



Chronicle-Tribune

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News

United Way kicks off its annual fund drive Telethon set for Oct. 22; goal is \$1 million

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After donations bottomed out in 2005, givers to the United Way of Grant County have managed to increase the total donation level each year since.

At United Way's annual kickoff breakfast, Scott Murphy, the 2008 campaign chairman, said he hopes to see a big jump in the money given to the group during this campaign.

The goal of the local United Way is to raise \$1 million in donations during the upcoming pledge season.

United Way of Grant County raised about \$535,000 in donations in 2005, about \$635,000 in 2006 and about \$710,000 in 2007. The county's all-time high fundraiser was \$975,000 in 2000.

Grant County has always been generous in its giving, Murphy said. In his opinion, the key to hitting the \$1 million goal is to get people who have never participated involved with the campaign.

"The message this year is to inspire and inform more of Grant County to be involved in the campaign," Murphy said. "We can improve the quality of life for the residents and neighborhoods of Grant County."

United Way executive director Mike McMillan said the \$1 million figure is based not on past drives but what the services it funds need to operate.

Still, he said, it's an achievable goal.

"I'm confident we can meet it because our community is on an upward spiral," McMillan said.

Several speakers addressed the challenging times that the county has faced in recent years, including many from United Way-funded organizations who gave testimonials about how donations allow them to complete their mission.

One was Autumn Shugart of the local chapter of the American Red Cross, who spoke of her organization's mission, locally and worldwide, to provide the most basic needs to those whose lives have been affected by disaster.

"This help is provided because of the support of the United Way," she said.

Murphy several times said the funds raised go to support the angels who are helping those in the community every day.

"They are on a mission, and they live that mission every single day," he said. "Let's take those gifts that God has given us and help change the community."

This will be the second year for the United Way of Grant County Telethon, which is at 7 p.m. Oct. 22 on WIWU-Channel 51 and simulcast on WBAT 1400-AM radio. The event is co-sponsored by the Chronicle-



Scott Murphy, Wal-Mart distribution center general manager and United Way 2008 campaign chairman, speaks during the annual United Way fundraiser kickoff breakfast Thursday at MGH Ambulatory Care Center. jmorehead@chronicle-tribune.com

Tribune and Mid-America Radio.

"At WIWU, we were looking for a way to serve the needs of our community better," station manager Kyle Hufford said in a news release. "By partnering with the United Way, we were able to use our new studios to help bring awareness to the community of the work that the United Way is doing. At the same time, we are raising some much-needed dollars that all go back into the community, 100 percent of it. Also, in highlighting the agencies of the United Way, we hope that our community will become moved to get involved."

Murphy said the telethon is the ideal opportunity for giving for those individuals who are retired and cannot give to the campaign through a workplace.

This is a time of need for the less fortunate in the county, McMillan said.

"If you contact St. Martin or The Salvation Army, you'll find they're feeding more people than they've ever fed," he said. "It's not just Christmas or Thanksgiving. The needs are there every day."

Where the money goes:

The following programs are funded in part by the United Way of Grant County:

- American Red Cross, 241 W. Third St.

- Boys & Girls Club, 3402 S. Meridian St.

- Cancer Services of Grant County, 306 S. Norton St.

- Carey Services, 2724 S. Carey St.

- Crippled Children and Adults.

- Family Service Society Inc. and Hands of Hope, 101 S. Washington St.

- Girls Scouts of Wapahani Council, 222 Spencer Ave.

- Grant-Blackford Mental Health Center, 505 Wabash Ave.

- Marion-Grant County Senior Center, 503 S. Gallatin St.

- Sagamore Council, Boy Scouts of America, Kokomo

- Services for the Visually and Hearing Impaired, 2301 S. Adams St.
- St. Martin Community Center, 901 S. Branson St.
- The Salvation Army, 359 N. Bradner Ave.
- Grant County Family YMCA, 123 Sutter Way.
- Marion-Grant County YWCA, 614 S. Branson St.

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