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Short \$50,000, United Way makes final push

January 30, 2019

Northern Ozaukee agency has two months to reach this year's goal of \$360,000, meet escalating needs

By **KRISTYN HALBIG ZIEHM**

Ozaukee Press staff

With two months left in its campaign season, United Way of Northern Ozaukee is about \$50,000 from its goal.

And with needs increasing, Executive Director Barbara Bates-Nelson said she is making a last-minute push to make sure the organization meets its \$360,000 fundraising goal by the time it closes its books on March 31.

"I'm optimistic, and we are working hard to make sure we meet the goal," Bates-Nelson said. "But it's never a given."

Several workplace campaigns haven't yet closed for the year, she said, and donations are still coming in.

But the fact that the 13 agencies United Way provides funding for are applying for allocations now is prompting Bates-Nelson to put out a call for donors now.

"We've had some great successes," she said, including the fact that the Port Washington State Bank's \$25,000 matching challenge was met and several workplaces have had strong campaigns.

But the fact that United Way didn't meet its \$400,000 goal last year and didn't have the funds to provide community impact grants weighs heavily on her.

Those grants help finance programs and projects that aren't included in the allocations typically provided to agencies, often addressing otherwise unmet needs.

"I don't want to be in that position this year," she said.

In addition, the needs of the agencies funded through United Way are growing, Bates-Nelson said.

She cited the fact that Advocates of Ozaukee, which handled homeless prevention programs, ran out of its \$25,000 allocation in December. The agency received an additional \$7,500 for rent assistance from United Way.

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Port Washington indoor farmers market
Feb 2 2019 - 9:00am to 1:00pm

Poetry workshop
Feb 2 2019 - 10:00am to 12:00pm

Racial segregation discussed
Feb 3 2019 - 8:30am

Poetry reading
Feb 3 2019 - 6:00pm to 7:00pm

Ozaukee County Executive Committee
Feb 4 2019 - 3:00pm

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United Way needs to build up its reserves to handle situations like this that require immediate action, Bates-Nelson said.

In addition, the issues facing the agencies funded through United Way are becoming more complex and require more intense and lengthy solutions.

Those issues include substance abuse and mental health, Bates-Nelson said.

"Substance abuse isn't going away," she said. "If you're suffering from substance abuse, you're in for the long haul. We only have one sober living house in the county, and down the road there's likely to be a need for more.

"Those are the kinds of things we have to prepare ourselves for. We know going forward there are issues that will take substantial investment."

United Way has taken steps to combat intense issues like these in the past, providing funding for the Children's Advocacy Center several years ago, Bates-Nelson noted.

Bates-Nelson said she is hopeful the campaign will meet its goal, noting that United Way has already raised more money this year than it did last year.

But there's still a long way to go, she said.

"I know the people of this county are generous," she said.

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