

## News Release 2010

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## UNITED WAY HONORS SUPPORTERS AND CONTRIBUTORS AT ANNUAL AWARDS BANQUET

After a successful 2009 fundraising campaign, United Way of Whatcom County honored both new and returning supporters and contributors for their outstanding involvement in the campaign.

Award nominees and campaign supporters gathered for the 2009 Campaign Celebration and Awards Banquet held Thursday, April 22 at the Best Western Lakeway Inn. Guests enjoyed a night of dinner, recognition and a LIVE UNITED-themed performance by the Upfront Theatre.

Community participation and involvement with United Way of Whatcom County has significantly grown since the 2008 campaign. Over 800 new donors joined the campaign this year for a combined total of over \$119,000 and 16 new companies were added to the list of contributors, bringing the total of participating firms to over 300. Of the participating firms, over 60 percent showed increases over the last year's results.

"It's always inspiring to see the number of people and organizations that stepped up and participated in our campaign," said Peter Theisen, President of United Way of Whatcom County. "It's a sign that people care regardless of the current tough economic times. It is really a measure of the quality of our community."

Leadership gifts continued to be a large part of the campaign, with over 300 individuals making major gifts of \$1,000 or more.

A total of 26 businesses and organizations were honored with awards that recognized exceptional participation and contributions to the campaign. Three organizations, Brigid Collins Family Support Center, Lydia Place and Unity Group, tied for the Spirit of United Way Award, an award given to the company with the highest employee participation. All three were at, or very near, 100 percent employee participation.

The Patron of the Year award recognizes a company that participates in United Way at every level, and whose contributions make up a significant portion of the total campaign. Conoco Phillips Refinery received the award for increasing employee participation by 30 percent, increasing total giving by 17 percent and making a generous contribution to the campaign. For a full list of 2009 award winners please visit: [www.unitedwaywhatcom.org](http://www.unitedwaywhatcom.org)

The banquet was made possible by generous contributions from local businesses. BP Cherry Point was the title sponsor and the following companies participated as table sponsors: Bellingham Cold Storage, CH2MHill, ConocoPhillips, IBEW Local 191, Matrix Service, North Coast Credit Union, PowerTek Electric, Puget Sound Energy, Samson Rope Technologies, The Unity Group, Whatcom Educational Credit Union, Whidbey Island Bank. The event was also made possible by in-kind support from the Best Western Lakeway Inn, Whatcom Family YMCA, Bellingham Childcare and Learning Center, and Towner Press.

The two-month long campaign that took place last fall raises money for the Community Safety Net, a fund that is overseen by a diverse group of about 60 community volunteers who review programs and make funding decisions based on: the agency's use of allocated funds, assurance that funding meets real community needs and that the programs deliver long term measurable results. The safety net of over 45 programs serves almost 1 in 4 right here in Whatcom County.

“During a time when so many need help, this is a huge investment in a better future for us all,” said Ken Marzocco, 2009 Campaign Chair.

United Way of Whatcom County has worked for over 50 years to increase financial resources for local health and human service needs, and to seek and invest in community-building opportunities to improve the health and welfare of Whatcom County residents.

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