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**United Way of Allegheny County celebrates record year of community impact
and fifth year of fundraising growth**

Pittsburgh, Pa. (June 10, 2015) – Today, United Way of Allegheny County hosted their annual campaign celebration to recognize the organizations, donors and volunteers whose support has helped impact more than 180,000 people in need across Allegheny County this past year. 2014 campaign chair Ray Buehler, chairman, Schneider Downs & Co., Inc., revealed that \$34,698,986 was raised during the 2014 fundraising campaign to support United Way’s work in developing children and youth to their full potential, helping individuals and families regain financial stability, keeping seniors safe in their homes, supporting veterans transitioning back to civilian life, and helping people with disabilities achieve greater independence. This total represents a two percent increase over last year’s total, and marks the fifth consecutive year of growth.

“Our goal was to exceed last year’s total of \$33.9 million in order to expand United Way’s impactful work and help more people across the region. Through the ardent commitment of United Way’s donors, volunteers and advocates, United Way is poised to help address more needs than ever before,” said Buehler.

This year’s fundraising dollars have made it possible for United Way to address a myriad of needs in the community. Notable achievements include:

- Expansion of **Be A Middle School Mentor**, providing weekly mentoring to 325 sixth – eighth grade students in 15 Pittsburgh Public Schools
 - 76% of students improved their math grades
 - 67% improved their reading grades
 - 84% have Pittsburgh Promise-ready attendance rates, compared to 74% of other students
- Participation of 14,000 students and almost 700 volunteers across 22 school districts in the **Be There** school attendance campaign

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- More than 90% of students registered for kindergarten on time in 2014, compared to only 20% in 2008, due to United Way's **Hi5! Kindergarten, Here I Come** initiative
- **PA 2-1-1 Southwest**, United Way's helpline, answered over 72,000 calls this year
 - 62% of the calls were from people needing help with basic needs including food, shelter and clothing
 - Over 3,700 calls came in from veterans and their families seeking help with housing, transportation, and job assistance
 - Since it's launch in 2011, call volume has increased three times from 26,000 calls to over 72,000 calls
- Expansion of the **Free Tax Preparation initiative**. More than 260 volunteers (a 30% increase from last year) provided assistance to more than 7,700 families, returning approximately \$12 million to low income working families in our region
- More than 1,600 volunteers gave more than 30,000 hours to help 4,500 seniors stay safe and independent in their own homes through United Way's **Open Your Heart to a Senior** initiative
- **21 and Able's Career Transition Project** created a successful model which is now expanding to additional companies to dramatically increase job opportunities for special education students and young adults with disabilities
 - In its first 18 months, the Career Transition Project met 154% of its original hiring goal.
- More than 100 young adults with disabilities advocated in Harrisburg and across the state as part of the **#IWantToWork** campaign. As a result, HB 400 was recently unanimously approved by the PA House to fund the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation to provide more job opportunities for special education students and young adults with disabilities.
- United Way's **Project SERVE** initiative helped more than 6,000 veterans obtain jobs, transportation, and housing.
- United Way's **fitUnited** initiative provided more than 7,500 healthy meals and snacks to children in need

The work of over 6,000 volunteers who gave more than 60,000 hours of time this year was also recognized. In the spirit of volunteerism, event attendees packed over 120 fitUnited backpacks filled with healthy food for kids during the celebration. Approximately 60,000 eligible children do not participate in summer food programs. United Way is working in partnership with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank to expand summer program food sites.

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“Our volunteers help bring about measurable impact for people in need,” said Robert Nelkin, president, United Way of Allegheny County.

Multiple organizations were recognized for excellence in workplace campaigns:

Outstanding Campaign Performance Awards were presented to: Allegheny Health Network, Axiall, Gateway Health Plan, Housing Authority of the City of Pittsburgh, KPMG, Peoples Natural Gas, PwC, Reed Smith, Schneider Downs, Wabtec, Williams

The Paul Stackhouse Award, which recognizes unions and their members who represent the example set by Paul Stackhouse, Sr. for dedication to the United Way mission and service to the community, was presented to Unions of Facilities Management at the University of Pittsburgh.

Deloitte took home the **Best of the Best** Award.

John Rosso and Len Pentracosta of Peak Performance Management, Inc. were named the **2014 Outstanding Campaign Volunteers of the Year**.

More than 600 representatives of Allegheny County’s business community attended the event, emceed by Charlie Batch, former Pittsburgh Steeler.

“The generous support by Pittsburgh’s business community and individuals led to a year of incredible impact and innovation. United Way works to identify and solve Allegheny County’s most pressing issues at a time when need is increasing and government funding is decreasing,” said Jack Barbour, CEO, Managing Director and Chairman of the Board of Buchanan, Ingersoll & Rooney PC and United Way Board Chair.

The 2014 Campaign Celebration was sponsored by Bayer USA Foundation, Bulldog Office Products, Highmark, UPMC, and Calgon Corporation.

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.

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