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United Way Closing in on Fund Goal

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By Kirsten Ballard

Staff Writer

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The United Way of Moore County isn't just counting down to the New Year; it's also getting closer to the 2012 monetary goal as the year winds down.

The United Way of Moore County is 85 percent of the way to its annual goal of \$590,000. It has until Feb. 28 to reach its annual goal before it all starts again.

"I don't want it to just be about the numbers," said Executive Director Linda Pearson. "The real goal and most important thing we do is support these agencies."

Last year, 20 local organizations received grants from United Way.

"We're getting ready to begin the new process of applications," Pearson said.

Each year, each partner agency must reapply for funding. The deadline is in February, and the partners will be selected in the beginning of June.

The United Way funds partner organizations that align with the mission of United Way: education, health and income.

In addition to the fund drive, the United Way also has a tricycle race, a day of caring and a cornerstone banquet to help

raise money.

"The banquet has really established itself in the community," she said.

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This year's banquet will be Jan. 24 and honor Walker and Katie Morris. They have met the criteria for going above and beyond in giving back to the community in time commitment, talents and treasure.

Looking back on the year, Pearson is most pleased with the goals and collaboration of the board of directors. The board is entirely volunteer-run.

"They give it all they've got," Pearson said.

This holiday season, United Way is hoping people are in the giving mood.

"It is such a wonderful thing to make a contribution to a nonprofit, any nonprofit, and it's a wonderful thing to give in the name of someone else," Pearson said.

"But if you give to United Way, you're giving to 20 organizations at once."

In addition to the supported agencies, United Way is responsible for finding sponsorships for 2-1-1. A health and human services number, the 2-1-1-phone service has been very useful for collecting a survey and providing a community needs assessment.

"We'll be releasing the information in the New Year, but it is mainly just basic needs," Pearson said.

"The United Way really has its finger on the pulse of the community," said John Dempsey, of Sandhills Community College.

In the new year, the United Way is sorting through applications and preparing for the banquet. Pearson says she is hoping for a better economy.

"We've definitely seen the impact of the recession," she said. "I'd like to say after this year, we'll help so many people that nobody will ever need help again, but it doesn't work that way."

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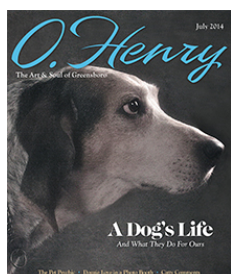
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