building. At the end of the training, we hugged and expressed love and gratitude for our relationship.

Rysheema and I didn't talk every day, we didn't text every day, and we didn't hang out every day. But when we did connect, it was meaningful.

Rest In Paradise, my mentee and friend.

## **Rysheema Always Reminded Me To...**

By Tierra Fair  
Vice President, Engagement & Partnerships  
United Way of Delaware

***"What we once enjoyed deeply we can never lose. All that we love deeply becomes a part of us."***

***-Helen Keller***

This one hurts. Rysheema Dixon was my friend, professor, and contemporary in creating good in the world. She was a beautiful person. I was continuously in awe and always proud of the way she chose to live her life. But my tribute to her is not about how sad I am to not be able to talk to my friend, find her at events where far too often most of the people don't look like us, or just watch her greatness from social media as we sometimes do when life gets busy. My tribute today is about the life she lived and the qualities she reminded me to exhibit every day. Rysheema always reminded me to...

**...Stop and Play**

I'll always remember her making sure children had safe spaces to be kids. So many of us were robbed of our own childhood, we forget there's always time to play with the little ones and show them you care. It also helps to keep life's problems in perspective.

**...Focus on the positive**

The realist in me goes straight to the worst that could happen. But Rysheema would always find something positive, whether it was a joke, a well-placed side eye, or a "YOU GOT THIS" to put things in perspective.

**...Write down your dreams**

Rysheema believed in the power of achieving your goals by writing them down. In graduate school, she was my professor. As I was torn on what to do after graduation, she would just say "Write it down to make it reality."

**...Leave the world better than you arrived**

The world is better because Rysheema was here. I am better because she was here. Even when people were irking her Rysheema, she always had room for laughs and smiles. She believed in making the world a better place and she left her footprint for the world to see forever.

Rysheema, I will remember you and talk to you. Your work, your spirit, the way you choose to live your life will never be forgotten. Rest in infinite power and love my friend.

Love, Tee

**UWDE PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT:  
Stand By Me NexGen**

**Creating Roadmaps to Dreams**

Preparing a child for college, junior college or trade school is complex and can be confusing. Youth who aren't exposed to stages of life planning in school often end up with no plan at all.

**No plan + no goals = uncertain future.**

That's why United Way of Delaware (UWDE) offers targeted resources for students, parents, teachers and guidance counselors called *Stand By Me NexGen*, a series of programs that begin with high school freshmen and extend through all four years of high school.

***College, Careers and Cash: Explore and Envision***



*College, Careers, and Cash (CCC)* comprises two interconnected curricula for ninth- and tenth-grade students.

- *CCC: Explore* helps ninth-grade students identify a lifestyle they feel would be rewarding for them. They develop a personal mission statement, identify career fields that align with their interests and strengths, and investigate the connections between work, income, and lifestyle.
- *CCC: Envision* guides tenth graders to further explore the lifestyle they want, starting with a dose of reality by putting a dollar figure to their dreams. Then, they identify careers that align with their lifestyle goals, and answer questions such as: What are the educational requirements of my ideal profession? Is this a growth field with lots of future opportunity? What are the entry-level and average pay scales for this career? Then, we put it all together in the form of a budget to see if they can afford the lives they envision.

### ***College Funding Project***

Eleventh- and twelfth-grade students are introduced to the *College Funding Project* (CFP) to help them understand that they *can* afford post-secondary education, and how to go about getting financial aid.

According to the National College Attainment Network (NCAN), some \$8 million in financial aid went unclaimed in Delaware last year, largely due to families not completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The application form can be daunting to students and parents alike. However, a completed FAFSA is required for all State of Delaware scholarship programs, institutional grants, athletic scholarships, and even the Federal Work/Study Program. At our current 66.7% FAFSA completion rate, Delaware ranks fifth in the nation for completion percentage. Yet, we need to do even better to make sure our students get the financial help they need.

The College Funding Project offers a menu of free services to help, students, families, and school staff understand and overcome the hurdles of financial aid through:

- *Paying for College*, a discussion of financial aid, FAFSA and helpful resources
- *Scholarships 102*, explaining scholarships and offering tips on essay writing
- Workshops and one-on-one online appointments to complete the FAFSA

With Stand By Me NexGen, students take an active role in planning their futures and understanding how to get there. It's a reality-based process and a source of hope that helps them develop a personal investment in developing and achieving life goals.

*UWDE provides these programs without charge. The College Funding program is offered in all of the state's 44 public/charter high schools.*

*On the other hand, College, Careers and Cash is offered in about half of high schools because of financial constraints. Your donation to United Way of Delaware can help us expand the program to all Delaware public or charter high school students. You can donate [here](#), and be sure to notate that the gift is for Stand By Me NexGen in the comments section of the form.*



**Stand By Me NexGen staff Edwin Santos, Cory Dunt, and Candace Kinard work with students to complete their FAFSA application forms.**

During Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 15 - Oct. 15, we want to introduce you to some of our Latino neighbors and friends and their valuable contributions to life in Delaware.



## Meet Laura Mayor

General Case Manager at the Latin American Community Center



Born in Peru, Laura Mayor holds a Bachelor of Law from the University of Lima in Peru and a Master's degree in Human Resources Management from Barcelona, Spain.

From a very young age, she has been passionate about helping the neediest people. Laura currently works as a General Case Manager at LACC and is in charge of Crisis Alleviation, which includes managing programs that help individuals with paying rent, mortgage, utilities, food, clothing and filing social benefits forms.

"I feel happy and grateful to work at LACC, positively impacting the lives of many people who are going through a difficult situation," Laura

said. "Many of them are immigrants like me and some do not speak English, but we can give them quality care because we are bilingual and we do our work with a lot of passion."

"Thanks to our partnerships, we can continue to reach more people in our community and with our valuable team, we can make good things happen. If you know of people who are having difficulty paying rent, mortgage, utilities, food, clothes, do not hesitate to contact us."

## Corteva for the Community

Corteva Agriscience is "Coming Together for Our Community" with their Annual United Way Giving Campaign this month.

*Caitlin Custer* and *Ashley Hollingsworth* are chairing the efforts that include special events and volunteer activities to help engage employees to make investments of time and a money to build a better Delaware.

***We at UWDE extend our sincere thanks to Corteva employees for your support of your neighbors in need.***



From left: Debbie Armstrong, UWDE; Rick Deadwyler Corteva and UWDE Board Chair; Caitlin Custer, Corteva; Ashley Hollingsworth, Corteva; Wes Davis, West End Neighborhood House; John Moore, UWDE; Greg Munson, West End Neighborhood House; Matthew Burns, Corteva

## October 20th is Lights On Afterschool

The day to SHINE a LIGHT on the impact of afterschool programs

On October 20, you can join more than 8,000 communities and 1 million Americans in celebrating afterschool programs during this year's **Lights On Afterschool!**

This nationwide event, organized by the Afterschool Alliance and in partnership with the 50 State Afterschool Network, calls attention to the importance of afterschool programs and the resources required to keep the lights on and the doors open.

The Delaware Afterschool Network is proud to be a Lights On Afterschool partner.

Organizations that offer afterschool programming can plan a celebration for the day and can find ideas, case studies and sample materials to help in the **Lights On Afterschool Planning Kit**.



***The Delaware Afterschool Network invites you to join us for two free and exciting conferences this October!***

**Fall Multi-State Afterschool Conference  
October 13th, 2022**

Afterschool Networks from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia are joining to host the *Virtual Constellation of Afterschool Stars - Illuminating the Field* Conference.

**Delaware STEM Equity Conference  
October 15, 2022 (virtual)**

Leaders of Delaware's STEM Council, Delaware Foundation for Science and Mathematics Education, Delaware Mathematics Coalition, and Forum for the Advancement of Minorities in Engineering (FAME) are committed to

This event will bring together speakers from the four states and across the country to discuss the latest science, news, and trends from experts in the field.

To register and learn more, head to the [conference website!](#)

building structures and systems that eliminate barriers to success in mathematics. The DE STEM Equity Conference engages PK20 educators, policymakers, and business leaders in meaningful learning experiences that are designed to leverage their capacity as agents of change.

Register [here!](#)



2022  
**LIGHTS ON AFTERSCHOOL**  
Celebrating afterschool programs

 Afterschool Alliance  
AFTERSCHOOL FOR ALL

3to6.co/lightson  
@afterschool4all  
#LightsOnAfterschool  
facebook.com  
/afterschoolalliancecd

## How We Help Every Day

Delaware 211, powered by United Way of Delaware, connects our neighbors in need to essential resources throughout the state. Our service is free, confidential, and available in multiple languages.



Here's a real-life example from one of our 211 Specialists that shows one way we helped:

*A mother called us because she just accepted a new job. She was trying to work out how she was going to be successful in it while making sure her children were cared for. She was looking for an educational program for her older child and a childcare placement for her younger child. She needed help paying for the services, and a supply of diapers so she could send the little one for care.*

*We were able to help her connect with AccessCare for program referrals for her four-year-old. We connected her with community programs that help with diapers and explained the state Purchase of Care program. She left the call with a plan, encouraged that there was help available.*

*When we followed up, she happily reported that she had been able to meet all her family's needs with the resources shared through Delaware 211 and Help Me Grow. It's a good feeling to know that you've helped someone transition into a more stable future for themselves and their family.*

This is how we help, one person at a time, every day. If you believe our work is important and would like to help us expand our capacity, please **consider a donation** to Delaware 211.

When you **give to Delaware 211**, you're helping to meet someone's most pressing needs. With your financial support, we can give our neighbors hope. Together, let's raise \$211,000 this year!

## Youth Pride Day Declaration Today!



PEACE & PRIDE FOUNDATION & THE UNITED  
WAY PRIDE COUNCIL PRESENTS

**NEW CASTLE COUNTY  
YOUTH PRIDE DAY  
SEPTEMBER 30TH AT 3:30PM**

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL CELEBRATION OF THE  
LONGEST RUNNING YOUTH-FOCUSED LGBTQAI  
ORGANIZATIONS IN DELAWARE PTK AND PFLAG &  
THE NEW CASTLE CO YOUTH PRIDE DAY  
PROCLAMATION

**Peace & Pride**  
I am Whole. I am Deserving. I am Here.

**PRIDE**



**SIGN UP NOW TO ATTEND!**

UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE | PRIDE COUNCIL | UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE

10th Annual  
**ANTI-BULLYING/ GSA  
SUMMIT**

The 10th Anti-Bullying Summit is a half-day gathering to connect and uplift members of Gender Sexuality Alliances, their parents, advisors, and allies that support them as they fight for equity and justice.

**Saturday | October 15, 2022**  
**11 am - 3:30 pm**  
**Georgetown, DE**

To register, text **GSA22 to 91999** or, visit [uwde.org/GSA](http://uwde.org/GSA)

PRIDE COUNCIL | UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE

JOIN US FOR THE  
**HISPANIC  
HERITAGE  
MONTH  
CELEBRATION**

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2022  
12:00PM - 4:00PM**

**FAMILY FUN EVENT!**

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES, INTERACTIVE RESOURCES FAIR, VENDORS, LIVE DANCE PERFORMANCE AND FREE FOOD WILL BE FEATURED.

THE EVENT IS FUNDED BY THE ARSHT-CANNON FUND AND SPONSORED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE MILTON PUBLIC LIBRARY AND CHARITO CALVACHI-MA TEYKO-RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CONSULTANT/PRACTITIONER FROM THE LATINO INITIATIVE ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE-COORDINATOR OF THE DELAWARE CIVIL RIGHTS COALITION

The Milton Public Library  
121 Union Street Milton, DE 19968

FOR MORE INFORMATION  
visit or call  
<https://milton.lib.de.us>  
(302) 855-1975

# LATIN FOOD FEST

October 8, 2022

Para todas las pequeña empresas que buscan promocionar o vender sus productos en este evento, comuníquese con Josue O. Ortega at [latinfoodfest@newcastlede.gov](mailto:latinfoodfest@newcastlede.gov)

## Celebrating Hispanic Heritage

### Glasgow Regional Park

2275 Pulaski Hwy, Newark, DE 19702

Matt Meyer  
County Executive

THE WILMINGTON LIBRARY invites you to our

# HISPANIC HERITAGE CELEBRATION

# SAVE THE DATE

DJ music, food, vendors, drummers, dancing, special guest speaker and more...

Date: Saturday, October 1st 2022  
Time: 12:00pm - 4:00pm  
Location: Wilmington Public Library  
10 E. 10th St. Wilmington, De 19801

Wilmington Library

The Work Development Program Presents

## LACC's Job Fair

The LACC Workforce Development Program will host its Job Fair on Saturday, October 22, 2022, hosted by our Platinum Sponsor The Brandywine Plaza Hotel.

There will be a raffle every hour during this event!  
Enroll in the program using the link below:  
<https://forms.gle/ZH6YWPZ2gspjtb318>

Brought to you by: Brandywine Plaza

**Providers Include:**

- Medical Receptionists
- Financial Education and Community Outreach
- Hotel and Hospitality
- Warehouse Pallet Handlers
- Food Services and more!

**Date:** October 22, 2022

**Location:** 630 Naamans Rd, Claymont, DE 19703

Contact us: (302) 455-7338 [www.theinfolinescenter.org](http://www.theinfolinescenter.org) #LACCProgramadeEmpleo

El Programa De Desarrollo Laboral del LACC Presenta

## Feria de Empleo

El Programa de Desarrollo Laboral del LACC organizará su Feria de Empleo el sábado 22 de octubre de 2022 organizada por nuestro Patrocinador Platino El Brandywine Plaza Hotel.

Habrà una rifa cada hora durante este evento. Inscríbise en el Programa utilizando el enlace a continuación:  
<https://forms.gle/ZH6YWPZ2gspjtb318>

Tráido a usted por: Brandywine Plaza

**Los Proveedores Incluyen:**

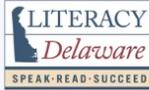
- Recepcionistas Médicos
- Educación Financiera y Alianza Comunitaria
- Hotelería y Hospitalidad
- Manipuladores de paquetes de almacén
- Servicios de comida y más!

**Fecha:** October 22, 2022

**Ubicación:** 630 Naamans Rd, Claymont, DE 19703

Contacta con nosotros: (302) 455-7338 [www.theinfolinescenter.org](http://www.theinfolinescenter.org) #LACCProgramadeEmpleo

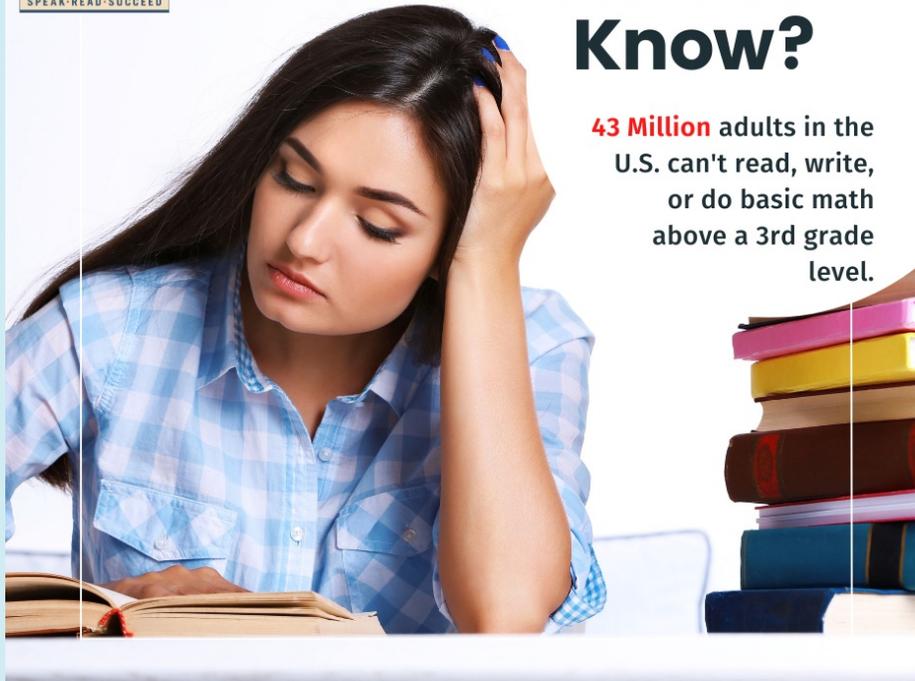
# COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS



Want to know how you can help? Visit:  
<https://www.literacydelaware.org/>

## Did You Know?

**43 Million** adults in the U.S. can't read, write, or do basic math above a 3rd grade level.



## It's Easy to Support United Way of Delaware

Your donation to United Way helps us work to make Delaware a great state to live, work and play for all our neighbors.



[Make an online donation here](#)

### Start With a Smile

Shopping at Amazon? Start at [Smile.Amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and feel better about spending money! Just set United Way of Delaware as your charity of choice. Then spend away and Amazon will donate 0.5% of eligible purchases to us — no fees, no extra cost!



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