

Woodland couple aims to raise nearly \$190,000 for CAP

By Brenda Blevins McCorkle / The Daily News | Posted: Saturday, October 1, 2011 8:15 pm

If Tim and Lee Welch and a group local donors have their way, the Lower Columbia Community Action Program will have \$1 million in a savings account in three years .

CAP, the area's largest social service organization, and the Woodland couple today launched the second year of a matching fundraiser that collected \$114,000 last year. This year, with the help of a several other local philanthropists collectively known as Friends of Tim and Lee, they're hoping to raise nearly \$190,000.

The group will match community donations to CAP up to \$87,000 through Oct. 16.

Last year, acting on their own, the Welches initially offered a match of \$35,000. When community donations exceeded \$57,000, the Welches matched that full amount. The couple intended to hold similar drives ever year for 10 years and raise \$700,000 for CAP's endowment fund. The success of last year's effort, though, convinced them they can raise \$1 million within the next three years.

Welch said last week that last year's donations to the fund came as a "wonderfully pleasant surprise."

"It motivated others," he said. "It showed that there was something pretty fundamental going on here. We were reaching a part of the community that really cared about CAP."

CAP offers a number of social services, including the Help Warehouse food bank, disabled and senior transportation, Meals on Wheels, disability services and other programs. Welch has been on a CAP board of directors since 2006.

When he and Lee decided to offer the matching grant fundraiser for CAP last year, the hardest thing was going public with their own financial commitment to the agency.

"We used to just write the check and tell ourselves that we'd done our duty," he said.

Afterward, they felt "kind of adrift in a boat," he added. "We wanted some help, so we went to other leaders, retired people, with wealth and assets," Welch said. "We told our story, but we told them we wanted them to do more than just write a check."

Among the donors putting up matching funds this year is Dan Evans, owner of JH Kelly, a large Longview industrial construction contractor. He said he has supported CAP for years but liked the idea of donating to an endowment fund that will generate a steady income for the organization.

"This way, they don't really have to rely on government funding," he said. "It's a better business model. They can become better financially self-sustaining."

Welch said the help is appreciated from the group.

"It's encouraging," he said. "We're not doing it alone, and it makes it easier. And this is a pretty good list of names."

By building up the CAP endowment, Welch expects programs such as Meals on Wheels and Rides for Seniors to benefit from the steady income.

"These are programs that are truly in jeopardy because of government funding," he said.

"What we do today will make quite a difference 10 or 20 years from now," he said. "For the people who live here or have a business, the health of the community is important to them. CAP has a great deal to do with that."

In addition to the additional donors, employees from various local businesses and organizations have pledged to participate as "challenge champions," including Adtopia, Anderson & Anderson, CAP staff and board of directors, Cascade Title, Coldwell Banker Bain, Columbia Bank, The Daily News, Gallery of Diamonds, King's House of Travel, and KLOG/KUKN.

Donation envelopes:

Included in Sunday's Daily News are donation envelopes that people can use to send a donation to be matched by the Welches. The envelopes will also be in the newspaper on Oct. 7 and 9. People can also donate online at www.lowercolumbiacap.org.

'Friends of Tim and Lee'

"Friends of Tim and Lee" who are joining Tim and Lee Welch in putting up matching money for a fundraising driver to benefit Lower Columbia CAP

- Jerry Adams Family Trust (Jerry Adams is retired from the equipment rental business);
- Bill and Karen Boehm (Bill Boehm is retired as one of the founders of Entek Corp.)
- Ben and Judy Coombs (Ben Coombs is a retired personal financial management and investment adviser)
- Bob and LaVina Jones (Bob Jones is the retired owner of what is now United Rentals)
- Bob and Pauline Kirchner (Bob Kirchner is the retired co-founder of Kalama Chemical, Pauline is on the Youth and Family Link Board)
- Ed and Dollie Lynch (Ed Lynch is the former president and founder of Kiewit Construction)
- George and Marilyn Ramirez (George Ramirez is a retired convalescent hospital administrator);
- Rick and Barbara Wollenberg (Rick Wollenberg is the retired CEO of Longview Fibre Co.)