

Contact: Teresa Dahlstrom
Campaign Assistant
United Way of Otter Tail County
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
Phone 218.736.5147
www.uwotc.org

UNITED WAY OF OTTER TAIL

For Immediate Release

Press Release

UNITED WAY NEEDS SUPPORT FROM RESIDENTS NOW MORE THAN EVER.

Fergus Falls, MN November 29, 2007: The United Way of Otter Tail County has raised \$215,000 — just over 60% of its \$360,000 campaign target.

The 2007-08 campaign was launched in September with the theme, "We Change Lives." Additional needs requested from partner programs necessitated that the goal be raised from the 2006-07 figure of \$335,000

"The demand is so great for non-profits," said Mary Phillippe, Interim Executive Director. Thirty four non-profits throughout Otter Tail County receive United Way dollars. Funds raised are allocated to programs throughout the county – not just Fergus Falls. In fact, even though close to 80% of the donated dollars come out of Fergus Falls, just 40% of them were allocated to Fergus Falls agencies. Last year, the Battle Lake area donated just under \$9,000, receiving \$36,200 for local and cross county programs. "We are hoping to see the Battle Lake area (Clitheral, Underwood, Vining and Henning) bring in at least \$12,000 to support the campaign." Phillippe adds. The current tally just tops \$7,000.

"It's so important for residents to realize how much their own community residents and agencies are supported by United Way. The Battle Lake Community Recreation program is one example, "just under 40% of families are unable to pay program fees for recreational programs including summer sports, arts and crafts, theatre, swimming lessons, safety classes or after school activities" states Mary Phillippe, Executive Director. United Way funds make it possible to provide scholarships so that all Battle Lake youth have the same opportunities.

The Open Door Youth Center also benefits from United Way dollars. This non-profit agency provides a safe, free, supervised drop-in atmosphere to school age kids throughout the week. Not only do they provide a safe, warm environment, but also homework help and free pizza every Wednesday night.

The Battle Lake and Henning Schools receive a combined \$8,200 for their School Readiness programs. Both programs support and strengthen families by providing resources on early education, provide extra school readiness classes for three and four year olds and also visit child care agencies with early education games, tips, etc.

Along with a direct mail piece to every single household, a downtown business blitz was held in early November with the help of Siep Drug, who provided a base location for volunteers.

Volunteers visiting local businesses were John Tamke (Battle Lake Review), Laura Smith and two sons (Henning School District) and Janelle Hawkinson (Open Door Youth Center). "We really couldn't have done it without these wonderful volunteers – we are so grateful for the support." states Teresa Dahlstrom, Campaign Assistant.

"It's not just about a quick fix or meeting needs anymore," Phillippe said. "It's about creating community impact and changing lives, helping adults and families thrive in the community, giving children a healthy start, it's about giving people the tools they need to create that change on their own."

To volunteer, make a donation or request a speaker for your business or service club, call the United Way office at 736-5147. Donations by check may be sent to United Way, P.O. Box 54, Fergus Falls, Minn., 56537. Online giving is also available at www.uwotc.com.

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