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The Home Team

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Thursday May 13, 2021

The Home Team

By Eric F. Spina

Before the most successful Giving Day in UD's history unfolded, I listened to Beth Flach speak from her living room and her heart to hundreds of volunteers about why she supports and roots for UD.

"Candidly, UD is a place where I've found more than a career," said the academic coordinator for athletics and co-chair of the faculty-staff campaign. "I'm constantly inspired by students. I'm cared for by colleagues. I'm driven by athletic competition. I'm awed daily by the talents I see from students, faculty, and staff.

"I truly consider UD my home. To me, you take care of your home, like we do in athletics."

Flach and co-chair Katy Kelly worked with 26 giving representatives across campus and inspired a strong 34% giving participation among all faculty and staff. Our amazing 1,176 campus donors collectively contributed \$256,150.

At the virtual kick-off for One Day, One Dayton on April 14, Mary Boosalis, chair of the Board of Trustees, uttered prophetic words, “I’d like to see us blow past every goal we’ve set.”

In a remarkable show of generosity and love, alumni, trustees, parents, faculty, staff, students, and friends stepped it up and easily surpassed our participation goal of 3,700 donors early on during our annual 24-hour Giving Day marathon. And when final results were tallied, ****6,024**** donors contributed more than \$2.8 million from every state and seven countries.

The numbers are staggering and humbling, as they show how many truly care about our beloved UD. I’m deeply grateful for the passion and concern for our students shown by the Flyer Faithful. As I look back on that whirlwind day, I keep coming back, though, to the “home team” — our faculty and staff who showed up and stepped up after an extraordinarily challenging year.

In the wake of the pandemic, they changed their game plan. With little preparation time, faculty rethought course delivery and student engagement, and staff set up makeshift virtual offices. They worked hard to make sure students could stay on campus and then during One Day, One Dayton, they invested in the future of our beloved University.

In the three months leading up to One Day, One Dayton, Rhonda Mercks wore UD gear and those fun Flyer pep band hats at School of Education and Health Sciences meetings to coax her colleagues to get involved. My hat is off to Rhonda who, as director of the ECHO (Empowering Children with Hope and Opportunity) office, certainly knows how to embrace possibilities and encourage others to reach high.

In a show of solidarity, most of the marketing and communications team were part of 136 faculty and staff who participated in a virtual 5K Run/Walk for Student Success. Numerous others on campus showed the world their Flyer love through social media posts.

They showed the world what it means to take care of your home.

(Students showed their immense love during One Day, One Dayton, too. Read this University of Dayton Magazine story by Lauren Durham '22.)