

AUBURN — The 2011 United Way Appreciation Festivities were a mixture of heartache and joy as campaign chairman Sheriff David Gould introduced victims of domestic violence before revealing that the United Way of Cayuga County exceeded its \$1.26 million goal by \$65,943.

“The first part will be sad and emotional,” Gould said. “The second part will be a celebration.”

Gould opened the meeting by showing the video about domestic violence that he showed to 103 organizations and places of business that he and his wife Suzanne, co-campaign chair, visited during the 2011 campaign.

After the video, David Gould, in tears, invited to the podium the families of Katie Socci, Bernard Gallow and Bridget Bell, the three people in Cayuga County who were victims in 2011 of what police called domestic violence homicides.

John Socci, father of Katie Socci, and Kelly Bell, mother of Bridget Bell, said people throughout the community have reached out to them to comfort and help them in their time of grief and need. They both recently received gifts from an 11-year-old boy who heard about the homicides and wanted to give presents to the toddlers left behind when mothers Katie Socci and Bridget Bell were killed.

“Domestic violence is a very real problem even in a small community,” said GERALYN Gallow, wife of Bernard Gallow. “I’m so hoping that bringing awareness will be very genuine in the prevention of such a terrible, terrible tragedy.”

David Gould asked for a standing ovation from the crowd for the families and told them they can count on other Auburnians for support.

“I hope there is never, never a domestic violence homicide in this county ever again,” he said. “If ever any of you need any help, you reach out to any of us ... because you know we’re all family.”

After the tearful presentation by the families and David Gould, and after countless thanks by the United Way to volunteers, donors, corporate sponsors and organizations that raised the most, the Goulds, the Auburn Maroons football team and the St. Alphonsus Children’s Choir unfurled the banner displaying the amount of \$1,325,943.

The United Way of Cayuga County funds 23 agencies that support 41 programs for youth, seniors, those with disabilities and families with other needs. David Gould said statistics show that one in four people will use a United Way service within his/her lifetime.

The 2010 United Way of Cayuga County campaign missed its goal by \$26,192, raising \$1,263,808.

Gould believes that although the economy is still struggling, people were deeply moved by the campaign video, which featured Geralyn Gallow speaking about how United Way services helped her family after her husband's death.

"I am sure that people related to the campaign video," David Gould said. "Even though the economy is bad, people gave to us because I think we conveyed in our presentations that people are truly in need."

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