

LIVE UNITED evening at WaterFire; UWRI kicks off '09 campaign

Campaign goal is set at \$15 million; Bank of America presented the special evening

LIVE UNITED evening at WaterFire, presented by Bank of America, on Sept. 5 lit up Downcity during an eye-catching celebration to kick-off United Way of Rhode Island's latest campaign and announce UWRI's '09 goal to raise \$15 million with \$7.6 million earmarked for United Way's Community Impact Fund.

[Click here to learn more about the community impact fund.](#)

This year's theme, "I don't just wear the shirt; I live it," references the rallying cry of the campaign, 'LIVE UNITED', and the now well-known United Way t-shirt that displays those words. LIVE UNITED seeks to engage an ever-growing community in the work of United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI).

During LIVE UNITED evening at WaterFire Some 80 volunteers marched from the Crawford Street Bridge to Waterplace Basin carrying placards noting areas important to United Way: Income, Education and Housing. Once at the basin, volunteers were handed torches and the volunteers spread out around the basin. At sunset, one by one the torches were lit creating a dramatic light show. Then, a LIVE UNITED sign lit up in the middle of the basin.

[Click here to see a slide show of the evening.](#)

The crowd of thousands applauded as the LIVE UNITED evening, presented by Bank of America, got under way.

-Photo, left Keri Ducharme; top and center photo Corey Martineau

LIVE UNITED 'flash mob' draws attention to UWRI '09 campaign

When about 90 Providence College freshmen heard the sound of a whistle, they each simultaneously revealed a white LIVE UNITED t-shirt. Then, they froze in a pose with LIVE UNITED prominently displayed.

As a crowd began to form around the students, one could hear mummerings among the onlookers. They asked, "What is going on?" "Why are you doing this?" "What's the point?"

After about two minutes, the sound of the whistle prompted the students to put back on their outer coverings, and then they politely interacted with the crowd answering questions. They told the crowd that they wanted to remind people to slow down and think about how each one of them can Give, Volunteer, Advocate to Advance the Common Good.

The PC students were part of a volunteer effort on Sept. 5 to draw attention to the work of the United Way, and to help promote UWRI's '09 campaign kick-off, which occurred that night at a special LIVE UNITED evening at WaterFire.

Three times on Sept. 5, Providence College freshmen repeated the eye-catching, crowd-forming display of LIVE UNITED t-shirts. Two big yellow school buses transported the freshmen and UWRI volunteers to each location: Roger Williams Park Carousel, Warwick Mall and Queen Anne Square in Newport.

Their communal act of disrobing to reveal LIVE UNITED is popularly called a “flash mob.”

Flash Mob n. A group of people summoned (as by email or text message) to a designated location at a specified time to perform an indicated action before dispersing.

[Click here to see UWRI/PC flash mob at Warwick Mall.](#)

As part of freshman orientation at Providence College, the about 950 members of the class of 2013 participated in a day of action. They spread out across the state taking on several volunteer projects all with the goal of advancing the common good.

Their efforts were aligned with United Way’s rallying cry to LIVE UNITED, and the two bus loads of incoming freshmen who participated in the UWRI flash mob series helped United Way announce UWRI’s campaign kick-off as well as spread the "Live United" message around Rhode Island.

Photos by John Martin