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For Immediate Release



Pacesetter Companies Provide a Jumpstart for 2007 United Way Campaign Volunteers Set Two-Tiered Goal to Meet Community Needs

(Greater Kansas City)---Why did four Kansas City area United Ways merge into one earlier this year? So they could be more efficient and effective in meeting long-term needs facing our community. When will that consolidation start to pay dividends? "Starting now," say United Way Campaign Co-chairs Karen Pletz and Louie Wright. United Way volunteers today launched the 2007 Kansas City area fundraising campaign, announcing a two-tiered goal.

First, volunteers unveiled a Kansas City area United Way fundraising goal of \$39.4 million to maintain current levels of assistance. Although nearly \$900,000 more than United Way volunteers raised last year, the goal still is not enough to meet the escalating needs in Greater Kansas City. To address these growing needs, campaign leaders unveiled a second, more challenging "Five to Fifty" goal of \$40.4 million. It represents a critical first step in a five-year plan to help our community begin raising \$50 million annually through United Way. Research has shown that by raising \$50 million a year United Way would be able to serve another 30,000 to 60,000 people in Greater Kansas City, crucial to meeting growing needs and remaining a healthy, vibrant community.

Pletz urged everyone attending United Way's campaign kickoff breakfast to help United Way meet its Five to Fifty goal by increasing their gifts by 5% and asking their friends and neighbors to join them in supporting United Way. Pletz said, "As one of the most caring communities in the nation, we can and must do what is necessary to meet the needs of a greater number of people." She added, "It starts with each of us, this year." Pletz announced a five-year plan aimed at increasing the amount United Way volunteers raise to \$50 million annually. The Five to Fifty goal is a call to action. Pletz said, "We must be guided by the needs facing our community and must not be limited by what others have done before." She added, "To start down the path, we will be asking companies and organizations that already support United Way to consider increasing their corporate gifts 10% annually and strive to increase employee giving 5% annually in each of the next five years. We will also be recruiting new companies to conduct United Way campaigns and asking major donors to consider increasing their gifts."

Wright joins Pletz in encouraging companies and individuals to "go the distance" during this year's campaign. Wright says, "We need to consider the kind of community in which we want to live. Is it a community where we are only concerned about ourselves and our own family, or a community where people also care about their neighbors, friends and co-workers? I believe most of us do care about others and that's why we have a United Way. It could be an unexpected illness, a job loss or even a fire. We never know when we, or somebody we know, might need a hand." Wright adds, "The only way we can succeed is with the cooperation of management and labor for the good of the community."

The good news is that volunteers have already raised \$ 6.9 million, 17% of their goal, during early campaigns conducted at 13 Kansas City area companies called “Pacesetters”. Pletz applauded the efforts of the Pacesetter companies saying, “Their success gives us a great start and sets a standard to which others in the community can aspire to achieve.” Speaking to Kansas City area community leaders and United Way supporters, Pletz said, “Clearly, reaching our Five to Fifty goal will require a stretch by all of us, but given the escalating needs in our community we believe that volunteers in Kansas City will hit the high mark.” Pletz said, “More than 300,000 people in the Kansas City area are uninsured or underinsured, one out of every six people. Combine that with the fact that one out of every three homeless people in our community is a child, it is clear that we all need to help. With the aging baby-boomers and growing healthcare costs we know that the numbers of people needing assistance in our community will continue to increase. We want to meet that challenge.”

Fundraising results from Pacesetter companies that have jumpstarted this year’s United Way fundraising effort include the following:

<u>Company</u>	<u>Total Raised</u>
• Hallmark	\$2,819,902
• JE Dunn Const. and its associated building trades unions	\$ 717,069
• KCP&L and the IBEW	\$ 759,877
• YRC Worldwide and the Teamsters Union	\$ 540,222
• Burns & McDonnell	\$ 489,759
• UPS, Kansas District & the Teamsters Union	\$ 488,535
• Blue Cross Blue Shield	\$ 224,495
• Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City	\$ 195,340
• Kansas City University of Medicine and Biosciences	\$ 180,249
• US Bank	\$ 159,176
• Kansas City Southern	\$ 148,531
• MarketSphere Consulting	\$ 80,664
• United Way of Greater Kansas City	\$ 85,307

As a group, Pacesetter companies increased their giving by more than 6%, right on target for this year’s Five to Fifty goal.

The Kansas City area community-wide and Five to Fifty goals announced today include goals for the United Way of Greater Kansas City and the United Way of Wyandotte County. More than 25,000 volunteers are involved in this year’s Kansas City area United Way campaign. It will continue for 10 weeks, concluding with a Victory Celebration at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center Hotel on November 15th.

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