

## OUR REGION

# Teams were aching to Pull the Plane

Groups of 20-plus deliver the goods in United Way fundraiser

By Michael Randall  
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STEWART AIRPORT— This was a fundraiser unlike any the United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region ever had before.

They invited teams of 20 or more people to come to New York Stewart International Airport on Saturday and "Pull the Plane."

Not just any plane, but a FedEx Boeing 757! Fully gassed up, it weighs 189,000 pounds.

Susan Dean and 19 of her co-workers at McKesson, a pharmaceutical supplier with a distribution center in Hamptonburgh, were among those who took up the challenge.

Dean said they came not only because they support the United Way, but they thought Pull the Plane would be an excellent team-building event.

"Pulling a plane is something that people think in their minds they can't do," Dean said.

Jeannie Montano, president and CEO of United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region, had a simple explanation for the new event.

"We wanted to bring something fun to the Hudson Valley," Montano said.

Montano said they were hoping to raise about \$50,000 Saturday, and they already were close to that number by the time everyone was heading home. Emily Darrow, senior director of marketing and communications, said more was expected to trickle in over the next few days.

Team members had to raise at least \$200 each.

Several teams held a pre-pull huddle that ended in a group shout or cheer.

And each team seemed to have its own approach to the pull itself.

Some put the biggest or strongest team members closest to the plane.

Some lined up alternately on the right and left sides of the giant nylon rope attached to the FedEx plane.

Their objective: To pull the plane 12 feet in the fastest time possible.



A team of Central Hudson workers pull a FedEx plane during Saturday's fundraiser for the United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region at New York Stewart International Airport. The goal was to pull the 189,000-pound plane 12 feet in the fastest time possible. Central Hudson accomplished that task in 10.36 seconds, good for second place. [MICHAEL RANDALL PHOTOS/TIMES HERALD-RECORD]

POUGHMENTUM, a team representing various organizations and companies in Poughkeepsie, was declared the winner, with a time of 8.626 seconds. The runner-up was Central Hudson, with a time of 10.36 seconds, followed closely by All Sport at 10.591 seconds.

Anthony Campagiomi, Central Hudson's vice president of customer services and regulatory affairs, was the top fundraiser.

Montano said all money raised goes toward the many community causes the United Way supports, everything from homeless services to anti-bullying efforts.

An hour after pulling the plane, Dean was still smiling.

"It was easier than expected, and an exciting way to come together as a team," she said.

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A team from McKesson, a pharmaceuticals distributor with a facility in Hamptonburgh, competes in the Pull the Plane event. United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region hoped to raise \$50,000. View more photos at recordonline.com.