

Williston Basin United Way Aims to Offset Cancelled Community Sale with New Summer Campaign

With restrictions and uncertainty hampering events, the Williston Basin United Way board of directors opted to cancel the 2020 Community Sale, traditionally held mid-May. Coined the region's largest rummage sale, it takes in thousands of pounds of rummage sale items by donation for two weeks prior to the sale. Proceeds go towards the local United Way's mission of supporting service and youth orientated non-profit programs at work in Williams, Divide and McKenzie counties.

"The grants we provide go to everything from feeding area seniors to promoting foster care to funding programs for early literacy to stocking food pantries," commented Interim Director Sabrina Ramey. "We work with a wide variety of non-profit groups. They are really the backbone of our communities in NW North Dakota, and they are all working extra hard right now."

The Williston Basin United Way board of directors felt with many spring events hoping to reschedule later in the year, it might be better to look forward to a 2021 Community Sale and promote a new campaign to make up part of the funding shortfall created by canceling the sale. The Community Sale typically nets \$10,000 to \$14,000 and kickstarts an annual campaign with a goal of over \$120,000 annually.

"With all the fluctuations in the community over the last ten years, we have struggled to create lasting relationships with many employers in the area," commented Kim Wenko, board president. "We want to tell the United Way story to individuals and connect with them. We want to show them how the work we do is important in keeping their community healthy."

Williston Basin United Way is launching a Personal Best campaign this summer, featuring testimonials from non-profit groups who benefit from grant funding, individuals who are helped by the programs and donors themselves. They hope these stories will inspire friends and neighbors as well as strangers to support their goals and work. They will set up new, easy ways to donate that will appeal to a younger audience, as well.

"Traditionally, we have focused on workplace campaigns," noted Wenko. "The events of this year have led us to really refocus who we want to inspire and connect with. We are excited to try something new."