

Daily News



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United Way has list of successes to kick off new drive

By **TOM COMPTON**

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United Way is kicking off its annual pledge drive and is seeking local residents' support.

The United Way of Crawford County and Knox County, Ind., work together to improve the lives of people in these communities through better health, education and financial stability. Every year UWCC donates thousands of dollars to local organizations to help facilitate the specific objects of those organization that benefit our community as a whole.

Barbara Shimer, community resource representative for the UWCC, is working to get the word out about what United Way does for Crawford County and how individual donations can improve peoples lives.

Starting with physical and mental well-being, UWCC is instilling good exercise habits in students through Cross Fit programs. United Way funds are also helping to install adult exercise equipment at local parks.

Concussions are a major concern in youth

athletics, and United Way has helped purchase concussion protocol football helmets for area schools in cooperation with the local hospital.

United Way continues to support CC Life Mental Health Awareness and Autism Awareness. The fight against drug and alcohol abuse is an ongoing battle. United Way supports RE-New and Drug Court programs as well as several anti-bullying efforts.

United Way partners with a number of local agencies that work specifically in the areas of child abuse, domestic violence, nutrition needs for children, access for exceptional citizens, park and public fitness equipment and AED devices distributed to churches.

Educating youth and helping adults in continuing their education has long been a part of United Way. Here in Crawford County United way funds have been covering fees for local high-school students taking dual-credit classes through community colleges. The support youth convocations and books, and the Imagination Library.

Shimer noted that the Improving Lives scholarship program has opened up opportunities for a number students whose lives would not otherwise let them return to school to improve their education and lives.

In addition to monetary support, United Way works to organizes volunteers for a host of projects that benefit the community. During their annual Days of Caring volunteers have come together to provide general labor and specialized skills at schools, parks, village and other community projects. Many of these projects would not be financially or physically possible without the number of volunteers.

United Way of Crawford County partners with agencies that local residents may already be supporting. Some of these partner agencies include Autism Awareness of Crawford County, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boy Scouts of America (Greater St. Louis Council), Catholic Charities, Catholic Charities Mobile Food Pantry, Clothing Center Workshop, Counseling and Information for Sexual Assault/Abuse (CAISA), Crawford County LIFE (Behavior

Health), CrossTies Christian Ministries, Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, Guardian Center/Healing Harbors, Helping His Hands Auto Ministry, Imagination Library, Lawrence Crawford Association for Exceptional Citizens, Lincoln Trail (BSA), N. O. W. Program, Hutsonville Schools, Outer West Market NOW, Palestine, Palestine Food Pantry, RE-New/Crawford County Drug Court, Robinson Food Pantry, SWAN Stop Women Abuse Now, and Unchanging Grace.

They also work closely with Lincoln Trail College, and the Lincoln Trail College Foundation providing support as they administer a number of scholarships and programs.

Shimer said United Way is always looking for corporate or employee-driven support to help give back to the community.

Support for any of the agencies or other programs can be accomplished through the United Way of Crawford County. To donate or learn more information go to their website at www.unitedwayofknoxcounty.org/ or call them at 812-882-3624.