'Bear Down and step up' with pumpkin crafting, a blood drive and more during UA Cares

University Communications
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Representatives from 19 local nonprofit organizations and charitable funds made their case to about 100 members of the campus community on Sept. 30, detailing the impact that a $5 payroll deduction can have. It was part of the UA Cares kickoff event, which marked the beginning of the University's annual workplace giving campaign. This year's campaign runs through Nov. 4.

"It's phenomenal to see how excited people are to give their time and money to these causes," said Nick Hilton, assistant director in the Office of Government and Community Relations and coordinator of UA Cares. "It warms your heart whenever you see people grateful for the opportunity to give and pitching in to make those opportunities available to others."

Throughout the campaign, Hilton says he hopes employees will "bear down and step up" by making a one-time donation or setting up a recurring payroll deduction through UAccess using the UA Cares tile on the employee homepage. The tile also contains a list of University funds that employees can choose for their donations.

Community members who do not use UAccess can donate online at any time. Donors can direct their gifts to support any department, college, program or initiative through the University of Arizona Foundation or contribute to local nonprofit organizations through the United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona.

The honorary chair of this year's campaign is Joellen Russell, Distinguished Professor of Geosciences.

"I am proud to work at the University of Arizona, where we help each other enrich the lives of others every day," Russell said in a video posted on the UA Cares website. "All of us, whether you're producing research, processing scholarship applications or doing any other job here at the University, each of us is actively working to improve the world around us. It's simply what Wildcats do."

Hilton says he is hoping to match or top last year's campaign results, which included more than $200,000 raised for more than 200 charitable causes. Since it began in 2004, UA Cares has raised more than $6.4 million to address campus and community needs.

There are also plenty of opportunities for those who wish to donate their time. The United Way Days of Caring, which happens Oct. 21-22, offers dozens of in-person and virtual volunteer opportunities throughout Southern Arizona.

Those projects include a joint effort from University Information Technology Services and the College of Education to help Laguna Elementary School in the Flowing Wells Unified School District work on multiple projects at the more than 50-year-old campus.

"Laguna Elementary School is proud to partner with the University of Arizona and the United Way to revitalize our bike track, plant trees and beautify our campus," said the school's principal, Alan Schmidt. "Through generous donations and supportive volunteers, we will transform Laguna for the next generation of students to take pride in their community school."

The University also will partner with the American Red Cross to hold a blood drive in the Student Union Memorial Center's North Ballroom on Oct. 25. Hilton said organizers are hoping for at least 100 people to donate blood, which could save 300 lives.

The beginning of UA Cares also means the return of popular fundraising events that have become campus traditions.

Among them is the annual Pumpkin Contest held by the Office of the Provost. This year's theme is Día de los Muertos. Participants are asked to make a $15 donation as an entry free and drop off their pumpkins on the fifth floor of the Administration building by 5 p.m. on Oct. 28. Judging will take place in the building's Regents Room on Oct. 31 from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Everyone gets five free votes. Additional votes can be purchased through donations.

Participants can also donate for the opportunity to vote for next year's theme – either Harry Potter or Dr. Seuss. Money raised will benefit the Campus Pantry. To enter, email Jonathan Lazar, administrative associate in the Office of the Provost, at jmlazar@arizona.edu with "Pumpkin Contest" in the subject line.

The Division of Human Resources has again organized a virtual food drive to benefit the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona. For every $1 donated, the food bank can provide four meals. You can set up a one-time or monthly donation at the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona website.
On Oct. 26 from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m., the Engineering Research Administration Service is hosting "Lunch for Paws" to raise money for the Friends of PACC, a nonprofit partner of the Pima Animal Care Center. Participants can buy lunch – a slice of pizza, dessert and a drink – for $5 at the Civil Engineering building. There will also be up to a dozen adoptable puppies available for stress relief and enjoyment as part of the event.

The Office of Budget and Planning is still working out the details for this year's Chorizo Breakfast and will release more information once it is finalized.