

65 years of community funds

The front page headline of the Oct. 29, 1946, Dalton News (with the tag line “Covers the County Like Dalton ‘Covers’ the Nation”) and a lovely drawing of a bedspread) announced “Chest Drive Goes Past Quota; May Reach The \$25,000 Mark.”

My first thought was: How did we ever wrap up a campaign before Halloween? My second thought was: We’ve come a long way. Digging back through the history folder, we know that the Whitfield Community Chest is now known as the United Way of Northwest Georgia and now serves both Whitfield and Murray counties.

The 1946 issue goes on to share that R.E. Hamilton, Rotary president, declared that while Rotarians headed the various fundraising committees and were responsible for planning and conducting that year’s drive, it is a “community job” in which all Dalton civic clubs had a part, and in which all could share the honors for surpassing the quota.

The article further explains that local clubs take turns being in charge of the annual campaign, including Rotary, Lions, the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Elks and Exchange clubs. Hamilton explained that Rotary’s process for selecting the chairman was to look around amongst its members for the “healthiest-looking, livest wire young man” and they decided on Tom Jones, who chaired the drive that year. R.E. noted that Tom took the job with enthusiasm and “jeeped all over Dalton, pepping up the workers and hunting contributions.” How funny, but accurate, his words are in describing the feelings and process of raising funds.

The 1946 cabinet members were Tom Jones, R.G. McCamy, Judson Manly, Joe Barrett, Warren Simes, Clarence Hill, Alfred Jones, R.E. Hamilton, Carlton McCamy, O.R. Hardin, Clifford Hale, Orvil Moffitt, Charlie Bowen, Murray Whiteside and Carl Berry.

Today the quota, now referred to as a campaign goal, is very different — this year’s is \$3.25 million. But one could argue that Bill Davies, BB&T city executive and member of United Way’s Young Leaders Society, was chosen for the job of United Way campaign chair in much the same way as Tom Jones was 65 years ago. As the old adage goes, the more things change, the more they stay the same.

Bill Davies’ 2011 United Way Campaign Cabinet members are Kevin Sanders, Marshall Mauldin, Jerry Watkins, Shawn Molsberger, Agnes Richmond, Julian Saul, Matthew Moore, Gary Dale, Bryan Macon, David Jolly, Jim Hawkins, David Pennington, Will Pridgen and Pete Sigmon.

Each of Bill’s Cabinet members has taken on a different segment of the community: finance and insurance, major carpet, professionals, commercial businesses, pub-

lic entities, major donors, young leaders, etc. If you read the full article from 1946, you will see Jones’ assignments are much the same — bedspread companies, general stores and dry goods, civic clubs and individual giving.

It is comforting to know that we have leaders like Bill Davies and his Cabinet in our community today who are willing and able to carry on the traditions of servant leadership of other great leaders before them. Not only did the entrepreneurial spirit build our carpet and floorcovering industry, this same spirit built United Way into a trusted philanthropic partner for each and every community member, no matter their income level, to help neighbors in need.

I would like to share with you what \$100 bought in United Way services in 1946 vs. 2011, but our history doesn’t provide this piece of information. I can share that in 1946 the newspaper was 5 cents and printed weekly. Today it is a daily edition and costs 50 cents. So here are examples of what your dollars will do in our community now:

- \$10,000 per year provides a year of service and support for an adult with a developmental disability

- \$7,500 per year provides assistance for 40 children from low-income families to attend summer camp

- \$5,000 per year provides eight months of speech therapy for a child in need

- \$2,500 per year provides 480 meals delivered to a homebound elderly

- \$1,000 per year provides two children with kindergarten readiness through a high quality preschool

- \$365 per year provides six individuals counseling sessions for a victim of domestic violence

If you are giving via payroll deduction at your company:

- \$25 per week provides a mentor for a child for one year

- \$10 per week provides one child a safe place to learn and play afterschool for one year

- \$5 per week provides 52 meals for families with hospitalized children

- \$3 per week provides two individuals with Alzheimer’s disease with Safe Return bracelets

Today, Bill Davies and his Cabinet have raised 76 percent of the \$3.25 million goal, so we still need your help. While you are contemplating your holiday giving, please consider a gift to United Way. A gift to United Way works 365 days a year. Imagine a child’s face when he has a hot, satisfying meal, a warm, safe place to sleep every night, and feels safe and secure. As a mother of three, I know these things are priceless. I feel good knowing my gift to United Way makes this possible.

Amanda Burt is the president of United Way of Northwest Georgia. Contributions can be made online at ourunitedway.org or you can mail a check to P.O. Box 566, Dalton, GA 30722. You can also stop by the office at 816 S. Thornton Ave.



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