

# Tough Questions - Good Answers

As a campaign leader, it will be your responsibility to help employees understand what the United Way is all about. The list below will help prepare you for whatever questions may arise as your campaign rolls along.



## **“What is the Capital Area United Way?”**

Capital Area United Way is a local charity that strives to improve the lives of people in the tri-county area. Through the Community Investment Fund, donor investors provide assistance to more than one charity. The Community Investment Fund is the collective power of people working toward long-term solutions, not just short-term fixes. The CIF invests donor resources in six community priority areas:

1. Healthy, Caring Communities
2. Safe, Stable Households
3. Learning From Birth to Young Adult

## **“How is United Way different from other nonprofit organizations?”**

United Way exists for one reason - to strengthen our community through individual and family well-being. Community volunteers from all walks of life identify critical needs in our community and addresses them with collective focus and action through the six priority areas listed above. United Way also engages community leaders, businesses and governmental agencies to worked together to make our community a better place for everyone.

## **“Why do businesses and labor choose to support Capital Area United Way?”**

1. Capital Area United Way is the most efficient organization for investing charitable dollars.
2. Capital Area United Way maximizes employees' limited time and resources for charitable workplace appeals.
3. It is a trusted community organization that solves the most pressing community needs.
4. Businesses and labor groups believe in giving back to the community through United Way.

# Tough Questions - Good Answers

---

## **“Isn’t United Way just another charity?”**

The community owns the United Way. It is a volunteer driven organization that seeks solutions to our local issues and problems. United Way touches the lives of children, families and seniors in the tri-county area.

## **“What if I don’t like an agency that CAUW funds?”**

Feel free to call us to ask for clarification on the kinds of funding each agency receives. Remember that highly skilled volunteers study all of the agencies and determine which programs best address the tri-county needs before funding is granted from the Community Investment Fund. Agencies receiving funding are held accountable and must submit progress reports listing their benefits to the community.

## **“How do I know my gift is really helping those in need?”**

Capital Area United Way works closely with agencies and other local service providers to define health and human service problems in our community and develop plans to solve community needs. We focus on results and require programs to measure their outcomes. Our agency partners provide quarterly reports on their progress.

## **“HOW DO PEOPLE GET HELP FROM UNITED WAY?”**

United Way supports more than 50 programs throughout the tri-county area that help people every day. United Way also helps support Central Michigan 2-1-1, which makes free, confidential referrals to organizations that can help with counseling, job training, emergency assistance and other needs. Along with 2-1-1, United Way also helped to support programs that assist middle school aged girls deal with issues that may affect their development into healthy, productive adults through the grants provided by the Women’s Leadership Council.

## **“Our employees and their families are struggling. How can we ask them to give?”**

Time and again, some of the most generous givers are those who themselves have struggled and needed a helping hand from our community. Everyone should be given an opportunity to express caring through charitable giving. Even a small contribution will help someone who might not otherwise receive help. Your gift strengthens other gifts. No gift is too small. By giving a small amount each pay period through payroll deduction most working people have found they can afford to contribute.

## **“Isn’t United Way money wasted on lunches or fancy parties?”**

Contributions do not pay for lunches or parties. United Way events are paid for by the attendees or sponsored by community-minded businesses.

## **“What happens if I designate my pledge?”**

Capital Area United Way will honor designations to any accepted organizations. If you choose to direct your gift to a specific agency, your donation to EACH organization must be a minimum of \$50.00 to cover the costs of processing designated gifts and to keep administrative costs low.

# Tough Questions - Good Answers

## **“Why are you instituting a Designation Minimum?”**

Donors expect us to be a cost effective method for charitable giving; therefore, CAUW has instituted a minimum amount of \$50 a donor can give to each organization they choose. This will help us maintain the most cost effective way a donor can give back to their community.

## **“Is it that expensive to pass my designation on to an agency?”**

It costs CAUW \$4.18 to process each agency designation it receives. If a designation is less than \$50, CAUW's processing fee does not cover the true cost of processing and CAUW would have to cover the cost of processing donor designations. By instituting the \$50 minimum, CAUW will be able to continue distributing donor designations without a cost to UW.

## **“How much will United Way make by now requiring a minimum designation?”**

CAUW did not institute the designation minimum in order to raise additional revenue; it was established to insure that the administrative fee would not have to increase.

## **“An administrative fee of 13% sounds rather high, doesn't it?”**

CAUW's administrative fee is well below what the Better Business Bureau recognizes as acceptable which is 35%. It is also lower than the national average non-profit cost of 20%.

## **“Aren't you worried that this will turn donors off to donating?”**

We understand this is a new way of doing business at UW. We hope that the donor will understand that we are committed to advancing the common good by doing what is in the best interest of our community and our donors. At UW, we are committed to making sure that donor dollars are being utilized in the best possible way that benefits our community. That means making sure every possible dollar goes directly to community services and not to processing designations.

## **“What if someone states they will now give directly to the agency of their choice?”**

Giving is a very personal thing and we understand that some donors have a favorite agency or cause. It is our hope that they will reconsider their decision and perhaps give to the priority area. For example, if someone is considering giving to Boys & Girls Club, we would suggest they consider donating to priority area entitled “Learning from Birth to Young Adult.” The BGC is currently receiving funding from that priority area. Their donation will be leveraged with those of other donors and can have a bigger impact on youth issues.

## **“It sounds like United Way is concentrating their focus on three new areas, is that true?”**

In December of 2007, the Board of Directors established three new priority areas in an effort to be more effective and efficient in its funding. This decision was arrived at after months of research, focus groups and discussions with community leaders on our community needs. Along with the three new priority areas, there are three initiatives that will direct funding to the root causes of our community's issues. The reasoning is if we can eradicate some of our community's issues at the root cause, there will be less need.

## **“What if I still want to give a gift of less than \$50 to an agency of my choice? Can I still do that?”**

If you do make a donation of less than \$50, every attempt will be made to contact the donor and inform them of the designation policy. The donor will then be given the choice of directing their money to UW, a specific priority area or increase their donation to reach the \$50 minimum. In the event that contact cannot be made with the donor, their donation will be directed the UW.

# Campaign Resources

United Way is always available to help you and to answer any questions. Listed below are helpful materials for our volunteers in their efforts of reaching people and businesses in our community. If you need any of these items, contact Theresa Stevens at (517) 203-5024.

## **2008 Capital Area United Way Video**

This video can be used in meetings or set up in a common area to run continuously.

## **United Way Outdoor Flag**

United Way flags are very useful in showing your company's support and reminds employees of the campaign.

## **Lapel Pins and Adhesive Lapel Pins**

These are United Way pins for donors to employee campaigns; they help to recognize and thank employees as givers.

## **United Way Catalog**

Companies may order items directly from this catalog as incentives or prizes for their employee campaigns. The catalog includes t-shirts, hats, key chains, cups and mugs, awards, etc...

## **Inter-Office Efforts**

Many times donors appreciate a "Thank You" from their employer every bit as much as they do from the United Way. Simple and effective ways of thanking your company's givers include a note or flyer with their paycheck, a memo from the company's president or CEO, or a special lunch to thank employees for helping to make a successful campaign. Feel free to contact the United Way office if you would like assistance with these ideas.

## **United Way/Partner Agency Tabletop Displays**

Informative displays with agency literature are great low-key donor educators. Perfect for break/lunch rooms. Also suitable for lobby display. Please call United Way to reserve in advance.

## **Speaker's Bureau**

A bureau of partner agency clients, volunteers and staff people are available to speak or address employee company meetings. Some are also available to give presentations on specific issues such as domestic and child abuse, health and safety, etc.

## **Agency Fairs**

Agencies set up display booths in employee cafeterias or break rooms. They can be available to answer questions at a designated time.

## **Agency Tours**

Visit various United Way partner agencies to see both volunteers and clients in action. Meet United Way and partner agency representatives.

# Sample Letters

Here are some sample letters for use during your employee campaign. You can use them as they are presented, or customize them to reflect your organization's style.

## CEO Endorsement Letter

Dear <Name>:

At <Company Name> we've earned a reputation for caring about our community. Soon, you'll have the opportunity to show how much you care by supporting the annual United Way campaign. This is your chance to make our community better and change thousands of lives right here in the tri-county area.

With one gift to the Capital Area United Way, you will touch the lives of individuals and families in all corners of our community. Only through giving to United Way can your one investment have as much impact on improving lives and strengthening our community.

Please join me in supporting this year's effort by contributing as generously as you are able. It is all of us giving together that makes this community stronger.

Sincerely,

## Thank You Letter

Dear <Name>:

Thank you for participating in this year's annual campaign for Capital Area United Way. In 2007, our employees raised <\$>, which will help make an impact on the most crucial needs facing our community.

Only through giving to United Way can your one investment have as much impact on improving lives and strengthening our community, and we appreciate your ongoing commitment.

You can be proud that your gift has helped make a serious impact on residents in the tri-county area. Thank you for caring about what matters most.

Sincerely,

## Leadership Giving Letter

Dear <Name>:

At <Company Name> we have always prided ourselves on our leadership and dedication to our community. Capital Area United Way is committed to focusing on the most critical needs in the community. Only through giving to United Way can your one investment have as much impact on improving lives.

For these reasons, <Company Name> actively supports the United Way campaign. As we begin the 2005 campaign, your continued support and generosity is appreciated. Your leadership and commitment inspire the generosity of others.

As you consider your investment in United Way, I hope you give serious thought to <continue giving or giving at> the Leadership Givers level. It is donors like you, and all of us giving together, that make this community stronger.

Sincerely,

# Sample E-Mails

## Announce Campaign Team Meeting

TO: 2008 Campaign Team

Subject: Goal Setting and Planning for 2008 Campaign

We are gearing up for campaign and I am glad to have you on the team!

I am scheduling a meeting to kick off our planning on <date>, at <time> in <location>. I would appreciate any thoughts you might have prior to our meeting. Please let me know if you can make it. Look forward to seeing you there.

Thanks for your participation!

<Coordinator's Name>

## Pre-campaign E-mail

To: All Staff

Re: Making a difference with Capital Area United Way

Giving to Capital Area United Way is the most effective, efficient, and accountable way to make positive, long-lasting changes in people's lives. Here are just some of the ways the Community Investment Fund improved lives in 2007-2008:

- Provided legal, health-related and socialization services to....nearly 3,500 people
  - Provided mentoring for....over 18,000 children
  - Provided 2,443,244 pounds of food to hungry families
  - Provided counseling for....over 7,000 people
  - Provided abuse prevention programs and a safe place for....over 20,000 people
  - Provided safe, short-term shelter and basic necessities to....over 19,000 people
- ...and so much more!!

## Announce the Campaign

To: All Staff

Announcing <company name>'s 2008 Capital Area United Way campaign! It's your opportunity to help make the mid-Michigan community a better place to live and work. Last year <company name> employees raised an incredible <dollar amount>. [include details on last year's corporate match, if applicable and this year's corporate commitment, if known]. This year's goal is <dollar amount>.

We will kick things off on <date> at <place>. [include description of kick-off event(s)]. Hope to see you there!

<Company name> is proud to partner with Capital Area United Way to offer our employees the chance to make a difference. Experience has taught us that when you invest your time, dollars, and your caring with Capital Area United Way, you become a powerful force for change in our community.

# Sample E-Mails

## CEO E-mail of Support

To: All Staff

Our Capital Area United Way campaign begins on <date>, and I invite you to join me in extending a hand and bringing help to the people who need it most.

Capital Area United Way helps more people, in more ways, than any other charitable organization in the tri-county area. One in four tri-county residents is helped in times of need through the United Way Community Investment Fund. Giving to Capital Area United Way is the most effective, efficient, and accountable way to make a difference in individual lives.

We all win when the Community Investment Fund is strengthened. The most valuable prize is a strong and healthy community and we must never lose sight of this goal. Your support of Capital Area United Way is critical as we face a slowing economy and other challenges.

<Name of employee> has generously agreed to be our campaign coordinator. If you have any questions about the campaign, please feel free to contact him/her.

I look forward to 100% participation in our United Way campaign.

To: All Staff

We are proud and happy to join other local citizens and firms in support of our community's United Way Campaign.

Your contribution to the United Way Campaign will help agencies to continue their important work in our community. These agencies work throughout the year providing services and programs to help people are hungry, homeless, and many others with varied circumstances who must at times depend on the generosity of others.

We ask you to join with our fellow workers and help keep the spirit the United Way Campaign alive. You can help make a difference in the lives of those in need.

# Sample E-Mails

## Campaign Progress Report

To: All Staff

Hello everyone! I wanted to let you know that we've reached <percentage>% of our <dollar amount> campaign goal.

Thanks to you, last week's <event name> was a huge success. [insert highlights from event]

If you have any questions about the campaign or about the changes at Capital Area United Way, please don't hesitate to let me know. I am happy to provide any additional information you might need.

Together, we're changing lives!

P.S. Please be sure to turn in your pledge forms by <date>.

## Results/Thank You

To: All Staff

I am thrilled to inform you that we met (and exceeded) our Capital Area United Way campaign goal and raised <dollar amount> to address our community's most critical needs. Thank you for supporting <Company name>'s commitment to making mid-Michigan a better place to live and work.

## Campaign CEO Thank You

To: All Staff

RE: Capital Area United Way Campaign

On behalf of <company name> and Capital Area United Way, I would like to express our deep appreciation for your involvement in this year's campaign. Your generous donation to our United Way campaign is greatly appreciated. Your gift is an expression of your caring, and it represents an investment in the future of our community. Because of your commitment, local United Way supported programs will receive the help needed to provide vital health, family, and youth services.

The value of your efforts – to these programs and the people who depend on United Way – cannot possibly be measured, but are certainly appreciated.

Again, thank you for your generosity.



# Sample E-Mails

## Informational E-mail messages for use during campaign or year-round

How to Live United: Join Hands. Open Your Heart. Lend Your Muscle. Find Your Voice. Give 10%. Give 110%. Give An Hour. Give A Saturday. Think of We Before Me. Reach Out a Hand to One and Influence the Condition of All. Give. Advocate. Volunteer. Live United.

Support our community! Our company's United Way campaign is fast approaching and it's the best way to make a big difference. Your single gift will support and sustain community programs in the tri-county area. And it's so easy to give through payroll deduction. Look for more information about the campaign in the next few weeks. The issues and needs facing our community change and evolve every year. But United Way has the flexibility to work with other concerned community organizations to address those issues and make a big impact where it's needed most. That's how you can Live United.

Last year over \$5 million was raised through the United Way campaign to support programs that help people in need. And now that you've helped raise the money, you can help invest the money! Consider becoming a United Way Grant Team volunteer. Visit their website at [www.capitalareaunderway.org/community\\_priority\\_areas.html](http://www.capitalareaunderway.org/community_priority_areas.html).

Imagine that with one gift through United Way you can accomplish so much good! Your gift through United Way helps fund programs that will help promote healthy, caring communities; ensure safe, stable households; and provide opportunities to learn from birth to young adult.