



# NORTH IOWA CASA NEWS

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## JERE MERRILL PLAYS KEY ROLE AT UNITED WAY

**In addition to being a CASA volunteer for over 3 years, Jere Merrill plays a key role at the United Way of North Central Iowa. We thought you might be interested in learning more about her role...**

### What is your volunteer role at United Way?

Currently I am a member of the United Way Board and co-chair the Community Impact Division. This division is responsible for the requests for funding, allocating the funds and holding the agencies accountable for the funding they received. I also participate in the Resource Development group (fund raising) and Strategic Priority group.

### How did you get involved?

Several years ago, I volunteered for the Citizens Review process and have continued to be involved every year.

### How much time do you put into it?

The past 2 years, the hours have greatly increased due to my involvement with the Community Impact Division. This will continue into 2011. I really can't give you an idea of how much time other than a lot! Prior to my involvement with the CI division, the time commitment was minimal as the UW staff does their best to appreciate the volunteers time away from work. Depending on the assignment, it could be 2 full days to just a few hours a month.

### What does your role entail?

Being a member of the UW board, I assist with functions the UW sponsors. It is also important that I attend monthly board meetings and all other meetings that are scheduled with the various segments I'm involved with. Most importantly my role as the co-chair for the Community Impact Division involves various meetings with agency leaders and local volunteers. As a co-chair, it is my responsibility to review all Venture Grants submitted, be involved in all decision making when it comes to funding and facilitate a variety of meetings with the community and agencies. This group is also responsible for reviewing the quarterly reports from the agencies to ensure the outlined outcomes and goals are being met.

### Why did you get involved?

I love the United Way mission and enjoy giving back to the community!



### Congratulations to:

- *CASA Angie Lien for being chosen as one of 20 under 40 in the Globe Gazette*
- *Welcome to CASA Alan Steckman who was sworn in on September 30*
- *Wendy's son Alex who made All State Choir for the second year*



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## Little Ways to Drop the Pounds and Keep Them Off

Bad news: The average person gains one to two pounds a year. Good news: Consuming just 100 fewer calories each day is enough to avert that weight gain. If you're finding this out a little too late—and you want to actually *lose* some of that weight—you have to downsize by 500 calories a day. But you don't have to slash them all from your plate. "You can eat 250 calories less and then burn 250 by walking for 30 to 45 minutes. Over a week, that will produce about a pound of weight loss," says Holly Wyatt, MD, a clinical researcher at the Center for Human Nutrition in Denver. You won't see dramatic changes immediately, but small tweaks like these will pay off over time.

### Order two appetizers

According to a study at the University of North Carolina, the average hamburger is 23 percent larger today than it was in 1977. Choose a pasta dish and salad or soup from the appetizer column, instead.

### Visit the vending machine

Nibbling on single servings is better than digging your way to the bottom of a megabag of chips.

### Start with salad...

and eat less during the rest of the meal, says a study from Pennsylvania State University. When salads were topped with low-fat mozzarella and low-calorie Italian dressing instead of high-fat alternatives, women ate 10 percent fewer calories over the course of the day.

### Stick a fork in it

If you prefer your salad dressing on the side, dip your fork into it before stabbing your greens. That little maneuver could cut hundreds of calories.

### Watch coffee calories

The fancy concoctions that are now the javas of choice for many people can contain as many calories as an entire lunch.

### Walk and talk

When your cell phone rings, slip on your walking shoes and stroll the halls at work or hoof it outside. If you did this for 10 minutes every workday at a moderate 3 mph pace, you'd burn about 1,000 calories a month and lose 3 pounds a year.

### Crack a nut

Dieters in a Harvard University study who ate a handful of peanuts or mixed nuts daily were more likely to keep weight off than a group whose regimen didn't include the high-fat snacks.

### Don't just sit there

The average person burns 100 calories per hour sitting and 140 per hour standing. Get on your feet 2 hours a day while you work, and you could drop an extra 6 pounds over the year.

### Sleep well, lose more

Insufficient shut-eye appears to increase production of the stress hormone cortisol, which regulates appetite. High levels seem to worsen bingeing and hunger; moreover, too little sleep could keep your body from burning carbohydrates, which translates to more stored body fat.

### Double your protein

The high-protein, low-carb approach may help keep you from losing muscle along with fat, according to a study published in *The Journal of Nutrition*. According to study author Donald K. Layman, PhD, of the University of Illinois, the amino acid leucine—found in beef, dairy, poultry, fish, and eggs—may help preserve muscle tissue.

### Keep an exercise journal

Writing down your fitness achievements is a great way to track your progress, give yourself positive feedback, and maintain focus on your goals.

### Eat dairy daily

A piece of cheese or a cup of milk or yogurt can rev up your metabolism, a University of Tennessee study found. People who cut 500 calories a day from their diets while eating yogurt three times a day lost 13 pounds over 12 weeks, more weight and more body fat than a control group who only cut calories.

### Have an apple before dinner

How did 346 people in small-town Washington State lose an average of 17 pounds each in 3 months? With regular exercise, balanced eating, and an apple with every meal. The typical apple has 5 grams of fiber, which makes you feel fuller.

### Be wary of white foods

That's the color of most high-calorie carbs—bagels, potatoes, breads, rice, creamed corn, and the like. Drink water. Your body often mistakes thirst for hunger, so staying hydrated means you'll probably also stay satiated.

### Act like a kid

Expand your definition of physical activity to include shaking your booty with your kids. It's a welcome break from the StairMaster and can burn just as many calories (about 120 every 20 minutes).

### Munch a handful of M&M's

Just under half a pack of plain candies adds only 100 calories to your daily tally and can satisfy a sweet tooth.

### Be picky about bread

Select loaves with whole grain listed as the first ingredient, and make sure each slice contains at least 2 grams of fiber.

### Eat breakfast

A Harvard study found that people who did so every day cut their chances of becoming obese and developing diabetes by 35 to 50 percent, compared with those who ate breakfast only twice a week.

### Brush your teeth after every meal

It doesn't just fight cavities: Brushing serves as a physical and psychological cue to stop eating. When you're on the go, a few Altoids or a breath strip can have the same effect.

[www.health.com](http://www.health.com)



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**Describe the community impact concept:**

Our focus has changed greatly over the past few years and we are now focusing on Education, Income and Health. For years, we have heard from our donors that we (United Way) need to stop trying to be all things to all people and start having a more focused approach. For the past few years, our local UW board has been brainstorming and planning for the movement to specific focus areas. In 2010, endless hours were spent planning with volunteers and community partners to highlight how this would work. The applications for the 2011 funding included outcomes that were approved by the UW board in November of 2010. The expectation is that the community partners (agencies) will work with these outcomes so we can have a more unified approach with our funding.

The second part of the Community Impact focus is the Venture Grant funding for new and evolving processes/projects for our 9 county area. These funding requests come into the UW and the Community Impact division leads review the request, analyze the need and viability and then approve/disapprove the request.

**What training have you received and how do you see United Way’s new approach as benefiting the community?**

Training: When starting with the Citizens Review process, you are trained on the process and understanding outcomes. Most of it is hands on and learning from others. I did attend the UW Leadership Conference this past March in Washington DC and learned a great deal on how other UW agencies work and have implemented change.

I see the new approach benefiting the community from the perspective that we are encouraging agencies to work together to provide services to the community. By focusing on specific areas/needs of the community, we are able to provide a larger benefit to those partner agencies and those that seek the needed services. The donors have made it very clear to the UW Board that trying to be all things to all people isn’t working. Focusing on the specific needs of the area we serve was a must.

**Thank you, Jere, for your many contributions to our community!**



**Youth CASA Story**

Dear Ann,

I would like to say you are like the mother I never had, but you say you’re too young to have a 20 year-old daughter and a 4 year-old granddaughter. I would like to also say that you are my guardian angel. The acronym of CASA to me stands for C for Caring, A for Affectionate, S for Sensitive and A for Ardent.

I can talk to you about relationships, school, friendships and mothering. Our relationship has grown so much. I love spending time with you and laughing, especially when you turn red in the face after trying to speak our slang.

I cried when I was told that we may not be able to keep in contact after I eman-

ipated. To know that you have to care for another youth, makes me a little jealous. I don’t want anyone to have the connection we do, but then again, I also know that you’re helping other youth, just like you have helped me.

Only you, your husband and myself know what you have done for my daughter and I and you have went above and beyond your job. As a mother, best friend and CASA you’ve done your part. You have done things that I should have known as a young woman, yet I still find myself calling you for idiotic things, like what is the number to 411.

However, the real question is why? After you first met me, why didn’t you

leave? After I said I didn’t want to have anything to do with you or for that matter any judge, social worker or CASA, why were you so persistent? Why did you care? Why do you still care? Anyway, to make a long thank you short.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart!  
[www.casaofalamedacounty.org](http://www.casaofalamedacounty.org)



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If you have lost your Smile....Do not fret for it is kept safe in all that surrounds you....in a Flower or on a Mountain top....in a Child's laughter or in a Song....in a Dream or in a Memory....in a Stranger or a very Close Friend....It is kept safe for you. ~scs~

## Slow Cooker Pepper Steak

2 pounds beef sirloin, cut into 2 inch strips  
Garlic powder to taste  
3 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 cube beef bouillon  
1/4 cup hot water  
1 tablespoon cornstarch  
1/2 cup chopped onion  
2 large green bell peppers, roughly chopped  
1 (14.5 ounce) can stewed tomatoes, with liquid  
3 tablespoons soy sauce  
1 teaspoon white sugar  
1 teaspoon salt



Sprinkle strips of sirloin with garlic powder to taste. In a large skillet over medium heat, heat the vegetable oil and brown the seasoned beef strips. Transfer to a slow cooker.

Mix bouillon cube with hot water until dissolved, then mix in cornstarch until dissolved. Pour into the slow cooker with meat. Stir in onion, green peppers, stewed tomatoes, soy sauce, sugar and salt.

Cover and cook on high for 3 to 4 hours, or on low for 6 to 8 hours. Serves 6.

TIP: Add green peppers 30 minutes or so before meat is done, so peppers are crisper and don't get soggy.

[www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com)

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