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Friday, November 27, 2009

Nonprofits finding other ways to do more with less during challenging time

Wichita Business Journal - by [Josh Heck](#)

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The economic recession is straining the ability of nonprofit organizations to provide assistance.

But local organizations, determined to not let fewer contributions and tight budgets keep them from meeting an increased demand for services, are finding new ways to help those in need this holiday season.

Demand is up, contributions are down, but the spirit of giving in the community remains high, nonprofit leaders say.

"It's everyone helping everybody," says Marsha Hills, executive director of the **Alzheimer's Association**.

"We're working together for the betterment of the community."

This year, the **United Way of the Plains** has twice polled local nonprofit organizations to gauge the toll the economy is taking. Both times the survey showed spikes in demand weren't matched by revenue increases.

During the past six months, 44 percent of the nonprofit organizations said individual donations were down, 35 percent reported a reduction in government funding and 33 percent have seen a dip in corporate and foundation giving, according to the survey.

"It's a two-edged sword when the economy goes bad and you're a not-for-profit that relies on donations," says Brian Walker, president and CEO of the **Kansas Food Bank Warehouse Inc.**

The Kansas Food Bank has seen its demand increase 30 percent over last year, as has the **Bread of Life Food Distribution Center Inc.**

There is also more need for clothing and toys this season than in years past.

"The demand is higher all the way around," says Perry Schuckman, executive director of the Nonprofit Chamber. "This is the second (holiday season) that many of these families have needed assistance."

Meeting Needs

Nonprofit organizations continue to be resilient.



JOSH HECK / WBJ
Jamie Korf moves a pallet of food at the Kansas Food Bank in preparation for Thanksgiving pick ups.

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"We fully expect to distribute a couple of million pounds of food in November and December," Walker says.

The Food Bank, Walker says, is buying more food to offset decreased donations.

Cargill Meat Solutions and **Dillons** food stores partnered to provide more than 100 turkeys for the **Greater Wichita YMCA's** "We Care" dinner Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the **Nonprofit Chamber of Service** hopes to collect 5,000 pounds of food through its second annual food drive. That's up from the more than 3,000 pounds the nonprofit collaboration collected in 2008. To date, it has collected more than 1,000 pounds of food for this year's drive. Organizations have until Dec. 1 to turn in their donations.

The seven-person staff of the Alzheimer's Association turned in 767 pounds of food. Board member Doug Stark, who is the president of **Comfort Care Homes Inc.**, donated \$1 to the Alzheimer's Association for every pound of food the organization collected for the Nonprofit Chamber's food drive.

Bread of Life provided 1,258 families with turkeys and supplies for Thanksgiving. Director Donna Pinaire sent out an e-mail asking for people to contribute to its food drive.

"The community came through just like gangbusters," she says.

Continued giving

Here are some examples of how businesses and nonprofit organizations are helping those in need this holiday season:

- **Cargill Meat Solutions and Dillons** food stores donated more than 100 turkeys for the Greater Wichita YMCA's "We Care" dinner.
- **Alzheimer's Association** turned in 767 pounds of food for the Nonprofit Chamber of Service food drive.
- **Bread of Life Food** provided 1,258 families a turkey and other supplies for Thanksgiving dinner.

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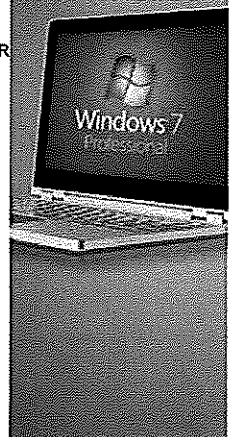
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