

Immediate Release



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Caption: From left, CEO of the South County Community Action Agency, Joseph R. DeSantis, receives a check from the President and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island, Anthony Maione, in front of the North Kingstown High School students who helped raise the money with a school dance. Among the students is Tony Maione's son, Graham Maione, right second row, a senior at North Kingstown High School.

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

North Kingstown High School's Interact Club gives \$1,500 to *UW's Fund to Prevent Homelessness in RI*

UWRI's \$1-for-\$1 match brings total to \$3,000

North Kingstown (March 2009) – The \$3,000 check the President and CEO of United Way of Rhode Island, Anthony Maione, handed to CEO of the South County Community Action Agency, Joseph R. DeSantis, on Monday (March 23) at North Kingstown High School stemmed from fundraising efforts initiated by the high school's Interact Club.

The Club, in which members perform community service and plan activities and fundraisers for charity, had decided to collect money for those in need via a techno-themed dance. One of beneficiaries of that decision was *United Way's Fund to Prevent Homelessness in Rhode Island*, which received \$1,500.

UWRI promptly matched it \$1-for-\$1. (UWRI is matching \$1-for-\$1 donations to the *Fund* up to \$100,000 until March 31.)

Among the members of the Interact Club is UWRI CEO's son, Graham Maione, a senior at North Kingstown High School. He said that they made the decision to include the *Homelessness Prevention Fund* in its fundraising efforts because "everyone had agreed it is such a worthy cause."

"Due to the recent rise in homelessness in Rhode Island, our club organized the dance, Pulse, with the plan to contribute money to charity," said Graham Maione. "We are very excited to contribute to United Way's efforts to prevent homelessness."

Anthony Maione added, "This is great news, and it's nice to see young people getting involved in helping out their community. We set up the *United Way Fund to Prevent Homelessness in Rhode Island* as an educational and fundraising initiative to help our neighbors keep a roof over their head."

Since introducing the *Fund* in January, United Way of R.I. has distributed more than \$200,000 to 23 agencies around the state. By March 31, UWRI is hoping to put \$400,000 toward preventing homelessness in R.I.

"This contribution has come at a time of great need, especially for children and families residing in the Town of North Kingstown" said DeSantis, CEO of South County Community Action Agency, based in Wakefield. "It has helped individuals and families who are facing difficulties because of the economic crisis. Your generosity and sensitivity to this problem should be commended and acknowledged by the entire community, and hopefully this will encourage others in the Town, both in the private and public sector, to do what they can to address this crisis."

Maione told the audience of students and a few teachers that 100 percent of the donations will go directly to helping those in need. Other agencies benefiting from the Fund include: Amos House, Bradford Jonnycake Center, East Bay Community Action Program, Family Resources Community Action, Salvation Army, Pawtucket Corps, Salvation Army, Providence Corps, WARM Shelter, Westbay Community Action Program, Wood River Health Services, Comprehensive Community Action Program,

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Crossroads R.I., Providence Neighborhood Agency Association members, Tri-Town Community Action Agency and South County Community Action.

How to Give

Anybody can help support the *United Way Fund to Prevent Homelessness in Rhode Island*. Credit card contributions may be made by dialing 2-1-1 or online at www.LIVEUNITEDri.org or by mailing a check payable to the *United Way Fund to Prevent Homelessness*, 50 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02909.

How to Get Help

Anyone in need of assistance can dial 2-1-1 or visit www.211ri.org, United Way's confidential, around-the-clock health and human services hotline staffed by information-referral professionals. In 2008, *United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island* received nearly 100,000 calls. 2-1-1, backed by a yearly commitment of \$500 thousand from UWRI, is also supported by a grant from the Hasbro Children's Fund as well as additional funds from the state.

To qualify for assistance from this special fund a family or person should meet with the caseworker at one of the participating agencies. The caseworker will determine what other state, federal, or nonprofit assistance is also available to the family/individual. As demand for assistance is great, the general limit on assistance is \$1,200 per individual or family, although the caseworker has some discretion in very special cases. The money must be used to keep a person or a family in a home or an apartment. Participating agencies will pay bills on behalf of the persons requesting help. No money will go directly to families; the agency will pay bills to the appropriate vendor.

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

About South County Community Action Agency

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We are committed to providing economically disadvantaged individuals and families with quality, comprehensive social and advocacy services while promoting self-sufficiency. Programs are funded through federal, state and local grants and private contributions. As a major education and social services provider in South County, the agency has a significant impact on the communities we serve by helping local citizens weather difficult times, and by preparing youth and adults to be educated, productive workers. For more information, visit www.sccainc.org

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