

Great Game Huddle Notes

October 4th, 2016

Presiding Commissioner Bob Cirtin introduced three guests speaking today on behalf of The United Way of the Ozarks.

First of all, we heard from David Hall, the Chief of the Springfield Fire Department. Chief Hall shared his personal experience donating to the United Way since becoming a firefighter years ago. The United Way focuses on community issues and providing assistance and support for the members of the community. Chief Hall presented to us a short United Way video. His opinion is that the leaders within an organization set the tone for giving, and that other employees within the group will follow their example.

Our next guest was Shellie Jones of the United Way. Shellie gave us a brief overview of the United Way as a whole. There are 1500 non-profit agencies in our area, and 22 partner agencies within the United Way. The statistics in the United Way video are local statistics and include:

- 1 in 4 children are living in poverty
- 1 in 7 children are abused or neglected
- 1000+ people are homeless at any given time
- 60% of inmates at the Greene County Jail are illiterate
- 1 in 4 people experience a behavioral, developmental or mental disability
- 1 in 4 households have an annual household income of just \$15,000

Shellie stated that 260,000 lives in our community are touched somehow by the United Way. What a difference this wonderful organization is making!

Brandi Bartel of The Victim's Center shared with us how the center interacts and impacts our community. The Victim's Center serves as a safety net for our community by helping people who are survivors of violent or sexual crimes. Sadly, the need for this service has grown dramatically in recent years, jumping 20% per year, three years in a row. The center's staff works closely with both the Harmony House and the Child Advocacy Center locally, and offer their services free of charge. The United Way partners with The Victim's Center to cover their expenses. The employees of The Victim's Center work 24 hours a day providing a hotline, court support and advocates, and counseling free of charge. Their advocates go to local hospitals and police stations, the jail, and to court in order to assist their clients. They have advocates placed in the Harmony House, the Child Advocacy Center (CAC) and the Circuit Clerk's office.

Commissioner Cirtin closed the meeting asking employees for their support in making this year's United Way fundraising drive the most successful yet.