

***For Immediate Release***

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## **United Way Raises \$1.75 M for Southwest Wyoming**

On Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, United Way of Southwest Wyoming announced record results for the 2007 fundraising campaign during their Annual Awards and Recognition Event. “Thanks to the generosity of local donors and companies over \$1.75 million was raised, surpassing our goal of \$1.6 million” said Executive Director Suzanne Zutter.

The 2007 results represent a \$280,000 increase over 2006 giving. Dollars raised through the campaign will support non-profit Partner Agencies who serve southwest Wyoming.

Volunteers, employees and companies were recognized at the event, particularly Jim Bridger Power Plant, its employees and Utility Workers of America Local 127. They were the recipients of the Excellence and Spirit Awards. The Excellence Award is based on the highest overall, combined corporate and employee per-capita giving. All workplaces with 100 or more employees, with 50% participation or more qualify. Jim Bridger Power Plant, its employees and Utility Workers of America Local 127 pledged an average of \$658.51 per employee. The Spirit Award is awarded to the company with the highest average employee gift. All employee groups of 50 or more, with a minimum of 50% participation are eligible. Jim Bridger Power Plant and Utility Workers of America Local 127 pledged an average of \$402.34 per employee donor.

A special recognition was given to Pam Christiansen, a United Way Board Director and a Loaned Executive from Bridger Coal and Western Energy Workers Local 1978, for her efforts in helping increase Bridger Coal and Western Energy Workers Local 1978’s campaign by 161 percent. A special recognition was also given to Rolland Christiansen, a Loaned Executive from Simplot Phosphates, LLC, for his efforts in helping increase the Simplot Phosphates, LLC campaign by 272 percent.

The theme for the event was *Live United in Southwest Wyoming*. This launched the new Live United brand. “Our marketing from this point forward will be geared toward Live United, in hopes to inspire our community to give, advocate and volunteer,” said Kelly Frink, Director of Marketing and Communications, “you will be seeing a lot of white t-shirts with the words live united; we are having a lot of fun with it.”

Board President Bob Arambel included Live United in his speech encouraging guests to “Give 10 percent. Give 100 percent. Give 110 percent. Give an hour. Think of we before me. Give, advocate, volunteer, live united.”

The event also featured speakers from some of the Partner Agencies. Each gave a brief statement of achievement they have accomplished from the funds they receive from United Way.

“In the past eight months our advocates have responded to over 5, 700 crisis calls and provided over 1,000 shelter nights to 90 survivors of domestic violence or sexual assault. ,” said Mary Ann Clark with the YWCA Support and Safe House.

“We were able to distribute 119,696 pounds of food to the hungry last year,” stated Kathy Siler with the Food Bank of Sweetwater County.

“Donations put bilingual, beginner readers and sign language books in five libraries. It also provides materials and reading incentives for 686 children who participate in summer reading programs and made 15 special events possible,” said Jenissa Bartlett representing the Lincoln County Library Foundation.

“Community Based In Home Services Program at the Young At Heart Senior Center provides housekeeping, personal care and chore service for clients in need or homebound,” said Jeanine Cox, Executive Director.

“After seven months of our current fiscal year the Youth Home has served 136 youth. These youth are struggling to deal with family, personal, peer group, school and legal issues. Donations have helped in providing for the youth’s primary needs of food, shelter, and security that allows them to focus on the issues in their life,” said David Thorne, Executive Director.

“The Youth Alternative Home Association provides safe, structured programs for our summer youth. While engaged in the summer programs, they are taught work ethics and life skills. They also experience the therapeutic benefits of working with animals. Because they are paid a minimum wage, they learn to budget their money as they are required to save 75 percent of their earnings,” said a representative from YAHA.

“We are currently helping 107 pregnant teens receive early prenatal healthcare and we have given out over 260 bottles of prenatal vitamins. The goal of starting community based parenting classes for teens will become a reality on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and this is only the beginning. Our mission at Wyoming Health Initiative is to empower teens through education,” said Starla Yerkovich, WHI Board President.

“Sexual Assault and Family Violence Task Force, Inc. of Uinta County is a program that helps domestic violence and sexual assault victims. We have a 24 hour 7 days a week shelter and a 24 hour 7 days a week crisis line. Last year we helped 261 unduplicated victims; we answered 520 crisis line calls and sheltered 63 victims for a total of 740 days,” said representative Laurie Hood.

“Your donations assured comfort and dignity for a child of 15, a great grandmother of 98, and 63 others as they completed their final journey,” said Pam Jelaca, Executive Director of Hospice of Sweetwater County.

“The Sweetwater County Child Developmental Center staff in Green River worked with the City of Green River Finance Department to create a town and tricycle streets for the children at the preschool. It is designed to look like a mini Green River. The teachers and children have enjoyed this new motor area. The children are learning how to ride bikes and develop other gross and motor language skills,” said Ann Owen, Regional Coordinator.

“We provided 400 children and their parents valuable information on bullying, internet and latchkey safety. We also provided 768 children with Christmas presents that they may not have had otherwise,” said Melissa Searle, Coordinator for Community Projects for Children.

“We hold a summer camp for approximately 70 school children that includes many enriching activities including numerous field trips for these children, as well as numerous literacy, science and art activities. This helps these children stay in touch with school expectations,” said Shawna Melton representing the Evanston Child Developmental Center.

“The Lincoln County Teen Center was able to hold a *Halo* tournament on New Year’s Eve with over 50 kids in attendance. This kept them from going to a party that might have tempted them to use alcohol or drugs,” said Nelson Smith, LCTC Board Director.

“Funds received during the past year covered 37% of transportation costs for individuals with disabilities to obtain services. We provided 6,168 rides to persons served with no ambulatory limitations and 1,153 rides to persons that utilize a wheelchair for mobility,” said a representative of Lincoln Self Reliance.

“Funding provides the means to give over 7,500 hours of direct services in the form of personal in-home care to the elderly and disabled in our communities,” said Ann Copelan, Executive Director of VIRS in regards to their Respite Care program.

“United Way donors helped 180 individuals to maintain positive family relationships through supervised visits. In addition, 124 people in the community and 134 inmates with 175 children, learned anger management and parenting skills,” said Kathy Garrison with Sweetwater Family Resource.

“We were able to help 748 people in 2006-2007 and have been able to help 499 people from July to December this year. We helped a family of eight whose van was totaled in an accident to get home; the

Sheriff's office to send released prisoners to their out-of-state homes and stranded travelers with rooms and meals," said a representative with Traveler's Assistance.

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**Picture:** United Way of Southwest Wyoming volunteers display the 2007 Campaign total of \$1,756,345 that was announced at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual Awards and Recognition Event on March 28, 2008. Participants included from left Pam Christiansen, Rolland Christiansen, Tami Christensen, Marcella Knoll, Monte Morlock, John Knoll, Ben Taylor, Rick Lee, Paul Grube and Carole Shafer.



**Picture:** Employees of Jim Bridger Power Plant and Utility Workers of America Local 127 hold the Spirit and Excellence Awards that they received at the 29<sup>th</sup> Annual United Way of Southwest Wyoming Awards and Recognition Event on March 28, 2008. From left: Janice Nelson, Jon Christensen, Bob Arambel and Teresa Ward.