



# Matagorda County United Way **REACHING OUT**

April 2004

Volume 8, Number 1

**"What  
Matters"**

**"Real Lives.  
Real  
Impact."**

## **Local EFSP Board receives an additional \$30,000 to assist with Emergency Food & Shelter For Area Residents**

In January as Executive Director and local Emergency Food & Shelter Program Board (EFSP) Member I drafted a letter requesting **an additional \$30,000** from the State Set-aside committee for Matagorda County citizens. Following are some excerpts from that funding request.

- Matagorda County is a County with population just under 39,000.
- We are a rural coastal community covering more than 1,114 square miles with no public transportation.
- Matagorda County has been a double-digit unemployment county for more than a decade.
- Median income for Matagorda County is \$32,174, which is almost \$7,750 less per household than the state average.
- One of every four children in Matagorda County is uninsured.
- The County has been declared a medical and dental shortage area.
- 18.5% of County residents live below the federal poverty level.
- 70% of public school students qualify for free or reduced lunch programs.
- Almost 3,250 individuals qualify for food stamps monthly, which is 8.5% of the County population.
- 18% of County residents are considered functionally illiterate.
- More than 134 families are currently qualified for the TANF programs.
- Local food pantries are seeing at least 1100 families monthly. With area food banks unable to fill orders, the local pantries are forced to go without food, shut the doors, or buy at retail prices.
- The 2003-2004 United Way fundraising campaign is \$70,000 short of their \$450,000 goal, which was dropped by \$50,000 from last year. This has resulted in \$14,000 less for local non-profits servicing emergency needs of County citizens and if campaign does not reach goal by February additional cuts will ensue. (This letter was drafted in January, we did reach goal by the close of campaign.)
- Matagorda County took a direct hit from Hurricane Claudette this summer resulting in catastrophic damage to our large shrimping, fishing, and agricultural industries. More than 7 months later several small businesses have not reopened. 110 families who were ineligible or had extensive home damage are still seeking help to repair homes.

We are a hard hit area with a number of factors affecting our families. The local social service organizations are unable to meet the needs in these difficult times.

**“United Way’s not just a fundraiser - Collaboratives & Coalitions are key”**

## **Community Impact –**

### **UW’s Not just a fundraiser**

So many people view United Ways as only a fundraiser and distributor of funds. As United Ways as a whole move more towards Community Impact a few changes may be felt in our local community. The Fund Distribution committees (community volunteers) will move more towards program funding as opposed to Agency funding, meaning dollars are designated to certain services/programs instead of openly awarded. The resources that become available to Communities through community impact become so vast that it dwarfs the annual community campaign and accomplishes so much more to the benefit of people in our community. The larger funding streams (foundations, governmental, etc) are moving more towards funding collaborative efforts than individual programs. Community Impact models help to make grass root changes instead of Band-Aids for the ills of our Community. MCUW's current initiatives include: Helping children succeed, fostering independence for seniors, increasing self-sufficiency, strengthening families, and promoting health and wellness. Community Impact also allows more collaborations with groups outside the funded agency status that has past presided. Matagorda County United Way is currently involved in several local collaboratives, including: **Matagorda County Health Care Coalition (MCHC)**-Collaboration with Matagorda County Hospital District, Matagorda County United Way, MEHOP, Palacios Medical Center, Texana MHMR, & The Trull Foundation; **Literacy Advisory Board-First Book-Matagorda (LAB)** - collaboration between Bay City Day Care, Bay City Library, Blessing Library, Boys & Girls Club-Palacios, First Book, Head Start-Bay City, Head Start-Palacios, Literacy Volunteers of America, Matagorda County United Way, MEHOP, Palacios Library, & Sargent VFW; **Youth Advisory Board** - collaborative involving: area youth, Bay City Housing Authority, Bay City ISD, First Prosperity Bank, Matagorda County United Way, The WorkSource, & Van Vleck ISD ; **Interagency Community Resource Coordination Group for Families (CRCGF)** has a membership of more than 100 local social service non-profits, federal, & state agencies, **Matagorda Interfaith Goodwill Humanitarian Team (MIGHT)** - includes local churches, faith-based organizations, & local non-profit social service organizations; **Texas Community Futures Forum-2004** - includes local community leaders; **HeadStart Child Development Council**-includes local social service organizations & medical teams; & **Emergency Food & Shelter Board (EFSP)** - includes representation from American Red Cross, Catholic Charities, the County Judge, 2 Government agency representatives, Homeless representative, Matagorda County United Way, Ministerial Alliance, & Salvation Army; among other Community wide efforts.

For information on any of the above organizations please contact Kim at the United Way office at 979-245-5852.

**"Volunteers  
are not paid  
- not  
because  
they are  
worthless,  
but because  
they are  
priceless."  
-unknown**

**"United Way  
Doubling  
your money"**

## The President's Volunteer Service Awards

Matagorda County United Way was recently accepted as a certifying organization for the Presidential service awards program. Local recipients for a Presidential Awards include: Kids (up to 14 with a minimum of 50 hours service) - Jessica Effenberger-Gold Award & Brittainy Helton-Gold Award. Young Adults (15-25 with a minimum of 100 hours service) Jeffrey Effenberger-Bronze Award & Jennifer Effenberger-Bronze Award. Adults (age 26 & up with a minimum of 100 hours service) Dennis Bensfield-Gold Award, (Dennis also received the Volunteer of the Year award from MCUW at the recent Volunteer Appreciation luncheon.) Jim Crawford-Gold Award, Frank Huerta-Gold Award, Peggy Scantlen-Bronze Award, Tereana Ottis-Bronze Award, Dr. Richard Johnston-Bronze Award, Joyce Johnston-Bronze Award. Families & Groups (2 or more people with a minimum of 200 hours service) none turned in. You can track volunteer hours and find out more about the awards at the following site. Remember to count up hours spent on organizing campaign x each campaign volunteer, plus food drives, home repairs, school supply drives, etc. I would love to have all the hours in and certificates ordered in order to give these awards out at the Volunteer luncheon early next year.

<https://www.presidentserviceawards.gov/>



## Matagorda County United Way More Than Doubles Dollars for Child Care!

Low-income children and families suffer as States continue to cut Child Care Assistance Programs MCUW approved \$37,500.00 for 2004 for child care assistance. In February MC United Way applied for \$45,000 additional dollars for day care services for low-income individuals using the \$37,500 as match for this grant. We received word this week that we had been **approved for \$45,415** in additional funding for our Child Care Initiative.

In 2003, more than half a million children eligible for child care assistance were put on waiting lists in 23 states. Matagorda County currently has 98 children on the waiting list for Neighborhood Centers subsidized childcare. These are children from very low income families. In addition, states have increased parent co-pays, reduced provider reimbursements, and lowered eligibility limits so fewer families qualify for help. The federal Child Care and Development Block Grant provides federal funds to support child care assistance to more than two million children -- but only one out of seven eligible children actually received assistance in 2003. The Children's Defense Fund warns that without additional child care funds, at least 200,000 children will lose the support they currently have, while millions more will receive no help at all. For the complete story check out this link.

<http://www.childrensdefense.org/childcare/statebudgetcuts.pdf>

## Office Happenings



**Literacy Book-Give-a-way** - As collaboration with First Book-Matagorda, we recently received more than 2500 books for our Kids Korner Literacy Program. **Any child** can come into the United Way office at 2417 Avenue G and receive a free book for their very own. They are eligible for one book a month as long as supplies last. We are looking for a volunteer to go at least one day a month to area day cares, housing authority, schools, and read to the kids and distribute books. If you are interested please give Kim a call at 979-245-5852.

**First Quarter Allocation payments** have been distributed to the 20 non-profit Community Care agencies approved for funding in 2004. In addition to these 20 non-profits, designations have been accepted for 27 other non-profit organizations through the MCUW annual campaign.



**HELPLINE** - Our in-house Information & Referral service averages 9000 calls annually. Are your parents having difficulty paying for prescription drugs? Would you like to volunteer your time for a worthy cause? For the most up to date local social service information give us a call or email at [mcuw@skycasters.net](mailto:mcuw@skycasters.net)

Matagorda County  
United Way  
2417 Ave G  
P.O. Box 972  
Bay City, TX 77404

Phone:  
(979) 245-5852

Fax:  
(979) 244-1541

E-mail:  
[mcuw@skycasters.net](mailto:mcuw@skycasters.net)

We're on the Web!  
[www.man-net.net](http://www.man-net.net)

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*Success...to leave the world a bit better...to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. That is to have succeeded. - Ralph Waldo Emerson*

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**Thank you** all for your support and encouragement. Without your help needed services for area citizens would not be possible.

You can also help United Way by forwarding the above newsletter to your acquaintances.