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Link to original story: <https://www.uwp.edu/explore/news/united-way-interactive-story-map.cfm>

**UW-Parkside students create interactive story map to highlight United Way of Kenosha’s community partners**

Story by UW-Parkside

The University of Wisconsin-Parkside and United Way of Kenosha County are proud to unveil an interactive online map that makes it easier for Kenosha residents to learn about and access resources and services.

During the spring 2024 semester, GIS (Geographic Information System) students in Dr. Caitlin Curtis Whitaker’s GIS and Communities course partnered with United Way to create an interactive story map highlighting United Way’s funded partners and the services they provide. This community resource navigator tool helps individuals find services to assist with financial stability, health and education. The map not only shows the location of each partner, but also provides contact information, service hours, and links for additional information.

Dr. Whitaker is proud to incorporate community-based learning projects (CBL) in her course. “CBL is so crucial to help my students gain a deeper understanding of the important problems that they can help solve with the skills they are learning in class,” Whitaker said. “We were able to arrange field trips to United Way and several of their partners so that the students could get out of the classroom, meet the real people behind these organizations, and actually observe what role they serve in the community. In the eyes of the students, these impactful places are soon transformed from the previously sterile dots on a computer map.”

Akeera Karbouski, a student who worked on the project, agreed. "This course allowed me to use what I learned in the classroom and see it come to life to help out and do something for the community,” she said. “I feel as though I have learned more than just GIS in this class. I've learned teamwork, problem-solving, and professionalism."

Carolynn Friesch, Chief Executive Officer of United Way of Kenosha County and Jevon Claussen, Senior Director of Community Impact Operations, worked closely with the students throughout the semester and offered feedback on the project.

“We are so impressed with the students’ work on this project and are proud to share it with our community,” Friesch said.

Community members can explore the new online resource on the United Way website at <https://www.kenoshaunitedway.org/>. Click on the “Community Resource Navigator” link at the top of the webpage.