

United Way hopes new-look campaign will spark giving

By KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM

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United Way of Northern Ozaukee kicked off its campaign last weekend with its beer garden — a kickoff that continues with a farm-to-fork dining experience at Twisted Willow this weekend.

The events aren't the traditional kick off for the agency, which is fitting for an organization that is taking new steps this year to reach its goal of raising \$360,000.

The goal is less than last year's \$400,000 target, which the group didn't meet, but Executive Director Barbara Bates-Nelson said her personal goal remains the \$400,000.

"That's my goal because of the needs we have in the county and the requests we're getting from our partner agencies," she said. "If we can exceed that (\$360,000) goal, that's what I'm aiming for."

This year's campaign starts off on a strong footing, with Port Washington State Bank issuing a \$25,000 leadership challenge. The bank will match any new donations of \$300 or more and, if someone increases their

■ *Northern Ozaukee agency kicks off annual fundraising drive with matching grant in hand, more modest goal*

donation from last year to \$300 or more, the bank will match the increase.

"That's big," Bates-Nelson said.

This year, United Way has also instituted a campaign cabinet of volunteers to help shepherd the fundraising efforts, she said.

The cabinet includes this year's honorary campaign chairmen Bill Henkle, a former educator with the Port Washington-Saukville School District, Bob Henkle of Reinhart, Boerner Van Deuren law firm, former Mequon-Thiensville School Supt. Karl Hertz and Carol Hertz, former curriculum director with the Cedarburg School District.

In addition, the cabinet includes Jim Asplin of Newport Wealth Management, Debbie Fedel of Seek Careers and Staffing Inc., Todd Luft of Associated Bank and Joe Graf, former president of the Volunteer Center.

"I'm excited about the people we have

recruited to help us," Bates-Nelson said. "The needs we're seeing are getting more complex, and you have to attack them from different fronts. They're interrelated and difficult to tackle.

"I think this group can help us tell the story of what we're trying to accomplish here."

In recent years, United Way of Northern Ozaukee has undertaken initiatives to help prevent homelessness in the county, to help children and to aid in mental health efforts.

United Way also helps fund 13 agencies, such as Family Sharing, Ozaukee Family Services, Advocates of Ozaukee and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

"We are looking at collaborating with several more agencies, particularly in areas like mental health," Bates-Nelson said.

Traditionally, United Way has not only allocated funds for the agencies it works with but also provides community impact

grants for new programs.

Last year, the agency didn't award any impact grants, instead joining with the United Ways in Washington and Sheboygan counties to help establish the Child Advocacy Center in Ozaukee County.

This year, Bates-Nelson said, she hopes to be able to once again provide the community impact grants.

In addition to fundraising, United Way is again planning its stone soup event on Oct. 6.

Anyone who wants to donate fresh vegetables or nonperishable food items to be used in the soup may drop them off in advance at Bates-Nelson's home or at Ansary & Associates in downtown Port Washington on Sept. 20, when volunteers will prepare the ingredients.

A donation barrel is also set up at Fox Bros. Piggly Wiggly in Port Washington.

Anyone interested in providing ingredients for the Stone Soup event or volunteering for the event is asked to contact Bates-Nelson by calling (248) 613-7855 or emailing uwno@sbcglobal.net.