



Editorial: Working poor still will be trapped

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When economic times are hard, nonprofit organizations feel the pinch but manage to serve more clients.

That's what the Greater Green Bay Community Foundation found when it conducted a recent survey of local nonprofits.

Although 46 percent of respondents reported a drop in donations, demand for services increased in 2009. Nonprofit organizations stepped up and filled that demand through cost-cutting measures and other tough choices. More than a quarter said they trimmed staff in 2009, and 43 percent said they dipped into emergency cash reserves or borrowed money.

Northeastern Wisconsin nonprofit organizations may be weathering the economic recession through frugal practices, but they also need an infusion of funds to remain viable to those they serve.

The Greater Green Bay Community Foundation is issuing "a call to action" to support local nonprofits, which are vital to the health of our region.

"We are proud to be a part of a community that has supported nonprofits and the work they do in a time of great need," said foundation President and CEO David Pamperin. He said supporting nonprofits is instrumental in increasing the quality of life in our area.

The "Nonprofits and the Economy Survey" is a follow-up to last year's questionnaire. The foundation asked 46 questions about experiences in 2009 and expectations for 2010. Seventy-four nonprofits responded, including groups that serve Brown, Kewaunee, Oconto and Door counties.

The survey focused on overall financial health and future outlook, fundraising and donor relations, social capital as defined by the nonprofit's ability to recruit and retain talent, demand for services and capacity to meet the community's needs.

It's amazing that these organizations — many with small staffs that rely on volunteers to carry out their mission — are able to fulfill growing needs in an economic downturn unseen since the Great Depression.

Their biggest obstacle, however, is raising funds. Sixty-eight percent of respondents identified fundraising as their greatest challenge or need.

Despite their situation, nonprofits indicated they are optimistic about the future. That says a lot about the heart of those who serve people in need.

We urge you to respond to the foundation's call to action by volunteering your time, money or expertise. Your contributions will help these groups continue their important work. Donors can also make contributions online to benefit an issue they care about. Specific giving opportunities are listed at www.ggbcf.org.

Please give generously. When nonprofits are healthy, so are the communities they serve.
