

United Way of Will County

54 N. Ottawa Street, Suite 300
Joliet, IL 60432
P 815.723.2500
F 815.723.2814
uwwill.org



United Way of Will County

ANNOUNCEMENT

United Way of Will County President & CEO, Mike Hennessy, retires after 31 years

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 27, 2020

FOR INFORMATION, CALL
Sarah Oprzedek
(815) 723-2500

Joliet – United Way of Will County President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Hennessy is leaving the community impact organization after 31 years of leadership.

Hennessy's last official day with the organization will be September 27, 2020. He remains committed to the community and plans to serve in another capacity. "I will continue to be supportive of the United Way of Will County and all the good work it does," he said.

Sarah Oprzedek, vice president of operations and development will serve as interim CEO and President while a search is conducted.

Leading the United Way of Will County for more than three decades "has been an honor and privilege," Hennessy said. Over these decades, and as a result of Hennessy's leadership, more than \$102,000,000 was raised to benefit Will County funded, community partners.

"We have been blessed to have so many wonderful individuals, companies and organizations involved in our efforts to fulfill our mission," he said.

"I wish everyone affiliated with the United Way of Will County nothing but the best as they continue to make a significant impact to benefit the residents of Will County. The United Way of Will County will always have a special place in my heart," Hennessy said.

United Way Board Chair Tom Hernandez praised Hennessy for his dedication and service to the community.

"Whatever is good about United Way, is largely because of him," said Hernandez who first met Hennessy about 20 years ago. Hernandez, who wrote a community newspaper column at the time, recalled calling Hennessy for information. "He was kind and helpful to a stranger without question or hesitation," Hernandez said.

United Way of Will County

54 N. Ottawa Street, Suite 300
Joliet, IL 60432
P 815.723.2500
F 815.723.2814
uwwill.org



United Way of Will County

“Mr. Hennessy is a passionate advocate for Will County residents in need. He is beacon of grace for our community with an incredible servant’s heart,” Hernandez said.

“We thank him sincerely for everything he has done to help make life a little easier for the countless people who rely on United Way’s partner agencies, and wish him well in whatever comes next,” Hernandez said.

Hennessy joined United Way of Will County as President and CEO in 1989.

About a year later his community leadership skills faced what became a career-defining test when a tornado ripped through Plainfield, Crest Hill and Joliet on August 28, 1990.

The storm was the worst on record for that time. It killed 29 people and caused hundreds of millions of dollars in property damage including flattening then-Plainfield High School and St. Mary Immaculate Church.

Hennessy helped create many local non-profits and community collaborations including South West Suburban Philanthropic Network; Day Break Homeless Shelter; Child Care Resource and Referral; Joliet Alliance for Youth; MAAP (Will County Community Needs Assessment); Will County Community Foundation now known as the Community Foundation of Will County; and Will County Disaster Relief Fund.

Hennessy began his career in public service in 1970 working on the psychiatric floor at St. Joseph Hospital in Joliet.

He also worked at Proviso Association for Retarded Citizens (now Aspire) in Hillside, Illinois as an administrator, social worker, and eventually Development Director.

He advanced to Executive Director of Cerebral Palsy of Will County, before becoming President and CEO of United Way of Will County.

###