United Way's Campaign Kickoff and Day of Caring

(BLACKHAWK REGION) - United Way Blackhawk Region kicked off its annual community campaign at an event on Wednesday, September 18 at the Eclipse Center. For the second year, Kerry sponsored the breakfast buffet catered by Best Events and attended by more than 425 United Way supporters, corporate partners, and Day of Caring volunteers.

United Way's Day of Caring is held every year in conjunction with the campaign kickoff. It is a day of action that mobilizes volunteer teams to complete service projects at local schools, churches and nonprofit agencies. Leslie Hulick, Volunteer Coordinator for Day of Caring and a loaned executive from Blackhawk Community Credit Union touted another successful year of community engagement.

"More than 700 volunteers will work on projects that may have otherwise stayed on nonprofits’ wish lists. Day of Caring is made possible by our sponsors and the 32 companies who afford employees time to volunteer," Hulick said. "We're also appreciative to the 44 nonprofits hosting Day of Caring projects; these lean teams put forth a great deal of time and energy to ensure volunteers enjoy a meaningful and productive experience."

At the breakfast kickoff, President & CEO of United Way Blackhawk Region Mary Fanning-Penny announced "Game Changers" as the theme for the 2019 community campaign, stating, "United Way raises every dollar we can to fight our community's toughest to solve problems: poverty, hunger, homelessness, family and sexual violence, mental health crises, addiction, and other challenges that do not have easy solutions. But, United Way is more than the fundraisers. We're the hand-raisers; the game changers. And now, it's your move."

United Way officials reiterated throughout the program that the United Way donor is the champion of the 2019 community campaign. Also revealed at the morning event was United Way's new three minute campaign video produced by Drywater Productions. The video features inspirational sound bites from game changers throughout U.S. history, present day game changers in the Blackhawk Region such as educators, law enforcement, United Way funded program partners, and donors from all walks of life.

Also unveiled at the breakfast event was United Way Blackhawk Region's 2019 campaign goal of $2.4 million dollars, as approved by the board of directors. Funding to support the more than $3.65 million dollars' worth of community grants United Way has committed to will come from a portion of the ‘18 campaign, entirety of the ‘19 campaign, and a portion of the campaign in 2020. United Way has transitioned to a two-year grant cycle while orchestrating the community campaign on an annual basis.

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Milton City Administrator and United Way Blackhawk Region Board Chair Al Hulick said, "We see this goal as a bit of a stretch. Despite some exciting economic development in our region, when local companies experience changes in ownership or executive leadership, continued support for United Way is not guaranteed."

Projections indicated United Way would not attain its 2018 campaign goal of $2.6 million dollars, until an anonymous donor challenged the community to match a $52,000 contribution.

Al Hulick added,"At any given time there's 10 million dollars’ worth of capital campaign drives underway across our region. We understand that we have a hill to climb to inspire giving and attain this goal, but we also know that we have you. And this group [United Way donors] of hand-raisers doesn’t shy away from a challenge."

Fanning-Penny concluded the event with a final call to action. "To be a game changer you need to have skin in the game. That means giving not only of your time, and not just today, but making a financial commitment to support this campaign and our community."

To learn how you can become a game changer, visit LiveUnitedBr.org.

About United Way Blackhawk Region
United Way fights for the health, education, and financial stability of every person in every community. We win by Living United, by forging unlikely partnerships and by finding new solutions to old problems; by mobilizing the best resources; and inspiring individuals to join the fight against a common foe, each community's most daunting social crises. United Way Blackhawk Region Lives United against poverty, family violence, hunger and homelessness to name a few, by providing community grants and resources to 54 human services programs at 29 nonprofit agencies in Rock County, Wis. and northern Winnebago County, Ill. More information is available at LiveUnitedBR.org or engage on social media via Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram.