



United Way

Community Matters

By Mary Lou Goeke

Celebrating the Generosity of Our Community

Every spring we at the United Way of Santa Cruz County gather with representatives of companies, organizations and partner agencies from all around the county to celebrate the completion of our yearly workplace fundraising campaign. Today we celebrate the completion of our 2008-2009 campaign with a festive luncheon at the Sun Room at the Cocoanut Grove with over 180 people from around the county. Our theme is "LIVE UNITED Locally".

"LIVE UNITED" is the call to action to the people of our County to Give, Advocate and Volunteer to advance the common good in Santa Cruz County. This is the day that we recognize the organizations, donors and volunteers who answer this call.

We recognize the companies with the top employee campaigns. The award winners come from all types of industries including agriculture, banking and finance, retail, healthcare, education, and manufacturing. While the winners are located all across the county, the Pajaro Valley area is well represented.

Here is a list of local winners: Graniterock, Fox Racing Shox, Wells Fargo Bank, City of Watsonville, Hospice of Santa Cruz County, Watsonville Community Hospital, Pajaro Valley Unified School District, West Marine Products, Santa Cruz County Bank, AT&T, Comcast, Monterey Mushrooms, UPS, Hutchinson & Bloodgood LLP, Paychex, Santa Cruz County Office of Education, FedEx Express, Santa Cruz Community Counseling Center, Palo Alto Medical Foundation, and the County of Santa Cruz. What a list! And this list does not include all the other businesses in the Pajaro Valley that give so generously.

It is such an honor for us to acknowledge all of those who work so hard for the United Way of Santa Cruz County. The campaign coordinators from each of these companies

gave many hours of their time in order for their campaigns to be successful. The employees donate generously to support us. Many companies provided special incentives and events to inspire support during their campaigns.

I particularly want to acknowledge one consistently generous organization. Graniterock is being recognized this year with the Stewardship award. Stewardship means taking responsibility for something you don't own. Graniterock people embody the philosophy of stewardship by giving of their time, treasure and talent to improve their community for their families and their neighbors. The company encourages employees to volunteer, to donate through the United Way, and to participate in special events to raise funds for worthy causes. The leadership and employees of Graniterock understand that when we reach out a hand to one, we influence the condition of all.

So you can see why these celebrations mean so much to me even after my 17 years of service. I am constantly touched and heartened by the support of our community. For all of you who pledged to the United Way through your workplace – thank you so very much. Together we can accomplish more than any single person, organization or business can do alone. Through your generous giving and the contributions of thousand of others throughout the County, the United Way can continue to make a difference here in Santa Cruz County.

For the past 16 years Mary Lou Goeke has been the Executive Director of the United Way of Santa Cruz County. She has 32 years of experience providing social services to elders, children and families. The mission of United Way is to improve the lives of the people of Santa Cruz County by convening the community to seek solutions to their needs and by efficiently raising funds for the human care programs the United Way supports. Their website is www.unitedwaysc.org.