

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 2, 2009

United Way invests in impact strategies that change community conditions and improve lives

United Way announce 2009/10 allocations

Bemidji, MN - The United Way of Bemidji Area Board of Directors approved allocations of \$293,000 investing in thirty-four (34) nonprofit programs and initiatives that address the root-cause of the most serious human needs in our community and create real, lasting change in people's lives in the areas of education, income and health.

Of the \$293,000 to be awarded, \$123,050 (29% of United Way's budget) will fund educational programs that help children, youth and adults achieve their full potential; \$36,300 (8%) will support income programs and services that promote financial stability, increase self-sufficiency and independence; and \$133,650 (31%) will fund programs that improve people's health and social well-being, and provide emergency services to those in need.

The nonprofit agencies that will receive allocations from the United Way in 2009/2010 are: Adult Day Services, ARC Headwaters, Bemidji Community Soup Kitchen, Bemidji Area Early Childhood Initiative, Boys & Girls Club of the Bemidji Area, Churches United, Civil Air Patrol - Northland Squadron, Community Resource Connections-Nonprofit Council, Courage Center, Evergreen Recovery House, Evergreen Shelter, Foster Grandparents/Senior Companions, Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines, Hope House, Kinship North, Lutheran Social Service (Personal Support and Guardianship), North Country Food Bank, North Country Home Care & Hospice, Northern Dental Access Center, Northwoods Habitat for Humanity, Northwoods Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers, Occupational Development Center, Ours to Serve House of Hospitality, Paul Bunyan Amateur Radio Club, Paul Bunyan Senior Activity Center (Bemidji Senior Center), Peacemaker Resources, Restore House, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program/America Reads, Rural Aids Action Network, Salvation Army, Sexual Assault Program, Timber Bay, Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center (Child & Adolescent Therapeutic Services), and Voyageur Area Boy Scout Council.

Allocations are based on demonstrated critical needs in our community. To be eligible for 2009/2010 funding local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations submitted an application that was due by March 31, 2009. These proposals were then reviewed by sixteen

volunteers that made up the Allocation Committee. Through a series of meetings during April and May these sixteen local community volunteers visited with applicant agencies and reviewed budgets to determine degree of community need, impact on that need, and the ability of the agency to provide the program and report its results. The United Way Board of Directors then accepted and approved the committee's recommendations at the June board meeting.

Funding sources for the allocations come from the 2008 United Way campaign. The United Way campaign is ran annually throughout the Bemidji community in September and October.

Remaining campaign funds are invested in Venture Grants (3%), Community Impact Initiatives and year-round programs (9%), fundraising expenses (11%), United Way of America dues (1%) and support administration expenses (8%).

In February 2009, the United Way of Bemidji Area granted \$9,900 to seven nonprofit agencies through the Venture Grant program which provides one time dollars for emerging needs or special projects through a separate annual application process. Venture Grants were awarded to: ARC Headwaters—Autism Spectrum Disorders Parent Group, Boys and Girls Club of the Bemidji Area—wireless computers for the Teen Center, Evergreen House—Street Outreach Program, Friends of the Bemidji Public Library—Book Kits for Kids, Girl Scouts—Outreach Program for At-Risk Youth, Hope House—Garden Project, and Northwoods Interfaith Volunteer Caregivers—Powerful Tools for Caregivers.

Earlier this year, the United Way of Bemidji Area also launched a Community Impact Initiative to address additional needs in the community. The new line item of funding supported an outreach effort to build awareness of the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit—helping to create financial stability for those in need. The funding also supported a Nonprofit Survival Summit, a day-long event, that allowed nonprofits the opportunity to openly discuss the challenges they were facing, and allowed them to identify imperatives for moving forward in a way which will not only strengthen nonprofits, but will also foster social and economic opportunities for all people. In response to the Nonprofit Survival Summit the Nonprofit Coalition was created. The Nonprofit Coalition is a partnership among Community Resource Connections, Beltrami Area Service Collaborative, Jeanne Edvold Larson (nonprofit consultant) and United Way of the Bemidji Area, working together to address the needs of local nonprofits and planting the seeds for a secure future. The Coalition's planning scheme includes: outcome measurement workshops, a gaps/overlaps nonprofit services assessment, a Understanding Poverty: Bridges out of Poverty workshop, volunteer management strategies and training, improved nonprofit marketing strategies, more opportunities for nonprofit networking and creating a systematic approach for sharing resources. The Northwest Minnesota Foundation, Drug Free Coalition of North Central Minnesota, Peacemaker Resources and Beltrami County are also integral partners in moving the Nonprofit Coalition's planning scheme forward.

Along with other community partners, both for profit and nonprofit, the United Way of Bemidji Area sponsors a number of year round programs such as Coats for the Community, Holiday Gifts for Kids, “Stamp Out Hunger” National Letter Carriers Food Drive, Senior Community Clean-Up Day, Someone Special Volunteer program, “Inspire By Example” Volunteer Recognition program, and Week of Caring.

In addition, to investing financially in organizations, the United Way of Bemidji Area strategically engages and build relationships with diverse community stakeholders helping to develop and implement education, income and health impact strategies that change community conditions and change lives. These partnerships include Beltrami Wellness Education for a Long Life (B-WELL), Bemidji Area Early Childhood Initiative, Bemidji Leads!, Beltrami County, Bemidji Rotary, Drug Free Coalition of North Central MN, and the local Emergency Food and Shelter board (FEMA).

For more information about the United Way of Bemidji Area and how to make an investment in your community visit www.liveunitedbemidji.org

###