
UNITED WAY OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY



YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ALLIANCE STAFF

Michelle Roers, MSW **Director, Education Impact Area**

Michelle Roers leads United Way of Northern New Jersey's Education initiatives, which promote access to quality early childhood education and a positive school culture and climate in K-12. Roers oversees strategic partnerships with child care centers, K-12 school districts, institutions of higher education, and the state of New Jersey. Through her leadership, United Way is improving access to quality childhood education for those struggling to afford it – ALICE and poverty-level families.

Roers, a licensed social worker, joined the former United Way of Morris County in 2007 where she served as director of Community Impact. In this role she oversaw broad-based coalitions established to draw attention to and create long-term solutions addressing the shortages of affordable housing, the inequities for accessing affordable high quality child care, the social emotional learning in school age youth, and the growing need to support unpaid family caregivers.

Prior to joining United Way, Roers served as an agent for the Morris County Prosecutor's Office. She developed and coordinated various outreach and community education programs focusing on crime prevention efforts, interpersonal violence, and substance abuse. Roers began her career as a forensic social worker in the Juvenile Rights Division of The Legal Aid Society in New York City. She later tapped into her social work experience as a victim advocate in Morris County and as coordinator of the Legal Advocacy Program at Jersey Battered Women's Service, Inc.

Roers has lived in Morris County since 1998 and actively volunteers her time in the community as a member of the Morris County Human Services Advisory Committee and treasurer of the Parents Group at the Richard Blake Children's Center, a child care center in Morristown.

Liz Warner **Associate Director, United Way *Youth Empowerment Alliance***

Liz Warner is the Co-Director of the School Culture and Climate Initiative: a partnership of United Way and College of Saint Elizabeth, Chair of the New Jersey School Health and Climate Coalition, Community Impact Associate Director and Youth Empowerment Alliance Project Leader on staff at United Way of Northern New Jersey.

Liz joined United Way in 2007. In early 2008 she created and led the team that launched the Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA) which is focused on ensuring all children have the solid foundation and life long skills needed to thrive socially, academically, physically and emotionally. During her tenure she has established United Way of Northern New Jersey as a leading center for Social, Emotional and Character Development (SECD) and Culture and Climate work within the state of New Jersey.



Liz launched the New Jersey School Health and Climate Coalition as well as the School Culture and Climate Initiative and the School Support Network, both of which have recently been recognized as national Promising Practices by Character.org.

Liz sits on many regional and state-wide committees and presents regionally and nationally on collaboration building and the 'School led-District wide' model of sustainable culture and climate change. Most recently, under Liz's leadership, the School Culture and Climate Initiative was awarded a \$793,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to provide the School Culture and Climate Initiative and sustainable mental health supports to students in 17 schools in Morris County adversely impacted by Hurricane Sandy. In 2016, this funding was extended by \$200,000 to include more schools.

Aileen Johnsen
Coordinator, United Way *Youth Empowerment Alliance*

After spending time in Massachusetts and traveling abroad Aileen decided to come back to her home state. Aileen provides support to the Youth Empowerment Alliance team by helping to organize the School Support Network meetings as well as provide support in the everyday operations for the School Culture and Climate Initiative. She is passionate about empowerment especially in youth. Aileen has a background in Psychology and has a passion for teaching yoga. When she is not at United Way Northern New Jersey she can be found traveling the world or hiking in the beautiful outdoors.

Stephanie Samuel, LSW
Program Manager, United Way *Youth Empowerment Alliance*

Stephanie has a Bachelors Degree from the University of Maryland and a Masters Degree in Social Work from Rutgers University. Before joining the team at United Way of Northern New Jersey, Stephanie held a variety of positions in the advocacy and education arena. More specifically, she spent several years advocating for families who had children in special education, she was a case manager on a brain injury unit at a children's hospital and most recently she worked as an advocate and educator for patients who lived with serious autoimmune diseases.

Stephanie is currently the Field Manager for the School Culture and Climate Initiative where she provides support for the consultant team and provides assistance to all of the schools. When she is not at United Way of Northern New Jersey, she can be found traveling, at the beach or at the theater.

Robyn Ulmer
Coordinator, United Way *Youth Empowerment Alliance*

Robyn has a Bachelors Degree from Sarah Lawrence College, having focused on child development, psychology and writing. Robyn's previous work experience includes childcare, customer service, sales, fundraising and youth literacy. Before joining United Way, she worked as the Community Relations Manager for a large bookstore. In 2012, Robyn joined the Youth Empowerment Alliance Team. She coordinates efforts around improving school culture and climate, sharing resources to increase awareness and education around Social Emotional Learning and Character Development. She takes a community-wide approach in her work with United Way and focuses on community engagement.

Additionally, Robyn teaches yoga, goes hiking and running and goes on outdoor adventures with her husband, young son and dog.

