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United Way Helps Local Citizens Recover from Difficult Circumstances

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Office of University
Communications

October 17, 2014

By: Tom Jones, Ph.D. – Professor of Biology

My fellow colleagues, what if these headlines were to appear:

12 individuals with Ebola reported from local church after mission trip to Liberia

Dam at Lake Lure has catastrophic failure – Major flooding throughout the flood plains in Rutherford and Cleveland counties, 400 missing and an estimated 4000 homeless

Tornado hits northern Cleveland County – Destroys 20 homes in a path from Lawndale to Casar

What would we do? Most of us would immediately volunteer to help in whatever manner we could (first aid, labor, reconstruction, clean-up, monetary donations, counseling, etc.). Are these the likely scenarios we would see? Probably not – BUT – these are the headline grabbers.

Much more likely are the day-to-day tragedies that befall some in our county—tragedies that are most often handled out of our sight by one of many agencies in the county that provide unique assistance for all of our citizens (Boys' and Girls' Club, Family Services, Communities in Schools, Boy and Girl Scouts, American Red Cross, Mental Health Association of Cleveland County, Community Organization for Drug Abuse Prevention, Hospice and Palliative Care, Cleveland Vocational Industries, Abuse Prevention Council, Crippled Children and Adults of Cleveland County, The Salvation Army, Boiling Springs Rescue, Children's Homes of Cleveland County, South Mountain Children and Family Services, Life Enrichment of Cleveland County, etc.).

Though many of us may donate directly to one or more of these agencies, there is one way in which we can provide all with some help. How? Make United Way a recipient of our donations.

In my classes, we often talk about how it may be the little things in life that make a real difference in the lives of many. In my University 111 classes, we read *Soul of the Citizen* or *The Impossible May Take a Little While* both of which expand on the issues of developing

citizens of our communities (on both an individual and a corporate level) and on working to improve the lives of those who live among us.

The GWU family has a great opportunity to provide more of this day-to-day help through our donations to United Way. UW often compares giving across the country by various groups. Last year, Cleveland County college faculty and staff placed ninth overall in a nationwide comparison, and I think we can do better this year.

I know that this is a time when we may feel “donated out” because of contributions to many of the very worthwhile charities associated with the recent headline disasters. However, I would encourage each of us to find some way to make a contribution to the day-to-day work done by the agencies of the United Way. I would especially encourage you to consider an ongoing commitment by establishing a payroll deduction. Not only is this easy to do, but it makes it financially easier since the donation is gone before you ever see it.

A representative from your department will be giving you pledge materials in the next several days. Please take to time to look over the material and prayerfully consider your decision as to a donation to United Way. Just place your form in the enclosed envelope with your name in the return address area and return the envelope to Frances Sizemore in the Human Resources office by Oct. 31.

Thank you for your participation.
