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Helping United Way helps alleviate fear, improve lives

Editorial staff Mar 7, 2017

United Way of Monroe County didn't set a fund-raising goal this year, so it will neither make nor miss a target. It simply wants to make lives better.

The organization instead is focused on raising as much money as it can so it can do the most it can do to help local programs efficiently and effectively serve members of the community.

The two "e words" above can join the United Way mission of strengthening three other "e's" as building blocks of life: education, earnings and essentials.

It's worth repeating here the words of United Way of Monroe County Executive Director Barry Lessow:

"We can share tons of statistics and lots of census data, but it boils down to a few very simple, human universal truths: When you can't afford food, it is scary; when you have no idea how you're going to pay the rent next week, it's scary; when you have to work in the afternoon and you don't know a safe place to put your kid, that's scary," he said at the campaign kick-off event. "A lot of our job is to tell people to not be scared."

United Way and its member agencies work to lessen the need for fear that comes with difficult circumstances.

"The only way that these (member) agencies can do what we ask them to do for other people, for people we know, and someday for us, is to make sure they have the funding and the support to do it," Lessow said.

As of Friday, the 2016-17 campaign had raised \$1,174,594 to help fund United Way's 26 member agencies and other nonprofit organizations designated by donors. That's a generous amount, but short of what was raised either of the past two years. It would be a positive signal of community engagement and caring if that number were to rise significantly as contributions are collected through the final week of April.

There's no goal to shoot for except the goal of helping others. We encourage people to continue to follow United Way's campaign slogan, which calls for "Empowering Your Community. One Donation at a Time."

Those who wish to learn more about United Way can go to www.monroeunitedway.org or call 812-334-8370.