

Benefactors Shone Brightly in '09

On Friday, February 19, 2010, your United Way of Gaston County celebrated it's 2009 Campaign and the highlights of last year. What a wonderful time it was with our volunteers, friends and supporters. A sense of community was evident throughout the room and gave us a great positive start as we begin plans for 2010. Our 2009 Board Chair, BF Beasley, was honored with the Harold Mercer award as he said his farewells. 2010 Board Chair, Rusty Harris presented the slate of new board members and installed our new Board officers. Tom Efird was honored as an outstanding community leader by receiving the Harold T. Sumner award. Lisa Boggs and Jay Smith were also recognized for their great leadership to us as the 2009 Campaign Co-Chairs and were awarded the Winget Award.

Our work is not possible without companies and organizations who give so much to ensure our success. There were several companies and organizations that were recognized for their outstanding support. Since no celebration is complete without awards, here is a snapshot of our 2009 Campaign award winners.

UWGC's youth council got involved in our fundraising by sponsoring the "Money in the Bank" competition at Ashbrook, Hunter Huss, Forestview and South Point High Schools, to see which student body could raise the most money. "Money in the Bank" will be an annual tradition and in keeping with the "passing of the torch" if you will, the winner from the previous year will give the trophy to the next year's winner. Congratulations to the 2009 "Money in the Bank" winner, raising over \$500, Forestview High School. Special thanks to Mrs. Audrey Devine, Principal and Donovan McQuitter, youth council representative who coordinated this effort.

Annually, the United Way of Gaston County offers participating organizations an opportunity to nominate themselves or have a volunteer nominate them for the local United Way Campaign Awards. This year's categories were: Most Innovative Campaign, Best Kick-off/Appreciation Event, Cabinet Member of the Year, Loaned Executive (LE) of the Year Employee Campaign Coordinator (ECC) of the Year, Partner Agency Commitment Award and three Community Impact Awards. Each year a panel of volunteer judges meets to discuss the nominees and select the award recipients.

Congratulations to the following award winners:

Most Innovative Campaign – Advance Auto Parts
Best Appreciation Event – Belk
Cabinet Member of the Year – Chief David Belk, Mt. Holly Police Department
LE of the Year – Jackie Ammons, Gaston College
ECC of the Year – Eric Johnson, Gaston County Employees
Partner Agency Commitment Award – Gaston Hospice

The Community Impact Awards are given to a company or an organization that has established a strong United Way culture through such means as a corporate matching program, corporate sponsorship, workplace campaign and special events, encouragement of employees to volunteer and providing Loaned Executives. Three companies/organizations received this prestigious award in the following categories: 1 – 50 employees, 51 – 500 employees and more than 501 employees. A big Thank you goes to:

Cherry, Bekaert & Holland (1 – 50 employees), whose average employee gift was \$1,215

PSNC Energy (51-500 employees), saw a near \$2,000 growth in employee and corporate contributions

Gaston County Employees (501+ employees), top giving department – Sheriff's office at \$11,800 and GEMS with the highest per capita giving

Congratulations to all of you for winning the 2009 Community Impact Awards! We are grateful that you all are our friends. We also count it an honor to serve Gaston County and are gearing up to continue that service throughout 2010. A special thanks to all of you who participated in the 2009 Community-wide Campaign. No act is small and each gift, minute, and thought that you gave us did not go unnoticed. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.