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**United Way of Southwestern PA to reach hundreds of thousands of local youth**  
*United for Children helps children succeed through agency collaboration*

Pittsburgh, Pa. (Aug. 16, 2016) – In December, United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania laid out its United for Children strategy to support children in need across the region both academically and socially. The organization recently announced it will impact more than 248,000 children over the next three years by expanding its children and youth initiatives and collaborating with 12 of the region’s top agencies.

“By focusing on our community’s children and helping them develop not just their academic skills, but character, grit, and perseverance, we are building a stronger future for our community,” said David Holmberg, president and chief executive officer, Highmark Health and co-chair, Children & Youth Investment Strategy and Action Plan Committee, United Way. “United Way carefully analyzed the community’s top agencies in order to partner with those who will deliver the highest results and make the most change for local children.”

After completing a needs assessment, United Way and its partners found that local children needed support with both academic and character development. In response, United Way announced United for Children, a five-year strategic action plan which expands on and widens the reach of its current initiatives to help children grow, learn and develop skills that equip them to become successful, contributing adults.

United Way identifies the most critical issues facing the populations it serves and collaborates with local agencies to develop programs to address those needs. By partnering with 12 of the region’s top agencies, United Way will impact more than 19,300 local children in the next three years. The selected agencies are highly effective and offer programming that supports United for Children’s five core focus areas: building strong foundations; promoting school success; establishing caring relationships; delivering quality out-of-school programming; and envisioning the future.

Agencies include: A+ Schools; ACTION-Housing, Inc.; Boys & Girls Clubs of Western Pennsylvania; Laurel Highlands Council, Boy Scouts of America; Higher Achievement; Holy Family Institute; Homewood Children’s Village/YMCA; Human Services Center Corporation; KidsVoice; Macedonia Family And Community Engagement Center (FACE); Neighborhood Learning Alliance; and YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh.

“United Way’s partnership is empowering Macedonia FACE to strengthen our collaborative efforts in order to support our children in a new and more effective way,” said Trish Gadson,

executive director, Macedonia FACE. “We are committed to helping our local children and their families succeed, both academically and personally, and this partnership will allow us to make an even bigger impact in the next three years and beyond.”

United Way will continue to collaborate with the community, agencies and local corporations to reach even more local children through its children and youth initiatives, including: Allegheny Partners for Out-of-School Time (APOST); Be a Middle School Mentor; Be There, an effort to inspire students to attend school every day; fitUnited, a movement to encourage healthy habits among the community’s youth; Hi5! Kindergarten, Here I come, an initiative to ensure all kindergartners are registered and ready for their first day of school; and more. Approximately 228,800 children will be impacted through these United Way Impact Fund-funded programs over the next three years, with an estimated 70,500 kids in its first year and plans for expansion and growth in years to come.

United Way’s Next Generation Committee will also play an active role in making a difference in the lives of local children, through programs that promote school success and build strong foundations. Next Gen volunteers are encouraged to get involved by supporting Reading Warriors and participating in reading projects across the city, participating as a mentor with Be a Middle School Mentor, and serving as a running coach with fitUnited through Kids of Steel. Through these activities and more United Way’s Next Gen volunteers will provide guidance, take part in beneficial volunteer activities and connect with hundreds of children throughout the community.

“As part of United Way’s Next Gen Committee, it is important to all of us to make an impact on and work hand-in-hand with the generation that follows us,” said Julie Patter, Next Gen Committee member and associate attorney, Cohen & Grigsby. “This year, the committee is taking a deliberate shift in programming to work more directly with children and youth. By planning engaging activities and events and partnering with local agencies and businesses, United Way is able to encourage more and more young professionals to get out and make a difference.”

Each year, United Way partners with its community on programming and support across four impact areas: children and youth, financially struggling families, (including initiatives specific to women and veterans); seniors; and people with disabilities. Last year, United Way made a difference in the lives of 208,000 individuals across the region.

**About United Way of Southwestern PA** – United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania, serving Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette and Southern Armstrong counties, leads and mobilizes the caring power of individuals, the business community and organizations to help local people in need measurably improve their lives. United Way creates long-lasting change for the betterment of our community.

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