

United Way's 2012 Campaign has officially kicked off!

2012 Campaign Kick Off Event

The 2012 Campaign officially kicked off at our Kickoff Event held September 16th. At this hour-long annual event, we heard personal stories of how your support of United Way *today* changes the *future* for our community and the people who live here, long after your investment has been made. Weren't able to make it to Kickoff? Read the articles featured in this Newsletter to learn more about the speakers who shared their personal stories that day.

This fall our community will strive to raise our campaign goal of **\$1,930,000**. This 2% increase over last year will mean that our over 30 current non-profit partner agencies will continue to receive the funds that are so important in meeting their needs to serve our community. It also means that we will be able to increase funding to grow the following programs:

- YMCA's Brother / Sister Program
- YWCA's Girls on the Run Program
- FOCP's BackPack Food Program

Go to our website at www.mankatounitedway.org to view a list of our **Partner Agencies** and read more about the programs and services your United Way dollars support.



2012 Campaign Video

Want to hear more about our Mentoring Initiative and the other exciting things our United Way is talking about this year? Attend your company's United Way rally, and check out our brand-new 2012 Campaign Video on our website at www.mankatounitedway.org.



Rising Heart Club

This year, we've introduced this new giving level to recognize individuals who pledge to *rise* to the Heart Club over the next 5 years, by pledging \$250 or more this year, and committing to increase their gift by \$1/week over the next 5 years. Just check the box on your 2012 Brochure & Pledge card before handing it in to your company representative to be a part of the Rising Heart Club.

2012 INITIATIVE: MENTORING



"Mentoring matters". That was Cheryl's message at Kickoff as she talked about the YMCA's Brother/Sister Program. Cheryl shared stories of how having a mentor has mattered in the lives of local kids; from the girl whose mentor helps take her mind off her worries of her father serving in Iraq, to the boy who held a frog for the first time this summer, to the girl who is cutting herself, whose mentor tells her every week how beautiful she is and that she is there to support her. For all these kids, it matters that there is another caring adult in their lives, showing them that they care, and who are there for them.

United Way's 2012 Mentoring Initiative will help expand the YMCA's Brother/Sister Program to include School-Based Mentoring. This new opportunity will match a child with a mentor who will meet with them once a week over the lunch hour during the school year, and will enable more kids to be matched with a mentor who cares.

Your support of United Way helps to ensure that programs like this are available in our community. To **find out more** about this year's mentoring initiative, go to our website and watch our 2012 Campaign Video, or click on *2012 Initiative: Mentoring* to find out how you can get involved.

MORE THAN JUST A SCHOLARSHIP

In 2007, United Way told you the story of Tiana, a local girl who got the chance to get involved in dance through United Way's Connecting Kids scholarships. Four years later, Tiana updated us on how her story continues to be impacted because of doors opened with that original scholarship and the programs United Way funding make possible.

Now a member of the Timberwolves Dance Team, and former member of the dance team at St. Bens College, Tiana found her passion for dance as a young girl in Mankato because of a scholarship that made it possible, and a person who reached out to give her the opportunity. Tiana



attributes her opportunity to participate in, and excel at, dance to helping her feel strong and giving her the confidence that she was good at something, but also giving her the motivation to better manage her time and the encouragement to do well in school.

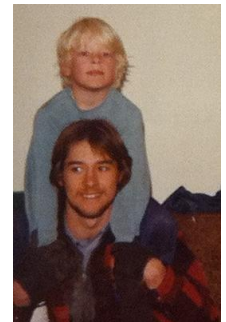
Growing up, Tiana viewed Connecting Kids Coordinator Al Roehm as a role model; seeing what a difference he had on her life and those around her was instrumental in her decision to pursue Social Work herself, and this spring, Tiana graduated from St. Bens College with a degree in Social Work. It is her ambition to one day work with disadvantaged youth; to show them the hope and the promise of the future that Al showed her.



A MENTOR RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS LASTED A LIFE-TIME

Nearly 40 years ago, the YMCA's Brother/Sister program matched Rob up with 6-year old Theodore whose single mom was raising Theodore and his siblings. Rob shared how his mentoring experience has impacted his life, as well as that of the boy he once mentored.

For 3 years, Rob was Theodore's mentor, taking time to cruise with him on his motorcycle, playing ping-pong and basketball, hanging out with him at the Y, taking him camping, reading together, and making an impression on him that would last a life-time. Now 44 years old, Theodore has a successful career in NYC (even flying together with former President Clinton on Air Force One), is a husband and a father of 3 young boys. Rob has kept in touch with him all these years.



Theodore shared with Rob some of the memories that he has of the time he spent with Rob; that the impact that Rob made on him in those crucial early years taught him how to be a man and a father. He told him that he now makes an effort to do things for his children that Rob did for him when he was a boy, like an unexpected school pick-up and quality time focused on the kids.

Rob's life has also been impacted by the experience. He has seen that the time he spent with a young child, and the way he made him feel, has helped form him into a successful adult; he also feels the experience aided him in being a father to his own two sons, and has seen his legacy continue with his own son Eric who today is a volunteer mentor to a young boy with the same program he volunteered with 40 years ago.

CONNECTING SOMEONE IN NEED WITH SOMEONE THAT CAN HELP

Many non-profits rely on volunteers to help keep overhead low. United Way is in a unique position to help connect the organizations and people who need help, with people who want to help. United Way's online database, Volunteer Solutions, connects hundreds of volunteers to local non-profits who need their help. This year, our United Way organized a Day of Action, connecting over 50 volunteers with projects around our community.

As part of the 2011 Day of Action, Abdo, Eick & Meyers sent a team of 8 people to spend the afternoon helping VINE tear out and rebuild a worn-out handicap accessible ramp at a home in North Mankato. Scott, a member of this team, relayed the story of how the family expressed how grateful they are for United Way funded programs like VINE and MRCI that have enhanced the life of their loved one who uses a wheelchair, and to the volunteers who give their time.



Scott shared how good it felt knowing that the work they were doing was making someone else's life better. It also felt good to work as a team outside of the office. As a business that recognizes the importance of team cohesiveness, his employer often brings in facilitators to lead team-building experiences; VINE's ramp-building project gave this group of co-workers the opportunity to not only help an individual and his family, but to have an awesome team-building experience. Scott's family also benefited, as Scott was able to drive past the home to show his kids the result of what he & his co-workers did that day and talk about the importance of volunteering.