

Campaign on target for United Way goal

■ Officials surprised by response to drive so far.

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Even with a stagnant economy and donor dollars going to help earthquake victims in Haiti and Chile, United Way officials have been pleasantly surprised by the community's response so far to their annual campaign.

Almost 9,000 people so far have signed up to volunteer during the Day of Caring on May 13, the same total as last year with another month left for further recruitment.

In addition, more than 20 new companies or organizations joined as donors this year, which makes officials confident they can hit their \$28 million fundraising goal.

The United Way will reveal its fundraising totals during its last campaign day, June 2, at an event at Frontier Field.

The campaign has been successful at local Wegmans stores. Customers donated \$149,188 in a four-week period

Giving

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ending April 3 during a check-out counter scanning program.

An additional \$60,000 came through Wegmans customer purchases of products from Frito Lay, Perry's Ice Cream, Kraft, Upstate Farms or Nabisco, which donated a portion of the price to United Way.

"While unemployment is regrettably still high, we're seeing a renewed sense of confidence from people that wasn't there a



Carpino



Wegman

year ago," said Peter Carpino, United Way of Greater Rochester president.

This year, United Way has focused on five strategic community priorities: early childhood, school-age youths, aging, and crisis and disability services.

"Donors know they can support any organization they desire, so they wanted to make sure that

United Way was addressing the root issues that are facing our community," said Carpino. "We've gotten high marks in shifting our strategy and they feel like we have the right blueprint for change."

In addition, the current community volunteer count is at 50,874 hours, ahead of last year at this time. United Way has been aggressive in recruiting two categories of local residents: youths and retirees.

Throughout March and April, University of Rochester students have organized Call to Action Days, where they hosted educa-

tional sessions for the public and kids on campus, answering questions about the United Way and galvanizing the public about getting involved.

Colleen Wegman, United Way campaign chairwoman, urged local businesses to send out letters to retirees requesting they give their time.

"It was eye-opening talking to some of our own retirees who told us that sometimes the United Way campaign has forgotten them and all they needed was to be asked to get involved," Wegman said. □

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