

United Way collects more this year

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Contributions to Pikes Peak United Way increased slightly in the fiscal year that ended June 30, said President and CEO Jason Wood.

Last year, the nonprofit collected around \$5.5 million, he said. This year there is an additional \$200,000 in the contribution baskets.

"We saw a better level of giving, from corporations to individuals," Wood said.

The United Way distributes money to other nonprofits in the region. Community volunteers serving on allocation committees recommend which organizations to disperse the money to, and how much. The final decisions rest with the board of directors.

This year, the nonprofit sought to further define its needs. A series of meetings held with the community resulted in a revised giving strategy that focuses on young people.

"We've really tried to hone in on what United Way is really focused on," Wood said. "We spent a lot of time listening over the last year or so."

The result is a new emphasis: "Education, income and health — key building blocks to a good life," Wood said.

The community told United Way

everyone should have access to early childhood education that includes STEM education — science, technology, engineering and math.

"In those community conversations, the major thing we heard is how we're developing our youth to really become career-minded individuals," Wood said.

The agency divided the focus into three segments that take a person from "Cradle to Career," the name of their new effort, he said.

"Are you ready for kindergarten by age 6?" Wood asked. "It's from birth to post-secondary education and how to prepare someone for their career."

The community emphasized the need for the effort to take place by the three entities working together: government, nonprofit agencies and the community.

The theory of action Wood spoke about focused on the following key areas:

- engage the community;
- eliminate defined disparities;
- develop a culture of continuous improvement; and
- leverage existing assets.

"There needs to be some action, is what we heard from the community," Wood said. "If we're really going to make a stride on these, it's important

for the community to see the three entities work together, and it had to be measurable and real."

Entities with measured outcomes will likely get more money than entities without measured outcomes, Wood said.

"We spent a lot of time listening and trying to understand what the community wanted, and then we matched it with the quantitative data," Wood said.

"It doesn't mean current partners won't be funded," Wood said. "We'll be focused on funding programs that have measured outcomes."

The organization will continue to fund "safety net services," because if they were not funded, it would have "traumatic effects," he said, citing the 2-1-1 call center that refers individuals to non-emergency health and human services, funded by United Way.

The 2-1-1 center helps callers with suicide intervention and prevention, medical clinics, housing, senior services, youth programs, support groups, mental health assistance, support for those who have been abused, educa-

tion, food banks and more needs.

For another example of a safety net service, a 27-year-old friend of Wood's is taking care of his sister, who has a disability.

"He can't be successful unless he has those supportive services. Also, we're needing to take care of our parents," Wood said.

"It's the whole archway of life."

The Cradle to Career effort is "a big undertaking," Wood acknowledged. Focusing on one slice or another won't work.

"As a community, we have to look at it from the be-

ginning all the way to the end [career]. From birth, if we can set everyone up for success, that's a good thing."

United Way of the Pikes Peak Region had been allocating funds every other year, but in 2014 the organization decided to wait a third year before deciding on its next cycle of funding.

Now, there is discussion to move to a three-year funding cycle.

"There's a lot to be said about multi-year funding" giving agencies more time to conduct activities that have measurable outcomes, he added. • CSBJ

"Are you ready for kindergarten by age 6?"

— Jason Wood, PPUW

Concours: Son plans to take over for his dad

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"With the advent of the Internet, we've been getting customers from farther and farther away," he said, noting a Ferrari owner in Vancouver.

The business works with racing organizations to tune high-performance vehicles, which Brett said can be lucrative in this part of the country. The groups include Audi Performance Racing and Volkswagen Racing, for which the shop is the largest distributor in Southern Colorado.

"Thankfully, APR allows us to do the high-altitude calibrations, so we're their highest North American dealer — we can go up to 14,000 feet," Brett said.

Keeping up with the times

Mark said keeping up with the pace of new technology is the most significant challenge that the automotive industry faces, but they diligently do their dogged best.

"We constantly take courses and we constantly read and study and use numerous resources for the work that we do," he said. The shop has been a Bosch Service Center since 1980.

While Brett works primarily with the tuning and modification of late-model German cars, his father oversees many of the older projects. He said the most enjoyable part of his job is restoring, retrofitting and modernizing antique vehicles to increase user-friendliness and restore beloved family treasures.

"That kind of stuff is just so cool," he said. "Fixing up old cars so they can run and be used is great ... and then there are the new cars — modifying them so that they perform properly is very satisfying."

Sitting in the small office adjacent to the shop, Brett nodded his head emphatically when the topic arose of taking over for his father one day.

"That's the plan," he said.

"Well," his father added, I guess there's the answer." • CSBJ



Brett and Mark Weiner take care of some of the area's most snazzy automobiles.

Photo by Cameron Meix

Professional: Cameron finds her place in PR

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Springs is trying. That's what's so intriguing to me — what young professionals can do here in a couple years.

Tell me about the National Advertising Federation.

The federation is a national nonprofit that focuses on the

advertising industry. ... My biggest role was helping to start the student chapter while I was a student in Colorado Springs. When I became a professional I stepped into the professional board and have been on the board of directors for three years. ... Now I'm going in as vice president.

What was your favorite thing to eat at Wendy's?

I didn't eat there that often, but their pretzel buns are amazing!

What do you do in your free time?

I recently got married — [three] weeks ago! We are in the process of closing on a house. Recently, my entire life has been nothing but wedding planning and closing on a house. But we have a puppy and he is my "fur child." He is a black Lab with too much energy. So we go hiking and running. We love the outdoors and during the winter, on most weekends, I'll be snowboarding. • CSBJ