



Monday

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United Way halfway to reaching goal**BY LARRY GIERER - lgierer@ledger-enquirer.com**

When working to gather money pledges for the United Way during a campaign, workers are given different groups to go to. Somebody has lawyers. Somebody has doctors. Others have accountants, schools, etc. Regular reports are given every week showing the percentage of the goal each group has raised.

Usually, many weeks go by before any group gets near its goal. One group is an exception. It's the one consisting of United Way agencies such as Open Door Community House, Easter Seals and the Family Center of Columbus. That group reached its goal weeks ago.

"People who work at these agencies know first hand the great need," said Jim Wink, CEO of the Boys and Girls Club of the Chattahoochee Valley. "Also, we want to set an example. We should lead."

Agency workers are not highly paid. "That's why we don't push them to contribute, but even the part-time help, who don't get the money, want to contribute," Wink said.

The 2008 United Way campaign overall has now reached 54.5 percent of its \$6.9 million goal with \$3,764,721 pledged. That's a little more than \$400,000 ahead of where the campaign was this time last year.

"As a community-wide team there is no doubt that we can achieve this goal and possibly exceed it," said Abbott Turner, United Way campaign chair.

"The success, so far, has been unbelievable. But we still have a long way to go. Our community recognizes that there are children who need academic preparation, homeless who need shelter and the skills to acquire and hold on to and we are confident that the community will come through as in the past."

United Way President Scott Ferguson said, "many company campaigns have come in higher than last year. There are several companies that are holding first-time campaigns and the preliminary reports are good."

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