

Butler County United Way Hasn't Been – and Won't Be – Idle

There has been much written in recent weeks about the proposed merger between the Butler County United Way and its counterpart organization in Warren County. I would be less than truthful if I didn't acknowledge my disappointment in the decision of the Warren County members' decision to block a merger – I genuinely think that a consolidation would have been in the best interests of both communities.

Nevertheless, as the Board Chair of the Butler County United Way, I want to assure all of our donors, partner agencies and other stakeholders that we were not sitting on our hands these past six months, waiting for the merger to play out. The staff and volunteers of the Butler County United Way, led by President and CEO, Maureen Noe, have been busy achieving important things for our community:

- Through the Annual Campaign headed by Butler County Treasurer, Nancy Nix, over \$2 million has been raised, and will be allocated to supported programs for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Even though the amount raised was short of the hoped-for goal, it is crucial for many programs serving our most vulnerable residents.
- Over the past 12 months, the Grant Consortium, which the Butler County United Way operates on behalf of its other founding members, the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Department of Job and Family Services and the Legal Aid Society of Greater Cincinnati, has leveraged \$2.2 million for local non-profits and public social service agencies from sources outside Butler County.
- In partnership with Miami University's Corporate and Community Institute – and sponsored by Ohio Casualty – a Board leadership certificate training program will be offered for the first time, beginning next month at the Miami University - Voice of America campus.
- To help Butler County residents navigate all of the services available to address the economic downturn and its consequences for them, the Butler County United Way, in sponsorship with General Electric and SELF, has developed a pocket resource guide. A second pocket guide – to address emergency services, is under development, in partnership with the County's Emergency Management Agency.
- The three United Ways serving Butler County have partnered with the Warren and Clinton County United Ways to create the Tri-County 2-1-1 Collaborative, to address the void created when state funding cuts led to

the loss of the 2-1-1 call center in Butler County earlier this year. The goal is to have a new call center up and serving Butler, Warren and Clinton Counties by May. A web-based application called ConnectYou (at www.connectyou.org) has been implemented in partnership with the Butler County Commissioners and Integrated Network Systems, Inc. to complement the phone-based 2-1-1 system.

- The important work of Butler County United Way's Action Councils has been kicked off, addressing self-sufficiency and childhood resilience. In March, a request for proposals will be issued, inviting Butler County agencies to join with BCUW to help our households earn a living wage and to help our children become successful adults.

The important thing for all those who care about the Butler County United Way to remember is that it remains a vital, vibrant organization, poised to continue its important work with us in our community.

The Board of Trustees for the organization, which I have been proud to head for over two years, is a team of caring and dedicated leaders committed to connecting resources to important community needs. Our work is enhanced by the input of others, and we invite everyone to join our work as their time and interests allow. Thank you.

Bruce Jewett, Board Chair
Butler County United Way