

## NEWS RELEASE



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
July 30, 2009

**Contact:** Jordan Ihrig, Beacon PR  
405.612.4015  
JIhrig@pr-beacon.com

### **Supporters Raise United Way Pledges, Ensure Strong Kickoff**

While the Stillwater Area United Way campaign does not officially kick off until September 17<sup>th</sup>, a few supporters are stepping up early to help ensure a successful campaign from the start.

For the 2009 campaign, eight local families within the United Way Leaders Society have agreed to donate \$16,000 above their 2008 pledge in Stillwater Area United Way "challenge gifts".

"We all know that the 2009 campaign will face some pretty significant challenges with recent downsizing and economic turmoil," said Mona Long, United Way volunteer and challenge giver. "This is one way that those of us with the means to give more right now can help make up that difference. We all want the 2009 United Way campaign to be a major success from kickoff to close."

Long and her husband, Ed, not only significantly increased their 2009 pledge but also led the challenge gift initiative.

"It's important for volunteers in the community to get involved, give and spread the word about what United Way is doing," Long said. "I simply contacted a targeted handful of community members and asked them to consider increasing their pledge for this year's campaign because of the possible hardships we will face. With just a few phone calls, we raised \$16,000 in increased pledges – that's the money these families gave above last year's pledge, not including last year's pledge amounts, which they also have generously agreed to give!"

The eight families who make up the 2009 challenge givers include Burns and Ann Hargis; Ed and Mona Long; Marlene Strathe and John Lowthian; Suzanne Carpenter; Gary and Jane Clark; Dick and Malinda Fischer; Larry and Pauledde Plank; and Lynn and Kelly Kinder. Each challenge giver is a member of the United Way Leaders Society.

The United Way Leaders Society is comprised of individuals and families who give \$500 or more. Members of the Leaders Society will serve as this year's Pacesetters group, leading the way in donations for the 2009 campaign.

"It's amazing how generous our Leaders Society members are and we are so thankful," said Sheri Carter, United Way Director. "Not only are many of them giving larger donations, but they are also giving more volunteer time to encourage gifts from others. The Hargis family is opening their home for a Leaders Society reception. The Longs headed up our challenge initiative. Suzanne Carpenter and her family volunteered their time to be in this year's campaign video. Through the time and donations of these key families, we are poised to kick off a successful 2009 campaign!"

For more information about Stillwater Area United Way, the upcoming campaign or how you can get involved, please visit [stillwaterunitedway.org](http://stillwaterunitedway.org) or call 405-377-2161.

###

