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Our views: Pam Toal

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Thumbs up - Pam Toal

Pam Toal, the executive director of the United Way of Thurston County, plans to retire Dec. 18 after eight years as leader of the agency. She leaves big shoes to fill. Toal, who says she plans to stay in Olympia and focus on consulting and freelance writing, has steered the United Way in a completely new direction during her tenure. Under the old United Way funding formula, about 30 nonprofit agencies received annual contributions. Toal, supported by her advisory board of directors, opened up the agency to receive applications from all nonprofits. In addition, under Toal's leadership, two community assessments have been completed helping to identify emerging needs in the community. The United Way then targets its donated funds to address those needs. That way donors know that their contributions are going to meet real needs in the community, not just supporting the same agencies year after year. Toal has pressed for community collaboration and an end to duplicated services in South Sound. She says this is a good time for her, and for the United Way, to step aside. "It's a very opportune time for new leadership," she said. Bill Lahmann, Olympia School District superintendent and United Way's current board president, said: "Pam has provided outstanding leadership to United Way of Thurston County. During Pam's time as executive director, United Way has focused on addressing specific community needs. Pam has helped bring people together to support those in our community that need it the most. Pam will be greatly missed, but she has helped build United Way of Thurston County into a strong, dynamic organization that can continue to strengthen our community." A five-member executive committee will search for Toal's replacement. Pam Toal has served with distinction and honor and this community owes her a big debt of gratitude.