

*The following is an opinion piece co-written by Nello Paoli and me on the **Success for Our Seniors** Program and the pilot underway at Dover High School. It was published in Delaware State News and The News Journal earlier this month.*

## **High School Seniors Benefit from a Partnered Approach for Success**

Ensuring Delaware’s diverse high school seniors are prepared for the next step requires effort from the private sector, state government, and Delaware’s community organizations. This is why the *Success for Our Seniors* (SOS) initiative offers an individually tailored approach for each student to better prepare First State seniors for the next stages in their lives.

United Way of Delaware, the Delaware Workforce Development Board, and the Capital School District are working together to implement the first pilot of SOS in Dover High School.

The initiative is designed to help each senior identify the path they intend to take upon graduation. Based on that path, SOS provides actionable opportunities and resources to help graduates turn goals into realities. SOS is not intended to replace the critical services provided by school counselors, but is instead designed to connect students with information, uncover obstacles, and strengthen family support as needed.

Importantly, SOS is not a “one size fits all” approach; it recognizes Delaware has a varied student population. The goal is to “ensure every high school senior in Delaware has exactly what they need to graduate with their path clear for success, one that is customized to their unique interests, needs, and life.”

We are privileged to be part of this effort and excited to share updates from the Dover pilot and our plans across the state. Among the several hundred responses to an initial survey of the senior class, we found that approximately half planned to attend college – either a two-year or four-year program -- with the other half fairly evenly distributed between entering the workforce, joining a training/apprenticeship program, enlisting in the military, starting a small business, or still contemplating their path ahead.

The students' self-described levels of preparedness tell an interesting story, with many of those planning to attend college not yet having applied (as of November of their senior year), and most of those planning on apprentice programs or trade schools not yet having lined up those positions. Of those planning to join the workforce after graduation, only a quarter had a job lined up.

While many students are well-prepared for their post-graduation goals, many are not. The logic behind SOS is that it recognizes that the guidance each student needs is unique to that student. SOS will help ensure that seniors have a post-high-school path and will provide the structure and guidance to move students along that path. The SOS process is designed to provide specific actionable steps based on the student's chosen path and will include checklists, detailed information sessions, connections to resources, and 1:1 guidance where needed.

As a brief illustration of our approach, students planning to enter the workforce upon graduation will receive Delaware Workforce Development Board resources such as post-secondary occupational skills training, interview coaching, help with resume preparation, a crash course on budgeting and other money management fundamentals, and help in developing and maintaining connections with businesses that are hiring in their communities. Those entering college will benefit from assistance with the intricacies of the application, financial aid, and scholarship processes. and leverage the United Way's Stand By Me NexGen financial coaching program.

Those with an entrepreneurial focus will have access to coaching in how to start a business, and insight from entrepreneurs who have gone before them. Significantly, SOS is not a one-and-done initiative. The program will eventually include a network for graduates to turn to when facing new decisions and roadblocks. Just as our approach recognizes differences between individual students, it also recognizes distinctions across the state. SOS will be adapted and adjusted as we continue to learn what works best. The SOS approach also recognizes demographic differences among student populations and will structure its rollout with these in mind.

Students and their families are not the only ones benefitting from these efforts. Delaware employers face a shortage of job seekers and SOS works to better focus the more than 8,500 individuals who graduate from Delaware high schools each year to help reduce that gap.

The goal of SOS is to help high school seniors enjoy a more fulfilling future by providing individualized guidance that identifies an optimal path for success, arming graduates with the optimal tools to pursue their goals, and contributing to Delaware's, and our nation's, future.

Michelle A. Taylor, Ed.D.  
President and CEO  
United Way of Delaware

Nello M. Paoli, Jr.  
Chair, Youth Committee,  
Delaware Workforce Development  
Board



**“Oh, I’m not racist. I accept everyone!”**

***Are you sure?***

What if we told you that research indicates that most of us all carry implicit biases that influence the ways in which we talk, act, and interact -- without us even recognizing these behaviors as bias.

While we may not consciously act on biases, they can be present in our parenting, healthcare delivery, the ways we interact with our colleagues, the experiences our students have at school, and even how we cast our ballot.

The Racial Equity Challenge, powered by United Way of Delaware and Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative, is back to challenge biases and offer steps to combat them in our lives. The challenge will explore implicit bias in the workplace, healthcare, schools/parenting, and voting.

For five consecutive days each quarter of this year, participants will be prompted with a daily e-mail challenge — such as reading an article, listening to a podcast, or watching a video – and are then encouraged to reflect on that content and to relate the situation to their own lives. Through these exercises, participants can discover how racial inequity and social injustice impact themselves and our community. The goal is to build new understandings and new connections and in so doing, to begin dismantling racism in Delaware.

Are you intrigued about whether you'll uncover some bias in yourself, among your friends or in your workplace? Do you think you positively have no bias at all? Are you sure? Find out along with many fellow Delawareans who have committed themselves and their time to taking the challenge this year.

***The challenge begins on Monday, February 20. Sign up now [here](#).***



Join us for  
**Delaware's Largest Day Of Giving**

**DO MORE 24<sup>TM</sup>**  
**DELAWARE**

Delaware's Giving Day. Powered By  
UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE United Way SPURIMPACT

**MARCH 2-3, 2023**

In 24 hours, Do More 24 Delaware raised over \$2.6 million for 450+ nonprofits in March 2022.

Learn more at **[DoMore24Delaware.org](https://DoMore24Delaware.org)**

***Support your favorite nonprofit year-round at [DEGives.org](https://DEGives.org)***

## What can we accomplish when we work together for 24 hours?

**DoMore24DE** is a statewide giving day launching at 6 p.m. on March 2. Your gifts to your favorite nonprofits during this campaign allow them to do more all year. Be sure to follow the hashtag **#domore24** on social media to learn about all the amazing work our nonprofits do every day of every year.

### **Join the Do More 24 Delaware Livestream!**

Join our 24-hour livestream starting at 6 p.m. on Thursday, March 2 and finishing a little after 6 p.m. on Friday, March 3. The livestream will appear on the **Spur Impact**

and [United Way Facebook](#) pages, the [UWDE YouTube channel](#) and the [Do More 24 website](#). Many participating nonprofits and supporters will be featured during the livestream. Check back often, as we will be sharing content and providing donation total updates all day! The indefatigable Chris Bruce of King Creative Studios in Wilmington will be our host and emcee throughout the full 24 hours!

*Would you like a reminder to follow DM24 and to donate? [Click here to sign up.](#)*

## United Way Worldwide Launches Turkey and Syria Earthquake Relief Fund

The 7.8 magnitude earthquake and multiple aftershocks that hit Turkey and Syria caused massive destruction and killed at least 45,000 people. The death toll is expected to rise. Hundreds of thousands of people are now homeless and at high risk due to disease, exposure and starvation.



United Way Worldwide is working to assess and respond to the short and long-term recovery needs and is partnering with local organizations to collect food, clothing and other essentials while coordinating shipments to those critically in need. In addition, they are working with healthcare organizations to coordinate medical and long-term trauma care.

Contributions to the Turkey and Syria Earthquake Relief Fund will support United Way Worldwide and local United Ways on the ground that are mobilizing solutions and recovery efforts. Learn more and [donate here.](#)

## Continuing Our Month-long 211 Celebration!

Throughout February we're highlighting Delaware 211, Delaware's statewide helpline powered by United Way of Delaware and the State of Delaware.

Last week we presented you with three videos that talked about our people, our purpose and our successes. This week, we introduce you to our team.

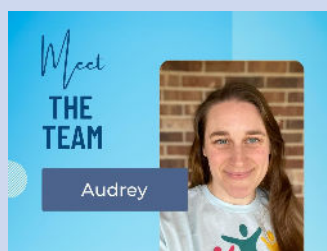
Please follow us on our social media channels to learn more about 211.

**Facebook** [@Delaware211](#) **Instagram** [@delaware\\_211](#) **Twitter** [@211delaware](#)

## Meet the 211 Team



"I love that I am able to brighten up someone's day, by getting them the



"I feel like I'm making an impact in the community when I help families



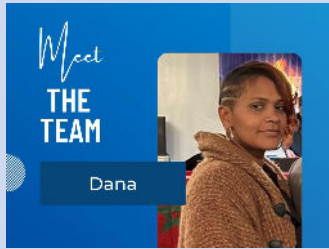
"I have the power to make a positive difference in real time, on the lives of the



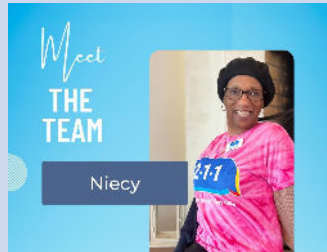
help they need daily."  
-- Patrice

understand their child's  
development and learn big  
and small ways they can  
support that development  
in day to day life." -  
-- Audrey

people I speak to every  
day."  
-- Lynn



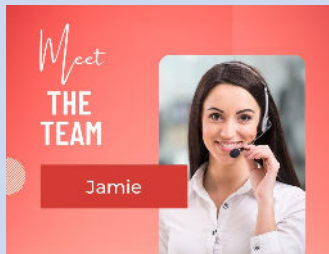
"All we have is EACH  
OTHER!" -  
-- Dana



"We make a living by what  
we get, but we make a life  
by what we give."  
-- Niecy



"I appreciate how  
communities supported  
each other over the past  
few years. Delaware 211 is  
a strong support for all  
individuals in the state."  
-- Debbie



"With kindness and  
compassion, Delaware  
211 helps bring the  
solutions to the problems  
of the families in our  
community by connecting  
them with local programs  
offering assistance."  
-- Jamie



"These past few years  
have been challenging for  
everyone. Many families  
did not know where to turn.  
We were able to assist with  
their needs, whether for  
food, financial support or  
baby formula, we  
connected callers to  
resources for assistance."  
-- Jennifer



We are making an impact  
in our community. Since  
2020, 211 helped 24,796  
community members with  
Covid-19 needs. Please  
consider investing in #211  
to help us continue  
connecting our community  
to their most essential  
needs. [Click here.](#)

## Welcome, Towne Point Elementary School, the newest participant in the *My Very Own Library Program*

United Way of Delaware's *My Very Own Library* (MVOL) program encourages and supports students' love of reading by providing them with new, free books to build home libraries.

United Way of Delaware's MVOL initiative is an example of what happens when generous and involved partners work collectively to address a critical community need. So far, during the 2022-2023 school year, 9037 students from 19 participating schools in 7 Delaware school districts have received 45,185 books,

We are excited to have a new school joining our MVOL family this school year:  
**Towne Point Elementary School, Capital School District.** Under the guidance of

Principal Toriano Giddens, 306 students will receive books from MVOL. Towne Point Elementary recently hosted their first MVOL Book Fair and each student at the school received 5 new books to begin their home library.

"We are so thankful that United Way of Delaware was able to bring the My Very Own Library program to Towne Point Elementary. Students were excited to choose their own books and to interact with the United Way volunteers throughout the book fair. Many students have already come to me to share what they have read and can be spotted reading their new books throughout the school day. My Very Own Library is invaluable because it provides equitable access to books and helps to foster a love of reading. We look forward to continuing this wonderful partnership with the United Way of Delaware and thank you for supporting the Towne Point community!" said Kaitlyn Jurewicz, Library/Media Specialist.

Current Participating MVOL Schools are:

**Brandywine School District**

- Harlan Elem. School

**Capital School District**

- Fairview Elem. School
- Towne Point Elementary School

**Caesar Rodney School District**

- W. Reily Brown

**Christina School District**

- The Bancroft School
- The Bayard School
- Stubbs Early Education Center
- Maclary Elementary School
- Brader Elementary School

**Colonial School District**

- Eisenberg Elementary School
- Wilmington Manor Elementary School

**Indian River School District**

- Georgetown Elementary School

**Red Clay School District**

- Highlands Elementary School
- Lewis Dual Elementary School
- Shortlidge Academy
- Warner Elementary School
- Forest Oak Elementary School
- Richardson Park Elementary School

**Thomas Edison Charter School**

For more information on My Very Own Library, please contact [Ken Livingston](#).

## Discussing the Future of Policing

The ACLU of Delaware, Delaware Racial Justice Collaborative (DRJC), and Smart Justice Partners recently hosted and participated in a Town Hall meeting in Newark to discuss policing in New Castle County.

The event brought together county residents and leaders to share experiences and ideas for the future of policing. Attendees participated in small group discussions where they expressed their vision for a more community-centered approach to policing.



"It was wonderful to hear from a diverse group of New Castle County residents," said DRJC's Alex Southerst. "I was happy to hear just how many individuals came with the sole intention of listening. They didn't have stories of their own to share but wanted to be supportive of those who did."

**World Readaloud Day:  
Celebrating Reading as a Human Right**

World Read Aloud Day is celebrated on the first Wednesday of February to highlight literacy as a human right and to encourage adults to read aloud to children. [Watch the video below](#) for a recap of UWDE's World Readaloud Day activities throughout Delaware. For more information about all of United Way of Delaware's reading initiatives, visit [uwde.org](http://uwde.org).



## **Stand By Me Minority Small Business Program Drives Community Change**

Strong communities rely on strong small businesses. The Stand By Me Minority Small Business Program helps minority entrepreneurs improve the way they do business so they can be a force for good for years to come. Entrepreneurs accepted into the program receive no-cost coaching and support services to help them achieve their business goals. To learn how to participate, [visit our website here](#).

**Build a Business That Inspires**

Small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy. The Stand By Me Minority Small Business Program helps minority entrepreneurs improve the way they do business so that they can be a positive force in the community for years to come.



Learn from Experts



Strengthen Your Business



Inspire. Influence.  
Drive Change.

**Minority  
Small Business  
Program**

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





# A Conversation on Implementing Black History into K-12 Curricula

Here's an opportunity to converse directly with the Delaware Department of Education leadership about the implementation of HB 198 to incorporate Black History into all school curricula from kindergarten through twelfth grade.

**PARENTS & COMMUNITY MEMBERS**

## GETTING H.B.198 RIGHT, ALL THE WAY

A conversation on the implementation of HB 198 (incorporating Black history in K-12)

In invited guests include:

- ⇒ Dr. Monica Gant, Associate Secretary, Department of Education (DDOE)
- ⇒ Dr. Michael Feldman, Social Studies Education Associate, DDOE
- ⇒ School Districts, Charter Schools and HB 198 Leads

**March 1, 2023 | 6:00 PM to 7:30 PM**  
**Virtual via Zoom**

Click or copy this link to register  
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/getting-hb-198-right-all-the-way-tickets-542897831027>

Event Sponsors





# “A CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS”

Parents, join us for the latest event in our series "A Conversation with Parents". These conversations pertain to education, health and financial stability for your family, and provide a safe space for you to discuss issues with others and share your experiences and life lessons.

This session celebrates a continuation of Mental Health Awareness Month. Information on the programs below will be shared:

**GUEST SPEAKER:** Valerie Brown, The Skills Connection

## SESSION DATES & TOPIC:

- **February 21st, 2023** – “We Are Connected” Lesson – Self-care and building positive relationships. Skills – Stress management, communication, resolving conflict. SEL competencies – Relationship Skills, Self-Awareness
- **March 21st, 2023** – “What Are They Thinking” Lesson – Brain science and Adverse Childhood Experience (ACEs) Skills – Identifying emotions, stress management. SEL competencies– Self-Awareness, Self-Management
- **April 18th, 2023** – “Be Accountable” Lesson – Preparing for self-sufficiency Skills – Organization, self-discipline, and self-regulation. SEL competencies – Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making
- **May 16th, 2023** – “Possibilities and Solutions” Lesson – Boundaries and consequences Skills – Problem solving, goal setting. SEL competencies – Responsible Decision Making

There will be a raffle for a \$40 ShopRite gift card at each session, you much attend to Win!

For more information please contact:  
Mr. Ken Livingston at [klivingston@uwde.org](mailto:klivingston@uwde.org)

Child Care and Dinner will be provided!



## Black History Month Events

**26TH AFRAM FESTIVAL PRESENTS**  
**BLACK HISTORY**  
**EXPO<sup>20</sup><sub>23</sub>**

**SATURDAY**  
**FEBRUARY 18TH**  
 10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

**SEAFORD DISTRICT LIBRARY**  
**600 N. MARKET ST. EXTENDED**  
**SEAFORD, DE 19973**

**CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS - AFROFASHION SHOW**  
**ETHNIC FOOD - VENDORS - MUSIC**

**VENDOR FEE: \$25 - INCLUDES 1 TABLE**  
 LIMIT OPEN TO THE FIRST 15 VENDORS

**CASHAPP: \$PATAJONES - FOR 2023 BLACK HISTORY EXPO**

THIS EVENT IS A FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT THE  
 EASTERN SHORE AFRAM CULTURAL FESTIVAL  
 THIS SUMMER ON AUGUST 12, 2023. **AFRAM**

**2023 REHOBOTH BEACH**  
**AFRICAN AMERICAN**  
**Film Festival**

*Presented by the Rehoboth Beach Film Society  
 in partnership with  
 The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice*

**Feb. 17 - 19, 2023**

**Cinema Art Theater**  
 17701 Dartmouth Drive, Lewes, DE

**DOCUMENTARIES**

Friday, February 17 - 7 pm – Streetlight Harmonies  
 Saturday, February 18 - 2:30 pm – A Most Beautiful Thing  
 7 pm – Who We Are: A Chronicle of Racism in America

**SHORT FILMS**

Sunday, February 19, 2 pm  
 A Vanishing Legacy: Black Captains of the Chesapeake Bay  
 Black Jockeys and the Kentucky Derby: A History of Race and Racism  
 Street Knights (Black Chess in Washington Square Park)  
 A Concerto is a Conversation  
 Mr. Tindley

[Network Connect](#)

Black History Family Feud 2/28/2023 - 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

# The New Castle County SCHOLARSHIP

The New Castle County Scholarship Program is accepting applications for awards ranging from \$500 to \$3,000. The deadline to submit an application is March 24, 2023.

Eligible students must be New Castle County residents currently enrolled or who will attend an accredited College or University in the Fall of 2023. Students must demonstrate financial need and provide supporting evidence by submitting the following:

- FAFSA Student Aid Report
- Most recent filed 1040 Tax Return
- Benefits Verification letter or statement

For more eligibility requirements and to learn how to apply, [click here](#).

This webinar is hosted by the Delaware Statewide Social Action and Economic Development Committees of the Wilmington (DE), Dover, Sussex, and Middletown (DE) Alumnae Chapters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated



## THE WORSENING WEALTH GAP: BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

*This webinar is for anyone looking to gain information on how to drive wealth equity via home ownership and investments or who has an interest in driving legislative action to support long term change.*

>> TO REGISTER:  
[TINYURL.COM/WEALTHGAPWEBINAR](https://tinyurl.com/wealthgapwebinar)

TUESDAY  
FEBRUARY 28, 2023  
7 P.M.



100 Black Men of Delaware Presents:

# 1st Annual New Castle County "Best Speller" Spelling Competition

Calling all 6th Grade students throughout  
New Castle County to participate

1st Place Prize \$500  
2nd Place Prize \$250

JOIN US



**Date:** April 22, 2023

**Time:** Check In 10:30-11am (Competition begins at 11am)

**Location:** Route 9 Library (3022 New Castle Ave, New Castle DE, 19720)

Please register by using your phone  
or device to scan the QR Code.

For additional information please contact  
Ken Livingston at [klivingston@uwde.org](mailto:klivingston@uwde.org)



## Free Tax Help Now Available

UWDE partners with Nehemiah Gateway Development Corporation and First State Community Action Agency to promote FREE tax filing services. FREE in-person drop-off, available by appointment only, and virtual tax services are available. For the most current information, call 2-1-1 or visit [Nehemiah Gateway CDC](#). Learn more about making a tax appointment [here](#) and about volunteering [here](#)



# DELAWARE'S HOME FOR FREE TAX PREP

Serving those who need it most, including non-filers!

For household income \$57,000 or less, or \$0 taxable income but need to file to receive stimulus payments and child tax credit



## Nehemiah GATEWAY CDC

SCHEDULE YOUR FREE TAX APPOINTMENT TODAY  
[NehemiahGateway.org](http://NehemiahGateway.org)



Scan to make a drop-off appointment!

### GO VIRTUAL!

100% VIRTUAL TAX PREP

All you need is internet access, an email address, and a cell phone number.

Sign up and submit your information 24/7 from anywhere.

starting 1/24/23

Scan to Have Your Return Prepared Virtually

In conjunction with [deltaxprep.com](https://www.deltaxprep.com/), powered by Code for America

### DROP-OFF TAX SITES

January 23 - April 22, 2023

All sites by appointment only. Hours listed are subject to change. Please see website for up to date information.

#### NEW CASTLE COUNTY

**Hudson State Service Center**  
501 Ogletown Road, Newark, DE 19711  
Appointments Available:  
Monday and Thursday 11am - 5pm  
Wednesday 11am - 5pm

**Route 9 Library & Innovation Center**  
3022 New Castle Ave, New Castle, DE 19720  
Appointments Available:  
Monday 11am - 5pm, Tuesday 5pm - 8pm  
Saturday 10am - 4pm

**Wilmington Public Library**  
10 East 10th Street, Wilmington, DE 19801  
Appointments Available:  
Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10am - 4pm

**Woodlawn Library**  
2020 W 9th Street, Wilmington, DE 19805  
Appointments Available:  
Tuesday 5pm - 8pm, Wednesday 11am - 8pm  
Saturday 10am - 4pm

**University of Delaware**  
(near Star Campus)  
Division of Professional & Continuing Services  
501 S. College Avenue, Newark, DE 19716  
Appointments Available starting 2/4/23:  
Saturday 10am - 4pm

#### KENT COUNTY

**Dover Public Library**  
35 Lookerman Plaza, Dover, DE 19901  
Appointments Available:  
Monday and Saturday 10am - 4pm

#### SUSSEX COUNTY

**First State CAA**  
308 N Railroad Avenue, Georgetown, DE 19947  
Call 302-856-7761 (Se habla Español)  
Appointments Available:  
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9am - 5pm

**Georgetown on Laurel**  
1 East Laurel Street, Georgetown, DE 19947  
Appointments Available:  
Monday and Friday 9am - 1pm

**Goodwill Milford**  
694 N. DuPont Highway, Milford, DE 19963  
Appointments Available:  
Tuesday 10am - 4pm  
Wednesday and Thursday 10am - 1pm  
Saturday 10am - 4pm

### FOR A SUCCESSFUL TAX APPOINTMENT, KNOW WHAT TO BRING!

- Current Government issued photo ID for taxpayer and spouse
- W-2s, 1099s, 1099-MISC, 1099-NEC, 1099-R, 1099-SSA for all employers, retirement, and social security benefits (no pay stubs accepted)
- Social Security cards and/or ITIN letter for everyone listed on tax return
- 6419 Advance Child Tax Credit and 6475 Economic Impact Payment (EIP) stimulus letters
- Childcare statement from all providers with address and tax ID# and/or SS# for childcare provider (or provide receipts with amounts paid)
- 1098s for education expenses paid, mortgage interest paid, property taxes paid and list of any other itemized deductions
- 1095-A for Marketplace Health Insurance Coverage
- Bank account and routing number for direct deposit
- Copy of prior-year tax return (may be required for new credits)

(302) 655-0803 • (800) 560-3372 • DIAL 2-1-1 • Fast refunds! • Get a Prepaid Visa Debit Card • Open a Savings Account

Sponsored by the Delaware Tax and Financial Services Campaign founded and operated by Nehemiah Gateway Community Development Corporation in partnership with First State CAA



## Libraries Need Your Input

The Delaware Division of Libraries has partnered with the Delaware Communities of Excellence and is working to increase equity through literacy. To ensure the most effective path forward, we are seeking to understand the current literacy landscape, by hearing directly from the community.

Please complete this anonymous Literacy Survey to help inform the research on the state's next steps to promoting literacy for all Delawareans.

You can complete the survey here: <https://questionpro.com/t/ALkqAZwXTs>

If you have any questions or concerns, contact [Emma Braun](#) or [Adara Scholl](#).

ANYONE WHO GIVES \$150 OR MORE TO UNITED WAY OF DELAWARE WILL BE ENTERED TO WIN A NEW **2023 KIA SELTOS** | OR **\$8,000 CASH**

2 Year Lease

Participants who donates \$150 or more to the **United Way of Delaware** will be entered for a chance to win!

**GIVE TODAY**



Kia of Wilmington  
AutoTeam Delaware

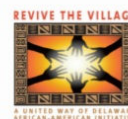


United Way of Delaware

## Feb. 20 is Your Last Chance to Help Us When You Shop on Amazon!

AmazonSmile is a way customers can support United Way of Delaware at no additional cost every time they shop with Amazon. The bad news is that Amazon is ending this program on February 20. We hope you will keep us in mind until that time.

**Here's how you sign up.**



United Way of Delaware | 625 North Orange Street, Wilmington, DE 19801

[Unsubscribe fmclair@uwde.org](mailto:fmclair@uwde.org)

[Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)

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