



Report to the Community 2007-08



United Way of Atlantic County
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REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

The Year in Review: 2007-08

Dear Friends:

As president of United Way of Atlantic County's Board of Directors, I would like to provide you with an overview of our accomplishments and events of the past year. A more in-depth report will soon appear on our website: unitedwayac.org. Although this website is presently undergoing an extreme makeover, this summer we will unveil our new look for our site, which will include all the facts and figures, success stories, agency programs and services information, and even an opportunity to make a donation or volunteer.

During the past year, we completed our strategic planning work which culminated in the release of our latest plans for the future in June of 2007. The planning process was based on an organizational self-assessment conducted by the Board of Directors, which provided an introspective look at how our United Way measures up in comparison to the *Standards of Excellence* developed by United Way of America in 2006. This strategic plan will guide our efforts over the next three years, and contains new vision and mission statements for our organization:

Vision Statement: United Way of Atlantic County will be the driving force in improving lives by mobilizing our community to create lasting changes in community conditions.

Mission Statement: The mission of United Way of Atlantic County is to improve people's lives through the investment of available resources to address community needs.

In the new strategic plan there are three overarching goals that help to frame out our vision for positioning our United Way closer to the standards. They are:

- Deepen our commitment to the Community Impact model, increasing UWAC-influenced community resources from \$2.1 million in FY2005-06 to over \$2.6 million in FY2009-10.
- Broaden community support of United Way of Atlantic County: increase annual revenue from all sources from \$2.8 million in FY2006-07 to \$3.35 million in FY2009-10.
- Improve the efficiency of United Way of Atlantic County's operations: lower fundraising and administrative costs from 17% in 2006 to at or below 15% of annual campaign in 2009.

Our **Community Advisors Councils** continue to stay active in helping our United Way complete our mission and reach for our vision. These volunteer groups are comprised of agency and government professionals and other interested community leaders, with a primary purpose of developing our community agendas and funding plans. Responding to the issues identified in our 2006 Community Needs Assessment, the Councils have stepped up their efforts to the address issues that impact all of us in this community. In fact, the Councils are re-defining the way UWAC uses community dollars raised to address these issues. This year, our Councils for *Basic Needs & Independence* and *Community Health Issues* identified Community Outcomes on which to base our funding decisions. Look for our results in achieving these outcomes in future reports. In addition the Councils are instrumental in promoting further collaborative efforts that address areas where UWAC funding alone cannot tackle the issues. Here's a recap of their progress over the past year:

Earn It! Keep It! Save It!
**File A Tax Return And
Make Tax Time Pay
For YOU!**
**You may be eligible for the
Earned Income Tax Credit.
As much as \$4,716!**

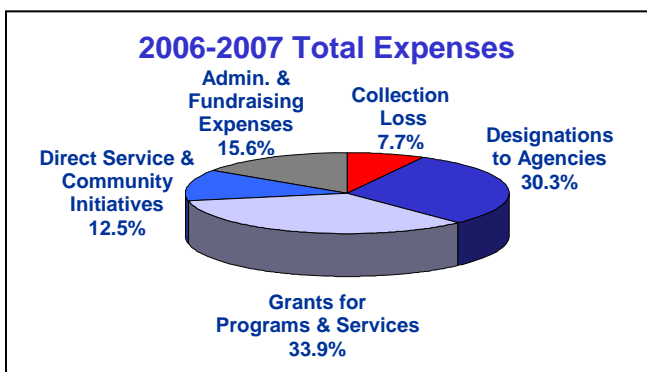
**CALL 609-404-4483 or 2-1-1
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- The *Basic Needs & Independence* Council organized our 3rd Annual *Project Warm Heart: Energy & Social Services Expo* in partnership with the Shore Mall, Atlantic Human Resources, Atlantic City Electric and South Jersey Industries. Some 200 local residents participated, enabling them to gain energy saving tips, apply for energy assistance and receive other assistance from local social service agencies. As part of United Way of America's *Financial Stability Partnership* we have focused our advocacy and efforts to build awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC). The IRS reports that about 25% of those who qualify never apply for the credit each year. In Atlantic County alone, there is an estimated \$17 million unclaimed that belongs in the hands of families within our community. Our efforts included promoting awareness of the volunteer tax-preparation (VITA) sites in our county as well as training and staffing volunteers to prepare taxes. We have distributed thousands of flyers and IRS brochures around the community, hosting an informational session for agency employees who work with populations that are likely eligible for the credits, and utilizing paycheck stuffers with EITC information for over 20,000 area employees.

- In the **Community Health Issues** Council, continuing efforts with the recently launched non-profit EMRX-SJ (Electronic Medical Records Exchange of South Jersey) are bringing our hopes for a regional health information organization closer to a reality. We have continued our *Healthy Smiles* program by funding pediatric dental services through our Success By 6 Initiative, and we have made access to prescriptions a little easier on families in our community with the distribution of the FamilyWize Prescription Discount Card to area pharmacies and social service agencies – where up to a 20% savings can be obtained on prescriptions for people without prescription coverage. To date over \$2,600 has been saved by local families using the cards.
- Our **Safer Homes & Neighborhoods** Council over the past year has worked on follow-up measures to the *Gang Awareness and Human Trafficking* seminar held in December 2006 by recommending funding to promote awareness and training, and provide services for victims. ATTAC, our local coalition addressing the issue of Human Trafficking and Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children has increased their efforts to communicate this significant problem that so often goes unrecognized. In June of 2007, with the support of funds recently received from the Merle E. Kravis Trust and through partnership with Home Depot and KaBOOM!, a 2,900 sq. ft. playground was built at the Family Service Association’s daycare site on the White Horse Pike in Absecon. 200 volunteers participated in this one-day build that was part of a national effort led by KaBOOM! and The Home Depot to build 1,000 playspaces in 1,000 days across North America. We again extend our thanks to all of the volunteers and partners that made this monumental undertaking possible. The payoff was in seeing the smiles on the many faces of the children, most under DYFS care, who now have a new fun, and safe place to play.
- The **Mental Wellness & Reducing Substance Abuse** Council continues to explore ways to address the systemic issues that affect their ability treat mental illness and substance abuse addiction. Of particular note is the lack of accredited professionals to provide the service and the difficulty in connecting individuals in need with the service. New to our cadre of programs funded under this priority is *Project Aware*, a project with Jewish Family Service of Atlantic & Cape May Counties, which is working to educate and inform specific target populations that deal with very young children about Autism Spectrum Disorder. The project has received a tremendous amount of interest and is currently preparing to present an education seminar to local pediatricians and other health and human service providers about screening and early intervention.



Tom James, who has recently left our area for a career opportunity, served as our Vice President of **Community Investment & Partnerships** again last year, leading our *Core Priority Funding Process*. With an increase in the annual campaign, the funding outlook for the 2007-08 was considerably brighter than in recent cycles, where we experienced three consecutive years of declining dollars. After netting out donor designated dollars to nonprofit agencies, which realized a 9% increase, there was only a slight increase in remaining dollars available for Core Priority Funding. So this presented another difficult year for our Community Impact Team and their grant-making efforts in 2007. Our dedicated volunteers always look for effective uses of UWAC dollars in the programs that we are able to fund – ones that fit in the Community Agendas within each of the priority areas. Thankfully our Community Investment & Partnerships leaders and their volunteers stayed task-focused and awarded available funds to programs that covered as much of the agendas as possible. As we progress along the



Community Impact continuum, the volunteers increasingly work toward the effective selection of programs that address goals and produce real and measurable outcomes. By doing this we are ensuring that our efforts add value to this community and that we are indeed an effective catalyst working to improve lives. Going forward, Ann Arena, Merchandise Systems Director at Spencer Gifts, LLC and this year’s George F. Lynn Volunteer of the Year, is preparing to take on the role of Vice President of Community Investment & Partnerships and leading our Core Priority Funding Process.

Our **Partner Agency** ranks have remained the same over the past year, holding at 39. This year Partner Agencies had the opportunity to compete with each other in a *Best Efforts* contest. This contest was born out of the Partner Agency Summit held in 2006 and was designed to spark new ways to co-market the partnership between United Way of Atlantic County and these outstanding health and human service providers. First place winners from the large and small categories are Community FoodBank and Contact, respectively.

2007 Campaign Projected Results: **\$2,840,000**

AtlantiCare has posted another year of stellar employee campaign results, raising over \$222,000 and remaining our largest campaign. Other areas experienced growth as well this year, namely the County & Municipal employees' campaigns (+7%) and the Leadership Giving (+7%) and Business & Industry (+11%) divisions. Fundraising in our special events was very successful this year, netting an overall 23% increase over last year's events. The Sun National Bank 12th Annual Golf & Sporting Clays Invitational raised \$53,000 and our 5th Annual Auction for the Community presented by Harrah's Entertainment and TN Ward, held last month, raised over \$62,000 – a record high for this event. Last summer of our Home Run Club fundraiser with the AC Surf raised \$8,300 by local businesses contributing \$20 for each home run hit by the Surf during the season. September 2007 saw a new special event come to town, the



Mid-Atlantic Blues & Music Festival sponsored by long-time local favorites the Bubba Mac Blues Band. Partnering with our United Way, together we created the “Blues for Good” concept of



raising funds through this event to assist in funding United Way programs and services. In the end, over \$4,600 was raised in this first effort for the campaign. In addition, some 900 volunteers, donors and supporters enjoyed the sounds of the band at our 2007 Campaign Kickoff at Steel Pier. This new take on our annual official start to the campaign resulted in over \$15,000 being raised to get us started on a campaign that proved to be as thrilling as one of the amusement rides!

The **financial condition** of our United Way remains solid, thanks to a great team of volunteers and the leadership of our Vice President of Finance Barbara Lang, Lang & Associates CPA's, and Finance Committee Chair Jeffrey Wilson, CPA, of Capaldi Reynolds & Pelosi. Our focus remains on maximizing the leverage of our fund balance with safe investments and keeping overhead costs at a minimum. We continue to experience an improved collection rate over past years with the help of a number of local employers who consistently solicit new hires for United Way payroll pledges. During the past year the Merle E. Kravis Charitable Remainder Trust matured and we have begun to utilize these resources to preserve Mrs. Kravis' legacy as a benefactor interested in improving the lives of others in our community. The first portion of the \$140,000 bequest helped to fund the KaBOOM! Playground project as mentioned above. The second portion, approximately \$30,000 will be used to upgrade our United Way's capabilities to reach new donors and offer web-based solutions to employers for their workplace fundraising campaigns. These improvements will be made over the next three months. The Board is exploring options for the remaining portion of the donation, including the formation of a Community Foundation that will help to attract other legacy gifts to sustain long-term support of our community.

Efforts to improve the **Marketing and Brand Image** of our United Way have increased over the past year. These endeavors, led by Bill Parker, VP & Creative Director at Parker & Partners Marketing Resources, worked to increase our visibility through billboard and print ad placements. Through the generous support of Pinnacle Entertainment, use of a billboard on the Atlantic City Expressway (eastbound at mile marker 8.8) has been donated since March 2007. By gaining the financial support of every casino property and a



host of other local employers we are now in production of our third billboard that depicts this community support for UWAC. The success of this new effort in broadening awareness of our organization has resulted in additional signs being placed on donated area billboards, with Trump Entertainment again provided billboard space for a month on the White Horse Pike and Visions Advertising donating space at the Duell Fuel site at foot of the AC Expressway Connector. Through a discounted program we have placed similar ads, along with 2-1-1 ads, in *Casino Connection* magazine. Our efforts to maintain a series of “advertorials” in *The Press of Atlantic City* in the Community section every other Wednesday continued through December, but ended as we unable to obtain adequate sponsorships to keep the series running. Our Marketing & Brand Image Committee also worked to improve our branding efforts related to the *Richard Somers Society*, our leadership giving recognition program. New ideas to feature RSS as the vibrant and prominent collection of caring donors they are has led to a number of upgrades such as a new RSS logo, a quarterly newsletter, *The Intrepid*, and a commitment for a more visible presence of RSS and its members at our events. In a few months, United Way of America will be unveiling its new marketing campaign, Live United. We’ve already begun planning how this new look will compliment our branding efforts here in Atlantic County.

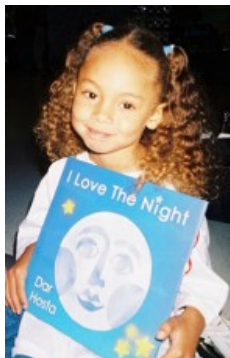
RSS

The Richard Somers Society



Our **Community Initiatives**, under the leadership of Brian Jackson, Executive Assistant to the President at Richard Stockton College of NJ, continue to experience significant growth and success. In addition to efforts related to the *Financial Stability Partnership* mentioned above, we are continuing our efforts to expand the reach and outcomes of our **Success By 6[®]** (SB6) early childhood initiative. The primary support for SB6 is funding generated through the *Women’s Leadership Initiative*. The WLI enlists a powerful network of more than 75 women in our community who are committed to effect change in the lives of young children through active leadership,

philanthropy and advocacy. In November, WLI held their *Fall Tea* at The Carriage House, and in early January celebrated their 3rd anniversary at Trump Marina. After two full years they infused over \$40,000 into the community through SB6. This investment has helped to propel our early childhood initiative as a recognizable, viable and valuable venture for UWAC. The priority areas for the collaborative are: pediatric dental health; early literacy; improving immunization rates, prenatal care and parenting skills. The two flagship programs of SB6 remain: *Raising a Reader[®]* and *First Book[®]*. Both of these nationally recognized



programs highlight hands-on book time for youngsters and their families as a way of promoting reading as quality time well spent. First Book is providing 120 children with a book per month for the entire year to build their own library as well as supplying the community with book grants. Raising a Reader is circulating book-filled bags into 156 homes of young children, getting them excited about reading and sharing stories with their families. Two new programs include the *Kindergarten Readiness Calendar*, distributed to 2,000 families, which has daily learning and developmental activities for young children, preparing them for Kindergarten. *Ready, Set, Read!* Utilizes WLI members to read to local preschool classrooms and distribute a book to each child. So far over 600 children have benefited. SB6

also celebrated The Week of The Young Child with a *Celebrity Read* event, with local leaders reading to preschool classrooms. We have increased our efforts supporting the national *bornlearning[™]* initiative promoting good parenting skills. Through high quality, research-based, educational materials and resources (even a website: www.bornlearning.org), parents are encouraged to use everyday moments as learning opportunities for the very young. The immunization awareness campaign expanded through informational stickers on children’s books with a phone number and website for vaccination information, and as mentioned above the *Healthy Smiles* program received an increase in funding. SB6 was again the beneficiary of additional fundraisers including the third annual Fun Day at Wonderland Pier, which generated over \$3,000 from ticket sales. Young students in six local elementary schools also got into the fundraising spirit for SB6, collecting pennies and raising a total of \$1,300 to support our early childhood initiative.



Another vibrant aspect of our Community Initiatives effort is **United Way's Volunteer Center**. In April of this past year, the Volunteer Center coordinated our *Fourth Annual Day of Caring*. Employees from area businesses provided hands-on volunteer help to local agency sites during this day of service. Planning is in place for this year's event on Friday, May 2nd. We are expecting more projects this year, so it's not too late to sign up! In December we coordinated our Third Annual *All Wrapped Up* holiday gift giving program. This year we were able to match 22 donors and businesses with 111 individuals identified by several partner agencies, a 20% increase over last year. As a result of our ongoing partnership with Atlantic County Probation, we have placed nearly 1,100 volunteers in local agencies through the Court Referral program, providing over 47,000 hours of community service. The Volunteer Center's involvement in the Atlantic Cape Safe Youth Partnership has refreshed the Volunteer Center and opened up so many opportunities. A six part series of Volunteer Management Trainings was provided to local organizations for instruction on how to properly establish, coordinate and sustain a volunteer program. We have become a Cooperating Collection of the Foundation Center and have established a **Nonprofit Resource Library** for grant research and management resources. Our Volunteer Center provided workshop training at the annual conference for ACSYP, as well as hosted two workshops about grant searching for the community.



**United Way's
Volunteer Center**



The newest addition to our United Way is **ACCEL**, the Atlantic County Community Emerging Leaders program chaired by Jay Snowden, VP and General Manager of Showboat. This exciting and diverse under-45 group has swelled to 69 members in its first year! The group kicked off in September with a party at The Pool at Harrah's. ACCEL promotes and encourages philanthropy and volunteerism among its members. The group doubles as a professional development vehicle by providing networking and learning opportunities throughout the year. The group will also be provided a chance to familiarize themselves with the issues that face our community, and how those issues are addressed. So far, ACCEL has hosted two professional development events for its members with notable local leaders: one "Lunch & Learn" and one "Cocktails & Conversation". The group has also held two volunteer events, the first during Halloween (*Kostumes for Kids*) and the second in December around the holidays. Members have the opportunity to get a hands-on service experience during these events, and more are planned for the coming months.

In summary, we are proud of the success of United Way of Atlantic County through all of the programs and initiatives highlighted in this report. We remain committed to advancing what matters – improving lives in our community. We thank all of you for your help and support in contributing to another outstanding year for our United Way.

With warm regards,

Mark Sachais

President, Board of Directors