

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way
of Bemidji Area

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United Way invests in local programs

United Way announce 2011/12 community investments

Bemidji, MN - The United Way of Bemidji Area Board of Directors approved a \$293,000 investment in thirty-six (36) local nonprofit programs and initiatives that help advance the common good, creating opportunities for better life for all by focusing on education, income and health - the building blocks for a good quality of life.

Of the \$293,000 to be invested, \$93,700 (21% of United Way's budget) will fund educational programs that help children, youth and young adults achieve their full potential; \$64,600 (14%) will support income programs and services that promote financial stability and increase self-sufficiency; and \$134,700 (30%) will fund programs that improve people's health and social well-being, and provide basic needs/crisis emergency services to those in need.

The nonprofit agencies that will receive investments from the United Way in 2011/2012 include: Adult Day Services, ARC United, Inc., Bemidji Area Early Childhood Initiative, Bemidji Community Soup Kitchen, Boys & Girls Club of the Bemidji Area, Churches Unite, Civil Air Patrol - Northland Squadron Community Resource Connection, Evergreen House—Transitional Housing, Evergreen House—Shelter Program, Family Advocacy Center, Foster Grandparents/Senior Companions, Girl Scouts of Minnesota and Wisconsin Lakes and Pines, Headwaters Science Center, Hope House, Kinship North, Lutheran Social Services, North Country Food Bank, North Star Chapter American Red Cross, Northern Dental Access Center, Northwoods Caregivers, Northwoods Habitat for Humanity, Occupational Development Center, Paul Bunyan Amateur Radio Club, Paul Bunyan Senior Activity Center, Peacemaker Resources, Restore House, Retired & Senior Volunteer Program/America Reads, Rural Aids Action Network, Salvation Army, Sanford Hospice, Sexual Assault Program, Timber Bay, Upper Mississippi Mental Health Center, Village of Hope and Voyageur Area Boy Scout Council.

To be eligible for 2011/2012 United Way community investments, local 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations submitted an application that was due by March 31, 2011. These proposals were then reviewed by sixteen volunteers that make up the Community Investment Cabinet. Through a series of meetings during April and May these sixteen local community volunteers visited with applicant agencies and reviewed budgets to determine degree of community need, impact on that need, and the ability of the agency to provide the program and report its results. The United Way Board of Directors then accepted and approved the cabinet's recommendations at the June board meeting.

The United Way's campaign which is ran annually throughout the Bemidji community in September in October provides the resources for these investments.

Remaining campaign funds are invested in venture grants, community impact initiatives and year-round programs (16%); United Way of America dues (1%); and administration expenses and fundraising expenses (18%).

In February 2011, the United Way of Bemidji Area granted \$10,140 to five nonprofit agencies through the Venture Grant program which provides one time dollars for emerging needs or special projects through a separate annual application process. Venture Grants were awarded to support the following projects: Beltrami Area Service Collaborative's Family Toybox at Sanford Health, Bemidji Community Food Shelf's senior proxy assistance, Northern Dental Access Center's non-enrolled patient access, Northstar Chapter of American Red Cross's Citizen CPR Day at the Beltrami County Fair and Northwoods Habitat for Humanity's Brush with Kindness.

United Way driven community impact initiatives that address pressing unmet needs in our community, include: Backpack Buddies, a program that responds to child food insecurity and hunger by providing food packs on weekends and school breaks and earned income tax, child tax credit and free tax preparation site outreach and awareness to help create financial stability for those in need.

Along with other community partners, both for profit and nonprofit, the United Way of Bemidji Area sponsors a number of year round programs such as Coats for the Community, Holiday Gifts for Kids, "Stamp Out Hunger" National Letter Carriers Food Drive, Senior Community Clean-Up Day, Someone Special Volunteer program, "Inspire By Example" Volunteer Recognition program and Week of Caring.

In addition, to investing financially in programs, the United Way of Bemidji Area is actively engaged, working side by side, with community partners on aligned education, income and health strategies that build a stronger community and help change the system for all of us. These partnerships include Beltrami County 's Caring Communities theme team, Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce, Bemidji Area Early Childhood Initiative, Bemidji Area Prevention Alliance, Bemidji Leads!-Students First Initiative, the local Emergency Food and Shelter board (FEMA), the Nonprofit Coalition and Northwest Minnesota Foundation.

For more information about the United Way of Bemidji Area and how to make an investment in your community visit www.liveunitedbemidji.org

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