

United Way facing a funding shortfall in Dufferin

By Marni Walsh

United Way Guelph-Wellington-Dufferin spends \$100,000 annually on five local non-profits, but is facing a financial shortfall of \$50,000 when it comes to fundraising in the area.

Headwaters Communities in Action (HCIA) is one of five local non-profit organizations that benefits from the support of the United Way (UW).

Consequently, the HCIA recently announced efforts to raise the profile of the organization in Dufferin County.

“HCIA benefits from foundational funding that is funding that keeps our core programs humming along,” says HCIA lead Shirley Boxem. “With that in place we can better serve our community by being a backbone organization.”

Headwaters Communities in Action, “has facilitated numerous community initiatives,” says Ms. Boxem “and continues to take the pulse of the community via such initiatives as the community well-being report.”

The organization points to a number of reasons for the shortfall in Dufferin County.

One of those is a lack of workplace campaigns in larger organizations. Another reason, says Ms. Boxem, “is that when UW campaigns take place in workplaces outside of Dufferin, and a Dufferin resident participates, they are not often aware of being able to divert the funds towards their own community.”

“Unless specified, place of residence information is not used to divert the funds,” says the HCIA lead.

Within the County, United Way supports Dufferin Child and Family Services (DCAFS), Big Brothers Big Sisters, Dufferin Parent Support Network and Volunteer Dufferin as well as HCIA.

The organization reports that donors should be aware that the United Way spends much less than the industry average on administrative costs; fundraising costs are 20 cents per dollar raised - well below the Canadian benchmark of 26%.

“United Way provides funding where gaps exist in services and with agencies,” says Ms. Boxem. “Social services are critical to the overall health of a community and all agencies struggle for adequate funding. They strive to fund as much as they can, though that funding is at risk if they continue to operate with a shortfall.”

To find out more about the United Way and how you can help, visit www.unitedwayguelph.com.