



# Newsletter

February 2009

## Good News!

Philanthropy is alive and well locally.

While we do not close out the United Way campaign until June 30 we are on track to raise the same amount of money we raised last year (\$569,000) and maybe a bit more. Now that is good news!

It is especially good news that the needs are increasing locally and we will be still be able to help local agencies provide the services to help local individuals who are struggling.

When times are challenging we all want to do our part in helping individuals and families that are directly affected. This is when we “want to” and “need to” step up to the plate as individuals, families, businesses and organizations to make a difference in our communities.

Several years ago, I was invited into a local manufacturing company to make my annual presentation to their staff. Before I arrived, a number of employees received news they were being laid off. That year, the employees who stayed on donated more than they ever had before the lay offs. The total employee gifts exceeded any previous year’s total .

I believe this is what we are seeing locally this year. Individuals are stepping up to the plate, wanting to help those who are struggling.

**Thanks so much to every individual and every business who was able to step up the plate this year!**

## Beer & Wine Tasting

### Gala



The United Way will hold its First Annual Beer and Wine Tasting Gala at Arrowwood on **February 20, 2009 from 5-7:30 p.m.**

Michelob is the presenting sponsor and there will be more than 15 vendors sampling products for the event.

A fabulous selection of wines from around the world and a variety of specialty beers will be featured. Approximately 39 different beverages will be available to sample.

Hors d’ oeuvres will also be served at the event. If you ’re looking for more, you may want to check out the pasta bar at Arrowwood’s Lakes Café for dinner after the Gala.

The evening will allow participants to try new beers and wines and to learn about ideas for food pairing with each product. Representative pairings will be served throughout the evening as light hors d’oeuvres.

Tickets are \$10 per person in advance or \$15 at the door. Tickets can be purchased at the United Way office at 115 3rd Ave West or by calling 763-4840 to have them sent or held for pick up at the event.

## Activities & Events Calendar

### February 14

All-Community Breakfast held the second Saturday of every month at United Methodist Church, 2210 6th Avenue East, 9-10:30 a.m. to volunteer call 846-1275.

### February 1- 11th

Check out Lakes Area Rec’s annual Bids for Kids On line Auction. Go to: [www.lakesarearecreation.cmarket.com](http://www.lakesarearecreation.cmarket.com)

### February 20, 5-7:30 p.m.

United Way’s First Annual Wine and Beer Tasting Gala at Arrowwood. Get your tickets now!

### February- April 15

Free Tax Clinic to help low income individuals and families claim EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) see page 3 for details.

### April 13 & 14 5- 9 p.m.

United Way Allocations Night

### June 15

United Way annual Golf Classic

### October 6

Chili Feed & Silent Auction

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## United Way Seeking Volunteers for Allocation Process

One of the most important things that United Way does each year is to determine agency funding. Douglas and Pope County residents are annually invited to be a part of this allocation process.

The local United Way Board of Directors has been in the process of revamping the allocations process for the past several years. Last year, we moved from funding agencies to funding programs.

The big change this year is the move from a one year to a two year funding cycle. Applications approved for funding this year will receive a commitment of funding for 2 years.

The first year volunteers hear agency presentations and then have the opportunity to do site visits the second year. This has been very successful with the United Ways that have been doing this and offers volunteers a greater insight to the services local agencies provide.

We are currently looking for volunteers to take part in the allocations process. In April, agencies requesting funding will make presentations to citizen review panels about their programs. Agencies share their mission, financials and program services. In addition, they are also asked to report on their program outcomes.

Panel volunteers will be assigned a panel at random to ensure non-biased community involvement. Before the allocations, volunteers will receive information regarding location and time as well as a proposal from the agencies they will be reviewing.

Each Panel will review about four agencies. Panel volunteers will have the opportunity to meet with representatives, ask questions and then as a panel, discuss the agencies and make recommendations whether United Way should fund them and if so the appropriate funding amount.

Next year, Volunteer panelists will serve on the same panel where they make site visits when possible and will consider any adjustments in needs.

This is a great opportunity to learn more about local needs as well as the dedicated staff and volunteers at the agencies that serve our communities.

For more information or to sign up, call United Way at 763-4840 or email [www.united-3@rea-alp.com](mailto:www.united-3@rea-alp.com).

Sign up forms are available on the United Way's web site at [www.uwdp.org](http://www.uwdp.org).

## Free Tax Preparation Clinic In Douglas and Pope Counties

Seen as one of the single most successful tools in combating poverty, the Earned Income Tax Credit is underutilized by those who qualify. The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) was introduced in 1975. This credit encourages low-income individuals to work, while helping struggling families escape the hardships of poverty.

Recognizing that one in four eligible families fail to file and claim the EITC, United Way's Community Impact Coalition and West Central Minnesota Community Action partnered to assist low income individuals and families by offering an additional free tax preparation clinic. This service, available for families earning \$45,000 or less, links families with entitled rebates and connects them with services they are eligible to receive.

The extra dollars eligible taxpayers can get through the EITC and other tax credits can make life a little easier for low to moderate income households. All they need to do is file a tax return, even if they aren't required to file, and claim the credit.

It is important to remember that some individuals and families may qualify for the credit for the first time because they are unemployed or have other changes in their financial, marital or parental status during the past year.

Tax Preparation Clinics will be held at the Following locations during the current tax season:

### **Alexandria:**

Marion Building, 700 Cedar Street

Mondays from 8am-8pm.

Call 1-800-492-4805, ext#100 to schedule an appointment

### **Glenwood:**

Glenwood Senior Center

Thursdays 9am-4pm (through April 9)

Call 634-4004 to schedule an appointment

### **What you should bring:**

- Income documentation: W-2, 1099s, Social Security, pension, and other miscellaneous income.
- Dependent care provider information
- Receipts or cancelled checks for itemizing deductions

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.

For information on how you can volunteer to help at the tax clinics, call Jessica Boyer

## Volunteers Needed

**Windmill Project** is holding a family event from 2-4 p.m. on February 15 at the Lakes Area Recreation. There will be time to enjoy the gym and some treats and games. Volunteers are needed to help decorate, set-up, assist with games and take down. Please call Gail Kulp at the Windmill Project at 763-9228.

**Alexandria Senior Center** invites you to their first fundraiser for 2009. The famous Dad's Belgian Waffles will be served for supper on Tuesday, February 24, from 4 - 6 p.m.

**School District 206** - Discovery's Drama department needs people to organize and maintain costumes and props. Call Ruth Turner at 323-762-5397 or email Ruth at rturner@alexandria.k12.mn.us.

**School District 206** - Puppetry Team needs volunteers to make presentations about disability awareness to elementary students. To volunteer, call Ruth Turner .

**Bethany Home** is looking for volunteers to staff their coffee shop. The coffee shop is open 5 days a week in the mornings and 6 days a week in the afternoon. Days are flexible. With spring just around the corner, the Bethany Community is looking for people interested in helping with the care and planting of various flower gardens at the home. If you or a group of you are interested, please call Brenda Hvezda at Bethany Home at 762-1567.

**Someplace Safe** can use some help scrap booking, moving furniture, painting offices, sitting in on court hearings, office work, mailings, fundraising etc. Call Susie at 320-762-1995 if you would like to help them out.

**United Way** is seeking volunteers for the following:

Allocations panels - April 13 or 14

Golf Classic - June 15

Silent auction & Chili Feed - October 6

If you are willing to help with any of these events, please call the United Way office at 763-4840.

**Wings** has a fundraiser scheduled for April. They need volunteers to help put pin wheels together. These pinwheels will be sold for peoples gardens. Call WINGS at 763-6638 to volunteer.

## Honoring Friends and Family with Special Gifts

### Memorial Gifts

Some things do last forever. By making a memorial gift you can honor a 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 newsletter.

### Gifts Honor Special Person or Event

Honor a special event such as a birthday, baptism, or 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

Gifts can take many forms. It can be as basic as designating the 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 tax advantages as well, depending on the asset donated. An experienced financial planner or tax advisor can play an valuable role in determining the appropriate plan.

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

## Memorial Gifts

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

**In Memory of Marion Sypnieski**  
from Marcia Gae Schmitt

**In Memory of Bill Mateer from:**  
From Marcia Gae Schmitt

Memorials are also listed annually in the Leadership in Giving brochure.

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

## Volunteer Spotlight



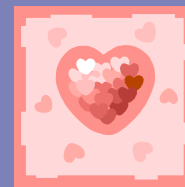
**Claudia Odio**

Claudia Odio has volunteered in our office since November of 2008. Claudia and her husband George Odio Jr. moved from Lima, Peru to Alexandria in May of 2008.

Claudia loves working at the United Way because it is a great opportunity for her to give back to the community, help people and make new friends.

Claudia is currently working on updating our Agency Directory for 2009. Once completed, the directory will list agencies along with their addresses, phone numbers, email address, website and a list of the services they provide.

The directories will be distributed to local businesses and agencies.



**This Valentines Day, give a child a book. Support the Dolly Parton Imagination Library. \$30 buys a child a book every month for a year.**

**Happy Valentines Day!**



## Board of Directors

<b>Board President:</b> Lisa DeKrey	Tastefully Simple
<b>Vice President:</b> Don Kleine	American Foods Group
<b>Secretary:</b> David Kent	3-M
<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
Shelia Marciniak	American Family Insurance
Carol Meissner	Douglas County Public Health
Tom Peterman	Douglas Machine, Inc.
Terry Quist	School District #206
Chris Schroeder	Merrill Lynch
Karin Tank	City of Alexandria
John Wosepka	Douglas County

## Campaign Cabinet

<b>Campaign Chair:</b> Don Kleine	American Foods Group
<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.
<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  
 Alexandria Family School  
 Alexandria Literacy Project  
 Alexandria Senior Center  
 Boy Scouts, Northern Lights Council  
 Brandon, Evansville, Ashby ECFE  
 Catholic Charities Club 1  
 Confidence Learning Center  
 Douglas County Jail Elder Network  
 Girl Scouts, MN & WI Lakes & Pines  
 Lakes & Prairies Community Childcare Resource & Referral  
 Lakes Area Recreation  
 Legal Services of NW Minnesota  
 Lutheran Social Service  
 Minnewaska Area ECFE/School Readiness  
 Miracle Horse Riders

North Country Food Bank  
 Pope County Family Collaborative  
 Salvation Army  
 School District #206-  
 Someplace Safe  
 TePPAC (*Teen Pregnancy Prevention Action Council*)  
 Teen Court  
 UCAN (*United Communities Advocating Non-Violence*)  
 The Village Family Service Center  
 Windmill Project  
 WINGS *Child Abuse, PLUS Kids, & Transitional Housing*  
 Young People's Place  
 Youth as Resources

### Community Impact Programs:

- Free Tax Clinics
- Coat Distribution
- Stuff the Bus (School Supplies)
- Back Pack Attack (Pilot program providing food for children over the weekend)
- Dolly Parton Imagination Library

**Underneath everything we are,  
 Underneath everything we do.  
 We are all people.  
 Connected, interdependent, united.  
 And when we reach out a hand to one,  
 We influence the condition of all.  
 That's what it means to  
 LIVE UNITED.**

### United Way of Douglas & Pope Counties

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 Alexandria MN 56308  
 Phone/Fax: 320-763-4840

**Website: [www.uwdp.org](http://www.uwdp.org)**  
**Email: [uniteddw@rea-alp.com](mailto:uniteddw@rea-alp.com)**

**GIVE. ADVOCATE. VOLUNTEER.**

**LIVE UNITED**™

