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## Merger Talks Between United Way of Greater Kansas City and United Way of Wyandotte County End

(Kansas City, MO)----For more than eight years, there have been discussions between Kansas City area United Ways about the possibility of merging resources and operations. In July, 2007 four of the five area United Ways merged to form United Way of Greater Kansas City (UWGKC). United Way of Wyandotte County (UWWC) decided not to participate. At the time, UWGKC's Board of Trustees was hopeful that UWWC might consider a merger later. There have been continued, informal discussions about the possibility for the past 1½ years. In January, the UWWC Board re-affirmed its desire to continue operating as a stand-alone organization and end merger discussions. Both organizations will continue working independently to serve the needs of the community.

UWGKC Board Chair Peggy Dunn says, "While disappointed, we respect the decision of Wyandotte County United Way to continue operating as an independent organization and we will look for other ways in which we can collaborate and work together to help people in our community. We will continue to welcome any discussions surrounding the possibility of a merger of our two United Ways in the future."

Dunn added, "We continue our commitment to addressing the health and human service needs for the entire Kansas City metro area, including Wyandotte County. Based on an analysis of regional programs receiving UWGKC funding, more than \$1 million of the funds UWGKC allocates to those programs goes to provide services to residents of Wyandotte County. In addition, United Way 2-1-1 has worked with more than 18-thousand Wyandotte County callers in the past three years to find the help they need." Dunn said, "We recognize these are tough times and we want to make sure that the money we previously sent to Wyandotte County United Way continues to help people in need in Wyandotte County. That is why we are setting up a special fund to which Wyandotte County emergency assistance programs can apply."

The UWGKC Board of Trustees voted to redirect their monthly payments of \$13,921 that had been paid to UWWC over the past 1½ years. Instead, UWGKC will make those payments, totaling \$167,052 in 2009, to fund emergency assistance programs operating in Wyandotte County. The money will be administered by Mid America Assistance Coalition (MAAC), which coordinates the delivery of emergency assistance services throughout the metro area.

UWGKC is the community's largest charity, helping to fund more than 300 health and human service programs throughout the Kansas City area. Last year, one in three families living in Jackson, Clay, Cass and Platte Counties in Missouri and Johnson County, Kansas received help from, or were involved in, programs funded by UWGKC. United Way has a 90-year tradition of bringing Kansas City area volunteers and resources together to solve community problems and help people in need.

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