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### United Way needs donors this year so it can meet goal and help more people

Our opinion

September 12, 2012

Looking over United Way's last half decade of fundraising, the people of Monroe County are showing evidence of a rut. They can't seem to muster the resources or energy to support United Way at the level it needs.

We don't think this shows a lack of caring. Rather, more likely it shows the effect of the recession, which has been dragging behind like a lead weight since 2007.

[This year the energy needs to return.](#) This year, United Way of Monroe County needs to get enough support to make its fundraising goal of \$1,410,000.

That goal was the same last year, and the campaign fell about \$10,000 short.

The year before that, a \$1.4 million was made by \$137 on some late donations.

The year before that — 2009-2010 — the campaign raised \$1,419,321 to top a \$1,375,000 goal.

The year before that, the campaign fell short of its \$1.4 million goal. And the year before that it fell short of a \$1.44 million goal.

Reaching what by no means are stretch goals only two of the last five years is not good enough. It's important that United Way starts to make these goals every year, and not just because it looks good on paper.

The 24 partner agencies and the numerous other agencies supported through directed donations need the financial support so they can help more people. While donations have been flat, the need for services has risen.

Barry Lessow, executive director of United Way, said at Friday's kickoff that a vast majority of people are doing all they can to help themselves. But not all people can get by without some assistance — with food, housing, health care or paying for an education in an effort to move toward self-sufficiency.

United Way's three focus areas are education, earnings and essentials. As Lessow noted, "It does our community no good when kids show up at kindergarten not able to recognize the letter 'A' or drop out of school at age 16; ... or women ignore that lump; or seniors ration their heart pills." United Way works to make sure all Monroe Countians have what they need for decent quality of life and a chance to better themselves.

Besides providing direct assistance, United Way plays a crucial role by fostering communication and collaboration among agencies. People at one agency can direct clients to other agencies for help, and a continuum of care is created.

These are challenging times, no question. We're hearing a lot of political campaigning about how candidates on the national stage are or aren't leading us out of the recession; are or aren't finding solutions, particularly to economic problems that have hurt the middle class.

This campaign of the United Way of Monroe County is not political and it's very local. Please cast a vote of financial support for United Way to help it exceed its goal so it can help the lives of others.

That's one vote that will lead to results, right here at home.

#### How to help

To help this year's campaign you can visit United Way's website at [www.monroeunitedway.org](http://www.monroeunitedway.org) and securely donate online via credit card. Donors can also download pledge cards and contribute in the form of cash, check, credit card, automatic bank withdrawal, stocks and securities, or can choose to be billed. Those participating in workplace campaigns can contribute via

payroll deduction.

Any company interested in having a workplace campaign or any group that would like a presentation about United Way or their member agencies can contact resource development director Lori Garraghty at [lori@monroe.unitedway.org](mailto:lori@monroe.unitedway.org) or 812-334-8370.



Barry Lessow, executive director of United Way of Monroe County, talks with Mark Moore, CEO of IU Health Bloomington Hospital, at the kickoff luncheon for the new United Way fundraising campaign. David Snodgrass | Herald-Times

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