



United Way of the Midlands

2201 Farnam Street, Suite 200
Omaha, NE 68102-1251
p: 402.342.8232 | f: 402.342.7402
unitedwaymidlands.org

UNITED STARTS WITH YOU

UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:

Brayton Hagge (bhagge@uwmidlands.org)
Office: 402.522.7963 | Mobile: 605.661.2137

Jill Samuelson (jsamuelson@uwmidlands.org)
Office: 402.522.7922 | Mobile: 402.319.8213

For Immediate Release: **September 22, 2020**

Community Invited to Free Event Featuring Critically-Acclaimed Author, Chris Gardner

First National Bank of Omaha (FNBO), Facebook and United Way of the Midlands (UWM) have partnered to host “Unlock the Power Within You,” a free, virtual event featuring special guest Chris Gardner, on Sept. 23rd beginning at 4:00 p.m.

Gardner, who is ranked the 5th most motivational speaker in the world, is a critically-acclaimed author, entrepreneur, single parent and philanthropist. His autobiography, *The Pursuit of Happyness*, served as inspiration for the 2006 film starring Will Smith.

“FNBO is honored to partner with United Way and Facebook to bring Chris Gardner to the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro,” said Clark Lauritzen, President and Chairman. “Mr. Gardner is a truly inspirational and dynamic individual, and his message underscores the power we all have to make our community a better place.”

During the virtual event, Gardner will discuss his experiences with poverty and homelessness and share how his love for his son helped him overcome many of the challenges he faced. Attendees will walk away with a better understanding of how to unlock their inner power and make a difference in our community.

“Mr. Gardner’s message of empathy and hope is especially timely given the increased number of people in need in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro,” said Shawna Forsberg, President and CEO of UWM. “We know everyone who attends will be inspired by his incredible story and motivated to help our neighbors in need in any way they can.”

The free, virtual event will feature a panel discussion with two of United Way’s partners who will share how they are finding solutions to some of our community’s greatest challenges – and how community members can get involved. Albert Varas, Executive Director of the Latino Center of the Midlands, and Tom Warren, President and CEO of Urban League of Nebraska, will serve as panelists. Forsberg will moderate the discussion.

“We are proud to co-sponsor this virtual event featuring Mr. Gardner as a unique opportunity for participants, our employees and the community at large,” said Matt Sexton, Community Development Regional Manager for Facebook, which broke ground on its Papillion Data Center in 2017. “This sponsorship will also help support the Urban League of Nebraska and the Latino Center of the Midlands, two nonprofits who are making a meaningful impact right here in Nebraska. We remain committed to investing in the local community and thank United Way of the Midlands for their leadership on this crucial issue.”

The event will take place on Zoom. Individuals are invited to register at www.unitedwaymidlands.org/chrisgardner. Those who are interested in supporting United Way of the Midlands can make a donation by visiting www.unitedwaymidlands.org/donate.

About United Way of the Midlands

United Way of the Midlands (UWM) has served the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro for more than 95 years. Guided by best practices and community input, it approaches poverty in a specific way – a “united” way. With the support of volunteers, community partners and donors, UWM invests donor dollars efficiently and effectively in our local community. These dollars fund basic needs, education and financial stability programs at local nonprofits, creating a circle of support for people in need. Please visit unitedwaymidlands.org for more information.

###