

# United Fund

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## 2010 Grant Cycle Underway

*Have you ever wondered how United Fund spends your money?*

Local community volunteers are hard at work overseeing the United Fund grant process. As members of the Budget and Admissions Committee, they are carefully evaluating grant applications submitted by our community non-profit agencies and recommending the distribution of funds for 2010.

The process includes an extensive review of program outcomes, while also considering the most pressing needs of the community. "We take special care to ensure that donor dollars are being used in the most efficient and effective way possible," states Committee Chair Howard Wilde. "By directing dollars to where they're needed most, United Fund is dedicated to making a measurable difference in the lives of people right here in our community."

All United Fund investments must answer three important questions:

- Does this program address a critical community need?
- Is this an efficient and effective use of our donors' contributions?
- Does the program achieve the community results we seek?

For 2010, United Fund will be funding programs in five areas of focus:

- (1) Increasing Self-Sufficiency:
- (2) Caring for Neighbors in Crisis
- (3) Improving Health & Wellness
- (4) Nurturing Children & Youth
- (5) Building Community

## Campaign Update

United Fund has now reached 82% of our annual fundraising goal! Since August, we have been working hard to reach our 2009 goal of \$330,000 to fund 34 area programs run by local non-profit agencies. These funded programs provide important medical, social, youth and community outreach services making positive, long-term changes in people's lives.

With your help, United Fund will continue our 132 year tradition of caring.

# Making a Difference

If you've ever wondered if your pledge matters, take a few moments and consider the positive impact your gifts have had on the lives of these individuals and families...

## Kidney Foundation of Ohio

As a single mother of a pre-schooler, Teresa Smith\* understands the challenges of managing a household budget. Her monthly Social Security and welfare income barely cover her bills. Teresa is a proud and resourceful woman who rarely asks for help, but when she received a disconnection notice for her electricity service she turned to the Kidney Foundation of Ohio.

Since Teresa started dialysis, she has fought to attend her treatments three times each week. She struggles to find and pay for childcare for her daughter during medical appointments. Her family is supportive and helps when they can, but there are times when Teresa must choose between paying her bills and paying for a babysitter.

To complicate matters, Teresa is traveling down the path of dialysis and End-Stage Renal Disease, and her mother may soon join her. Her mother's diabetes - one of the leading causes of kidney disease - is perpetuating a cycle of illness in the family. It is Teresa's hope that her young daughter will be spared from this disease.

Teresa continues to fight for her dignity and independence. She works diligently with her renal social worker to adhere to her prescribed medical regime. Through the continued support of the United Fund, the Kidney Foundation of Ohio provided vital aid to the Smith family in a time of crisis.

*\*The name was changed to protect the confidentiality of the client.*

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## Prom Dress Project



Spring has officially sprung, and that means Prom season! For many area teens, finding the right dress can be a challenge. For others, especially in light of the current economic times, the challenge is how to afford one.

That's where the United Fund can help. For the past eight years, donations from a bridal shop and many individuals have allowed United Fund to make new and gently used dresses available to students in Huron County and the surrounding areas who cannot afford one.

"It's our goal to see that deserving students who don't have a dress are able to attend formal dances like Prom or Homecoming," says Project

Chair Roxanne Sandles. "Referrals generally come from school advisors, principals and counselors, but any girl in need is more than welcome to call our office and make an appointment to come in and try on dresses."

Although each dress is given to the students as a gift, a written note of thanks to the United Fund Board and the bridal shop, if applicable, are requested. "Showing appreciation to the people who make the project happen is a learning experience for the student and confirmation that this program makes an impact and should continue." explains Sandles.



## Tool Time

It's that time again! You won't want to miss United Fund's 4th Annual Tool Time on Saturday, April 18, from Noon-4pm at the St Paul Convocation Center in Norwalk.

The community is invited to join the fun! Tons of tools, great food, -you could even walk away with the top bid on the famous rubber chicken!

Tickets are available at the door for \$5.00 and include entry into the top prize drawing, tool drawings every 15 minutes, United Fund give-away, food and snacks, and 3 beverage tickets.

The event also features a Silent Auction, Canadian Auction, 50/50 Drawings and display tables by event sponsors.

Thanks to Norwalk Catholic School for donating this great location!

## Responding to Community Needs

Life has changed dramatically this past year, and calls to the United Fund office for assistance have more than tripled. "There are many people who are or will be experiencing financial challenges for the first time," comments Linda Bersche, Executive Director of United Fund. "Donations to United Fund make it possible for us to answer the phone, providing a helping hand and referrals to appropriate services and community resources."

United Fund will continue to take a proactive leadership role in responding to the ever growing need for assistance in our community:

- We compiled the Huron County Community Resource Guide, a comprehensive list of programs and services published by the Norwalk Reflector and available in many local agencies and businesses. Copies may also be obtained by contacting our office at 419-668-0269.
- We partnered with a group of local volunteers to assist them in creating the Community Workers Fund, providing emergency assistance to workers in order to minimize hardship due to involuntary layoffs, closings or economic slow down.
- We are active members of the Huron County Workforce Response Team and Save Our Homes Task Force, and recently partnered with Huron County Job & Family Services and the Ohio Benefit Bank to provide free tax clinics for low-income residents.
- United Fund also coordinates quarterly meetings of the Huron County Interagency Council, a county-wide strategic planning partnership designed to promote a better understanding of community supports, reduce duplication of services, identify gaps in services and make the best use of area resources through communication, cooperation and collaboration.

In these uncertain times United Fund is there, proud to be a well established presence in our community since 1877 and ready to respond to the changing needs of our community.