

Ministry confident it can meet challenge in tough times
by Pat Kimbrough
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HIGH POINT – West End Ministries representatives say they know these are difficult times to try to raise money but are confident the community will support its capital campaign.

An anonymous challenge gift of \$275,000 has been made to begin the campaign. WEM has 18 months to raise \$250,000 to go toward matching this donation. Representatives say they want to exceed the targeted amount and plan to use any additional money raised for debt retirement on the ministry's community building and to go toward an endowment.

“We realize this is a tough time to be going out, but the need is there for us,” said WEM Executive Director Judy Mendenhall. “In the grand scheme of things, it's not millions we're trying to raise. I would love to see us get to \$600,000. I think the fact that we've been given a challenge says a lot about that donor's confidence in the ministry.”

The ministry is getting an assist in its quest in the person of longtime High Point Realtor and civic leader Ed Price, who is helping lead the campaign.

“I've never seen the people of High Point not respond to a big-city need,” Price said. “Somehow in this town, it just always seems to get done, whether it was the hospital or the Y, whatever it was. Somebody always steps to the plate that you weren't even thinking of. That says a lot for our community.”

WEM representatives say the campaign should enhance the ministry's long-term financial health. For example, a new site for a thrift store, which brought in more than \$45,000 of WEM's \$254,000 budget in 2008, should generate more revenue, in large part because it will be open more than the current two days a week.

“I can see the store generating more revenue, which will allow us to put more money into programming, since we won't have to put so much into heating and cooling the building,” Mendenhall said.

In addition to the store, the other two major sources of revenue for the ministry are donations and grants.

The store is only one example of the ministry's successful efforts in the community. Last year, its food ministry served 9,150 meals to about 200 people per week. The food pantry, which received 31,422 units of food in donations, distributed enough to benefit 1,765 people. The Kids Cafe program, which provides neighborhood youth with an evening meal three nights a week, served 8,752 meals to an average of 120 to 180 children each week last year.

“Hopefully, this will draw people into West End. There were all kinds of businesses, but there is no retail in West End now,” Price said. “Hopefully, this will spark something.”

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