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For Immediate Release

Merger of Kansas City Area United Ways Becomes Effective Today

(Greater Kansas City)---The much-anticipated merger of four Kansas City area United Ways officially takes effect today. The United Way of Greater Kansas City (UWGKC) opened its doors this morning combining the staff, resources and volunteers of Bi-County United Way of Cass and Jackson, Heart of America United Way (including Northland United Way Services) and United Way of Johnson County. Together, the four United Ways raised $36.25 million of the $38.5 million that United Way volunteers raised in the Kansas City area last year. Donors of the four area United Way approved the merger earlier this year.

The goal of the merger is to make United Way more efficient and effective in raising resources, identifying emerging community issues and developing solutions that address the challenges we face. The merger follows more than four years of planning, discussions and negotiations by United Way volunteers with a passion for helping others and a desire to improve people's lives. They agreed that a merger made sense given the fact that issues and challenges facing our community don't recognize city boundaries or state lines.

UWGKC Board Chair Peggy Dunn, says she is excited about United Way's potential to raise additional resources and help more people, given the list of community leaders recruited to serve on the UWGKC Board of Trustees. Dunn says, "These men and women are leaders in business, government, education, philanthropy and the faith community. They are visionaries, successful people with an ability to work together for positive change. Their overriding focus is finding the best way to help those who are vulnerable and at-risk in our community."

UWGKC will continue to maintain local offices representing Eastern Jackson and Cass Counties, Kansas City, MO, the Northland and Johnson County. The offices will work to nurture relationships with local donors, companies and partner agencies while embracing a regional approach to service delivery and problem solving. The staff at the various UWGKC offices will all be reachable through a single phone number (816-472-4289). United Way of Greater Kansas City also has a new web site. You can log on to www.unitedwaygkc.org to make a pledge or to learn more about UWGKC.

Susan Stanton is serving as UWGKC's interim CEO. A search committee headed by Don Hall, Jr. is conducting a nationwide search to find a permanent CEO.

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