



MEDIA STATEMENT

Nov. 11, 2024

As United Way of Greater Knoxville (UWGK) CEO Matt Ryerson has decided to pursue other professional opportunities, the UWGK board of directors has accepted his resignation. Following a four-month search, Ryerson was hired in December 2019 and served as CEO of the organization for five years.

United Way of Greater Knoxville Chief Impact Officer Chrystal Armstrong Brown will serve as Interim CEO as of Nov. 11, 2024, providing stability and continuity through this leadership transition.

"Matt served as a bridge, following Ben Landers' 26 years of leadership in the CEO position, to where we are today. And now, we're ready to move forward with the next chapter of this great organization with intention, innovation and dedication," UWGK Board Chair Clarence Vaughn III said. "Chrystal is a proven leader with a passion for community, vision for transformational innovation and commitment to measurable and meaningful impact. The board is thrilled to have her step into the Interim CEO position to provide stability and servant leadership throughout this transition."

Armstrong Brown has served as Chief Impact Officer of United Way of Greater Knoxville since April 2023. Previously, she served as vice president of program development for Emerald Youth Foundation for nearly five years, and before that, she was the director of education for United Way of Southwest Virginia. Her experience in development, education and coordination also includes past roles at AgeOptions in Illinois and locally at Tennessee Voices for Children & K-Town Youth Empowerment Network, Boys & Girls Clubs of the Tennessee Valley, University of Tennessee-Knoxville and the Knoxville Area Urban League. In addition, she has 20 years of ministry and pastoral leadership experience through Overcoming Believers Church and Crossings Church, both in Knoxville. Armstrong Brown earned an MBA in Organizational Leadership from Johnson University and a master's degree in English Rhetoric and Writing from the University of Tennessee.

"The United Way is evolving, and we must continue to transform in order to make the most meaningful and enduring impact through our work," Armstrong Brown said. "But, at the heart of everything we do, we continue to unite people and resources. It's in our name; it's in our DNA; it's in our servant hearts. We are stronger together. And I thank the board of directors for entrusting me to help lead our team as we stand together with hope and determination for this next chapter for United Way of Greater Knoxville."

The UWGK board of directors is working on next steps to identify and appoint the organization's next CEO.