

United Way Extends Campaign – Still Time to Give!

Deciding the needs of the community are too great to give up, the United Way of Union County's Board of Trustees has voted to extend this year's campaign.

This year, for the first time, the organization set a goal of \$1 million. It was ambition, leaders said, but necessary.

"With requests over \$744,000 coming from our current Partner Agencies and knowing there are additional needs we may want to fund through our Special Grant Fund, we simply cannot turn our back now on a goal that has not been met" said Dave Gleeson, Board Member and Chairperson of the Community Investment Committee.

At a meeting on Wednesday, the board heard that the fund-raising projection for the campaign right now is at just over \$934,000. That is 93.4 percent of the goal, just \$66,000 short.

Tony Eufinger, Board President said "Now is the time for Union County to pull together to help close this gap. We are asking everyone who believes in helping their neighbors who are struggling with hunger, illness, or providing shelter for their families to contribute what they can. Our \$1 million goal is not an abstract number. It's the amount we need to raise to meet real needs that our friends and our own families experience every day in our community - critical needs that will go unmet without our help."

This year's goal was intentionally ambitious. During the United Way's Strategic Planning process six years ago the United Way Board of Trustees determined that by now, \$1 million would be necessary to meet its stated mission.

More importantly, however, is the fact that during the past six years the needs of the community have grown and the demands placed on the funded partner agencies has become greater. In order for the United Way and its partners to serve more people than ever before it is imperative to raise more funds.

In the past 10 years the United Way has added five new Partner Agencies that provide seven new programs. Three of these programs are geared toward helping Union County residents who are either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. One of the agencies provides programs and services for senior citizens, one provides a personal needs pantry to residents residing in the North Union School District and one is a free clinic providing free medical care for residents of the Fairbanks and Jonathan Alder School Districts. Two additional programs, the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the new 2-1-1 Information and Referral program, also added are under the direct oversight of the United Way.

The United Way of Union County provides funding for over 45 local programs that are provided by over 28 different agencies. The original concept of the United Way was to provide one fund-raising campaign that would support multiple needs and agencies. While this concept is still in place today, the United

Way is much more than just a fund-raising organization. The United Way of today is looking toward making an impact in the lives of people served through United Way funded programs.

The United Way is an active community partner that works closely with other social service agencies, nonprofit organizations, community leaders, and businesses to seek optimal ways to meet the needs of Union County residents. Many times United Way is a participant in community conversations and sometimes the United Way is the leader who invites other partners into a discussion regarding a community need. The collaborative efforts that have evolved over the years help all of the partners involved meet some needs and work together for the betterment of Union County.

If you have not already supported this year's United Way fund-raising campaign, the Board of Trustees invites you to participate. Your gift is tax deductible and can be made through the United Way's website at www.unitedwayofunioncounty.org or by sending a check to P O Box 145, Marysville, Ohio 43040. More information regarding the work of the United Way of Union County can be found on the website.