

Charities will share more than \$1M

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(Photo: Supplied)

More charities raised more dollars this year during the Wayne County Foundation's Challenge Match.

On Thursday evening, foundation officials joyously announced that organizations participating in the 2014 Challenge Match raised more than \$772,500 in donations.

That amount, plus the foundation match, will result in approximately \$1,003,800 in total benefit to the community.

Additional good news: All 40 participating organizations exceeded their match goals.

"We knew this year was going to be big, but I don't think anyone imagined anything like this," said Steve Borchers, the foundation's executive director, in a press release. "This represents a 45 percent increase in community contributions over last year."

The foundation, with the help of a dozen Challenge Match sponsors, offered \$231,300 to 40 local organizations that raised an equal or greater amount during a 12-day match period in November.

The 2014 totals were higher than those from 2013. Last year, the program generated \$702,000 for 35 local non-profits, including \$169,250 of matching money from the foundation.

"Thanks to our Challenge Match Sponsors, we had more money available and we were able to involve more organizations this year," said Chris Hardie, foundation board chair, in the release. "We really appreciate their contributions, as well as the coverage by our local newspapers and radio stations. Without them the match wouldn't have been nearly as successful as it was."

This was also the first year for all participating organizations to exceed their match goals. The foundation said each group's goal was set in relation to the size of the organization's budget and the strength of its proposal to leverage the match.

"A number of organizations this year were even able to secure donors to 'match their match,'" said Borchers. "That's really exciting."

One of those organizations was Birth-to-Five, which provides educational opportunities and guidance for families of young children.

Executive Director Jim Cohen said the organization had a goal of \$7,500, but raised more than \$10,000. In addition, Birth-to-Five then qualified for a \$7,500 match from United Way.

"That is critical money for us," Cohen said.

Funding for Birth-to-Five's Parents As Teachers program is totally dependent on community contributions, Cohen added. Parents As Teachers hosts play groups and Book Buddies programs throughout the county and provides customized home visits and community outreach services.

"It's clear the economy is doing better," said Cohen, who is also chair of the board for the Economic Development Corporation of Wayne County. "When the economy is good, people are more generous, and it definitely showed this year."

Leaders of AMIGOS, the Richmond Latino Center, were also thrilled by donors' generosity, calling it a "historic high."

Executive Director Howard Lamson said AMIGOS had a \$5,000 goal and received about \$11,900 that was eligible for the match. Donations came from 65 people and businesses.

One large donation exceeded qualifications for the match, so in total, AMIGOS raised more than \$16,000 during the campaign.

"People are understanding the importance of what our diverse groups are contributing now and will contribute to Richmond in the future," Lamson said.

Lamson said many of their efforts help bilingual Latino students who will most likely stay in the area after they finish school.

"We have some very talented and skilled people," Lamson said. "They are so motivated to come here and make a better life for their children and contribute to the life of the community for all of us. Our lives are always enriched by people from other backgrounds and cultures. We learn new ways of looking at the world."

Final numbers from the Challenge Match will be released later this month.

"Any adjustments notwithstanding, these results speak volumes about the tremendous generosity here in Wayne County and the remarkable work being done by our not-for-profit organizations," Borchers said.

Gifts at a glance

Wayne County Foundation officials announced that 40 organizations participating in its 2014 Challenge Match raised more than \$772,500 in donations.

That amount, plus the foundation match with help from sponsors, will result in approximately \$1,003,800 in total benefit to the community.

Participating charities: Wayne County Soil and Water Conservation District, Richmond Day Nursery, Wayne County Literacy Coalition, Junior Achievement, Peer Information Center for Teens, Quaker Hill Conference Center, Richmond Rose Garden, Youth As Resources, Children's Justice and Advocacy Center, Community Food Pantry, Amigos the Richmond Latino Center, Christian Charities of Richmond and Wayne County, Circle U Help Center, Gateway Vineyard Church Food Pantry, Hayes Arboretum, Hope House, K-Ready, Levi Coffin House Association, Northeastern Music Boosters, Open Arms Ministries, Richmond Family YMCA, Starr-Gennett Foundation, Sunrise Inc., Wayne County Cardinal Greenway, Wayne County Historical Museum, Western Wayne Dollars for Scholars, Whitewater Valley District 9 Pro Bono Commission, HELP the Animals, Birth-to-Five; Richmond Friends School, Boys & Girls Clubs of Wayne County, Communities in Schools, Cope Environmental Center, Girls Inc., Golay Community Center, Model T Ford Club of America, Richmond Art Museum, Richmond Civic Theatre, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, YWCA

Challenge Match Sponsors included Brady Ware; the Connie and Roger Green Donor Advised Fund; the Fund for Tomorrow; Richard E. Jeffers; the King Family Donor Advised Fund; Paul and Pat Lingle; Richmond Baking; the Rosar Donor Advised Fund; Steven E. and Margie Stoller; Dave and Carla Stidham; US Bank; and Wayne Bank and Trust Co.

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