

Charities and aid agencies unite to get ahead of need

Regional fundraising has goal of \$1 million

By **SCOTT HEWITT**
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Economic stress, layoffs, evictions, rising prices for food, utilities, transportation — it's a desperate time out there right now.

So the United Way of Columbia-Willamette, which undertakes a regional fundraising drive to support charity and aid agencies every fall, has launched an additional emergency campaign.

"These are extraordinary times that demand an extraordinary effort," said Marc Levy, United Way's chapter president. "We need to shore up the safety net for those most in need."

The Community Relief Fund will collect and funnel 100 percent of donations to local non-profit agencies that strive to keep people from hitting bottom. No overhead or operating costs will be deducted.

Providing assistance for food, rent, utilities and other basic needs may mean the difference between despair — or worse — and the possibility of a decent future, Levy said.

"It's a lot less expensive to keep someone in their home than to get them back into a home after they've lost one," said Levy. "The earlier people turn to help, the more options

they've got. If they get to the point where they're falling behind, it's a lot harder."

The United Way's Community Relief Fund will support agencies in Multnomah, Washington, Clackamas and Clark counties. A steering committee of key players from these four counties came up with a formula for disbursing the funds based on population and poverty levels; Clark County will get approximately 22 percent, according to United Way spokeswoman Maileen Hamto.

The Clark County agencies involved are the YWCA, the Salvation Army, Interfaith Treasure House in Washougal, the Cowlitz Tribe and Share. The Oregon Food Bank, a central supplier for

On the Web:
give10tell10.org
unitedway-pdx.org

IF YOU NEED HELP

Call 211 for information and referral to appropriate social services.

regional food pantries including those in Clark County, is also on the list.

"The challenge is, do we allow every organization to appeal to the community for funds, or do we come together and communicate one message to the whole metropolitan area?" Levy

said. "It is a recognition that no one organization can do it all by itself."

United Way is seeking corporations, grant foundations and others with deep pockets who can match or even triple the donations that come in, for a total goal of \$1 million raised over a three-month period, Levy said.

To find out more, visit give10tell10.org, or unitedway-pdx.org.

The idea behind the Web address, Levy said, is to encourage people to give \$10 (though anything will be gratefully accepted) and then tell 10 more people about the effort.

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