Slide 1 – I appreciate everyone taking a few minutes to talk about this year’s United Way campaign! As some of you may notice, we are now working with United Way of East TN Highlands. In the past, we worked with United Way of (Johnson City / Washington County / Carter County / Johnson County), but to become more financially efficient and serve more of those who need help, they went through a merger to create United Way of East TN Highlands! A very important part of the merger agreement was to keep the dollars raised in our county in our county so that our local nonprofits continue to thrive and grow!

Slide 2 – The mission of United Way is the same and just as strong as it always has been. Break the cycle of poverty by UNITING people and resources to strengthen the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community.

Slide 3 – Last year, your support led to a grand total of $XX,XXX of support in our community! This year, we want to see if we can (increase or do it again)! So we’ve set this year’s goal at $XX,XXX! We know this could look like a large number, but just look at what you all were able to do in height of the pandemic.

Slide 4 – For those of you who aren’t as familiar, I want to give you a few of the top reasons to consider United Way this year. In our community, we’ve seen how important our health is. Physical and mental health is essential for all, but costs are unexpected and overwhelming far too often. With your support, we can make physical and mental healthcare available and more affordable to those in need. Our health programs also include meal assistance to the low income or elderly members of our community. Education is a huge focus, after all, the children are our future. In Northeast Tennessee, roughly two-thirds of our 3rd graders are unable to read at grade level, making educationally based after-school care a valuable resource. Your support will help make quality afterschool childcare more affordable for the low income families in our community. And speaking of low-income families, the financial stability of the families in our area is our third focal point. For every financially stable household in our community, there’s a family living paycheck to paycheck and still struggling to make ends meet, forcing them to sacrifice the well-being of themselves, their spouse or even their children.

Slide 5 – Your pledges are crucial to moving our community forward in creating healthier lives, a stronger future and the financial stability of our friends and neighbors. In 2021 more than 40 United Way grants were awarded to nonprofits in our community to create this outcome. Hopefully, with your help, even more can be given out in 2022.

Slide 6 – If you’re thinking to yourself, “how much support should I give this year?” I wanted to share a few levels that are fairly popular to consider. $10 a week or $45 a month can create 3 meals a week for those in need. $25 a week or $110 a month can help create a scholarship for a child to be a part of a quality afterschool care organization! $40 a week, or $175 a month can provide the tools and resources necessary to elevate a family to a financially stable state, thus creating a home that adults and children alike can thrive in for years to come.

Slide 7 – Improving our community is a huge task, and while we have many local nonprofits who we partner with to work toward our goals, we can’t do it without your help. Whether it is through your financial support, volunteering, or acting as a fundraiser yourself, your contribution can and will create a positive impact in our community.

Slide 8 – For those of you who aren’t familiar with United Way or need a quick refresh, I’d like to give a slight overview of how United Way works. If you choose to give through payroll deduct, we ensure that the amount is taken out of your paycheck and send it to United Way for you. The pledges you make allow for United Way to open up grants that local nonprofits apply for. A team of volunteers are brought together to review grants, interview the nonprofit leaders and ensure that the dollars you plan to donate are going to well vetted organizations working to improve the health, education and financial stability of the community. Once a local nonprofit is awarded a United Way grant, they have to report back to United Way periodically to show that they’re using the dollars in the way that they were intended to be used. Now I go through all this to ensure that you understand how it works, but I also do it to show you that your dollars are very well taken care of. They’re going to well vetted, local nonprofits and they’re monitored even after the grant is awarded, ensuring that your donation is improving lives in our community all year long.

Slide 9 – As always, charitable donations are your choice, not something we are forcing you to do. If you want to learn more about United Way of East TN Highlands before making your decision, please visit the website at [www.unitedwayetnh.org](http://www.unitedwayetnh.org).