

## Imagineering: United Way asks community to work together to help others

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United Way 2011 Campaign Kick Off at the Holiday Inn Friday. Tony Duncan/Johnson City Press

The United Way of Washington County kicked off its annual fall fundraising campaign Friday with just more than 25 percent of this year's \$1.725-million goal already pledged for 17 local human service programs the campaign supports.

Becky Hilbert, communications director for the city of Johnson City and this year's campaign chairwoman, announced a total of \$437,730, or 25.38 percent of the goal, contributed so far by the workers and owners at 34 businesses and community organizations that conducted their in-house drives early to help set the campaign off at a good pace.

Hilbert asked the campaign team members and the community as they work to bring this year's campaign goal to fruition to keep in mind the service agencies the campaign supports and the faces of children, youth, adults and seniors the agencies serve.

"That's what its all about. That's why we're here," Hilbert said. "Hold these images in your mind when you're out there volunteering or writing that check."

Hilbert has chosen "Imagine What We Can Do" as this year's campaign theme and encouraged everyone to "imagine what we can do if we all work together. Imagine what we can do if we all give a little more."

Hilbert and Ed Herbert, chairman of United Way Board of Directors, both noted that when the deadly tornadoes struck the region in April, the United Way's partner agencies, including the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, were among the first to arrive at the disaster sites, and other United partner agencies, including the Interfaith Hospitality Network for homeless families with children, helped the storm victims in their long-term recovery.

"April 27, 2011, was catastrophic," Herbert said. "The agencies were there. But remember the other 364 days of the year — the agencies are there every day."

"We are blessed to live in a community that truly cares about children and adults and those in crisis," Hilbert said. "We have so much to be thankful for in Johnson City, Jonesborough and Washington County but there are still so many people suffering. Thank you for your giving nature but I must ask you to imagine what we can do when we come together and commit to the level of caring and generosity that our agencies demonstrate every day."

Hilbert introduced Tim Swecker of Pepsi Bottling, Jerry Pelphrey of TruPoint Bank and Homer G'Fellers of the Johnson City Power Board as vice chairmen of this year's campaign, and dozens of volunteers who will serve as the campaign's division leaders, including Dr. Paul and Nancy Stanton who will head up the Leadership Giving Division of contributors who pledge one hour's wage each month or \$500 or more to the campaign.

Jonesborough artist Lynn Bachman unveiled the limited-edition campaign print, "Stanton Gerber Hall," a depiction of the Quillen College of Medicine building on the Veterans Affairs Medical Center campus that will be presented to all contributors who pledge \$500 or more to this year's campaign.

To join the campaign or for more information, call United Way President and CEO Lester Lattany at 282-5682.