



2026 Nonprofit Leader of the Year

Megan Remaley: Clearing the Way



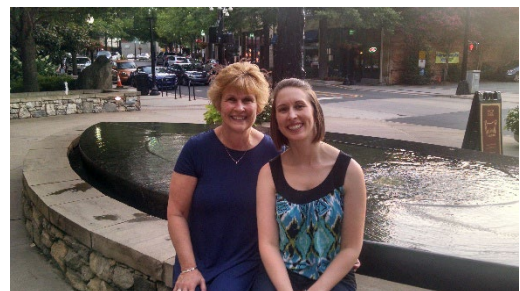
Receiving recognition is not especially comfortable for Megan Remaley, in part because she sees every achievement as the result of many people's work. As President and CEO of United Way of Treasure Valley, and as the 2026 Nonprofit Leader of the Year, Remaley is being recognized for leadership that does not seek the center of the story, but instead clears the way for people, organizations, and communities to do their best work together.

It is a role she describes less as a spotlight and more as a snowplow — the first on the road, clearing a path so a talented team of professionals, collaborators, and change makers can do the work that helps communities thrive. Without them, she says, there would be no work to acknowledge. If there is one thing she hopes people remember, it is not that change was tied to her alone, but that the work itself was rooted in genuine care, belief, and action.



That way of leading was shaped early by observing the actions of her late mother — a role model who did what was necessary to care for her family and the people around her. Having barely completed high school, Remaley's mother carried a kind of practical wisdom that came from experience, not credentials. She was tenacious, funny, strong-willed, and unafraid to be direct — sometimes even a little rough around the edges. But beneath that toughness was a deep tenderness, especially for children. As a paraprofessional in an

elementary school, she became part of the quiet network of adults who notice when a child needs support, encouragement, or simply someone steady in their corner. In watching her mother show up that way, Remaley learned that care is not always soft-spoken. Sometimes it looks like persistence, honesty, humor, and doing what needs to be done. From her, Remaley learned that it is possible — and necessary — to be both strong and tender.





That balance continues to show up in her leadership today: a commitment to clear expectations, honest accountability, and genuine care for the people doing difficult, mission-driven work. It also helped shape a career grounded in the belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive. With a Master of Social Work from Virginia Commonwealth University and a background that includes work with Community Schools and United Way organizations across several states, Remaley has spent her career focused on strengthening communities from the inside out.

Before becoming President and CEO of United Way of Treasure Valley, she served as Director of Community Impact, where she helped lead major collaborative efforts including the expansion of the Community School Strategy across rural Idaho and work to better connect Idahoans with resources through findhelpidaho.org. The Community School Strategy, a through line throughout her career, depends on schools, nonprofits, public agencies, and community partners trusting one another, sharing resources, and continuing to improve together. The work is data-driven, but it also leaves room to experiment, listen, and adjust.

Similarly, findhelpidaho.org reflects Remaley's commitment to systems-level solutions — tools that make it easier for people and organizations to navigate complex needs together. For Remaley, “thriving” is not a one-size-fits-all outcome. It means creating space for people to access the resources, relationships, and opportunities that help them define and pursue their own best lives. She often thinks about young people in this work, and the simple but powerful idea that “when you see it, you can dream it.”



Much of her leadership has focused on opening that space early — helping ensure children and families can see more options, make informed decisions, and imagine futures that may not have felt possible before. Her leadership style is grounded in collaboration, but not the easy, surface-level kind. Remaley is candid that true partnership is hard. It requires setting aside competition, scarcity, and the instinct to prove who is “in charge.”

She prefers work where people come to the table as equals, with enough honesty and patience to return again and again to the shared purpose. Sometimes that means raising a hand to lead. Other times, it means



recognizing when another organization is better positioned to do the work. For Remaley, lasting change happens when communities move from “we can solve this for you” to “we can solve this with you.”

When she looks at Idaho’s nonprofit sector, Remaley sees both extraordinary strength and important opportunity. “Idaho runs on nonprofits,” she notes, describing the sector as filling critical gaps that make quality of life possible in communities across the state. At the same time, she sees room for deeper collaboration, more shared resources, and a shift away from scarcity thinking. As the philanthropic landscape changes, she believes nonprofits will need to leverage relationships and resources in more intentional ways — not to protect individual organizations, but to better serve communities.

Her advice to emerging nonprofit leaders is simple and generous: trust your knowing, and listen. Remaley believes people often arrive in leadership roles because passion, skill, and lived experience have prepared them to contribute. But that confidence must be paired with humility. When leaders trust themselves and make listening the first goal of their work, she believes they are more likely to find the right next step, even when community needs feel overwhelming.

What gives her hope for Idaho is the state’s deep desire for community and connection. Even in moments of division, Remaley believes there is a strong current of care for one another — a shared hope that our families, neighbors, and communities can thrive. If people can keep returning to that care, she believes the rest can be figured out together. That humility and hope are part of what make Remaley’s leadership so meaningful. She understands that people are the work — the staff members, partners, donors, volunteers, and community members whose passion and skill turn generosity into impact. By clearing the way for others, Megan Remaley is helping create stronger pathways for Idahoans to access opportunity, support, and hope. Her recognition as the 2026 Nonprofit Leader of the Year honors not only what she has accomplished, but how she has chosen to lead: with courage, collaboration, tenderness, and an unwavering belief that communities thrive when everyone has the chance to be part of building them.