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## Shouse committed to mission

ANDREW CRITCHELOW The News-Enterprise Jan 29, 2019 Updated Jan 31, 2019



United Way of Central Kentucky Director of Operations Christa Shouse has worked with the organization since 2012. She also served as administrative assistant, office manager and interim director.

Handling the logistics of an organization with thousands of diverse stakeholders can be quite the task. It's a job United Way of Central Kentucky Director of Operations Christa Shouse has faced head-on since 2012.

Shouse describes herself a juggler of many duties at United Way: a person who puts out fires behind the scene as the organization meets its goal of providing grants for community partners and instituting initiatives to face the unique needs of the region.

“Whatever you need done, I’m going to find a way to do it,” Shouse said of her role.

Shouse’s job description includes a variety of tasks such as handling calls, scheduling meetings, managing records, scheduling special events, managing pledge payments, speaking at campaign meetings, working with volunteers and overseeing social media.

“One of the things I really like about this job is you a lot of times don’t know what to expect,” she said.

Before taking on her current role, Shouse served as an administrative assistant and office manager for United Way. Her background includes roles as a child support investigator, a paralegal, a clerk and a forklift operator.

“I just wanted to be part of something bigger that was making a change in the community,” Shouse said of her involvement at United Way.

Shouse also served as interim director for United Way Central Kentucky in June of 2018 before current CEO Ron Eppes took over in October.

Megan Stith, former director for the organization, who now serves as dean of institutional advancement at Elizabethtown Community and Technical College, said Shouse’s multi-faceted understanding of the organization set her at ease when it came to leadership transition.

“Christa understands the organization on every level and was able to ensure a smooth transition to new leadership,” she said. “I could not have stepped into my new role without knowing she was there to lead United Way during this critical time.”

Shouse said one of her favorite aspects of her job is witnessing the community’s generosity through volunteer efforts and donations.

“I think everybody has a heart for the work being done,” she said.

Shouse said her engagement with community needs goes beyond working with local nonprofits. Handling the phones at United Way , Shouse often talks one-on-one with people in crisis. She said this has made her truly realize the needs of the community.

“There’s no cap on it,” she said. “It goes far deeper than I think most of us realize.”

When she's not working with United Way, Shouse enjoys photography and painting. She has volunteered with Via Colori, a street art festival designed to support local trauma-informed foster care, for seven years. She also has volunteered with Fine Arts Society in Bardstown and has exhibited some of her own photography through the organization.

Shouse said she enjoys photographing nostalgic scenes and subjects that are disappearing from the landscape such as old barns and abandoned buildings. She said she feels compelled to preserve these scenes before they disappear.

Shouse said she plans to start a blog Kentucky Calling, showcasing local slices of Americana.

"I'm sort of a fan of the nostalgic," she said. "Maybe there's no other way of giving that experience than through a photograph."

Looking toward the future of her position with United Way, Shouse said she would like to see an expansion in UWCK's partnerships and volunteer base and continued success for United Way programs such as Way to Work, which is designed to combat the area workforce shortage.

Stith said Shouse treats every client she encounters with respect and a willingness to help.

"Whether she is providing information on community resources to a family in crisis or scheduling hundreds of campaign meetings each year, Christa is uniquely able to problem-solve and help clients achieve their goals," she said.

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