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**United Way of
Allegheny County**

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**Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network
honors Afterschool Champions**

Rich Fitzgerald, William Peduto and James Doyle to be recognized March 3 in Harrisburg

Pittsburgh, Pa. (March 2, 2015) – The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) will honor Allegheny County Executive Rich Fitzgerald; Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto; and James Doyle, Pittsburgh Public Schools coordinator of afterschool programs, as Afterschool Champions on March 3 in Harrisburg.

At PSAYDN's annual meeting and reception, Afterschool Champions from across the state will be recognized for exemplary commitment, dedication, and outstanding work in supporting high quality afterschool and out-of-school time services for children and youth.

Fitzgerald and Peduto will be recognized as a team who support multiple United Way initiatives such as Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST), Be There, and Be a Middle School Mentor.

Since taking office as County Executive in 2012, Fitzgerald has made youth organizations a priority in Allegheny County by restoring \$22 million in funding to human services, nearly a third of which supports out-of-school programs for approximately 52,600 children. Fitzgerald has also spoken at APOST's State of Afterschool Symposium and their annual Lights On Afterschool celebration.

"I'm extremely honored and humbled to be recognized by PSAYDN and the United Way for the County's support of afterschool programs," said County Executive Fitzgerald. "We know that children who participate in afterschool programs are more likely to do well in school, get sufficient physical exercise and are less likely to get involved in risky behaviors. The dividends that those programs pay make investing in our children even more important."

Peduto named out-of school time services a focus area for his administration, and is an advocate of summer youth employment. Additionally, Peduto has worked to establish a taskforce to support early childhood education and is exploring ways for Pittsburgh to collaborate with the national out-of-school time services community. Peduto was recently appointed co-chair of the National League of Cities Council on Education and Families.

"Providing more out-of-school time activities is a priority for my administration and the Pittsburgh Public Schools, and was a key recommendation by my Education Task Force last month. It is all part of greater efforts to provide more opportunities for all Pittsburgh youth, and help build them into the city leaders of tomorrow," Mayor Peduto said.

“County Executive Fitzgerald and Mayor Peduto are a ‘dynamic duo’ when it comes to being advocates for youth, families and out-of school time services here in Allegheny County,” said Robert Nelkin, president, United Way of Allegheny County. “They have been vocal advocates about the benefits of afterschool programming and produced a greater number of quality programs. As a result, our region is ultimately stronger.”

As Coordinator of Afterschool Programs, Doyle provides the structure and management to afterschool programs on a district-wide level for Pittsburgh Public Schools. Doyle also serves as an APOST executive committee member, working to assure quality and accessible afterschool programming to youth throughout Allegheny County.

“James’s innovative thinking style has taken out-of-school programming to the next level for Pittsburgh-area youth, “ said Mila Yochum, director, APOST. “His flexibility and willingness to help build this system as a representative of Pittsburgh Public Schools is essential.”

Two local organizations, The Consortium for Public Education and Propel Homestead, will also be recognized for their work in addition to Cornel Collins, a seventh grade student at Pittsburgh Westinghouse Academy 6 – 12 and a Higher Achievement scholar.

The reception will also highlight PSAYDN’s accomplishments, future goals, and showcase afterschool and out-of-school time youth performers. The celebration will take place on March 3 at the Hilton Hotel in Harrisburg.

About United Way of Allegheny County - United Way of Allegheny County is a change agent and efficient community fundraiser that improves lives by addressing critical community needs. By convening diverse partners and investing in programs and people to advance solutions, United Way creates long-lasting change and helps children and youth succeed, strengthens and supports families by promoting financial stability, ensures the safety and well-being of vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities, and provides county-wide access to information and referral sources meeting basic needs.

About Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network (PSAYDN) – The Pennsylvania Statewide Afterschool Youth Development Network promotes sustainable, high-quality out-of-school time youth development programs through advocacy and capacity-building to enhance the welfare of Pennsylvania’s children, youth and families. PSAYDN’s mission is that all children and youth deserve access to high-quality out-of-school time programs that promote positive youth development and support the successful transition to adulthood.

About Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST) – APOST is a cornerstone initiative of United Way of Allegheny County. A partnership of funders, government entities, intermediaries and providers, APOST is dedicated to building a quality out-of-school time system that contributes to the healthy, successful development of young people as they progress through their school years, graduate from high school, and enter into adulthood.

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