

Solutions for a stronger community

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For well over three-quarters of a century, the Tulsa Area United Way has served the region with great distinction and honor, providing practical help and assistance to thousands of our friends in need.

This year's campaign is coming to a close this week as thousands of area volunteers scramble to reach, and hopefully exceed, an aggressive goal.

Indeed, our United Way operates with impressive credentials, delivering an astounding 91 percent of monies directly to front line agencies who provide sensible and effective programs

for those who find themselves in need of help. And a staggering 99 percent of funds stay

right here in the Tulsa area. Moreover, it is estimated that 1 in 3 area residents are served in some form by a United Way agency.

Read through the list of annual donors and you'll see mighty business barons listed alongside Tulsa's most recognized individuals and philanthropists. Tulsa and the entire area are truly fortunate to be home to such a generous cadre of giving souls who loyally support Tulsa's wide-ranging health and human service organizations.

But working silently behind these marquee names are an army of ordinary, kind-hearted citizens whose gifts matter just as much, if not more.

From airline mechanics, teachers, and dental hygienist, to the welder, hair dresser and small business owner, the United Way is equally reliant on thousands of individuals who blend into the everyday landscape of life, giving an equal if not greater sum of their annual earnings to help others in need.

It takes gifts both small and large to fund the desperately needed programs operated by our network of agencies. And donors can feel good knowing their gift is smartly invested to combat our most pressing community needs. Increasingly, an entire family of agencies goes to work for a single individual in order to pro-



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vide comprehensive solutions.

In fact, the method of prioritizing community needs and recommending funding levels for some 170 programs is an immense and difficult process.

Prior to the start of the campaign in September with the Day of Caring, some 275 trained volunteers invested more than 8,000 hours analyzing the needs of the community and studying the effectiveness of local programs; all in an effort to ensure that your contributions have the greatest possible impact.

These special United Way volunteers recognize that the real power to build strong, healthy communities starts with taking personal responsibility for the health of our community through volunteer efforts.

This process of reviewing program plans, visiting agencies and analyzing budgets keeps our United Way firmly connected and responsive to our community's most pressing needs.

At the same time, because human service needs grow and change over time, this process allows us to direct our limited resources where they will do the most good, with more and more funding directed toward preventative measures.

Now take a moment and read on to discover what two United Way funded programs are doing to help your friends and neighbors.

Right now, as you read these words, two children, between the innocent ages of 0-5 will be enrolled in the Family Sexual Abuse Treatment Program. Young children, oftentimes abused by people they know and trust. It's saddening, but it's their reality.

This particular United Way funded program helped an astonishing 663 children last year. Worse,

the number of child victims is on the rise.

And at this moment, there is a physically and emotionally battered woman knocking on the door of Domestic Violence Intervention Services, asking for help, asking the question, "why me?," asking to make sense of her new nightmare. She, like hundreds of others, will join a United Way funded program to find a way out of this trauma. But she'll never fully recover.

That's just two programs - two stories. There are some 170 other vital programs helping in other ways, including developmental disabilities, chemical abuse, hospice care, after school programs for low-income children and so much more. There are agencies and programs ready to help, but it takes money. There is an answer. And the answer is you.

Please call to make your best contribution or to start a United Way campaign, 583-7171.