



For Immediate Release
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United Way Volunteers Launch 2011 Community-Wide Fundraising Campaign

(Greater Kansas City)----The 2011 United Way of Greater Kansas City fundraising campaign is officially underway with campaign leaders asking those who can afford to do so, to dig a little deeper this year to help those who are still struggling because of the sluggish economy. Campaign leaders today announced that the campaign is off to a great start with 16 companies who conducted early United Way employee campaigns this summer raising more than \$6.7 million.

Campaign co-chairs Peggy Dunn and Jay Lind praised the good work of the 16 pacesetter companies, saying they raised the bar on giving and set a great example for other Kansas City area companies to follow. Speaking to a room filled with more than 700 United Way volunteers and supporters, Dunn said, "By working together, we can better meet the demand created by the increased number of people who are seeking help in our community. This campaign we want to challenge companies to increase their commitment to United Way by five percent. That can be measured as a five percent increase in total donations or a five percent increase in participation. The challenge is simple. It is direct. And it can accomplish so much."

As a labor leader, Lind said he is well aware of the impact the economic downturn is having on people who are desperately trying to support their families. Lind said, "We are facing a cumulative affect from three years of high unemployment and rising food, energy and medical costs that have left many people financially struggling and desperate for help. Where do people go when they lose their jobs, get evicted from their homes, or end up unable to pay their medical bills because they have no health insurance? Many of them are seeking help from programs funded by United Way. The money people give this year will be going to a number of different places, helping people who are struggling in a variety of different ways."

Everyone agrees. The need is crystal clear, and that is why this year's United Way campaign is so important and why Dunn and Lind are excited by the early pacesetter campaign results. All of the companies reporting final results had increases and as a group they exceeded the 5% challenge issued by Dunn. Leading the way among United Way pacesetter companies was Hallmark Cards and its employees who pledged more than \$2,764,000, with employee giving up nearly 5% over last year. Hallmark promoted Leadership giving, and has 54 Women's Leadership Council members, 91 Young Leaders Society members and 24 Tocqueville donors (\$10,00 or more) this year. Other pacesetter results were just as impressive:

- **KCP&L and the IBEW** increased Leadership giving and met its goal of 55% participation and the utility has already raised \$723,506, with its campaign still underway.
- **JE Dunn Construction Group, Inc.** had an average gift of more than \$900 with 1/3 of its employee who are donors giving at the Leadership level (\$1,200) as JE Dunn raised \$609,283.
- **UMB** had 440 employees increase their gifts or make a pledge to United Way for the first time. Employee giving increased 5% as UMB's total topped \$560,000.
- **Garmin International** invited community leaders and neighboring businesses come be part of their United Way kickoff. Garmin encouraged its employees to give as much as they could, and many of them did, as Garmin raised \$540,042, an increase of 6% over last year.
- **Waddell & Reed and the Ivy Funds** has increased giving to United Way 34% over the past two years. This year the financial services company and its employees pledged \$354,766.
- **BKD, LLC** reports an amazing 40% increase in giving as 87% of its employees made pledges this year. BKD matched each dollar of increased giving, as the company raised \$226,364.

- **St. Luke's Health System** increased giving 23% using E-Way to electronically make their pledges. They started strong and kept the momentum going until the end, raising \$213,213.
- **Stinson Morrison Hecker LLP** used a team approach, involving partner of the firm, an associate attorney and a staff person in the planning the company's United Way campaign as they raised \$174,707, including a 5% increase in employee giving.
- **MRIGlobal** has seen their United Way donations rise 87% in the past three years, including a 14% increase this year. With an 8% increase in new donors, MRI reports a total of \$134,867.
- **HNTB Corporation-Kansas City** talked about the need in encouraging employees to give as much as they could, raising \$134,534, a 10% increase over last year.
- **United Way of Greater Kansas City** employees showed they do more than talk about giving they walk the walk as UWGKC employees pledged \$113,964, a 14% increase in giving.
- **Community America Credit Union** got help from Captain America, who encouraged employees to give as they pledged \$75,091, an 8% increase over last year and 62% increase in three years.
- **Financial Counselors Inc.** had 94% participation as their 38 employees pledged \$28,660 which is an 11% increase over last year.
- **Kansas City Area Transportation Authority (KCATA)** used the Day of Caring to kick off their United Way campaign and saw employee giving increase nearly 8% in raising \$26,274.
- **Parris Communications'** 13 employees are all giving to United Way once again this year, with employee pledges of \$23,640, a 10% increase from 2010. Their average gift was \$1,818.

While the goals of United Way are important and serious, companies agree that an important ingredient in a successful campaign is to mix in a little fun along the way. With that in mind, United Way will once again be sponsoring Live United Week (September 26 – 30). During the week, United Way is having a jeans day on Wednesday, September 28 when companies will be encouraged to allow their employees to wear jeans to work in exchange for an extra \$5 contribution to United Way.

United Way is also partnering with the Roasterie which created a special "Live United" blend of coffee. The coffee is available for sale online at www.theroasterie.com/causes with 10% of the proceeds coming back to United Way.

And once again, donors who give one percent of their salary or more to United Way will be entered in a drawing for a motorcycle donated by the local Harley-Davidson plant. This year's motorcycle is a 2012 V-Rod with a retail value of \$15,300. The Harley will be given away in a live drawing at United Way of Greater Kansas City's annual meeting next spring.

The 2011 United Way of Greater Kansas City fundraising campaign will last for 10 weeks, with a Victory Celebration at the Westin Crown Center Hotel on November 18th. That is when United Way campaign leaders will announce how much money campaign volunteers were able to raise this year.

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