

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**

**LIVE UNITED™** 

# United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties *NEWSLETTER*

November 2008

## Chili Feed-Auction



Randy Winger, Tyler Wirth and Tim Olson are shown judging the chili. They were three of fifteen chili judge volunteers.

Heartfelt thanks go out to the numerous individuals and businesses that contributed to the outstanding success of the Chili Cook-off, Chili Feed and the Silent Auction this year

Kellie Janssen's Silent Auction team solicited 179 items for the Silent Auction that raised more than \$10,000 which was a record!

The Chili feed and Cook-off were chaired by Marcia Gae Schmitt, Cindy Zacher, and Craig Erickson. The Chili feed raised a record \$3,000 also. Thanks to everyone who contributed in any way, volunteering, donating, making chili, judging, advertising, etc. This has grown to be a great community event!

## Chili Winners

1. Alexandria Fire Department  
Hottest Chili - 5 Alarm Chili
2. Arrowwood Chef's  
Most Unusual - German Chili
3. Legal Services of NW MN -  
Open Division
4. Elder Network  
People's Choice - Cheesy Chili
5. Young People's Place  
Best Display
6. Viking Savings Association -  
Runner Up - Best Display
7. District 206 Mentorship Program  
Honorable Mention - Best Display



Dan Sieve and Chris Eddy were winners of the hottest chili.

## Coat Distribution

WOW! 1250 coats were collected and 900 distributed in Douglas County. The remaining coats went to Pope County to be added to the 300 coats collected there for their distribution. Sincere appreciation to American Cleaners for donating their cleaning services.

## Activities & Events Calendar

### Sertoma Christmas Tree Sale

November 28 - December 14

M-F 3:30 pm to 8 pm

Sat & Sun 11 am - 6:30 pm

All proceeds go to local charities

### Salvation Army Bell Ringers

November 22- December 24

Sign up to help ring the Bells at the following locations:

Wal-Mart-Roger 815-2889

Kmart-Loren 815-7591

Viking Plaza-Art 763-5089

### Jingle Bells Volunteers

Alex Jaycees Jingle Bells Telethon - at Geneva Bible Camp

Sat. December 13, 5:30 - 10 pm

To help pack and deliver food baskets and toys just show up on Sunday, December 14 at 9 a.m. at H. Boyd Nelson.

For information call 834-3030

### St Mary's Thanksgiving Dinner

St Mary's Church Thanksgiving dinner 11:30-1:00. Call 766-0951 for transportation or would like a meal delivered.

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## Upcoming Events - National Homeless Awareness Week

Recent news is filled with stories of financial crisis. Many struggles, soaring foreclosure rates, and ever increasing credit card debt on families. One of the many struggles for people in this current financial crisis is affordable housing.

We have watched the impact of increasing energy and gas prices on our family, friends and neighbors. Many are feeling the pinch when there isn't enough money to make ends meet.

Income shortages can have devastating consequences: terrible living conditions, limitations on economic opportunity, and hunger. As food prices skyrocket and the economy tightens, we are more aware of homelessness.

Housing challenges increase as the cost of housing takes a bigger bite out of family income. The Minnesota Housing Partnership reports that increases in home values have far outpaced income increases in recent years.

One in nine homeowners now pay more than half of their income for housing, up from one in 18 just five years ago in Minnesota. These numbers increase dramatically for renters. We have seen this "housing burden" locally.

According to the Douglas County Recorder's Office, there have been 79 foreclosures in Douglas County since January 1, 2008. This number is up from 40 foreclosures in 2006.

The Family Homeless Prevention and Assistance Program, operated by the West Central MN Communities Action, Inc., assisted 62 households in Douglas County with funds to prevent evictions and utility disconnection in the past year (July 1 2007 to June 30, 2008). This included assistance with rent, rental deposits, mortgage payments, electricity and heating costs. This assistance was utilized as a last resort, meaning it was the only avenue available for them to receive funds for these essential needs.

In the past year (October 1, 2007-September 31, 2008), Salvation Army reports assisting 240 individuals, 77 families, with rent so that they would not be evicted and another 114 needed help with utilities to avoid eviction. In 2006-07, 170 individuals received rent assistance and 91 individuals received utilities assistance to avoid eviction.

WINGS Family Services reported turning away 47 families from transitional housing. These were families that could have been placed because they fit the criteria for homeless, but there were no vacancy at the transitional housing facility.

The Douglas County HRA is currently providing 230 household with assistance. Their current waiting list for affordable housing is 365 households. At the end of October 2007 there were 185 households on the waiting list.

Please remember those around you that are struggling

during this holiday season. National Homeless Awareness Week is recognized the week before Thanksgiving each year to remind us that there are those in our community, state, and nation facing homelessness and hunger during this time of abundant food, celebration and thanks.

Community Impact Coalition actively works to address complex social issues and implement solutions to help local individuals struggling to meet their basic needs. The group meets monthly in Douglas County. If you would like to know more about the work being done locally by the Community Impact Coalition, please contact Jessica Boyer, United Way Community Impact Director, at 320-763-4840.

## Horizons Program

The University of Minnesota Extension Center for Community Vitality has announced that thirteen rural communities will participate in programming for leadership development and poverty reduction over the next eighteen months.

The program, called Horizons, is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation. Participating communities have populations of less than 5,000 and poverty rates greater than 10 percent.

The program mobilizes community members to learn more about poverty, to support and uncover emerging leadership and to engage the entire community in establishing a future that addresses poverty and creates a new future. Communities that complete the 18-month process receive up to \$10,000 to carry out their ideas for action.

New Horizons communities have already begun their community based discussions in Akeley, Appleton, Braham, Elysian, Evansville, Gaylord, Hoffman, Menahga, Moose Lake, Pine City, Sebeka, Starbuck and Waterville.

The program requires immense local energy and willingness to think in new ways. Horizons provides training, coaching, education and tangible resources that supports and encourage their efforts. Horizons is about getting people together to solve their own issues.

To learn more about the program, visit the website for Horizons at [www.extension.umn.edu/community/Horizons/](http://www.extension.umn.edu/community/Horizons/)[2]

## Tax Tips for Charitable Givers

The Tax Extenders and Alternative Minimum Tax Relief Act of 2008, which was enacted on Oct. 3, 2008, extends several expired charitable giving tax breaks that expired at the end of 2007. The new law restores the provisions and extends them for two years (through 2009).

The extended provisions include: *IRA charitable rollover*. This provision allows individuals aged 70 1/2 and older to donate up to \$100,000 from their individual retirement accounts (IRAs) and Roth IRAs to public charities without having to count the distributions as taxable income.

This giving incentive is particularly beneficial to those individuals who do not itemize their tax deductions and would not otherwise receive any tax benefit for their charitable contributions. For more information, contact your tax advisor.

## Campaign News

United Way's Fundraising campaign has wrapped up the majority of the major firms that have employee presentations.

Of the seven major firms who have turned in their campaigns six have come in with higher campaign donation totals than last year!!

In times of uncertainty in the world, it's great to know that we have so many wonderful, caring people in our community. It is when people step up to the plate to help others in need, knowing it could be us someday.

We continue to do presentations and are beginning to make contacts for presentations in Pope County as well.

Don Kleine our campaign chair has been busy making his appeal for the campaign as well. Don has made about 50 presentations this year.

We are very lucky to be in such a caring 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 of Douglas & Pope Counties, 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 newsletter.

### Gifts Honoring Special Person/Event

Honor special events like a birthday, wedding anniversary, or retirement with a gift that continues to give by helping others. This is a great idea for that "hard to buy for" person! These will also be listed in our newsletter.

### Leave a Legacy - Planned Gift

A Planned Gift 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 the asset donated. An experienced financial planner or tax advisor can play a valuable role in determining the most appropriate plan.

Please contact the United Way office at 763-4840 for additional info.

## Memorial Gifts

The following memorial gifts were recently received at the United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties:

### In Memory of Bev Murphy:

Curtis & Laurie Burns  
Keith & Linda Roles

### In Memory of Florence Lucken:

Curtis & Laurie Burns

Memorials are listed annually in the Leadership in Giving brochure.

Thank you to everyone who chooses to make a difference in our community through gifts given in memory of a loved one.

## Volunteer Spotlight



Carrie Kalsbeck has volunteered in our office since August 1, 2008

Carrie and her husband Tom live in Miltona, they own Kalsbeck Construction and Country Finishing.

She loves working at the United Way because of the variety of things there are to do and the opportunity to think outside the box and help people in our community.

Carrie has helped with campaign mailings, Stuff the Bus, the Chili Feed and Silent Auction, both coat drives and distributions in Douglas and Pope County as well as organizing the office. She has helped to inventory all of the school supplies and she and her husband, Tom have helped us obtain off site storage in one location of school supplies and other "United Way Project materials".

Thanks Carrie!

## Thanks Media

We wish to say a special thanks to the area media who have been so supportive of the United Way and our projects throughout the month of October.

Each have gone out of their way to advertise in print, and over the air for the Coat Drive and Distribution, the Chili Feed and Silent Auction, and the two Irish Music Fun Fests.

We want to say a special word of thanks to Echo Press, Starbuck Times, Pope County Tribune, West Douglas County Recorder, Osakis Review, KBHL, KSAX, KXRA, KMGK and KIKV for their generous support to the success of United Way.

## Board of Directors

<b>Board President:</b> Lisa DeKrey	Tastefully Simple
<b>Vice President:</b> Don Kleine	Wells Fargo Bank
<b>Secretary:</b> David Kent	3M
<b>Treasurer:</b> Carol Juul	Bremer Bank, Alexandria
<b>Board Members:</b> Susan Boerhave	Viking Savings Association
Dale Erickson	Henry's Foods
Bill Finley	Unicel
David Gray	Douglas County Hospital
Jennifer Haugen	Pope County
Marc Illies	Alexandria Extrusion
Terry Kennedy	Retired Surgeon
Karin Tank	City of Alexandria
Sheila Marciniak	American Family Insurance
Tom Peterman	Douglas Machine, Inc.
Terry Quist	School District #206
Chris Schroeder	Merrill Lynch
Carol Meissner	Douglas County Social Services
John Wosepka	Douglas County

## Campaign Cabinet

<b>Campaign Chair:</b> Don Kleine	American Foods
<b>Leadership in Giving:</b> Terry Kennedy	Retired Surgeon
Pat Kennedy	
<b>Annual Golf Classic:</b> Dale Erickson	Henry's Foods, Inc.
<b>Chili Feed:</b> Marcia Gae Schmitt	Brophy Bay, Inc.
Cindy Zacher	Zacher Excavating
<b>Silent Auction:</b> Kelly Janssen	Glenwood State Bank

## United Way Staff

Linda Roles	Executive Director
Jessica Boyer	Community Impact Director
Randy Bredeson	Technology & Financial Assistant
Corliss Stark	Special Events and Volunteer Coordinator

### Mission Statement

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

## 2008/09 United Way Partner Agencies and Programs

211 - First Call	Lakes Area Recreation-Scholarship Program & The Zone	The Village Family Service Center
Alexandria Family School	Legal Services of NW Minnesota	Windmill Project-Douglas & Pope Counties
Alexandria Literacy Project	Lutheran Social Service -Douglas & Pope Counties	WINGS Child Abuse, PLUS Kids, & Transitional Housing
Alexandria Senior Center	Minnewaska Area ECFE/School Readiness	Young People's Place
Boy Scouts, Northern Lights Council <i>Douglas &amp; Pope County</i>	Miracle Horse Riders	Youth as Resources
Brandon, Evansville, Ashby ECFE	North Country Food Bank-Douglas & Pope Counties	
Catholic Charities-Caritas Family Services & Foster Grandparents Club 1	Pope County Family Collaborative	
Confidence Learning Center	Salvation Army-Douglas & Pope Counties	
Douglas County Jail-Anger Management & Inmate Transition Programs	School District #206-Community Education & Middle School at Risk	
Elder Network	Someplace Safe-Douglas & Pope Counties	
Girl Scouts, MN & WI Lakes & Pines	TePPAC (Teen Pregnancy Prevention Action Council)	
Lakes & Prairies Community	Teen Court - Douglas County	
Childcare Resource & Referral	UCAN (United Communities Advocating Non-Violence)	

United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties thanks the many supporters whose generous support is helping 43 agency-sponsored programs locally. In addition to the agencies listed, funding is also provided for the Dolly Parton Imagination Library and the Community Impact Coalition.

Funding for 2008/09 is over \$360,720. This was \$174,000 short of the funds needed to meet the needs of all the agencies who applied for help this year!

### United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties

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**Linda Roles:** Executive Director

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