

Women of Tocqueville Member of the Month Spotlight

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Strategic Impact Focused | How has your involvement with United Way of Metropolitan Dallas deepened your understanding of the complex challenges facing North Texas, and what about UWMD's approach to addressing those challenges resonates most with you?

UWMD has driven change by working with community leaders and many different agencies to define the challenges and opportunities faced by the larger Dallas community. These opportunities were refined into three key areas of impact- education, income and health. UWMD also defined zones of impact where the most people could be impacted (by zip code) by change. By shining a light on the problems and then tying them to larger categories, it offers an opportunity for greater exposure and a more deliberate approach to problem resolution. It also allows for a focused approach to advocacy. What I like the most is that UWMD helps to highlight difficulties and opportunities while spotlighting agencies and people making a difference. For me education is a cornerstone of my life. I believe that it is a silver bullet to helping people to find commonalities and work collaboratively on long term solutions. But all three areas of impact work together to provide line of sight to a better Dallas.

Grant Panel Experience | Through your engagement with United Way of Metropolitan Dallas, what have you learned about how strategic investments and partnerships can drive lasting impact in our community?

I have been fortunate to be involved in the UWMD Grant panels since 2019. I appreciate the measured and measurable approach that UWMD uses to assess community needs, organization effectiveness, and resource assignment. By having a baseline set of expectations that are consistent with the key areas of impact, it makes an "apples to apples" comparison more manageable. Additionally, UWMD holds all applicants and beneficiaries accountable to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) based on what the agencies say they will do. That level of accountability (do what you say you are going to do and then demonstrate that you did it) is not always implemented well in the non-profit world. UWMD leads the way in helping those groups who receive funding to manage their organizations in a more consistent and professional manner. These expectations allow donors to know exactly how their donations are being used and to have faith that their money is used well.

Philanthropy | What personal values or life experiences most influence how you choose to give back and stay engaged in your community?

My mother set the example of connecting with others in everyday ways. This means that you do outreach in small/relatable ways - taking a casserole over for a family in need or hosting a brunch to raise money for a cause. She illustrated what it means to be part of the community - not just in the community. I have tried to emulate my mother's approach in my own life. People ask me all the time to help them figure out how they can volunteer in the community and make an impact. The first thing I ask them is "what is important to you?" Because we each need to find out what is important to us personally and then build a plan around that. For me, I am interested in improving our community through focusing on building opportunities through the Arts AND access to Education (with a focus on STEM/STEAM and girls/women). I believe that learning is a life-long skill. But the basis for that skill is by helping children to find joy in learning through innovative approaches to education and demonstrating relatable ways that education benefits us all. Additionally, the Arts help everyone to find new ways to understand and creatively relate to the world around us.

And in conclusion, I enjoy the fellowship that I have found in WOT from fun events to get to know the other women as well of days of impact like March Reading Days. Thank you WOT for allowing me to be part of a larger community and to learn more about how to impact Dallas for the better.