

United Way hits \$6.5 million donation mark

When the thermometer edges down toward freezing, as it did last week, there's only one thing to say: "Baby, it's cold outside."

What if you want to restore some warm feelings as winter takes hold this January? You could pull on a sweater, huddle beneath a heavy quilt or turn up the thermostat.

Or, you could get out your checkbook and donate to the United Way. By giving, you'll not only help share warmth with the needy, but you'll feel some of that warmth yourself. It's a good feeling, too.

Many people and organizations in our community have already passed on the warmth through very generous contributions. As the outside thermometer dips, the United Way thermometer is rising. In fact, it's getting balmy with 90 percent of the United Way community campaign met to date.

While 90 percent is great, the warmth won't reach the whole community until we hit 100 percent.

More than 400 companies and thousands of individuals have already given to the United Way Campaign. So far 15 companies and communities have given more than \$90,000:

- Publix Super Markets - \$1,141,026
- Bonita Bay Community - \$877,987
- Bonita Bay Group - \$468,536
- Chicos - \$300,000
- Oswald Trippe & Company - \$265,000
- Lee County School District - \$233,846
- The Brooks Community - \$197,276
- Fiddlesticks Community - \$166,015
- Mediterra Community - \$166,695
- United States Postal Service - \$141,881

Lee Memorial Health System - \$141,825
The News-Press/Gannett Foundation - \$118,151

Lee County Employees - \$117,448
LCEC - \$105,000
FineMark National Bank and Trust - \$90,000

Scott Edmonds, United Way Campaign Chair, and Chairman of the Board, CEO and President of Chico's FAS, thanked the community for the tremendous generosity thus far in the campaign.

"The top contributors are vital to the success of our campaign, but individual donations are definitely encouraged, appreciated and needed to help us make goal and fully fund the United Way network of partner agencies and initiatives," Edmonds said. "We realize our community has been hit hard this year by the economic slow down and additionally by cutbacks in governmental funding, so the United Way partner agencies need your help now more than ever. We are counting on the gracious and enthusiastic support from the community that we have received in past years. If everyone does what they can to help, we will make our goal and fully fund the critical human service programs in our community that help so many people every day."

"Our goal for this campaign is \$7,280,330 and we are now at \$6,561,000," said Cliff Smith, President of the United Way of Lee, Hendry and Glades. "This is great for January and again shows the phenomenal giving spirit of our community. However, the final 10 percent of the campaign is always the most challenging, but we have great confidence in our hard working volunteers and our generous community." ■

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