



United Way
of Island County

MAKING CHOICES

How will you invest your resources?

INSTRUCTIONS

- Make a copy of the “game sheet” for everyone in the meeting.
- Provide each person 15 candies (Smarties work well because there are 15 in each roll). If you want, people can work in teams.
- Tell each participant or team their candies will become symbolic of their “budget” and not to eat their candies until the end of the game!
- Explain that for the purposes of the game each person or team is to pretend they’re married with 2 children.
- One adult in the household is working full-time and the other is working two part-time jobs. Both make minimum wage.
- The family has a limited budget and only 15 candies to spend.
- They have some tough decisions to make.
- Each participant must study their choices in each row and invest their candies with 1, 2 or 3 candies depending on what’s most important to them.
- They cannot skip a row.
- Usually, the least desirable option requires an investment of 1 candy and the most desirable option requires 3 candies.
- After they’re done making their choices, ask the group how it felt to invest their candies. (Usually the response is, “There weren’t enough candies!”)
- Now tell them there’s been a change. One of their children has an infected tooth and has to see the dentist. The family doesn’t have dental insurance. In order to get the child the dental care the family must give up 2 candies.
- Tell the group to take off 2 candies and adjust the rest as needed.
- Tell them there’s been another change. Their spouse just got laid off with no severance pay. They have to take off 4 candies to adjust.
- Let them go through the exercise of taking off the 4 candies and adjusting the rest.

THE MORAL OF THE STORY:

Hardworking people make these kinds of tough decisions every day in Island County.

United Way not only helps meet the immediate needs like hunger and homelessness, they also address the root causes of the problems. It’s not enough to feed someone who’s hungry. It’s important to find out why the person is hungry in the first place and address the problem at its source.

United Way provides a coordinated, strategic, sustainable approach to solving the local community’s most pressing issues.