

United Way using rap video to spread word for fundraising

BETSY HERRMAN

hherrman@kassonjournal.com

The United Way of South Central Nebraska is reaching out to a younger crowd with a rap video, "One Team, One Mission."

Ramon Diaz de Leon, a 20-year-old sophomore at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, wrote the song with his friend and producer, Zack "Heavy Z" Luthring.

United Way executive director Tabitha Fox said she heard about Diaz de Leon and Luthring after they made a video called, "Big Red Anthem."

"That has kind of taken Husker nation by storm," Fox said. "It's a rap video about Nebraska football, so we contacted him to see if he would be interested in doing one for the United Way."

Diaz de Leon said when he was asked to write the song, he didn't hesitate.

"I knew what they were about, so when they contacted me I knew what I wanted to do with the song and the message I wanted to put in it," he said. "It's always been my



Courtesy

The United Way of South Central is using a rap video, shown here in a screen shot, to spread word for its fundraising campaign.

dream to help out any type of good cause with my music, so I just kind of went at it. I was busy doing 'The Big Red Anthem' for the university as well. I was in the finishing stages of that, and they called me and I was like, 'Yeah, let's do it. Anything for a good cause.'"

He said he wrote the words to the United Way song and Luthring wrote the music. He and Luthring are working on their seventh album together.

"He's basically my brother from another mother," he said. "We make music together. I make the words to it and he makes the music and we just push music out like that."

Fox said she directed Diaz de Leon to the United Way website and let him go from there.

"His first shot at the song turned out just perfect," she said.

The video for the song includes Diaz de Leon and Luthring as well as local United Way volunteers. Kristin Friesen of Hastings did the filming and editing.

Fox said the video was unveiled Sept. 13 and posted to the United Way website and Facebook page. She'll use it as she talks to businesses and service organizations throughout the 2011-12 fundraising campaign.

Diaz de Leon also will perform at the United Way's Wine and Dine event Oct. 6.

"It's been really exciting and it's just something really different and fun to promote the campaign this year," Fox said. "We're really using

the theme 'One Team, One Mission.' That's kind of what our video is about. It's really team-oriented, and it really took a team to put it together."

Fox said the video should help attract younger volunteers and donors to the United Way's mission.

"I just think it was a great way to show what the United Way does in a different capacity," she said. "I know that our campaign chair this year also wanted to do something different. I think we succeeded and it's really gotten people excited about our campaign, so we're very happy about that."

Said Diaz de Leon: "We did it with the best intentions in our hearts. We didn't do it for publicity or money. We just wanted to help out, and if that's what draws people in, then hopefully it makes a difference."

The United Way of South Central Nebraska serves Adams, Clay, Nuckolls and Webster counties. The video can be seen at www.unitedwayscne.org.