

Annual meeting coming up Wednesday

As our board members and staff prepare for the United Way Annual Meeting, we pause to reflect on the past 12 months and give thanks.

Volunteer projects, community investment panel meetings, corporate agency tours, new AmeriCorps members, the launch of the Superhero Sprint and countless campaign meetings and presentations — kept us all busy and helped bring

the mission of United Way to life in Northwest Georgia.

I invite you to join the United Way Board of Directors for our annual

meeting on Wednesday, March 21, at 8:30 a.m. at Ryman Hall in Dalton. This year we celebrate 125 years of the national United Way movement.

Our local United Way traces its roots back to the early 1940s. Mindy Binderman, executive director of GEEARS (Georgia Early Education Alliance for Ready Students), will be sharing the business case for early learning. Companies with outstanding campaigns will be recognized.

Community-wide volunteer awards will be presented, including the Connie Woodward Award for Volunteerism in Whitfield County and the Elaine Butler Award for Volunteerism in Murray County.

Volunteers who have given more than 100 hours will receive a Presidential Volunteer Service Award. Dixie Kinard, local community leader and board member of Georgia Bright from the Start, will share United Way's progress on the goal we launched last November to recruit 100 new readers, tutors and mentors to work with area children and youth in our education initiative.

Meagan Shinn, a recent

graduate of University of Georgia Grady School of Journalism and a United Way intern, has put together a beautiful, but concise, annual report for our organization.

In addition to more than 10,000 donors of financial resources who contributed over \$3.25 million to our campaign, United Way worked with 3,664 volunteers in 2011 who made a \$653,616 impact with their time. Volunteers who lend not only their time, but also their talent, make the United Way movement strong.

Local distribution employees help plan Meals on Wheels routes to minimize mileage expenses and stretch scarce dollars. Six-Sigma black belts give their time to non-profits to analyze their internal systems and improve operating efficiencies. CPAs provide financial oversight and accountability. Sales professionals help spread the United Way message to other companies and individuals. Parents, business professionals, and retirees, who volunteer to read to local classrooms, ensure more children read on grade level and nurture a love of reading.

I want to thank Brian Ramsey for fulfilling a second term as the chairman of the United Way of Northwest Georgia Board of Directors. At our annual meeting, Brian will pass the gavel to Delyn Ellis. Delyn has spent many years living the mission of United Way as a donor, advocate and

volunteer. Delyn is active in the Shaw Industries workplace campaign, helped United Way convene a Community Forum on Basic Needs and provided hundreds of hours volunteering on United Way Community Investment panels. Delyn has already hit the ground running and is planning for a new year of LIVE UNITED.

I hope to see many of you next week at our annual meeting. If you can't join us, look for our annual report on our website, www.ourunitedway.org. There you can find a host of opportunities to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our communities in Northwest Georgia.

We all win when a child succeeds in school, when families are financially stable and when people have good health. Dare to dream. Join our team. Live United.

Amanda Burt is the president of United Way of Northwest Georgia.



Amanda Burt



TEACHERS

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