

FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE OF
GOVERNOR DAVE HEINEMAN
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Gov. Heineman Thanks State Employees for Making 2012 Charitable Giving Campaign a Success

(Lincoln, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today highlighted the charitable contributions made by state government employees during the annual State Charitable Giving Campaign. This year, more than 4,000 workers contributed to the Nebraska State Employees Charitable Giving campaign, which raised over \$522,000 for charities across the state – a 17% increase from last year’s efforts. For the last three years, the State of Nebraska Employee Charitable Giving Campaign has been the largest donation amount for the United Way. This is the first time the State Campaign has raised over \$500,000.

“I’m very proud of what our state employees do to help Nebraskans every day in their jobs, and also each year with their donations to important charities throughout our great state,” said Gov. Dave Heineman. “The annual charitable giving campaign is just one of the many ways that State of Nebraska employees continue to give back to their communities. I want to personally thank Beverly Neth and her team for this extraordinary success. Bev is our leader of the Charitable Giving Campaign and she has done an outstanding job.”

For the last three years, the State of Nebraska has been recognized as the number one overall campaign by the Lincoln and Lancaster County United Way and has also received additional honors including recognition for leadership giving. Since 2003, the State’s campaign has raised more than 3.5 million dollars to support more than 400 charitable organizations through Nebraska. This year’s 17% increase is in part contributed to some large increases in agency donations. For example, Nebraska Game and Parks say an increase of 264% in this year’s donations, with some other state agencies increasing as much as 72% and 40%.

“The State of Nebraska Campaign represents the largest dollar increase thus far in the community wide campaign,” said Brian Wachman, Executive Director of the United Way of Lincoln and Lancaster County. “The almost \$80,000 increase will have a significant impact across our state and will provide assistance to hundreds of additional people who would not have been able to receive assistance prior to this campaign.”

At the news conference, Christy Bennett, mother of 13-year-old Justice, who has undergone open heart surgery, thanked employees saying, “We have a choice every day to look at our daughter as having a sick child or as having a child that is just an incredibly special gift to us and enjoy every moment that we have with her.”

Justice, through the Charitable Giving Campaign's relationship with the Make-A-Wish Foundation, was able to go to Hawaii with her family for her wish. Their family had a tour of Pearl Harbor led by a survivor of the attack.

Bennett added, "My husband is a state employee and we have given to the charity for years. We never knew we would be a recipient. It is an easy way to give, and it means so much to us. Thank you to the state employees who donate."

Heather Younger is a mother of twins who have benefitted from the Charitable Giving Campaign's relationship with March of Dimes. Younger's twins were born early weighing a combined total of 4-pounds.

Younger, a state employee herself stated, "All state employees work every day to help others. The research and advocacy of the March of Dimes saved the lives of my boys. For everyone who donates to the campaign, thank you. You mean the world to us, because our boys mean the world to us, and it's because of you they are here today."

Employees have the option of supporting one of 17 local United Way chapters or local partners, giving to one of the 37 non-profit groups registered with the Community Services Fund, or directing their contribution to one of the 23 health-related groups affiliated with the Community Health Charities of Nebraska.

Contributions have helped agencies assist individuals and families impacted by severe storms and natural disasters, provided education and support to Nebraskans with chronic illnesses, supported public radio and television, and helped make youth sports and other development programs available in Nebraska communities.

This year's campaign started August 6 and ran through August 31. Participating employees had the option of donating to the state campaign through payroll deductions or by cash or check.

The annual charitable giving campaign is one of the outreach efforts organized for state employees by the Department of Administrative Services Personnel Division in partnership with Nebraska non-profit groups. In April, state offices in Lincoln collected food and cash contributions to benefit the Food Bank of Lincoln. The State Campaign Against Hunger raised over \$42,000 in cash donations and more than 11,000 pounds of food.

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*Editor's Note: Photos will be on the Governor's website shortly: www.governor.nebraska.gov.
One photo attached for use; Courtesy: Governor's Office.*