



Newsletter

February 2008

Campaign Highlights

Sincere appreciation and thanks go out to Pat and Terry Kennedy, 2007-08 Campaign Co-chairs. One or both of them attended nearly every presentation at local companies and civic groups.

Every year campaign chairs inject new ideas and enthusiasm into our annual campaign. They are busy people yet they give their time and talents to help.

Pat and Terry are certainly no exception. They organized the *St. Patrick's Day for Snowbirds* concert at the AAAA Theatre featuring local talent. The concert was a great success and we hope to continue it in 2008.

The 2007-08 campaign is currently at \$530,000 with expectations of reaching at least \$550,000. which again will be another record.

Pope County's campaign is still underway so we expect numbers to increase once their results are in.

As a result of implementing the Dolly Parton Imagination Library Program we had several new donors who donated in support of that new program.

In addition, we also received several new donations as well as increased donations from previous donors who wanted to support our work in addressing the issue of poverty.

Money raised during the 07-08 campaign will be distributed during the upcoming allocations process. Check out the dates in the right column if you are interested in volunteering to be part of a Citizens Review Panel.

Panelists will review four agency applications and listed to the agency presenters share information about their programs. It is a night will spent!

Call 763-4840 today and signup to be part of the allocations process.

Activities & Events Calendar

Free Tax Preparation Clinics

Thursdays, Noon to 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays, Noon to 4:00 p.m.

Marian Building
700 Cedar Street

Annual Allocation Nights:*

Douglas County

April 7th & 8th

First Congregational Church
Alexandria

Pope County

April 14th

Sacred Heart Catholic Church
Glenwood

*Volunteers needed for both counties

8th Annual Golf Classic

June 16

Geneva Golf Club

Don't miss out - register your team now!

Earned Income Tax Credit - Clinics

The goal of the EITC program is to assist low income individuals and families in completing their Federal Income Tax forms, especially with respect to the Earned Income Tax Credits. Tax credits are available to low income filers who meet certain criteria.

This free service eliminates tax preparation fees and can ultimately increase the income in many households by distributing refunds that may otherwise go unclaimed.

In 2006, individuals and families in Douglas County failed to claim over \$500,000 in tax credits. This is money that could have been used to pay for food, shelter, transportation costs, or any of the other basic needs expenses many families struggle to provide every day.

United Way cautions filers against applying for "instant" refunds that are actually loans. If the individual is subject to garnishment of wages for things such as back child support or

legal fines, the person will be billed for the reduced refund. This can be 100% of the original refund.

In addition to helping with free tax preparation; EITC volunteers assist with registering visitors and providing temporary child care.

Free tax clinics have been made possible through the combined efforts of United Way's Community Impact Coalition and West Central Minnesota Communities Action.

The clinics are located in the Marian Building, 700 Cedar Street, Alexandria and are open as follows:

Thursdays from Noon to 8:00 pm

Saturdays from Noon to 4:00 pm

If you know of someone who might benefit from this program or would like to volunteer, please contact us at 763-4840.

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Poverty - Children's Needs by Jessica Boyer

A fundamental factor in the development of a nation's wealth has long been its ability and willingness to invest in opportunities for all its children, helping them become productive members of society.

Surprisingly, the United States ranks 20th among the 21 richest democracies in providing for the well-being of its children, according to United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

In recent decades, national investments in children's health and social programs have been declining as a percentage of the overall federal budget. These investments are projected to decline still further over the next decade. It is time to start advocating for our children.

The Children's Defense Fund has identified seven basic need areas that contribute to a child's well-being: family & caregiver; economic security; food and nutrition; healthy development; early care and education; school-age care and education; and safe homes and communities. These categories, though identified and separated, are also interrelated.

For example, a hungry child will struggle to concentrate on school work; or an uninsured child with an untreated, chronic medical condition will miss days and fall behind in school. A young child unable to receive needed dental care could experience social ostracism and suffer health problems and even die from complications, as happened recently in the Twin Cities.

Parents struggling with economic security may need to work numerous jobs, making them less accessible for

their children and each other. Domestic violence in a household under economic stress is likely to end up in homelessness for a parent and child.

Those who fall below the poverty line have the same fundamental aspirations, beliefs and hope as other Americans: a desire to work hard, provide their children a good life and to get ahead. They are faced with many hurdles preventing them and their children from achieving their full potential.

United Way of Douglas and Pope Counties is making children and youth a top priority. This decision is based on responses to community surveys. We are committed to finding ways to better serve children's needs in areas that are often overlooked.

Investing in children provides many benefits: it keeps the U.S. competitive in a global market; prevents minor problems from becoming major issues; allows better support for the aging population; and fulfills the commitment the current generation has to future generations.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: In 2006, the Outreach Food Shelf in Alexandria served 1,837 households, totaling 6,379 individuals of whom 2,900 were children. During this same period, the Hearts and Hands Food Shelf in Glenwood served 556 households, 1,889 individuals with 860 being children.

10% of children in Douglas County live in poverty. For Pope County that figure rises to 12%.

In Douglas County School Districts, 1,472 Douglas County students receive free and reduced lunches - 27% of the total student population.

In Pope County, that percentage is anywhere from 39 to 46%, depending on the district.

Imagination Library



938 children in Douglas County and 330 children in Pope County are now receiving their very own book each and every month. This response has been

a welcomed surprise.

The program encourages reading by delivering new, age-appropriate, hardcover books to children from birth to age 5 at no cost to the family. The books are selected by educational professionals and are updated on a regular basis. United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties is the community sponsor and covers the \$30 per child annual cost of postage and handling.

We've received donations directed to this program from educators who understand the benefits of reading with children. Others have made donations as gifts for newborn children or grandchildren. We are also meeting with area service organizations who have indicated an interest in supporting programs for children. It can also be a great way for businesses to offer this as a benefit by providing sponsorship on behalf of their employees with children. Rather than having a party or flowers for the employee after a child is born, give a gift that continues to give through sponsorship.

Please contact us if you have questions about the program or would like to sponsor a child for one or more years.

Consider this: A child who has been read to on a regular basis enters school with a vocabulary of over 10,000 words. Children lacking this opportunity have only a 3,000 word vocabulary!

Upcoming Allocations Dates for Douglas and Pope Counties

Volunteer now to participate on a Citizen Review Panel in either Douglas or Pope County. Citizen Review Panels consist of 10-15 community residents who listen to presentations by area health and human service agencies seeking United Way funding.

Each panel will review 4 agencies. A panelist's role is:

- Listen to agency allocation requests;
- Ask questions during presentations;
- Review requests;
- Participate in panel discussion;
- Arrive at a consensus whether United

Way should fund the program and, if so, how much.

Funding recommendations are compiled and reviewed by the Allocation Committee members, with final decisions by the Board of Directors. Decisions are announced in May for the new funding year beginning July 1st.

Get involved in this valuable process and volunteer as a panel member. It only takes a few hours of your time, on one evening. Participants have their eyes opened to the needs that exist within our community and the available programs.

Information and registration forms are available on our website at www.uwdp.org. You can also call our office at 763-4840 with questions.

Douglas County panels will be on Monday and Tuesday, April 7th & 8th from 5:30 to 9:30 p.m. at the First Congregational Church in Alexandria. Pope County panels will meet Monday, April 14th from 5:30 to 9:00 p.m. at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Glenwood.

Training is provided during the first 1/2 hour of the session. Review packets are distributed to panelists about 2 weeks in advance.

Agency Spotlight by Lara Bursch

Alexandria Area Uncompensated Care

Alexandria Area Uncompensated Care Plan (AAUCP) was established in 1997 in response to changes in federal and state health care programs that would ultimately limit access to medical care for many people. They are a group of 90 local health care providers who agree not to charge qualified area residents who would otherwise go without their professional services. Their mission is simply, "to do our best to insure that no one goes without medical care because of the inability to pay for it."

In its ten year history Alexandria Area Uncompensated Care Plan has seen its numbers double. This past year the number of eligible participants increased from 161 to 213. Unfortunately, this trend appears to be continuing even as the AAUCP looks for ways to expand their ability to serve the many unmet needs that exist today.

Healthcare professionals serving the AAUCP recognize that delayed access to appropriate medical services often results in increased

stress and suffering of the patients themselves. This lack of early care can eventually result in increased demands and expense on community resources as well as their medical conditions worsen. This is especially true for children where health care delays or neglect frequently has a long-term impact.

Working closely with Douglas County Social Services to determine eligibility, the AAUCP utilizes many of the same guidelines currently applied to recipients of governmental Medical Assistance programs. Individuals cannot receive additional medical assistance if they are to be eligible for this locally supported program. Once their eligibility is established, Douglas County Social Services monitors

If you or someone you know could benefit from this service or if you would like more information, please contact:

Douglas County Social Services 762-3842
Bill Heegaard, 320-763-5979

National Children's Dental Health Month

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. As adults, we know that establishing good work habits is critical to success in our jobs and life. Similarly, we need to teach our children the importance of proper oral care through regular brushing and flossing.

It is also important that children have regular dental visits. Early treatment of dental problems goes a long way towards preventing long-term problems.

Monitoring snack foods that the kids eat also promotes healthy teeth and gums.

United Way donors have identified children and youth as a priority in the community. As a result United Way helped West Central Resources with a \$10,000 grant in 2007 to set up Caring Hands Dental Clinic in the basement of the Marian Building where local dentists volunteer their time.

The clinic was established to provide dental care to the under served members of the community. The facility is used by the following two entities:

Outreach Clinic: 800-663-6713
Caring Hands Dental Clinic: 320-815-5711

Volunteer Update

Thank you's are in order to Pro Staff and Work Connection, two local employment firms, for considering United Way when they have employees recovering from work-related injuries. These employees generally have lifting or bending/stooping limitations while they recover, yet are able to do many of the tasks that we have in the office.

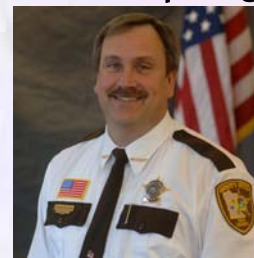
In January alone, volunteers provided by these companies logged 112 hours in our office! Their help has been invaluable with campaign mailings, organizing files, making copies and many other tasks that come up on a daily basis.

Thanks also to our many other volunteers who contact us directly and work on regularly scheduled projects in the office or help with events such as the upcoming Citizen Review Panels. Your help is truly appreciated.

We are in the early stages of developing a network with our partner agencies who may need help with similar projects in the office. When agencies contact us in advance of needing project help, we will notify the employment firms and inquire as to availability of workers.

Utilizing volunteers keeps operating costs down, maximizing the services we all provide.

Volunteer Spotlight



Tom Larson

Tom and his wife, Linda, live in Glenwood and are proud (and busy) parents of 4 teenagers; Jane, Thomas, Lauren and Nathan. He joined the UW Board of Directors this past year and has a long history of community involvement.

He is currently Pope County Sheriff and has also been actively involved in HELP Council, Red Cross, Salvation Army and also Advisory Board member at Alex Tech, Lakeview Good Samaritan Home, and West Central EMS along with a host of other organizations throughout the county and state. He brings a solid knowledge of Pope County residents and their needs. As he says, "I am not afraid to speak out and affirm the communities that I represent."

Thank you, Tom, for *leading by example*, serving your local community.

Honoring Friends and Family with Special Gifts

Memorial Gifts

Some things do last forever. By making a memorial gift you can honor a special friend or loved one even after they are gone. Their community was important to them. By giving to United Way, you honor them by supporting people who need it most in their home community. Memorial Gifts to the United Way are listed in our monthly newsletters

Gifts Honoring Special Person or Event

Honor a special event such as a birthday, baptism, or wedding anniversary with a gift that will help others. A great idea for that "hard to buy for" person! These will also be listed in our newsletter.

Leave a Legacy

Planned Gifts can take many forms. It can be as basic as designating United Way as a beneficiary in a will or life insurance policy. It can also be more complex, such as designating funds from a trust account. Often times, there can be significant tax advantages as well, depending on asset donated. An experienced financial planner or tax advisor can play a valuable role in determining the most appropriate plan.

Please contact our office at 763-4840 for additional information.

Board of Directors

Board President: Tom Peterman	Douglas Machine
Vice President: Lisa DeKrey	Tastefully Simple
Secretary: Trudy Blanshan	KIKV/Cool 94.3
Treasurer: Donald Kleine	Wells Fargo Bank
Board Members: Dale Erickson	Henry's Foods
Bill Finley	Unicel
Mark Grandgenett	Bremer Bank, Alexandria
David Gray	Douglas County Hospital
Jody Hanson	Echo Press
Jennifer Haugen	Pope County
Denise Holtkamp	American Diversity Business Solutions
Terry Kennedy	Retired Surgeon
Tom Larson	Pope County Sheriff
Sheila Marciniak	American Family Insurance
Terry Quist	School District #206
Chris Schroeder	Merrill Lynch
Susan Skoglund	Viking Savings Association
Mike Woods	Douglas County Social Services

The 2007/08 Campaign Cabinet

Campaign Co-Chairs: Terry Kennedy	Retired Surgeon
Pat Kennedy	
Leadership in Giving: Trudy Blanshan	KIKV/Cool 94.3
Jody Hanson	Echo Press
Susan Skoglund	Viking Savings Association
Annual Golf Classic: Don Kleine	Wells Fargo Bank
Chili Feed: Marcia Gae Schmitt	Brophy Bay, Inc.
Silent Auction: Sheila Marciniak	American Family Insurance

United Way Staff

Linda Roles	Executive Director
Jessica Boyer	Community Impact Director
Randy Bredeson	Technology & Financial Assistant
Craig Erickson	Administrative Assistant & Event Coordinator

Mission Statement

Mobilizing resources to create sustained changes in community conditions to improve the lives of Douglas and Pope County residents.

2007/08 Agencies and Programs

Alexandria Area Uncompensated Care	North Country Food Bank
Alexandria Family School	Osakis ECFE
Alexandria Literacy Project	Red Cross of Douglas County
Alexandria Senior Center	Salvation Army
Boy Scouts, Northern Lights Council	School District #206 - <i>Community Education & Middle School at Risk</i>
Brandon, Evansville, Ashby - ECFE	Someplace Safe (New 2007/08)
Caritas Family Services	TePPAC (<i>Teen Pregnancy Prevention Action Council</i>)
Club 1	The Windmill Project
Confidence Learning Center	The Village Family Service Center
Douglas County Jail - <i>Anger Management & Inmate Transition Programs</i>	Wings (formerly Listening Ear Crisis Center) <i>Domestic Violence</i>
Elder Network	Young People's Place
Foster Grandparent Program	Youth as Resources
Girl Scouts, Land of Lakes Council	
Lakes Area Recreation - <i>Scholarship Program & The Zone</i>	
Legal Services of NW Minnesota	
Lutheran Social Service - <i>Counseling; In Home Family & Parenting</i>	
Miracle Horse Riders	

United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties thanks the many supporters who helped us help those who need it most by providing \$350,000 to fund these local health and human services programs.



United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties

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