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United Way of King County Announces Chris Capossela and Leigh Toner as Campaign Chairs

This year's campaign chairs will capitalize on United Way of King County's strong momentum, attracting a new generation of donors and building a community where people have homes, students graduate, and families are financially stable.

SEATTLE | September 12, 2019. United Way of King County is pleased to announce the co-chairs of our 2019 – 2020 fundraising campaign, which kicked off July 1, 2019.

They are **Chris Capossela** and **Leigh Toner**.

Chris Capossela is the Chief Marketing Officer and Executive Vice President at Microsoft, an early corporate supporter of United Way's ParentChild+ program, which helps King County parents nurture the skills and confidence to become their children's first and best teachers, letting kids from every background arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and thrive.

His wife, Leigh Toner, is a committed community volunteer, presently serving on the Board of Trustees at Seattle Girls' School. She and her husband are proud parents to two young daughters.

The couple has been strong supporters and advocates for United Way for almost three decades. When asked about their decision to serve as this year's co-chairs, Leigh explained that United Way spoke to their deep belief in education as a path to economic opportunity and social equity.

"Chris and I have had so many opportunities, and they trace back to chances we had early in life to discover and develop our potential," explains Leigh. "Every young person deserves that."

"What's great about United Way," Chris adds, "is that they know that obstacles can arise all the way to college graduation, and so they've developed effective programs to intervene at every stage in a child's journey."

Those programs include **Reconnecting Youth**, which helps kids who are struggling to finish

high school, and **Bridge to Finish**, which mobilizes food, transportation, and financial support for community college students fighting poverty to remain enrolled.

Says Leigh, “Beyond all these great programs, we’re also so impressed by how United Way is building a culture of engagement and philanthropy for adults in their 20s and 30s — many of whom are new to the area.”

That initiative, **Emerging Leaders 365**, has thousands of participants, and boasts hundreds of donors who have signed on to give a dollar a day, or \$365 a year — donations that add up fast and enable United Way of King County to continue innovating to meet the unique needs of our community.

In signing on to lead this year’s fundraising campaign, Chris joins a long line of high-profile **Microsoft** executives. **Jeff and Tricia Raikes** — both of Microsoft — led the 2006 – 2007 campaign. Jeff later went on to head the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. **Brad Smith**, now President of Microsoft, and his wife, attorney **Kathy Surace-Smith**, led the 2010 – 2011 campaign.

“I’m honored to carry on a proud company tradition of supporting one of the region’s most important nonprofits,” says Chris. “As a company, Microsoft stands with people experiencing homelessness and other forms of displacement, including refugees. United Way of King County’s efforts are very much in line with our work in those areas. But beyond that, I think there’s tremendous opportunity to introduce United Way to a new generation of Microsoft employees — as well as to tech employees across the region.”

Chris and Leigh will get their chance to do just that starting at September 13’s **Day of Caring**, the biggest all-community day of volunteering in the Pacific Northwest.

Both look forward to the community immersion and learning that comes with the role. “Even one person homeless is too many,” says Leigh. “We’re eager to dig into how United Way helps, including programs like **HomeBase** that help people on the verge of homelessness break their fall.”

Chris goes further, explaining, “We all have a role to play in making an impact and advancing a future for everyone. This year, Leigh and I expect to learn much more about these issues. By the end of the year, we anticipate we’ll be even stronger advocates than we already are.”

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ABOUT UNITED WAY OF KING COUNTY

One of the nation’s largest and most successful United Way chapters, United Way of King County works with determination and innovation to create a community where people have homes, students graduate, and families are financially stable.

Signature United Way of King County programs include **Home Base**, which helps people on the verge of homelessness stay stable in housing; **Jobs Connect**, which connects people already homeless with jobs to get them back on their feet; **ParentChild+**, which helps struggling parents gain the skills to be their child’s first,

best teacher; **Reconnecting Youth**, which helps kids drop back into high school (or a GED) after falling out, and; **Bridge to Finish**, which helps cash-strapped community college students stick with their education instead of giving up.

United Way of King County is supported by thousands of contributors large and small across King County, including a fast-growing number of professionals in their 20's and 30's who take part in its **Emerging Leaders** program.

95% of every contributed dollar goes direct to community impact thanks to a substantial endowment originally seeded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and designed to offset the bulk of organizational operating costs.