

## Rock the Block

United Way Fox Cities is supporting the Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity's neighborhood revitalization initiative Rock the Block® with a multi-year, \$300,000 grant. The grant will invest in neighborhoods struggling with decreasing property values and an increasing number of rental properties. John Weyenberg, Executive Director of Greater Fox Cities Area Habitat for Humanity said, "This is a very significant gift for us. It gives us the ability to serve countless numbers of families throughout the Fox Cities and launch Rock the Block®."

In September 2015, Habitat kicked off Rock the Block® near the former Pierce Manufacturing site in Appleton. This May, Rock the Block® served Neenah's Downtown West neighborhood. Expansion of the project will continue to Menasha in 2016. Over the next few years, Habitat plans to build new homes, rehab and repair homes, and help develop neighborhood leaders throughout the Fox Cities.



Tony Gonzalez, Vice President of Community Development at United Way Fox Cities

Ryan Roth, Habitat's Community Development manager, is looking forward to building upon the success of Habitat's first Rock the Block® event. "We completed 31 repair and improvement projects with the help of over 500 volunteers and many community organizations. Since then, five homeowners began more extensive repair work through Habitat's Home Repair program, with another handful of neighbors completing home improvement projects on their own" Roth says.

United Way Fox Cities is proud to be a part of these efforts. United Way uses the LIFE Study (Leading Indicators for Excellence) to look at the overall quality of life in the Fox Cities, determine community needs and make investment decisions. The most recent LIFE study emphasized the condition of housing in established neighborhoods as an area of strong concern. Peter Kelly, President and CEO of United Way Fox Cities said, "We are committed to improving the lives of struggling low-income families and households and recognize the importance of having safe, stable housing in thriving neighborhoods. The formation of this initiative will serve as a valuable resource and will strengthen the support systems available to help a growing number of low-income households to be more self-sufficient."