



United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania



EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

SUSAN LEIS

What is your name, title, and department?

Susan Leis, 211 Resource Navigator, United Way's PA 211 SW

Can you tell me about your role at United Way?

My role as a 211 Resource Navigator is to connect callers in need to the resources that will be able to resolve their issue. We help clients find resources for almost any basic need: food, clothing, shelter, rent, utilities, job search, housing search, health aids, etc. Often, clients focus on one need, but by listening to them, we try to determine if they need other support as well. Sometimes they have no idea that we can help with something other than rent or utilities. We do our best to listen patiently and carefully, so we can give them the best resources for success.

What do you love about working here?

There are two things that I love about working at United Way. I love being able to help someone in need, who begins a call feeling hopeless, to ending the call feeling confident, hopeful, and armed with a list of resources they didn't even know was available. That's a wonderful thing to see transpire. Even better is when you do a follow up call and hear that they were able to get the help that they needed, and they are doing great! That makes my day, every single time! Equally important is the wonderful team I get to work with. I have worked many jobs in my lifetime, and this is one of the most amazing groups that I've been part of. We all help each other out, whether it's finding the right resource for a client or lending support after a difficult call, the whole team is there for each other.

How did you end up working at United Way?

I worked in a school pre-COVID as a teacher's aide. I loved that job, I got to use my teaching skills and help kids learn, but, after the pandemic, I just couldn't go back in the classroom and risk bringing COVID home. I feel like my whole life has been preparing me for this position. My jobs in education, in retail, customer service positions, along with being a parent of a child with several special needs, have prepared me to handle the emotionally charged calls that we get daily.

SPEED ROUND: CHOOSE ONE!

Morning person **or** night owl?

Breakfast **or** dinner?

Coffee **or** tea?

Dog person **or** cat person?

Beach **or** mountains?

Susan says: *My dream vacation would be to go to London, Paris and Rome, maybe a few days in Greece!*

Who is the most famous person you have met?

Keith Urban when he opened for Kenny Chesney, when we got backstage passes for a meet and greet!

