

December 3, 2007

OSSE Team,

We have another exciting week here at the OSSE. Today will be the Council of the District of Columbia's public oversight hearing for the agency. I will be testifying before the Council and look forward to answering any questions they might have for me. It will be a great opportunity to better inform the Council and the public about our ongoing work including our three critical action areas: special education, federal grants, and the statewide longitudinal data warehouse. The hearing begins at 11:00am and will be replayed on channel 13 and online.

Please extend a warm welcome to Ms. Norma Birchhead. Effective January 7th, Ms. Birchhead is joining the Nutrition Services team as a CACFP Manager. Although Dr. Cynthia Bell has been working with the federal grants team since August, she has now been officially named as the Project Director for Federal Grants Reform. Ms. Tami Lewis has been selected as the Project Director for Special Education Reform and Ms. Rehva Jones, who you all know from the All Hands meetings, is now the Director of Student Services & Parent Engagement. Congratulations, ladies! I would encourage everyone at the OSSE to periodically check the DCHR website (<http://dchr.dc.gov>) for any job postings within our agency. You can sort the listings by agency, but please note that we are still listed as the "State Education Office." If there is a position that you are interested in and feel you are qualified for, I strongly encourage you to apply. The leadership team and I are committed to ensuring that we have excellent people in these positions so we can do the very best job possible for our customers: the residents of the District of Columbia.

The OSSE Winter Gala will be next Friday, December 14th at THEARC (1901 Mississippi Ave SE, Southern Avenue metro). The gala goes from 7:00 PM to midnight and tickets are \$33. To purchase tickets, please contact Cardell Saunders (Cardell.Saunders@dc.gov). We need to get a rough headcount for the caterer, so please RSVP with Cardell by 5:00pm this Wednesday (December 5th) so we have an idea of how many people to expect. The winter gala is a different event from the December All Hands meeting which will be Wednesday, December 19th, from 10:30am-12:30pm at Van Ness Elementary (1150 5th St SE, Navy Yard Metro).

You should have received an email from either Deputy Superintendent John Parham or my assistant, Juan Garcia, about the extension we were granted for establishing PMP Performance Plans for the Fiscal Year 2008. The new deadline is **December 30th**. If you are not located at Judiciary Square, you will need to reach the management liaison specialist assigned to your division:

Business & Support Services
724.7756
Planning, Performance & Public Engagement
pat.magruderjackson@dc.gov or 741-5934
Standards & Accountability
veronica.wade@dc.gov or 202-727-8577
Teaching & Learning
deborahc.anderson@dc.gov or 202-725-1528

Temple Huff at temple.huff@dc.gov or
Pat Magruder Jackson at
Veronica Wade at
Deborah C. Anderson at

Chief Information Officer
veronica.wade@dc.gov or 202-727-8577
Review & Compliance
eboni.gatewood@dc.gov or 202-724-2077

Veronica Wade at
Eboni Gatewood at

If you are unable to reach one of the management liaison specialists, please contact RaeShawn Crosson at raeshawn.crosson@dc.gov or the Performance Management Unit at (202) 442-9671. For Employees of the legacy SEO, the deadline remains December 7, 2007.

While December is chock full of last minute shopping, hot cocoa and marshmallows by the fireplace, and bundling up the little ones to go ice skating, the holiday season is also the time of giving. I would also like to encourage everyone to participate in DC's 53rd Annual One Fund drive. To learn more about this year's campaign, please visit the One Fund website at <http://www.grc.dc.gov/onefund> or contact Ms. Laurencia Henderson (Laurencia.Henderson@dc.gov) who is the One Fund point of contact for the OSSE. Some of you will remember the problems that the United Way of the National Capital Area had a few years ago. At the end of this email, I have included an article from the Washington Post that discusses the extensive efforts that the United Way has gone through to recapture the public's trust. I hope the article will allay any concerns you might have. I am fully confident and have been a district fair share giver for many years. Help us meet our goal of 100% participation for the OSSE. If every employee gave a dollar a week (much less than your coffee break!) we could contribute nearly \$20,000!

Attached, you will find a flier for the Serve DC One Warm Coat Drive and the food/clothes/toy drive that is being organized by the Office of Property Management. The collection dates for OPM's drive are next week (December 10-14, 11:30am-1:30pm) here at Judiciary Square, but the One Warm Coat drive ends tomorrow. Coats can be dropped off at the Wilson Building. Please keep these two drives in mind as you go about your holiday shopping or sort through old winter gear.

I wanted to thank everyone again for participating in the code of ethics activity at the last All Hands. I want to reiterate how important it is to always be vigilant about our business processes and being cautious about our ethics practices. If there is an ethics-related issue or question, please bring it to the attention of your supervisor immediately. Also, Monica Brown, is our ethics counselor and is available to answer your questions. She can be reached at either Monica.Brown@dc.gov or 202.727.2814. I also wanted everyone to be aware of the Inspector General's hotline number (202.727.0267) which is a confidential channel to report government corruption for the Government of the District of Columbia.

Finally, I'd like to share something with all of you that I read in the "Overcoming Buffaloes in Our Lives" e-newsletter. Everyone at the OSSE, from the Deputy Superintendents and the program managers to the staff assistants and schedulers, is a valuable member of the team and the work you on a daily basis takes us all one step closer to our goal of ensuring that each resident of the District of Columbia receives a first-class education. I hope you will take a few minutes to think about the Harambee spirit and the little things we can all do to pitch in.

[Harambee— 23 Basic Ways of Pulling Together With Your Team](#)

Harambee is a Swahili word that means, “Let’s pull together.” Indigenous communities, in Kenya during the colonial days, pulled their meager resources together and built their own schools, hospitals and churches. People contributed whatever they could. With the spirit of Harambee, less fortunate families had their children join costly schools and living standards were improved within villages.

Here are 23 basic ways to make your contribution matter, in the spirit of Harambee:

1. Set and follow goals
2. Be punctual
3. Show self-initiative, do what needs done
4. Let go of past experiences that may have failed
5. Develop a vision for what you want to accomplish in your work and in life
6. Deepen your determination to overcome obstacles and achieve goals
7. Be enthusiastic, motivated and focused on the things that matter to you
8. Be competent enough to excel on and off the field
9. Go the extra mile to improve your strengths
10. Develop first-class organizational skills and prioritize what matters
11. Check your confidence
12. Be patient with your progress and that of your teammates
13. Be responsible, dependable and decisive in your professional and personal paths
14. Always be ready to adjust to change, so as to grow
15. Teach yourself to be a lifelong learner from the people and things that are around you
16. Constantly check your commitment to your goals and your coworkers
17. Be an encourager of your coworkers
18. Develop the discipline needed to follow through on what you say you will do
19. Never compromise your values
20. Your attitude should never be a seasonal make-up
21. Be content with yourself for who you are and appreciate others for who they are
22. Follow paths that can deepen your wisdom
23. Always have hope for a better future

Publisher: Kituku & Associates, Overcoming Buffaloes in Our Lives Newsletter

Have a great week!

Deborah

Deborah A. Gist
State Superintendent of Education
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
441 4th Street NW, 350 North, Washington, DC, 20001
Phone 202-727-6436
Assistant, Mr. Juan Garcia, 202-727-3471
deborah.gist@dc.gov

washingtonpost.com

United Way Fundraising Rises After Scandal-Induced Plunge

By Philip Rucker

Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, November 30, 2007; B03

The embattled United Way of the National Capital Area will report today that its fundraising drive collected \$35.8 million in the last fiscal year, a 1.7 percent increase from the year before, when it recorded its lowest total in at least a decade.

Although the increase is modest, nonprofit leaders said it is a sign of restored trust in the organization, which has been battered by financial and management scandals. Donations to the area United Way exceeded \$90 million six years ago but plummeted the following year. The group's leaders said they are slowly drawing back employers that had abandoned their annual campaigns.

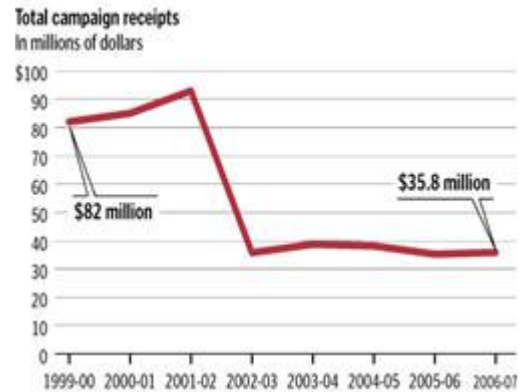
"Winning back trust is one person at a time and one firm at a time," said Charles W. Anderson, the local United Way's president and chief executive. "At a certain point, my theory is that you hit a critical point, you hit a critical mass of organizational turnaround, and we are there. . . . The momentum is there. Hopefully many of those people who left and are waiting on the sidelines and will return."

About 67,000 people contributed to the campaign in fiscal 2006-07, according to audited figures that will be released today. Contributions from private-sector employees, a key indicator of corporate support, grew by about 5 percent, from \$19.6 million to \$20.6 million.

The donations collected in the annual workplace fundraising drive are being distributed to about 895 accredited nonprofit agencies.

A Slight Rebound

The United Way of the National Capital Area's campaign fiscal 2006-07 raised \$35.8 million, a 1.7 percent increase from the previous year. Donations dropped substantially in 2002-03, when the organization came under fire for questionable spending by top leaders, bloated overhead costs and other financial improprieties.



Top recipients of United Way funds, 2006-2007

1. So Others Might Eat	\$899,527
2. Whitman-Walker Clinic	590,008
3. Children's Hospital Foundation	469,523
4. Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington	426,555
5. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Arlington	409,023
6. House of Ruth	403,002
7. Make-A-Wish Foundation of the Mid-Atlantic	343,885

SOURCE: United Way of the National Capital Area

| The Washington Post - November 30, 2007

Early figures from this year's campaign show that the United Way is in a good position to meet its fundraising goal of \$40 million, Anderson said.

Nationally, the United Way's 1,293 local affiliates reported receipts of about \$4.07 billion for the 2006-07 campaign, a 2.3 percent increase from the year before, said Rick Belous, vice president of research at the national headquarters in [Alexandria](#).

The United Way is the funding lifeline for many charities. For example, the Children's Hospital Foundation used the \$469,522 it received to buy thermometers and tongue depressors as well as to fund its medical program.

"We rely on these dollars to be able to keep our doors open," said Heather Terry, the hospital foundation's fundraising manager.

The local United Way was rocked in the early part of the decade after its former chief executive, Oral Suer, was accused of stealing as much as \$1.5 million from the organization during the 27 years he worked there. Other executives were accused of cheating the organization out of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Internal audits and [Washington Post](#) investigations also uncovered questionable spending by top leaders and bloated overhead costs. Suer served two years in prison before being released in 2006.

Amid the scandal, many corporations pulled out of the fundraising drives. The United Way also lost its contract to run the Combined Federal Campaign, the fundraising drive among federal government employees, which had been raising about \$50 million a year. The United Way has not won back the CFC account, though it raised about \$15.2 million from federal employees last year.

Anderson was recruited to restore the United Way's fundraising prowess and salvage its reputation. He and other leaders of the organization came under fire after they projected a fundraising total of \$39 million for the 2004-05 campaign but a later audit found that the total was \$38.1 million. The organization no longer releases projections and does not announce fundraising totals until the receipts have been audited.

Leaders throughout the nonprofit sector said they think the local United Way has turned a corner.

"Everybody, particularly from the nonprofit point of view, was afraid that it would take years and years and years, if credibility could ever return," said Betsy Johnson, executive director of the Center for Nonprofit Advancement.

Edward J. Orzechowski, president and chief executive of the [Catholic Charities](#) of the [Archdiocese of Washington](#), said: "I think the credibility and community confidence of United Way is coming back."

"I'm really convinced that yesterday's story is long since done," said Barry LeNoir, president of the District-based United Black Fund. "They've got a great team over there, great leadership, great integrity. They've taken the story forward, they're transparent, there's nothing hidden with what they're doing and we're very impressed. We're very much convinced that they've got the right track."



"Winning back trust is one person at a time and one firm at a time," said Charles W. Anderson, leader of the United Way of the National Capital Area. (By Susan Biddle -- [The Washington Post](#))