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United Way leader to retire

BRIAN SANDFORD; The Olympian

Pam Toal, the executive director of the United Way of Thurston County, plans to retire Dec. 18 after eight years with the agency.

Toal said she plans to stay in Olympia, focusing on consulting and freelance writing.

Both of her children are grown, she said, which contributed to her decision to make a change.

"It's a very opportune time for new leadership," she said about the agency she joined in June 2001. A five-member executive committee will search for that leadership; a position announcement will be posted Sept. 25 at www.unitedway-thurston.org.

Toal said she will support the executive committee in its search and expects quality candidates will emerge close to home.

"We'll be focusing regionally," she said. "There's just a lot of great folks out here in the Northwest."

Toal previously was the director of development at The Evergreen State College and moved to Thurston County from Michigan in 1992.

"The thing I've most enjoyed is just the privilege of working with so many types of people who really care and want to help – elected officials and community leaders in all sectors," she said about her United Way work.

Bill Lahmann, the Olympia School District superintendent and United Way's board president, said Toal made significant improvements in the agency.

"I attribute a lot of it to her leadership," he said. "United Way now is an organization that really focuses on community needs. We've done two community assessments under her leadership, going out and identifying underserved populations."

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