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Hold For Release at Noon



## Kansas City Area United Way Campaign Nearly Halfway to Its Goal with Three Weeks to Go

(Overland Park, KS)---With three weeks remaining in the 2007 Kansas City area United Way campaign, fundraising volunteers say they're making good progress in reaching this year's community-wide goal. Speaking at a lunchtime gathering of community leaders and United Way supporters and volunteers, campaign leaders reported that pledges and donations are at \$19,570,752, which is about \$4 million more than the total reported at this time last year. The \$19.5 million total is 49.7% of this year's \$39.4 million goal and 48.4% of United Way's Five to Fifty goal of \$40.4 million.

Leading the way are Sprint and EMBARQ. Together, **Sprint** and its employees are pledging \$2,080,000. Sprint employees received a video appeal from Kansas City Chiefs Head Coach Herm Edwards and two Sprint co-workers who've received help from United Way, asking for their support.

Just as impressive were the fundraising results from **EMBARQ**, which became only the third Kansas City area company ever to raise more than \$1 million for United Way. Using a theme of "United We Light the Way," EMBARQ employees pledged \$842,369, raised another \$49,611 from special events and received a \$111,000 corporate pledge to total \$1,002,980 for United Way. Their total is 7% more than last year.

Campaign Co-chair Karen Pletz and Greater Kansas City AFL-CIO President Bridgette Williams applauded the efforts of United Way volunteers at companies throughout the metro area. They thanked the thousands of volunteers who are working so hard to help United Way raise more money this year. Pletz spoke of the need in the Greater Kansas City region, where more than 4,000 people are homeless every single day. She described the actions of one Kansas City CEO, "He became an unrecognizable homeless person sitting on the sidewalk appealing for help outside the building where employees of his company were on their way to a United Way gathering." Pletz said, "He later spoke to the gathering describing the reactions he experienced on the street and in the elevator, and how it felt to be in the shoes of a homeless person. It brought the United Way message home in a powerful and impactful way."

Williams, filling in for Campaign Co-Chair Louie Wright who was out of town, encouraged everyone to continue working hard over the next three weeks saying, "Reaching our goal it will allow so many more people to receive the help that they need." Williams said, "Your energy creativity, determination and willingness to put the good of the community above your own needs, is what makes Kansas City a great place to live and work." She added, "You are the lifeblood of United Way and with your help; we will get more homeless people off the streets. We will do more to make sure children are prepared to succeed when they enter school. And we will see to it that more families are able to maintain their self-sufficiency when facing employment setbacks or medical issues."

Many Kansas City area companies are embracing the Five to Fifty challenge by increasing their corporate gift at least 10% and asking individuals to give at least 5% more. The results have been very positive.

- **QuikTrip** and its employees pledged \$540,000, a 10% increase over last year. The total includes \$270,000 from employees and special events and a 100% company match.
- **Butler Manufacturing** had a 70% increase in Leadership Giving, as Butler employees pledged \$152,779. Combined with a 33% corporate match, Butler's total for United Way was \$203,195.
- **BKD, LLP**, a Kansas City accounting firm, announced a 69% increase in its campaign, raising \$95,938 with 100% participation from employees.

- County Manager Mike Press portrayed the younger brother of Forrest Gump in a video urging **Johnson County Government** employees to "Go the Distance" in supporting United Way. They did, pledging \$132,000, an increase of 9% over last year.
- **Bayer Animal Health** raised \$154,512 using its own Survivors Game to excite people and get them involved. Half of the total came from a 100% company match of employee pledges.
- **The Kansas City Star** is still totaling pledges, but has raised \$222,000 of its \$232,000 goal.
- **Children's Mercy Hospital** is known as a caring place and their employees showed that they believe in helping others by pledging \$231,769, surpassing their goal.
- **Citi Cards** is in the middle of their campaign, but using their "Let's Get it Done" slogan they've already raised \$242,000 and are at 90% of their \$275,000 goal.
- **GEHA** had a 12% increase in employee participation, which when coupled with a 100% company match meant \$151,050 for United Way, a nearly 10% increase over last year.
- Employee giving was up 20% helping **ATK** of Independence raise \$69,507 for United Way.
- **Johnson County Community College** employees pledged \$56,000, nearly a 20% increase.
- **Shook Hardy Bacon** reports a 34% increase this year, raising \$97,332. Participation was up 28% and Leadership Giving nearly doubled.
- **Isle of Capri** employees dug deep and have raised \$64,121, tripling what they raised last year.
- **AT&T** and the **Communications Workers of America** aren't done yet, but have already raised \$386,601, which is a 9% increase.
- **Black & Veatch** has already raised \$535,111. The company is matching the first \$144 from new donors and 50 cents for every dollar above. Black & Veatch expects to reach its \$700,000 goal.
- **UMB** still has a week to go in its campaign, but has already raised \$290,176 including \$240,176 from employee pledges and special events and a \$50,000 corporate gift.
- More than 60% of **National Starch** employees made pledges totaling \$40,114. Combined with a 100% company match they are pledging \$80,228 to United Way.

A number of smaller companies also exceeded the Five to Fifty mark, including:

- **BNIM Architects** which had a 23% increase, raising \$31,400 for United Way.
- **RH Donnelly Company** recorded a huge 356% increase, going from \$8,200 to \$29,200.
- **Henry Wurst** celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> year in business by raising \$49,601 for United Way, up 24%.
- **A.G. Edwards** in Liberty reports a 62% increase in giving, raising \$5,484.
- **Posty Cards** used 100% participation and a 100% company match to raise \$17,241, up 10%.
- **Full Employment Council** went from three donors to 29 donors, raising \$3,677.
- **Adams Gabbert** went 23% over its goal, raising \$18,092 this year.
- **IMA of Kansas, Inc.** has only 17 employees, but they donated \$6,264, twice last year's total

New Account Development reports 31 new companies conducting United Way campaigns which together employ more than 1,760 people. Some highlights include:

- **Gateway Packaging Co.**, which raised \$24,481 in its first campaign.
- **Davidson Brown** offered ½ day off to employees who pledged at the Caring Club level (\$144). They raised \$6,264 with only 25 employees.
- **ITW Labels** in Gardener raised \$13,170 in its first ever United Way campaign.

The 2007 United Way fundraising effort wraps up with a Victory Celebration at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center on November 15<sup>th</sup>. United Way has more than 25,000 volunteers involved in the fundraising effort this year.

For further information, contact:

Ron Howard  
 United Way of Greater Kansas City  
 (816) 559-4644