

Advancing the Common Good

SPRING 2009

Strategies to Help Our Community During Tough Times (or Making Lists to Cope with Economic Downturns)

By Pam Toal, Executive Director



I'm a fan of lists -- to do lists, e-mail distribution lists, books to read in my book club lists.... You name some things, I'll make a list. So when the economic downturn became a reality, I started a list of ways United Way could enhance its community impact work during this very challenging time. Below is a list of what our volunteers, staff and partners have done during the past six months. If you have ideas to share or wish to get involved, I hope you will contact me at 360.943.2773 x 10 or ptoal@unitedway-thurston.org. Working together can get us through this tough time and create hope and opportunities for a better tomorrow.

Top 10 United Way Activities

1. **Surveyed non-profit leaders** in October 2008 and April 2009 to determine which local services are or will be at risk. The surveys were conducted in collaboration with The Community Foundation of South Puget Sound.
2. **Published an editorial** on 11/20/08 emphasizing the importance of local giving. United Way campaign chair John Winn Miller wrote "Dig deep to help others in time of need" for *The Olympian*.
3. **Hosted the "Creating Opportunities in Challenging Times" Forum** on 1/29/09 where 150 individuals representing government, business, nonprofit and faith-based organizations discussed ways to proactively address the challenge of providing responsive services in the current economic crisis.
4. **Advocated for 2-1-1 funding.** On 2/11/09 business leaders from United Way's Board of Directors met with 11 legislators during United Ways of Washington Advocacy Day, to seek state support for 2-1-1 to keep people connected to vital available resources.
5. **Sponsored the Economic Survival Fair** on 4/4/09, which offered direct services and information on-site to help people in need. This event was organized by the Volunteer Center and attended by more than 500 individuals.



Rhodetta Seward, UWTC Board President, chats with Lee Wojnar, O Bee Credit Union, at the Economic Survival Fair on April 4.

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Top 10, cont.

6. **Coordinated the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) outreach campaign** (December 2008 – April 2009). In collaboration with 2-1-1, AARP, the Volunteer Center, and the Asset Building Coalition the goal was to expand the capacity of free tax preparation sites, and provide training about EITC eligibility to nonprofit agency staff to share with their clients.
7. **Sponsored the Asset Building Coalition Summit** on 3/24/09 to help strengthen an integrated system of community resources that promote opportunities for people with limited incomes to become more financially stable.
8. **Raised additional dollars** to help individuals reduce debt, increase income, establish savings and gain assets. Through United Way's Women's Leadership Council, an additional \$25,000 was raised for the WLC's Giving Circle Fund, to provide grants to organizations that help women and girls become financially self-sufficient.
9. **Conducted a Community Assessment** (Fall 2008 – Spring 2009) to assess our community's strengths, challenges and opportunities (*see related article*).
10. **Provided sponsorship for the upcoming Faith Communities Forum**, scheduled for 9/15/09 and organized by Out of the Woods, which will bring faith-based organizations together to collaborate on ways to help the poor.

Community Assessment report coming soon

Mark your calendar to attend a presentation about United Way's 2009 Community Assessment on Tuesday, June 9th from 10:00 – 11:00 a.m. at The Evergreen State College campus, Seminar II, room A1105, when Dr. Larry Geri and students from Evergreen's Masters in Public Administration program will share the findings and recommendations about Thurston County's assets and challenges. The study is based on data gathered from two community surveys, two agency surveys, 10 focus groups, as well as information about specific social services provided by service clubs, faith-based organizations, government and nonprofit organizations. The community driven, asset-oriented assessment will:

- Help residents become more informed about local issues
- Compare perceptions of issues with available quantitative data
- Identify gaps and duplications in services
- Mobilize individuals and groups to work collaboratively to develop strategies for change
- Provide data that jurisdictions can use for planning purposes
- Help organizations make data-driven decisions regarding funding, advocacy and volunteerism

Both a summary and full report will be available on the United Way website in June. For details and to RSVP for the June 9th event contact Ellen Zito at 943-2773 x 15 or ezito@unitedway-thurston.org.

Blockfest held to celebrate "Week of the Young Child"



United Way celebrated the Week of the Young Child (April 18-25) by hosting "Blockfest," a building block extravaganza, at Westfield Capital Mall on

April 18th. The event featured hands-on activities for children and access to many resources for parents. The Week of the Young Child, sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, is a time to create greater awareness about the importance of early learning.

Participating agencies included:

- Child Care Action Council
- Family Education and Support Services
- Hands On Children's Museum
- Sound to Harbor Head Start/ECEAP
- South Sound Association for the Education of Young Children
- South Sound Reading Foundation
- SPSCC Early Learning and Education Programs
- Timberland Regional Library



Dr. Larry Geri seeks insights from (l-r) Veronica Bronkema, Delfina Gayle and Kathy Baros-Freidt, who participated in a United Way focus group about local Hispanic issues.

2008-09 United Way campaign donors and awardees reflect generosity of community

Despite economic challenges, Thurston County organizations, employees and individuals outside the workplace have given more than \$1,285,000 to date to support United Way's 2008-09 campaign. We are grateful! We also appreciate and recognize our outstanding 2009 awardees, listed below.

Advocate of the Year

Michael Cade, Thurston County Economic Development Council

Campaign Coordinator of the Year

Renee L. Cox, Titus-Will Chevrolet-Cadillac-Hyundai

Community Impact Volunteer of the Year

Lee Wojnar, O Bee Credit Union

Corporate Supporter of the Year

The Boeing Company

Employee Campaign of the Year (2 awards)

Thurston County

Washington State Employees Credit Union

Gladys Burns Human Service Award

Kim Gaffi, Garden Raised Bounty (GRuB)

Special Recognition Award

Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Reservations

Our **top 10 workplace campaigns** include:

1. Intel Corporation
2. State of Washington Combined Fund
3. The Boeing Company and the Employee Community Fund of Boeing
4. Providence Employees
5. Thurston County
6. State Farm Insurance
7. Washington State Employees Credit Union
8. Olympia School District
9. Costco
10. Titus-Will Chevrolet-Cadillac-Hyundai

Washington State Employees Credit Union employees exceeded their campaign goal by 95 percent from the previous year, raising a record \$36,344. Many organizations, such as Engineered Software and Patrick Townsend & Associates hosted workplace campaigns and contributed an additional employee match or corporate gift. Some, like Lucky Eagle Casino, Intercity Transit, and Capital Medical Center also provided creative incentives or conducted fundraisers to add to dollars raised through payroll deduction.

The Women's Leadership Council (WLC), a new United Way of Thurston County philanthropy program, raised more than \$50,000, with \$25,000 allocated for new grants to organizations



Titus-Will Owner Jamie Will (on left) with employees Debbie Archer and Keith Cook

that help women and girls become financially stable. The WLC is accepting grant applications through May 18th.

If your employer doesn't yet host a United Way campaign, please ask that you and your co-workers have the opportunity to help their community through payroll deduction at work. Individuals outside the workplace can give online at www.unitedway-thurston.org or send a check to UWTC, 1211 Fourth Ave E, Suite 101, Olympia, WA 98506.

For information on other giving opportunities, please contact Toni Verbon at 360.943.2773 x 17.

We are sincerely appreciative to all who gave so generously to support the United Way campaign. Thank you for *living united!*

Save the Date! Upcoming United Way events

Community Assessment Report Presentation	June 9
Annual Meeting	June 11
CEO/Coordinator Breakfast	September 15
Day of Caring	September 25
Women's Leadership Council "Power of the Purse" Fundraiser	October 8

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Executive Director
PAM TOAL

Sponsorship opportunities now available to individuals and families

This year we are extending sponsorship opportunities to individuals and families as well as organizations. If you are looking for a new way to give back to your community, we invite you to consider sponsoring one of the following:

- Day of Caring (September 2009)
- CEO/Coordinator Breakfast (September 2009)
- Women’s Leadership Council “Power of the Purse” fundraiser (October 2009)
- Annual Celebration Luncheon (March 2010)
- Kindergarten Readiness Calendar
- Account Executive position

To learn about the many sponsorship and recognition benefits, go to www.unitedway-thurston.org. For additional information contact Toni Verbon at 360.943.2773 x 17 or tverbon@unitedway-thurston.org.



New! E-newsletter available

United Way newsletters will soon be available in an electronic format. The new “e-newsletter” will include information covered in our print versions as well as additional timely items of interest. To sign up, go to www.unitedway-thurston.org and enter your email address in our “Newsletter” box on the homepage.

Include United Way of Thurston County as one of your estate beneficiaries. You won’t regret it—and the work of United Way will continue strongly into the future because of your generosity. For information, call Pam Toal at 943-2773 x 10.



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