



Sheriff's Office kicks off its 2009 United Way fund drive with books, baked goods, and a barbecue



Orange County Mayor Rich Crotty, Orange County Administrator Ajit Lalchandani, and Heart of Florida United Way President and CEO Bob Brown joined Sheriff Demings in the atrium of the Orange County Sheriff's Office Central Complex on July 29th to kick off the agency's 2009 fund raiser for the local United Way. And, true to its tradition, the Sheriff's Office hit the ground running by kicking off the campaign with a baked goods sale, a book sale, and a good old fashioned cook out. The preliminary numbers for



today's initial fund-raising effort look good. According to Capt. Miguel Pagan, coordinator for the kickoff event, over \$1100 was raised through the sale of books, burgers, and baklava.

While our local United Way chapter reaches out to so many organizations and causes in the county that truly make a difference in our community, there was a common theme in the opening remarks made by Sheriff Demings, Mayor Crotty, Mr. Lalchandani, and Mr. Brown. They

all had something to say about the nation's economy and the impact that it is having on the lives of so many people right here in Orange County. All of them stressed the vital role the United Way plays in the lives of so many people who have lost their jobs and homes or been adversely affected by the downturn in the economy. "The time to give is when help is needed the most," said Mayor Crotty. United Way President and CEO Bob Brown put the situation into even better perspective when he stated that 2-1-1 calls (the number citizens in need of assistance most often call first) to his agency are up 41 percent over the



previous year and that citizens requests for assistance have actually exceeded the bar set following the four hurricanes that blew through Central Florida in 2004.

While the need for assistance continues to rise in our community it should be noted that Orange County government employees have raised more money for the United Way than any of the state's other municipal governments. Sheriff Demings hopes potential donors will consider the plight of their fellow citizens and participate in this year's United Way fund-raising efforts. And while cash is most certainly needed perhaps the greatest gift a person can offer is a few hours a week of their time for one of the United Way's many volunteer opportunities. To learn more about the *Heart of Florida United Way* please take a few moments and visit their web site.

