

IN HOUSTON, WE STAND UNITED



AGENCY NEWS FLASH

A weekly publication highlighting the 2009-10 United Way Agency Support Campaign

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THANKS A MILLION!

A big round of applause goes to all of you for exceeding the \$1,000,000 mark in the Agency Support campaign. Currently, we have 54 campaigns that are completed and another 10 that are in progress. So far, the campaign has raised \$1,003,725 which represents 97 percent of our goal and an 8 percent increase over the amount raised at this time last year.

We have said it before but it doesn't hurt to repeat it. Your extraordinary generosity is even more special because you know firsthand how great our community's needs are. So thank you for the work you do every day and for the extra special gifts you give through the campaign.

The campaign officially closes on March 31, 2010.

AGENCY CAMPAIGN RESULTS

2009-10 CAMPAIGN GOAL:
\$1,035,000

Campaign Dollars to date:
\$1,003,725 (97% of goal)

Campaign Dollars as of this week in 2009:
\$931,674

So we have time to not only meet our \$1,035,000 goal, but exceed it. Keep the good news coming and thanks again for all of your excellent work.

"BROADWAY" COMES TO HOUSTON

United Way and **Catholic Charities** invite you to join them for an evening of fun and music as they present "Broadway on the Bayou. The musical review features music from such hits as: *Wicked, Evita, Mama Mia, The Wiz, Dream Girls, Cabaret, The Lion King, Jersey Boys* and many more. Proceeds from the show benefit the United Way.

BROADWAY ON THE BAYOU

Saturday, February 27 and March 6, 2010

The Children's Museum of Houston, 1500 Binz,

7:00 p.m. Reception **8:00 p.m.** Curtain

\$20 for Open Seating

To purchase tickets, call 713-874-6744 or go online at: <http://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/97103>

THE POWER OF A STORY

This week, **Santa Maria Hostel** kicked off their United Way campaign with the power of words and music. The agency hosted a Karaoke contest for their talented staff and Yvonne Timms stirred the crowd with a rendition of "You Need Me". However, the highlight of the kickoff came in the form of a powerful letter from one of the agency's clients, a young girl who found hope through the work of Santa Maria Hostel. If ever there was an incentive to keep pressing on this would be it. With permission the letter is included here:

People look at me and think that because I am young and homeless, I must be some hard-headed teen who just didn't want to mind her Mom. I swear if they only knew half of my life story, they will look at

me a different way. In fact, they will wonder how it is that I'm still alive.

Growing up I was a fragile girl, who thought that I would never see life as an adult. As a new baby I was taken from my mother and returned to her at the age of 3. During my childhood I was physically and mentally abused by my mother. At times the abuse was so bad, I was left bleeding or half conscious. I thought that no one loved me, not even God. The abuse was bad but when I was forced to leave school, I was convinced I would be nothing. At the age of 16 my mother was addicted to cocaine and her drug life was more important than her children, so I contacted a social worker. When my mom found out about what had been done, she kicked me out of her house and told me to never come back.

Walking down streets and highways, I would beg for money and food, that's how I came up with the money to get a Greyhound ticket to Houston. I didn't think it would be difficult. Again, I was wrong. I got pregnant and had a bad run in with the authorities.

During my stay in jail I was informed about Santa Maria and decided to put my faith in God and in them.

Upon my arrival to Santa Maria, I was treated with hospitality and love. I came to the shelter with nothing but the clothes on my back and now have enough clothes for myself and my baby to dress a whole football team twice! God made a way for me and I now see how good life can be. Yes, there are times I just want to sleep for a week because my body is so tired, but I don't give up because this is not the end for me it's just the beginning.

Life can be tough, and unfair, but as long as you keep faith and be willing to work hard until the very end, you will succeed.

