

# United Way sets record, raises...



Ron DeKett / HP correspondent

The United Way of Southwest Michigan found a creative way to announce the total amount raised during its recent campaign – by putting the dollar amount on the backs of students representing area high schools. The \$3,859,785 collected set a new record. The display came during the United Way’s annual celebration at Lake Michigan College.

## Organization celebrates, issues awards Thursday night

By HP STAFF

**BENTON TOWNSHIP** — The United Way of Southwest Michigan snuck past its campaign goal and set another collection record for itself, the agency announced.

The organization had its Annual Celebration and awards program Thursday night at Lake Michigan College’s Mendel Center. The campaign raised nearly \$3.86 million, surpassing the \$3.85 million goal.

“It was a special evening that represented a very special year,” United Way President Anna Murphy stated. “We are proud to have surpassed our goal, but what’s more important to us is the impact that this money will have on our communities. It was evident this evening that great impact was made in 2015, and we are grateful to all of donors, volunteers and commu-

nity members who helped make this happen.”

UW reported that more than 69,000 Berrien and Cass residents were served in 2015 through the agency, almost one-third of the counties’ population. Volunteers tallied nearly 38,000 hours of service.

“2015 proved to be a year when many companies were inspired by the work of our funded partners and collective impact partnerships in the areas of Education, Income, Health and Basic Needs,” Honor Credit CEO Scott McFarland said. McFarland and Honor Credit Union’s Kaylee Williams chaired the fund drive.

2015 also saw a significant increase in United Way’s school campaigns. Eighteen districts ran campaigns, contributing to a 14 percent increase from 2014, the first increase in over 5 years, the agency reported.

Awards went to:

**Milestone Awards (Company employee campaigns)**

**Large Business of the Year:** Lake Michigan College, American Electric Power – D.C. Cook Plant.

**Medium Business of the Year:** 1st Source Bank, Gast Manufacturing.

**Small Business of the Year:** Cass District Library, Wolverine Pipe Line Co.

**ECC (employee campaign chairs) of the Year – Large Business:** Joe Tanko, American Electric Power – D.C. Cook Plant.

**ECC of the Year-Medium Business:** Ivan Price, Martin’s Super Market, St. Joseph.

**ECC of the Year-Small Business:** Sarah Hadley, Competitive Edge.

**Inspired Giving Award (for first-ever campaigns):** Sunset Tool Inc.

**David J. Weichhand Award (for creative and fun drives):** Whirlpool Corp.

**Impact Chair Recognition:** Clint Gabbard. Lake

Michigan College.

**LIVE UNITED Award (for embodying mission, vision and goals):** Gast Manufacturing.

**Excellence in Impact Award (for making measurable difference in community):** Zechariah Hoyt, Niles Community Schools, Berrien County Council for Children: Children’s Assessment Center.

**Pacesetter Recognition:** Competitive Edge, Edgewater Bank, Honor Credit Union, Kemner-Iott Agency of Cass County, Meijer – Benton Township Meijer – Stevensville, Mid-West Family Broadcasting.

**Milestone Awards: Breakthrough:** AutoCam Corp., Berrien Springs Public Schools, Lewis Cass Intermediate School District, Lincoln Township, St. Joseph Public Schools. Wolverine Metal Stamping.

**Milestone Awards:**

**Trendsetter:** City of Buchanan, Honor Credit Union, Kinexus, Martin’s Super Market – St. Joseph, Martin’s Super Market – Stevensville, Meijer – Stevensville, Mid-West Family Broadcasting, Teachers Credit Union, Tyler Automotive, United Federal Credit Union.

**Milestone Awards: Landmark:** Andrews University, Center[ed] On Wellness, Coloma Township Police, Competitive Edge, Indiana Michigan Power, Kemner-Iott Agency of Cass County, Lakeland Health, Meijer – Benton Township, Mosaic CCD, UPS, Whirlpool.

**Milestone Awards: Capstone:** Berrien County Cancer Services, Berrien County Council for Children, Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Berrien and Cass, Boys and Girls Club of Benton Harbor, Edgewater Bank, Horizon Bank. Ravitron.