

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

For more information:
Faye Zuckerman
United Way of Rhode Island
(401) 444-0644-office
(401) 829-9764-cell
faye.zuckerman@uwri.org



Anthony Maione, CEO and president of United Way of Rhode Island, is interviewed by Channel 10 news reporter Mario Hilario at the Jan. 12 press conference, in which UWRI announced a three-month initiative to raise money to prevent homelessness in Rhode Island.

Photo by Keri Ducharme/United Way of R.I.

Homelessness Prevention Fund raises \$240,000 for those in R.I. at risk of losing their homes *UWRI winter fundraiser helped hundreds of adults, children*

Providence, R.I.(April 2009) – United Way of Rhode Island announced today that the 3-month-long community-wide education and fundraising initiative to keep at-risk Rhode Islanders in their homes this winter concluded with contributions topping \$120,000 and calls to United Way’s human and health services hotline 2-1-1 increasing.

UWRI immediately matched the contributions to the *United Way Fund to Prevent Homelessness in Rhode Island* dollar-for-dollar, and distributed more than \$240,000 to about 23 agencies around the state. One hundred percent of the contributions made to the *Fund* have been distributed directly to people who need assistance to meet rent, mortgage and utilities.

Between the end of January and April, some 300 families, which included 448 adults and 383 children, benefited from the monies raised by UWRI for its *Homelessness Prevention Fund*. (Funds are still being distributed.) Participating agencies paid bills on behalf of a person or a family requesting assistance.

“*United Way’s Fund to Prevent Homelessness* was a call to action for Rhode Islanders to step up and help keep those at-risk in their homes,” said Anthony Maione, CEO and President of United Way of R.I. “We are pleased at the response and grateful that Rhode Islanders opened up their wallets during such difficult economic times. All of the contributions were matched and then distributed directly to people who needed assistance.”

Incoming calls to United Way’s social and human services help line 2-1-1 during Jan., Feb. and March topped 30,600 compared to the same time period in 2008 when calls numbered nearly 20,000. Hits on the web site 211ri.org also increased.

According to Cristina Amedeo, director of *United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island*, the nature of the calls had changed from a year ago. In 2009, callers inquired about mortgage and rental assistance, employment, medical care and food. In 2008, during the first three months of last year, 2-1-1 callers asked about homeless shelters, emergency housing and utility assistance.

“The uptick in calls was due to the visibility for the *UW’s Fund to Prevent Homelessness*,” Amedeo said. “Individuals seeking help had never heard of 2-1-1 before. They called and told us this was the first time they have needed any kind of financial help.”

In addition to the scores of donations from individuals, schools, churches, civic groups and UWRI’s Philanthropy Fund account holders, corporations gave generously. CVS Caremark Charitable Trust donated \$50,000; Sovereign Bank and The Jewish Fund for Justice each gave \$10,000; and Johnson & Wales weighed in with \$7,500.

The following agencies distributed money from the *Fund* to those in need: Amos House, Bradford Jonnycake Center, Comprehensive Community Action Program, Crossroads R.I., East Bay Community Action Program, Family Resources Community Action, Progreso Latino, Providence Community Action, Providence Neighborhood Community Centers Association, Salvation Army, Providence Corps, South

50 Valley Street
Providence, RI 02909
tel 401.444.0600
fax 401.444.0635
www.LIVEUNITEDri.org



County Community Action, Tri-Town Community Action Agency, WARM Shelter, Westbay Community Action Program and Wood River Health Services.

“A number of families are stable and warm because of your (UWRI’s) generous donors,” said Darlene Briggs Magaw, director of the family support division for Woonsocket-based Family Resources Community Action. “These funds were new, certainly welcomed and very helpful.”

United Way Fund to Prevent Homelessness in Rhode Island was geared to those who were in danger of being displaced from their homes as a result of the current economic downturn. The need continues to be unprecedented with foreclosures in our state among the highest in the nation, and the unemployment at more than 10 percent, the highest in the nation.

About United Way of Rhode Island

United Way of Rhode Island has been working to improve the quality of life in Rhode Island communities for over 80 years. UWRI’s mission is to mobilize the caring power of the community to improve the lives of people in need and address the issues Rhode Islanders care most about. United Way’s goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. We believe that all Rhode Islanders deserve the opportunity to have a better life, as when any one of us succeeds, we all succeed. At United Way, we refer to this as advancing the common good. For more information, visit www.LIVEUNITEDri.org.