UNITED WAY HONORS COMMUNITY LEADERS AND
“SIGNS OF PROGRESS” IN LANE COUNTY

Annual event is Thursday, Jan. 17th at Eugene Hilton
Leadership Giving Reception 5:30-6:15
Dinner 6:00 – 6:45
Program 6:45

SPRINGFIELD, OR – United Way of Lane County announced the results of its 2007 annual campaign at its celebratory event called “Signs of Progress” on Thursday night, January 17, 2008. United Way’s evolving community impact role is reflected in the expanded ways in which community members and private and public organizations contribute to a stronger community. Décor matched the theme of construction and included yellow hard hats and lit, upright flashlights in place of candles.

In 2007, $5,242,870 was invested in the community through United Way via the following channels:

- The annual workplace and corporate campaign
- Support and sponsorships for Success By 6 projects including the Parent HelpLine and an education outreach called “Children DO Come with Directions.”
- Support for Project Homeless Connect
- Sponsorships for the Western Oregon Womens Conference.
- Membership in the 100% Access Healthcare coalition
- Support and sponsorships for Earned Income Tax Credit outreach and fee tax assistance.

Grants and bequests to United Way of Lane County are not included in this total but comprise an additional $367,748.

Campaign chair, Bob Harris, CEO of Pacific Cascade Federal Credit Union was justifiably pleased with the results of his campaign year.

“This impressive result confirms the caring, giving spirit of our friends, neighbors, and employers,” he answered when asked how he felt about the community’s response to United Way’s efforts.
HIGHEST INCREASE FROM SURPRISING SOURCE
One of Oregon’s more beleaguered business segments is the wood products industry. Yet, the company posting the most impressive growth was Murphy Plywood with a whopping 84% increase over their workplace campaign in 2006.

When asked what accounted from such astonishing growth, Robin Heide from Murphy Plywood answered, “Besides the fact that we have a truly amazing group of folks working here, I think that the big leap in giving is attributed to two things. First, people are being laid off right and left in the industry. Our president, John Murphy, appealed to our workers pointing out how lucky they are. Murphy hasn’t had a single layoff. He urged them to share some of our luck.

Secondly, John also pledged to match every employee donation dollar-to-dollar. So someone’s $5 a week gift automatically became $10. I think that really inspired us to celebrate that we’re secure, our workplace is stable, and, like I said before, we’re just really lucky.”

Murphy’s employee campaign leaders, Lisa Gardner and Susan McKenna received one of United Way’s Extraordinary Employee Campaign Leader Awards at Thursday’s event.

BIGGEST CONTRIBUTIONS
- The single highest campaign contribution in the history of United Way came from PeaceHealth which posted a 10% increase over last year’s contribution. In total, along with their partner organizations Oregon Medical Lab and Oregon Imaging, the entire PeaceHealth campaign, along with added community investments, raised $407,980.
- The University of Oregon includes 107 separate departmental campaigns and strong Leadership giving. That combined with its other United Way investments brought the total contribution to $279,500.
- Of the three top performers, Bi-Mart boasts one of the highest participation rates in Lane County with over 86% of the employees donating. Employee gifts and support from the corporate office brought Bi-Mart’s 2007 total giving to $185,502.

NEW ORGANIZATIONS
Five local organizations got involved with the annual campaign for the first time in 2007:
- Egge Sand & Gravel
- Eugene Hearing & Speech
- Flakeboard, Inc.
- Goodwill
- Mercedes-Benz

NONPROFITS GIVE MORE THAN EVER
United Way supports over 40 Lane County nonprofit agencies, many of whom also run employee campaigns. Considering layoffs in nonprofits, and traditionally low salaries, it is impressive that their combined 2007 giving represented a generous $114,000.

ALTON F. BAKER AWARD FOR VOLUNTEERISM
One of the highlights of the evening was the annual presentation of the Alton F. Baker Award. Founder of The Register-Guard Alton F. Baker has a particularly warm spot in the heart United
Way of Lane County. It was Baker who, in 1942, started up the Community Chest which evolved into today’s United Way.

Alton Baker’s grandson, Tony Baker, made the presentation to a surprised and visibly moved Mike and Fran Curtis. For decades the Curtis’ have supported, volunteered for, and served a range of local nonprofits. A video produced for the occasion by KVAL-TV quoted friends and family and served the announcement to the winners. Mike Curtis is the owner of Curtis Restaurant Equipment in Springfield.

SIGNS OF PROGRESS
Priscilla Gould offered comments based on the theme of the evening, “Signs of Progress.” She discussed United Way’s evolving role in the community and its powerful ability to convene a wide range of partners to focus on the root causes of issues.

Gould pointed out one particular success, the 100% Access Healthcare Initiative http://www.100percentaccess.org. Led by a broad based coalition of partners from the healthcare industry, 100% Access has made great strides in just over 2 years in terms of improving access to healthcare for Lane County’s under- and uninsured residents.

She also discussed shifts in the needs of local residents related to financial stability. While individuals may go to local social service agencies for help with food, medical care, shelter, or utility assistance, the root cause problem is poverty. United Way of America launched a Financial Stability Partnership last year and our local United Way has been doing extensive research and evaluation here in Lane County on the subject.

Bob Harris closed the evening with this statement:

“We’re all aware of the rapidly changing nature of the world around us. And, United Way has evolved and changed to meet the needs before us. Issues facing our neighbors are more complex than ever and so our work must meet the challenge. Over the years we’ve seen United Way respond to these challenges with innovative solutions. Several years ago when child abuse rates in Lane County reached a troubling peak, the United Way brought dozens of partners together and formed the Success By 6 Initiative which is now a regularly funded goal area of our work. Three years ago when access to healthcare issues became the prevailing concern, United Way responded by forming the 100% Access Healthcare Initiative. And, again, dozens of partners came to the United Way table to design and implement solutions right here in Lane County. Today the 100% Access work is a national model on how to do it right. And next month you’ll be hearing about earned income tax credit outreach to seniors and low- to moderate-income workers in an effort to expand their financial stability while enriching the local economy.

This important work is only possible because we are united in our commitment to our neighbors, united in our caring, united in our giving.”

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