



FOR THE LACK OF MONEY

Non-profit organizations generally operate on limited budgets, relying heavily on the generosity of businesses and individuals in the community. Private donations, fundraisers, and government funding are primary financial resources, but limited economic conditions don't exactly allow for people to make large donations as they may have in the past. Of course, every dollar counts, and some community members who've made a point of donating in the past still find it in their hearts and wallets to continue donating so their favorite non-profit doesn't have to close its doors.

These three Wayne County non-profits are finding ways to make do with less without sacrificing their services to the community.

by Allison Mowatt



Dessin Animal Shelter

The Dessin Animal Shelter is a private, non-profit organization founded in 1968 by mother and daughter, Olga and Dorothea Dessin, who established a fund to help homeless animals. Since its inception, Dessin has been a means of survival for thousands of unwanted animals that have been abandoned or surrendered. The depth of services available at Dessin benefits the animals and the public, who are offered knowledgeable answers when they visit or call.

Dessin is primarily funded by donations from supporters and fundraisers arranged by the staff and volunteers. Despite the economic status, Dessin continues providing quality service, and it is all made possible because of the loyal donors and supporters, hardworking volunteers, and the numerous fundraisers held annually. The Olga and Dorothea Dessin Society operates the shelter, and every donation brought to Dessin gets utilized within the community.

According to Jennifer O'Reilly, Vice President of the Olga and Dorothea Dessin Society, all of the surrounding veterinary facilities have traditionally been and remain strong donors and supporters, such as the Cherry Ridge and Wallenpaupack Veterinary Clinics and the Carbondale Veterinary Hospital.

Resources, from staff to supplies to finances, are being managed at a level never before experienced to offset negativity in this declining economy. According to information provided by Dessin, the overall status of financial donations, excluding fire recovery funding, has remained consistent from 2008 through 2009. Comparing 2009 to 2008 and direct donations by an individual, organization, or through a fundraiser held by an individual or organization, the breakdown exemplifies that while there is no noticeable growth in donation dollars within these two comparative periods, the quantity of donors has significantly increased.

Additionally, Dessin's volunteer base has grown, adoptions are increasing, and needs are being met through their Wish List, which is where Dessin communicates their needs to volunteers and a bank of supporters.

In keeping in line with the economic downturn, last year several paid staff functions were eliminated, staff hours were reduced, and position cutbacks were implemented. Similar to how people throughout the community have tightened their belts during these challenging economic times, at Dessin, an ongoing review of expenditures is managed month to month.

Dessin's mission to serve both animals, as well as the community, allows them to host, cooperatively operate, or even just consent to a diverse multitude of fundraising opportunities. "Not only does this keep the revenue stream viable, creative, and varied, it allows Dessin to target specific donors and donor groups. "We strive to be very creative while simultaneously helping animals at the shelter," said Jennifer.

For more information, visit www.dessinshelter.com or call (570) 253-4037.



Wayne County Community Foundation

Since 1991, area residents have been turning to the Wayne County Community Foundation (WCCF) to make their philanthropic giving as effective as possible.

The WCCF is a public foundation and a one-stop shop for local fundraising, grant development, and student scholarships. It's funded through direct donations from local individuals and businesses, state programs, and investments earned through people's estates and wills. As a community foundation, the WCCF has been serving thousands who have a common concern—improving the quality of life in Wayne County.

"We're pleased that despite the recession, donations have remained consistent," said WCCF Executive Director Paul Edwards. "There are donors who haven't been able to give as much or stopped donating for the time being, but others have taken their place."

Over the last year, the WCCF has seen a decline in returns on investments through stocks and bonds. This has rebounded over the last quarter. "Nationally, everyone took a hit," said Paul. "But we've made conservative and wise investments. We've suffered losses but not as great as others." Additionally, the WCCF has been lucky since it hasn't had to cut any programs, grants or scholarships.

About five years ago, Honesdale resident and Professional Engineer, Jerry Swendsen, established a \$1,000 yearly scholarship for Honesdale High School students interested in the engineering field. As a WCCF donor, he figured the organization would be ideal in helping with this endeavor. "The WCCF facilitated everything from setting up the funds to selecting the students," said Jerry.

As a Honesdale High School graduate, Jerry wanted to encourage other young students from Honesdale to study engineering. "The money donated to the WCCF gets used for the donor's primary intended purpose or donations can be passed on to other charities throughout the area since the WCCF makes annual donations in other areas," explained Jerry.

All contributions are tax exempt and by keeping current on the tax laws, community foundations provide valuable assistance with planned giving and complex charitable planning.

The WCCF gives donors the flexibility to pinpoint their philanthropic efforts on whatever needs the community may have over time. The organization gathers contributions from multiple donors and puts them together into a single fund, creating a more substantial effect on the community. The WCCF has funded many projects and initiatives for the local fire companies, libraries, parks, and many other entities and endeavors.

The organization also has the experience and contacts to help donors and charities unlock the value of unusual gifts such as appreciated stock, life insurance policies, real estate, or collectibles. By coordinating grants, matching funds, and other resources, they can tap into every available source of funding for a given cause.

For more information, visit www.waynefoundation.org or call (570) 251-9993.

Victims' Intervention Program

VIP provides services to adult and child victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. Established in 1988, it is the only Wayne County agency to provide the community with free, professional, and confidential services.

According to VIP Executive Director Michele Minor Wolf, even though the economy has been tough for everyone, VIP has found ways to make changes that have not impacted their services to the community. The organization continues to offer the same services to victims and their families, such as the 24-hour crisis hotline, crisis intervention, counseling, and emergency food and shelter. VIP is funded through grants, donations, and fundraisers. "We are very grateful to all our donors," said Michele. "Every individual dollar counts, and we would not be able to maintain these services if it was not for the generosity of the people supporting us."

Many local non-profits are pinching pennies through these economic hardships. "We have cut operational costs as low as we possibly could, considering our already tight budget," said Michele. "Our priority is and always has been the safety and well-being of the people we serve and that will continue to be the priority."

Due to the economy's condition, clients' needs are greater than they used to be, and organizations like VIP are more needed than ever. They are the saving graces for many victims who have been or are being abused, and donations big or small are appreciated.

Honesdale resident, Diane Yaddow, knows first-hand how important agencies like VIP are. For the past fifteen years, Diane has donated to VIP and also worked the crisis hotline. Diane feels a deep connection to VIP since she has been in abusive relationships. "I know how hard life can be for anyone who lives in that situation or is a single parent, as I was," she said. "There is such a wealth of information within those doors, whether you need help, answers, or just someone to listen."

For Diane, her decision to continue donating to VIP despite difficult economic times comes straight from the heart. "I remember being a single mother and not being able to afford anything for my children for Christmas, and I wouldn't want other people to experience that," she said. "Every person needs to know that others care about them, even if they don't know their names."

Diane also understands the importance of keeping her donations local and gives to other local non-profits. "Those that you know can do the most with the money they receive," she said. "There are people in my county that are homeless and hurting. I choose to donate to VIP because there are not enough grants or money that goes to organizations like VIP."

For more information about VIP, visit www.vipempowers.org or call (570) 253-4401 or toll free at 1-800-698-4VIP.

