

Another successful campaign

(Editor's note: This is the first of a two-part series.)

"This has been a year of everyday, ordinary people becoming heroes, stepping in to fill the service gaps and needs in our community," proclaimed board chair Celeste Creswell, as she opened the United Way Annual Meeting this week.

For those of you unable to join me at United Way's Annual Meeting, you missed a lot. Clark Kent, Lois Lane and Jimmy Olsen were at the meeting on the hunt to uncover everyday superheroes who are responsible for all the good deeds happening all across our community. We had a long list of superheroes to celebrate.

This past year was truly amazing. I had the pleasure to witness 9,548 individual donors and 47 companies respond to the call to fill human service gaps in our community. More than 67,000 lives were improved in Whitfield and Murray counties through generous giving and volunteering with United Way.

At our Annual Meeting, campaign chairman Bob Ringer announced that the 2013 United Way campaign goal of \$3.5 million dollars had been met. During the campaign, companies and individual superheroes all across the community went the extra mile. From the moment Bob kicked off the campaign with the Super Power lunch at the trade center to the Superhero Sprint and the CEO Trike Race, I knew we had the support of the community.

This year, in order to recognize companies that went above and beyond to champion United Way at their company, we developed the 5-Star Champion Award. In order to earn this highest distinction, companies had to meet the follow-



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ing objectives:

1. Make a CEO gift and a corporate pledge.

2. Choose a dynamic campaign coordinator and team.

3. Allow employees to go on United Way impact tours.

4. Host leadership and company-wide campaign meetings and report results to United Way by Thanksgiving.

5. Encourage employees to volunteer with United Way.

Thank you to the CEOs, the campaign teams and all the employees who support United Way by giving, advocating, and volunteering throughout the year. This year, United Way of Northwest Georgia was proud to recognize the following companies:

Brown Industries received a 5-Star United Way Champion award. Their strong campaign led by Tim Holt was up by 4 percent over last year. The positive results can be attributed to a leadership campaign spearheaded by Stuart Nelson and Lynn Whitworth. Brown employees volunteer with United Way and the company makes a generous corporate gift.

Dalton Public Schools earned a Participation Award. They grew the percentage of their employees who gave to United Way from 23 percent in 2012 to 61 percent in 2013, a 165 percent growth year to year. Jim Hawkins provided his support and leadership and Nancy Zahn led the campaign.

Dalton Utilities earned a 5-Star United Way Champion award. Their campaign grew by 4 percent and was led by a team,

including Kay Phillips, Edwin Galloway, Russell Witherow, Timmy McNeese and Ben Kinsey. They conducted a targeted leadership campaign, which grew by 12 percent. CEO Don Cope is a United Way advocate and very supportive of the campaign.

Dorsett Industries earned not only a 5-Star Champion Award, but also a Participation Award. In the category of companies with 250 employees or less, Dorsett Industries has the highest percentage of its employee base giving to United Way at 80 percent. CEO Bryan Macon and campaign coordinator Bob Goodroe led this strong pacesetter campaign.

Engineered Floors was presented with a Growth Award. Their company increased in dollars by 44 percent over last year, which is the biggest increase for a company with less than 1,000 employees. Generous giving by CEO Bob Shaw and leadership by James Lesslie resulted in a rapidly growing campaign. Zack Adamson served as the campaign coordinator, organizing more than 20 meetings with employees.

J&J Industries not only received a 5-Star award, but also a Participation Award for highest overall participation, with 84 percent of their employees giving to United Way. CEO David Jolly has instilled a culture of giving, with the company campaign lead by Pat McCoy and Cathy Swiney.

Marketing Alliance has earned a 5-Star United Way Champion Award. CEO Bryan Hair and campaign coordinator Sandi Puckett led this year's campaign.

Shaw Industries not only earned a 5-Star United Way Champion Award, but because of Shaw Industries' spirit of corporate philanthropy and social responsibility, they also received the

prestigious Chairman's Award for Excellence. Shaw Industries CFO Ken Jackson accepted the award. Our community is grateful to Shaw Industries for its civic leadership. I would like to thank Brenda Knowles, Shaw's 2013 campaign chair, for her role in the corporate campaign, which was up by \$50,000. Shaw Industries makes a very generous corporate investment and 3,872 of their employees give to our United Way. In total, Shaw Industries has an annual United Way impact of nearly \$1.5 million in Whitfield and Murray counties. Shaw Industries has been a long time champion of United Way, dating to the 1960s. Thank you to CEO Vance Bell for his leadership and commitment to United Way.

It was my pleasure honor Ralph Boe in a special way. United Way's Live United Award recognizes an outstanding individual or company who embodies the spirit of philanthropy and embraces the "Give, Advocate, Volunteer" call to action. Ralph, the recently-retired President and CEO of Beaulieu Group, is the 2014 recipient of the Live United Award.

Ralph has been a staunch advocate of United Way within his company, with his peers, and community-wide. As president and CEO of Beaulieu Group, Boe led the company and its employees to invest almost \$1 million over the last 10 years in United Way's mission. Ralph served as United Way's Alexis de Tocqueville Chairman for three campaigns in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Under his leadership, Boe raised more than \$2.1 million from this group to meet needs in the community.

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