Thank you, Russ and good afternoon, everyone. It’s my pleasure to be here today.

I’m proud to be part of United Way of Greater Cleveland, where we are truly charting a new course in our community.

I’ve just completed my first year in this role, and it’s given me the opportunity to see first-hand that this organization and everyone who works in support of it, takes our mission very seriously - and that is to make sure the person in need is at the center of all we do. That’s our true north.

We’re accountable to the investments we make on our donor’s behalf. We’re committed to catalyzing change. And now more than ever, we’re collaborating and partnering. Because we need the power of YOU to make Greater Cleveland even Greater.

United Way is constantly challenged to work harder and smarter to stand up and address poverty in more effective ways. You’re going to hear more about how we were doing that a little later on.

But for now, know that we as a board recognize that United Way of Greater Cleveland is the largest private sector Investor in health and human services in our region. And that resource must be protected for
the good of our community. For everyone today, and for those that follow us.

The kinds of systemic changes we've been making --as difficult as they may be--are essential. Our plan forward is an outgrowth of our Strategic Plan and was in large part created through the hands-on work of a Board that's rolled up their sleeves and put their energy and commitment behind it. I'm most grateful to chair such an engaged group of volunteer leaders, and I thank them for their courage and willingness to make some hard choices.

We have so many board members who have done a tremendous job during their terms.

And we're welcoming new Board members, including representatives from Cuyahoga, Geauga and Medina Counties, and our Young Leaders.

(on screen)

- Joe DiRocco  Fifth Third
- Randy Paine  KeyBank
- Dr. Nabil Chehade  MetroHealth
- Matt Carroll  Cuyahoga County
- Mary Ogden  United Way of Medina County
- Mary Ann Stropkay  United Way Services of Geauga County
- Tara E. Samstag  United Way of Greater Cleveland Young Leaders
Id also like to give a special word of thanks to our outgoing board members

[ on screen
  • Akram Boutros
  • Bob Helmer
  • Shibu Joykutty
  • Tony Minor
  • Beth Mooney
  • Jim Niehaus
  • John Skory
  • Jerry Stadler ]

There are two people that deserve special mention. Beth Mooney--United Way of Greater Cleveland, and this city owes her a debt of gratitude for her servant leadership to this community. We wish her all the best as she continues to forge ahead in her next chapter as community leader and philanthropist. Shes passing the torch to Randy, who we will expect to carry on Beths tradition.

Theres no better example of a commitment to excellence than Dr. Toby Cosgrove. Its my pleasure to recognize and thank Dr. Cosgrove for his leadership as this years campaign chair. Last year alone, we were able to give back to the community $33.2 million, which is an incredible achievement. I commend all of you for this.
And now, Dr. Cosgrove has generously agreed to another leadership role within our United Way community. I am thrilled to announce that he will serve as the inaugural Chair of the Impact Institute, our Think Tank with an action plan.

We have no doubt together we will aggressively advance the work of the Institute on behalf of our fellow Greater Clevelanders in immeasurable and enduring ways under the leadership of Dr. Cosgrove, Augie and the entire team of experts and community advocates with us today.

I’d like to take a moment to ask Dr. Cosgrove to stand so we can recognize him for his past and future contributions to create meaningful and lasting change within our community for every person within it.

Before I close, I do want to take a pause here to honor a great philanthropist, Steve Minter, who served as the president and executive director of the Cleveland Foundation for two decades. His passing is a loss for the community, and he will be remembered.

United Way is an organization that relies fully on the passion and purpose of the people across our community to achieve and sustain success.

We look for your continued support and leadership as our guides, our measures for success and our ambassadors. We need you to continue carry the message that no citizens zip code should determine the trajectory their opportunities.

On behalf of Augie and the entire Board of Directors at United Way of Greater Cleveland, I thank you all.
Russ…with that, I'll turn it back over to you.