

CAP challenge grant campaign tops \$128,000



Roger Werth / The Daily News Lee Hutten-Welch and Tim Welch.

[By Andre Stepankowsky / The Daily News](#), The Daily News Online | Posted: Wednesday, October 13, 2010

The CAP challenge grant has nearly doubled its target and will end up raising at least \$128,000 for the area's largest nonprofit social service agency, amazing both CAP officials and the benefactor who launched the effort.

"This is a stunning response from our community," Alan Rose, CAP's development and community relations director, said Wednesday. He said the CAP staff "feels like it is a vote of confidence for what they do in the community."

Since the campaign started Oct. 1, the community has donated nearly \$46,500, Rose said. The goal was to raise \$35,000 in donations from the community to meet a challenge by Tim Welch and his wife, Lee Hutton-Welch.

The Woodland couple originally agreed to match each community donation dollar for dollar up to \$35,000, meaning the original target was to raise \$70,000. However, Rose announced Wednesday that the Welches have decided to match all donations, even those exceeding their original commitment.

In addition, the Welches are matching all donations from CAP employees and board members at a two-to one ratio, making a \$50 gift from an employee worth \$150 after a \$100 matching contribution by the Welches.

It all adds up to this: The Welches will match about \$64,000 in donations — which translates to \$128,000 for CAP, according to Rose.

In all, 97 donors have contributed to the campaign, which continues through Friday.

"I am stunned not only by the amount of the donations but delighted at how many of these are for \$20, \$30 or \$50," Tim Welch said in a phone interview Wednesday. "It's not just the effort of a few people in the community."

Noting the struggling economy and double-digit unemployment in the area, Welch said "We are getting money from people where it really hurts. ... It says a lot about our community and the kind of people out there."

Welch, a member of the CAP Foundation board of directors, says the donations will be placed in an endowment fund that generates income to "build a financial foundation that is sufficient to sort of stabilize CAP, at least stabilize programs within CAP, so it is not so dependent on government funding. This is community social service agency and it should be supported by our community, not by the federal government."

The Welches had previously agreed to match \$35,000 in community donations annually for 10 years. Welch said it remains to be seen whether the additional money they'll pay out this year will shorten the life of the challenge grant program.

"We are basically accelerating the rate of giving by giving more now. I'd like to give more than the \$350,000. But at this point I don't know if I can," Welch said. "But if we continue to be successful and the (stock) market comes back, it could be more than \$350,000."

He said he's looking for other members of the community to join him in offering to match donations to CAP, saying his goal is eventually to build up \$1 million in CAP's endowment.

Lower Columbia Community Action Program (CAP) was organized in 1964 by area residents to address poverty in the community. It runs a variety of programs to help people improve their lives — such as job training and home ownership initiatives — and "safety net services" such as the Help Warehouse food distribution center, senior community lunches and energy assistance.

[How to contribute](#)

Donations to CAP can be written out to the "CAP Foundation" and sent to 1526 Commerce Ave., Longview, WA 98632, or donations can be made online at www.lowercolumbiacap.org.