

United Way 2011 Campaign Update

For some local families, the books their children receive through our Books for Kids Program are the only ones in their home.

Program Spotlight: Greater Mankato Area United Way's Books for Kids Program

Did you know that our United Way sends over 27,000 books to families in the greater Mankato area every year? But why is United Way's Books for Kids program so important? Research shows that the best time to start sharing books with children is during infancy. The more words a child hears, the larger the child's vocabulary and the more likely the child will be a proficient reader.

United Way understands that early childhood learning is critical in order to ensure that children are ready to be successful when they begin kindergarten. As their child's first teacher, it is crucial that parents have a better understanding of their role. Through the Books for Kids program, parents of children ages 0-5 receive monthly newsletters filled with insight on important parenting issues, as well as tips, ideas and resources for enhancing their interactions with their children.

Recently we heard from a young mother who said that her daughter receives books through our Books for Kids program. She said that because she was watching every penny, the United Way books were the only books in her home. Last December she was especially grateful for the program, because when the book arrived in the mail, she was able to give it to her daughter as a Christmas present.

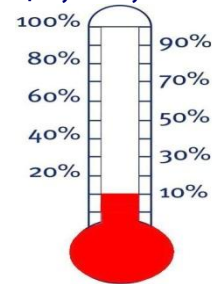
Because Coughlan Companies generously donates all the books for the program, and because donors like you give to United Way each year, United Way is able to make this program a reality in our community. Families all over the greater Mankato area have told us when their child receives a book sent to their home in their name, that child eagerly looks forward to receiving their book and is excited to read it; helping to instill the love of reading early on. And for some children, it means even more. To find out more about this program, [click here](#).

Every day, your donation to United Way is at work in our community.

What would you do for *A Minute to Win It!*

Kato Engineering's campaign team came up with an awesome idea for a United Way fundraiser / team building / what a great place to work game: A Minute to Win It! You know that TV show where competitors have 60 seconds do some crazy task? Well, recognizing the competitive nature of their employees, this was an event sure to succeed at Kato Engineering!

2011 Campaign Goal: \$1,860,000



Amount Raised: \$183,399
Percent of Goal: 10%

Corporate Spotlight

Thank You to the following businesses who have pledged their corporate gift since our Kick Off event. To see a list of all corporate pledges received to date, [click here](#).

- Appraisal Services of Mankato
- Dance Express
- Diversified Consultants, Inc.
- Farrish Johnson Law Office
- First National Bank Minnesota
- Garrett Starr, DDS
- Jerry's Body Shop
- Keepers R V Center
- Minnesota Iron and Metal Co.
- MinnStar Bank
- Paragon Printing
- Pneumat Systems
- Swanson, Hinsch & Co. Chrt'd
- The Thro Company
- Voyageur Web
- W W Blacktopping, Inc.

Your dollars in action



United Way funds 58 partner programs in the greater Mankato area. One of these is The American Red Cross's Emergency Services. The Red Cross has been there to help families devastated by the floods in southern Minnesota and in the past several weeks

How did they do it? 7 teams (over 30 people total) participated as contestants in the games. There were joined by an audience of over 40 people, cheering them on; why did they cheer you ask? Because there was something in it for them: at \$1/ticket, they had picked which team they thought would win. A ticket was drawn from the winning team's bucket and that person won a grand prize to be envied by all! When asked how they picked what games to hold, team member Jerhod Smithback responded that they had several criteria: 1) they were looking for events where there was no athletic skill required ☺, 2) the events had to be easy to organize, 3) they couldn't be too messy (it took place in their cafeteria, 4) they couldn't be embarrassing for people (there are some wacky ones out there!) and 5) they had to be cheap to put on! They found the game ideas by going to NBC's website, but also found there were several other websites with game ideas. All 7 teams competed in a total of 5 events, taking a total of about 45 minutes.



Of course, Kato Engineering donated the event's proceeds to United Way; but almost as important to them as a company is what their employees experienced that day: a relaxed atmosphere, team building, laughter and the knowledge that they were having a great time for a greater purpose: helping to support their community!

Being a United Way donor means being a part of something greater than yourself.

I'll take that change!

True Value surprised us by bringing a donation to our Kick Off event: a HEAVY jug full of bills and change! True Value employees raised these funds, (totaling nearly \$3,500!) for United Way through a variety of special events, including a very successful Penny War, a "friendly" award lunch competition amongst the Safety Teams, and several silent auctions.



When asked how they were able to be so successful in raising these extra funds, True Value representatives Bev McCullough and Cindy Schmit said, "Here in Mankato the True Value Regional Distribution Center's associates have a long standing history of support for the United Way. Several of our associates have had friends, neighbors or family members that have benefitted in their time of need from United Way supported agencies. We all realize there is a greater need in tough economic times. Good Luck to the Greater Mankato Area United Way and let the fund raising begin!"

True Value Company also supports United Way by matching employee pledges during the annual campaign.

alone, nearly 200 Red Cross volunteers and paid staff have responded to the disaster, serving over 1,000 meals a day, distributing a total of more than 1,936 clean-up kits and offering emotional support to affected families.

Your donation to United Way helps the Red Cross deliver disaster relief services and be there for families in their time of need. As one flood victim recently said, "The Red Cross was the first ones here to help us. I don't know what we would have done without them."

BackPack Food Program Update!

News of this awesome program is spreading fast. In the pilot season of the program this spring, 40 students participated. This fall, as the program expands, **over 120 students** have already been enrolled. Those are 120 local children who thanks to your support of United Way, will have the opportunity to access food, even on the weekends when they might otherwise have had to go without. Thank You for your support!



2011 Campaign Video

Haven't had a chance to see it? Then [Click Here!](#) Our 2011 Campaign Video was filmed



right here in greater Mankato and features United Way partner programs including the Backpack Food Program and LEEP. Take a few minutes to find out how your donation to United Way is changing lives right here. Every day.



Join Our Facebook Page & become a Fan!