

# COMMENTARY

CHET VALIANTE  
Publisher

JAMES L. DEAN  
Editor

JOHN P. REILLY  
Editor Emeritus

## A fall occurrence: annual campaign for United Way

It's as much a part of the fall calendar as the arrival of autumnal colors and the World Series — it's the annual campaign of the United Way of Norwalk & Wilton.

Each year the battle to reach the campaign's goal has become more difficult. Among the reasons is the obvious one; the state of the nation's economy. Another one results in part from the first. More and more people have to rely on the services provided by United Way member agencies.

The community agencies, of course, have problems of their own. They all must deal with tighter budgets and less reliance of state agencies to pick up any slack.

This year's campaign is taking aim at recruiting more corporate donors, the backbone of many campaigns in previous years. As companies have down-sized or left town, the impact has reverberated through the United Way and the member agencies.

We have often cited how those agencies that rely on the United Way as a principal source of funding touch every aspect of our community. Whether it's working with young people, or the mentally or physically handicapped or the senior citizens, its reach is profound.

If each of the member organization had to underwrite its entire budget, you would face a torrent of appeals for funds year-round. We know they are all worthy causes, but how does an individual decide?

The United Way, through its distribution mechanism, makes sure that requests fulfill a real community need, and that programs are carried out as planned. The committee is not composed of a group of distant experts; its members are your friends and neighbors who volunteer their time and energy to make sure that contributors get the biggest bang for their buck.

And who runs the United Way? Perhaps you do, or a co-worker, or a neighbor, volunteering for in-house campaigns or covering the neighborhoods to see that everyone had an opportunity to learn about the United Way and to contribute.

In its effort to enlist new donors, corporate and individual, the outlook is promising. The campaign goal is to enlist 270 new givers; in less than a month's time, 74 are on board and \$80,375 has been received in new donations. The hope is to surpass last year's goal of \$1,262,797.

As we have noted, you'd be hard put to find some aspect of our two communities or someone you know whose life has not been touched by one of the many member agencies. The United Way provides you with a perfect opportunity to reach out to those who may not have anywhere to turn but to one of the member agencies.

You can argue that it's just an efficient way to use resources, but it's more than that. We are helping friends, neighbors — and sometimes people we don't even know — and in the process we are helping ourselves to be caring citizens.