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CONTACT:

Chris A. Hays
chris@blenderadv.com
412-709-6149 (office)
412-389-1385 (cell)



United Ways serving Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette and Southern Armstrong Counties form United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania

Pittsburgh, Pa. (July 1, 2015) – Today, the merger to combine United Ways serving Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette, and southern Armstrong Counties into United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania became effective.

“For more than 125 years, United Way has leveraged collective power for the common good,” said Bobbi Watt Geer, Regional Vice President, United Way of Southwestern PA, and former President and CEO of United Way of Westmoreland County. “Here in Southwestern PA, we’re looking to do more good work on behalf of the people we serve, uniting to achieve greater impact in each local community.”

The merger will provide a stronger foundation for growth within each county, capitalize on available resources, and develop programmatic innovation beyond what the individual entities could achieve on their own. The unified organization has already seen success in other multi-county collaborative efforts, including PA 2-1-1 Southwest, the 24-hour helpline that serves 11 counties.

“Through 2-1-1 and other regional collaborations, we know we’re stronger together. The combined experience, data, and resources of each organization will have a transformative effect across our counties,” said Jack Barbour, CEO, managing director and board chair of Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney, PC and board chair, United Way of Allegheny County.

Dollars raised locally will remain in their respective communities, and local community volunteers will continue to make decisions about how to best direct funds to help people in need. As a unified organization, the staff and leadership will work collaboratively to merge technology, systems, and processes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness throughout the year.

“A combined effort will streamline our efforts to help more people across our four counties,” said Watt Geer. “Plus, local dollars will continue to be invested in the best local agencies with proven programs that deliver measurable results.”

In its first year, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania will focus on having a greater impact in the communities it serves by expanding on effective programs, including building on the free tax preparation campaign, which returned more than \$14 million to Southwestern Pennsylvania for low-income workers in 2014; Project Serve, which provides supports and programs to veterans, active military and their families; and Raising Readers, part of a robust school readiness program that incorporates parents into the literary lives of their children.

“We’ll build off one another’s strengths, while maintaining local decision-making,” said Robert Nelkin, President and CEO, United Way of Southwestern PA, and former President and Chief Professional Officer of United Way of Allegheny County. “We are very excited about the great working relationships that have been built among the board members and staff of the two organizations. It will go a long way in helping to drive successful outcomes in our local communities.”

To support the expansion of these programs and services, the unified organization is collaboratively developing key strategies for fundraising campaign growth, including expansion of successful Tocqueville Society and Women’s Leadership Council giving groups, and corporate giving and integrated workplace campaigns across former borders that will better serve companies that support United Way.

“We are committed to and continue to focus on struggling families, seniors, youth, veterans, and people with disabilities across counties. There has never been a better time for a new model,” said James Morrison, retired VP, Kennametal and board chair, United Way of Westmoreland County. “The new United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania is well-positioned for achieving significant impact and positive change in each local community we serve and across the region.”

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