



STRONG STUDENTS =

STRONG COMMUNITY

DID YOU KNOW?

Truancy is often the first sign of trouble. Truancy is the first indicator that a young person is giving up and losing his way. When our youth start skipping school, they are telling their parents, school officials, and the community that **they are in trouble and need our help** if they are to keep moving forward in life.

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Students who are truant eventually drop out of school.

High school dropouts are two and a half times more likely to be on welfare than high school graduates. Dropouts are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as high school graduates. Dropouts earn much lower salaries.

Students who become truant and eventually drop out of school set themselves up for a lifetime of struggle.

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Truancy is a gateway to crime. High rates of truancy are linked to high daytime burglary rates and high vandalism.

Truancy is the most powerful predictor of juvenile delinquent behavior.

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In Rockford, approximately 2,500 students a day are absent without an excuse and despite tremendous progress, our truancy rates are still **three times greater than the state average.**



In 2004, United Way of Rock River Valley began a community-wide effort to combat truancy.

By partnering with the City of Rockford, Winnebago County, Rockford School District, and others, in the past year the **truancy rate dropped by nearly 30 percent** in the Rockford Public Schools (from 9.4 percent to 6.7 percent).

Furthermore, 81 percent of all students cited for truancy had fewer than five unexcused absences from school once becoming involved with the project.

The results speak for themselves.
But there is still work to be done
and your support is needed.



Truancy Intervention Specialists

United Way has placed truancy intervention specialists in each of the local public high schools. What do these specialists do? First, they meet with both the student and their parents. Involving parents is a critical component of the program's success. Parents, students, and truancy intervention specialists work together to create a plan for students and parents to improve attendance and monitor student absences. Students are linked with any needed services and provided with support. Students are held accountable if they do not improve attendance. Students are referred back to the court system for intervention – public service work, parent fines, and continued work with truancy intervention specialists.

Students working with our specialists learn the value of school, get the support they need to be successful, and set and achieve personal goals.

Post Secondary Advisors

To what do our youth aspire? One of the root causes of truancy in our area is a lack of post-secondary aspiration – which is manifested by the small number of adults with a Bachelor's Degree or higher (13 percent). Many of our students grow up in households that are largely low income and lack role models to assist with post secondary preparation.

To help with this navigation, post secondary advisors are being placed in district high schools. The advisors keep students on a successful path toward post-secondary enrollment, retention and success.

The advisors identify student assets and build career plans built on individual students' strengths; provide career advising and mentoring; create job shadowing experiences based on interest inventories; provide workshops including ACT preparation, financial aid applications, school applications, essay writing, and more. Advisors track graduates through post secondary experiences and follow up when needed.

What does this mean to me?

You may be thinking that truancy doesn't affect you. You may be thinking that only the truant students and dropouts pay the price for their behavior. Nothing is farther from the truth.

Truancy has devastating effects on our county's economy, our community, and our future.

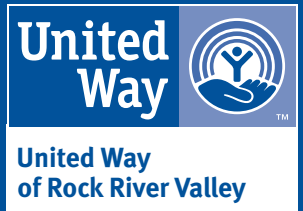
How does truancy affect me?

- Truancy erodes economic growth by causing a reduction of skilled labor jobs in our region.
- In 2006 alone, it is estimated that the short-term costs of truancy in our region were \$25 – 38 million.
- Truancy from 1998 to 2006 cost our region between \$73 and \$118 million in lost personal income.
- This loss of income revenue stream cost a loss of 830 – 1,329 additional jobs in the same eight-year period.
- Conservative estimates show that continued chronic truancy over the next two decades could reduce the Rockford Gross Metropolitan Product by 2.7 – 5.5 percent.

Take a Stand!

Please join United Way of Rock River Valley and our community partners in eradicating truancy. Your support is vital to the success of our efforts. Together, we are doing what matters.

TAKE A STAND!



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