

United Way needs help to reach fundraising goal

With only a few weeks left in the 2008-2009 United Way campaign, volunteers and staff are striving to reach the \$8 million goal. Area companies, communities and individuals have pledged \$7.4 million to date, putting the campaign at 93 percent of goal.

"I am optimistic that our great community will step forward and help us reach this important goal," said Mark Morris, United Way campaign chair. "The work that United Way and its 70 partner agencies are doing together in our community is critical."

Calls to United Way 211, the comprehensive information and referral source for the community, increased by 56 percent from 2007 to 2008. The most common reasons for the more than 40,000 calls were basic necessities such as help with utilities, rent/mortgage payments and food. The situations of the callers are growing more complicated in these challenging times and require more extensive services.

"United Way funding is critical as our center strives to meet the growing needs of our community. The number of cases of Alzheimer's disease continues to increase, making our support to family caregivers even more important," said Dotty St. Amand, executive director of the Alvin A. Dubin Alzheimer's Resource Center, a United Way partner agency.

United Way has made its annual fundraising goal for the past 15 years. Last year United Way partner agencies served more than 300,000 families, children, seniors and people in need in the community.

All money raised in the United Way campaign stays in the local community to help support the local human service network of partner agencies. United Way partner agencies like Children's Advocacy Center, Big Brothers Big Sisters and LARC serve a diverse range of needs in our community nurturing children and youth, strengthening families, meeting critical needs such as helping the elderly and disabled live independently, and empowering communities by bringing health and human services to neighborhoods.

In addition to raising funds for human service organizations in our community, the United Way promotes partnerships and collaborations among agencies, helping them to work together focusing on issues and solutions that continue to improve lives.

The United Way of Lee, Hendry and Glades has been "the way the community cares" since it was established in 1957. For more information, call United Way of Lee, Hendry and Glades Counties at 433-2000 or visit www.unitedwaylee.org.



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