

# Combined Fund Drive, United Way start charitable efforts



Photos by Tori L. Bailey/The Olympian

Louretha Glasl (from left) and Darrell Hunter, both with the Department of Social and Health Services, learn about the Parent Empowerment Network from Juanita

Doyon and Karen Robbins during a Combined Fund Drive information day for state workers Wednesday on the East Capitol Campus.

## Event organizers hope to surpass last year's donations

BY DIANE HUBER  
THE OLYMPIAN

Dual campaigns kick off this week to encourage South Sound residents to donate to local charities, and organizers are encouraged by the community's generosity last year.

State workers can learn about approximately 90 charities at booths set up during the lunch hour today in Huntamer Park in Lacey.

"It's an opportunity for state employees to talk to charities so they can make an informed decision on who they want to give to," said Randy Ryan, program manager for the Combined Fund Drive, which acts as a clearinghouse for charitable donations from state workers and retirees.

Friday, United Way of Thurston County will kick off its

2006 campaign with the 14th annual Day of Caring. More than 400 volunteers will paint, plant trees, harvest produce and more for 34 nonprofit organizations in the county.

### A generous county

Last year, state workers donated \$5.6 million to the Combined Fund Drive, and about 20 percent of those funds, or \$1.3 million, came from Thurston County, Ryan said. This year, organizers hope to collect \$6 million.

About 25 percent of state employees donate to 2,000 local, national and international charities, Ryan said. Statewide, about 20 percent of employees donate. In other states, 10 percent to 25 percent of the employees tend to give to similar donation programs for state employees.

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State employee Rebecca Yette (center) picks up literature from several organizations during a Combined Fund Drive information day Wednesday on the Capitol Campus. The Combined Fund Drive is a workplace giving program for state workers and retirees.

### UNITED WAY DAY OF CARING

Volunteers will participate in 34 community projects Friday, ranging from yard work to painting buildings, clearing trails and harvesting produce.

To participate in these events, call Ami Forsberg at 360-943-2773, ext. 13.

To donate to United Way, go to the agency's Web site at [www.unitedway-thurston.org](http://www.unitedway-thurston.org).

### COMBINED FUND DRIVE

About 90 charities associated with the Combined Fund Drive will set up booths at Huntamer Park from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. today for state workers to learn more about their programs. Organizations include United Way of Thurston County, Bread & Roses, Thurston County Food Bank and Wolf Haven International.

To donate to the Combined Fund Drive, go to the drive's Web site at [www.cfd.wa.gov](http://www.cfd.wa.gov).

### FUNDRAISING

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Thurston County residents tend to give more because the fund drive has its headquarters here and they're more aware of the program, Ryan said.

"It's very visible, and I think that really makes a difference," he said.

Community members also donated more to United Way of Thurston County last year than in 2004.

The organization collected \$1.3 million, a 9 percent increase.

"Disaster relief was not a big factor. ... People did dig deeper, which was great," Executive Director Pam Toal said. Other nonprofit organizations are also seeing increases in donations, she said.

### As important as ever

With about one-quarter of the county's employees working for the state, and few major private

employers, raising money for local programs can be more challenging here than in other communities, Toal said.

State employees donate only 40 percent of the total funds to programs in Thurston County, Ryan said.

"We just try to stress local giving, because there are some real local needs here," Toal said.

For example, more families are reaching out for help for the first time because of high energy and gas prices this year, she said.

"Their dollars just aren't stretching as far as they need to in the last year," she said.

But she is optimistic local residents will step up again this year.

"I think we live in a very caring community and people want to help when they can."

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