

Applying one extra degree

“A person struggles. You help. A door needs to be open. You open it. A child needs some extra attention. You give it to them. A job needs to be completed. You do it.” — Sam Parker.

Imagine the possibilities if we each gave one act of service or kindness each week. That would add up to 52 acts inspiring moments each year.

I am truly honored and humbled to be the 2012 campaign chairman at our local United Way. I have lived in Dalton for 29 years and have always been amazed at the many ways this community takes care of its own people, all ages and all backgrounds, especially in the toughest of times.

In my opinion, the United Way of Northwest Georgia is the absolute best organization for individuals and companies to invest back in our community. By supporting education, basic needs and health through 20 partner agencies we ensure brighter futures for so many. Your investment in United Way helps our youth, our elderly, our disabled, our next door neighbors, our fellow employees, in essence, our “community family.”

Our community is remarkable when you think about the tremendous financial and volunteer support that our local companies provide through corporate gifts, employee contributions and retirees’ investments. Year in and year out the contributions that our

United Way receives are far greater than other communities that are similar in size.

Based on the fact that last year Dalton lost more jobs (4,600) than any other U.S. city, we knew 2012 would be tough. So how do we take the local economic challenges and actually “raise the bar” to support more people in harder times?

There is a motivational book called “212: The Extra Degree” by Sam Parker, which touts “How to achieve results beyond your wildest expectations.” The basic premise of the book is that at 211 degrees, water is hot. At 212 degrees, it boils, and with boiling water comes steam and with steam, you can power a train. Applying one extra degree can make a positive difference to anything we do.

This year our United Way staff and Campaign Cabinet have embraced this concept, have set a goal of \$3.35 million (plus 3 percent over the 2011 goal), and have taken the spirit of “212: The Extra Degree” to the streets. Here are a few examples of extra degrees that have made a positive difference in the 2012 campaign:

■ United Way Superhero Sprint mobilized over 100 runners.

■ The inaugural CEO Trike Relay had 12 corporate teams participate.

■ Ed Hoggs delivered a powerful speech about walking hand-in-hand with our neighbors in need at the United Way Kickoff Event and at the Shaw Campaign Kickoff.

■ 900 volunteers participated in Make a Difference Day.

■ Our 2012 Campaign Cabinet has called on hundreds of local businesses. Cabinet members include Fran

Brantley, Carmen Cavanaugh, Elyse Cochran, Bill Davies, Cathy Ferguson, John Neal, Stuart Nelson, Dan Penland, Bob Ringer, Mitch Sanford, Pete Sigmon, Andy Walker and Jerry Watkins.

■ Restaurants have hosted Give Back days for United Way: Hamilton’s, CiCi’s, Longhorn, Schlotzky’s, Starbucks and Subway.

■ Lynn Whitworth led women’s tours of United Way programs and helped launch the Women’s Leadership Council.

■ The retiree campaign jumpstarted with 45 individuals mailing in a total of \$28,350.

■ Johnny Rambo spoke at our kickoff event and at Beaulieu’s employee campaign, sharing about how United Way changed his life.

■ The United Way account executives — Julia Davidson, Sandra Derrick and Donna Lusk — gave 224 presentations to businesses and groups all across Whitfield and Murray counties.

■ Bryan Macon and Bill Davies launched a Junior Alexis de Tocqueville Society.

■ Corporate and individual commitments so far total \$2.370 million, which is 71 percent of our goal.

All our extra degrees start with a person, a person who is passionate about helping others. To contribute to the United Way campaign, please visit ourunitedway.org, call (706) 226-HELP to set up billing, or mail a check to P.O. Box 566, Dalton, GA 30722.

Kevin Sanders is the vice president of the Shaw Hospitality Group and the 2012 United Way campaign chairman.



Kevin Sanders