



United Way Alliance of
the Mid-Ohio Valley

Contact: Andrea Shirey
Executive Director, United Way Alliance of the Mid-Ohio Valley
Direct: 304-580-0570, Cell: 304-893-3092
ashirey@uwamov.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way invests \$760,000 into programs and services for the Mid-Ohio Valley

Parkersburg, WV – June 1 – United Way Alliance announced today it will award funding to 49 local programs, raising its total investment in the Mid-Ohio Valley to a record \$760,000 which includes funded partner allocations and United Way supporting services.

United Way's volunteer board of directors unanimously approved the 2017 funding recommendation from its Community Investment Committee, ending a competitive application process that began in March with more than 100 community volunteers evaluating proposals totaling \$805,000.

"Our staff and volunteers have spent countless hours reviewing a record number of funding applications to ensure that contributions made by United Way donors are put to the best use, invested efficiently, effectively, and strategically, to improve lives and build a stronger community," said Tony Dunn, United Way board member and co-chair of the United Way Community Investment Committee.

The 49 programs represent some of the very best non-profits in the community making an impact in one or more of United Way's three focus areas: Education, Income and Health. For 2017, United Way will new funding for 44 existing programs and will partner with five new programs. The new programs include: Casa of the Fifth Judicial Circuit (advocating for kids in the foster care system), Children's Home Society (Transitional Living Program for homeless youth), Children's Listening Place (providing a safe place for victims of sexual abuse to be examined and evaluated), Ely Chapman Education Foundation (offering financial assistance to families seeking after-school and/or summer care), and Franklin Elementary School (launching *The Leader in Me* program).

Executive Director Andrea Shirey said programs were ranked using a new score card system and evaluated largely based on alignment with United Way's strategic goals and how well the organizations were able to document measurable program outcomes.

"It is no longer enough to evaluate applicants based on who is doing "good work," said Shirey. "The communities we serve are incredibly fortunate to have many non-profits doing good work. The challenge is having to choose which ones are making the biggest impact and creating sustainable change – a task that is both grueling yet very rewarding for our board and volunteers. I tell the board each year to remember how hard this process was so that when it's time to fundraise again, we are all motivated to state the case among those who support this work. It's simple – we are limited to giving away what we raise so we must continue to raise more money."

"The application process was extremely competitive this year," said Dunn. "But, because of the robust system in place to use community feedback, volunteers and a unique evaluation process, we're confident the programs selected will make the best, most efficient use of the funds contributed by the thousands of donors who contribute to United Way."

“This process improves a little each year and I’m confident that the money entrusted to us by our generous donors is invested in the very best programs in our community,” said Shirey. “Every tough decision has been made to ensure that because of United Way and its funded partners, the Mid-Ohio Valley will continue to be a place where help is available for those who need it and where those who have the capacity to give help trust that United Way is the best possible investment for their charitable giving. “

United Way Alliance will spend the summer preparing for the next campaign, visiting and working with its funded partners to help them build capacity and provide whatever support they can. “With United Way, it’s more than just sending these folks money each month,” said Shirey. We’re constantly working with them, helping them improve their operations and figuring out how to get them what they need. It’s a relationship that fosters collaboration and says, “hey, what else can we do? The summer can be slower than campaign season but for us, it’s never really slow. If we’re going to fulfill our mission, there’s really no time to slow down.

United Way will also spend the summer months concentrating on their community-wide initiatives like WV 211, the FamilyWize Prescription Drug Program and Volunteer MOV. And on June 21, United Way hold their annual Day of Action engaging nearly 200 local employees in community service on the longest day of the year - June 21. “It’s the longest day of the year and gives people the most daylight hours to volunteer.”

For more information on United Way – how to give, volunteer or just learn more, visit www.uwamov.com