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United Way in Waukesha County's Campaign Goal Within Reach

(December 13, 2010) – Waukesha, WI – United Way in Waukesha County's campaign is still underway with several companies to report final results. At this time, the organization is projecting to raise 96% of the \$4.3 million goal and is looking to members of the community to close the gap.

“We are confident in our potential to raise the outstanding \$176,000 by the end of December, but we still need our community's support. We are asking that Waukesha County businesses and residents rally and step forward with new and increased gifts to ensure community success,” said Jayne Thoma, executive director of United Way in Waukesha County.

The month of December is crucial for the organization as staff and volunteers work to collect the still-needed funds.

“We want to ask those who have the ability to donate to please give,” said Dave Vetta, chair of the 2010 campaign. “Never have donations been more important than in the midst of this great recession when so many are losing employment and finding themselves struggling for the basics that the rest of us take for granted.”

United Way in Waukesha County reports that most of its funded programs have experienced increased need. However, basic needs programs providing food, shelter and health care have experienced the most dramatic increases.

“Almost 6,700 households in Waukesha County applied for assistance with Energy Services in 2010, which is almost a six-fold increase from the 1,142 households that applied ten years ago. In the last year alone, we have seen a 31% increase in applications,” said Tammy Grauer of Energy Services. Of the 6,700 households applying in 2010, 30% had an elderly member, 32% had a member with a disability and 22% had children under the age of 6.

Although Waukesha County is consistently named as one of the state's wealthiest counties, it still has almost 16,000 residents living at or below the poverty line (defined as less than \$22,050 a year for a family of four) according to the 2009 American Community Survey by the Census Bureau. An estimated 3,960 children in Waukesha County are living in poverty.

“The acute need in Waukesha County is often underestimated, which is why we need leaders in the community to offer their support,” said Vetta. “While there are a lot of needs in our community, there are also many individuals who have the means to make a financial

contribution. Personally, my wife and I believe in giving at the Leadership level [\$1,000+] and we know that there is an opportunity for others to do the same.”

Any new gift made at the Leadership level toward the 2010 campaign will be matched 50% by the ProHealth Care and Wisconsin Energy Foundation Leadership Challenge Grant.

“It’s going to take all of us coming together as a community, businesses and individuals alike, to help those most in need. Every gift matters. All donations are greatly appreciated, as well as needed,” Thoma adds.

To make a donation, call the United Way in Waukesha County office at 262-547-8459, mail to P.O. Box 1041, Waukesha, WI 53187-1041 or visit the Donate page on the organization’s website: www.UnitedWayWaukesha.org.

Last year, United Way in Waukesha County-funded programs helped almost 70,000 people through its 33 agency partners. In addition to basic needs, the organization focuses on its core initiatives to help children succeed in school and life; provide support services for seniors and their caretakers; offer transportation solutions for the working poor; and increase financial literacy for those in fiscal danger.

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