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United Way of Youngstown  
and the Mahoning Valley

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **United Way Celebrates 100 Years & Generations of Impact**

February 11, 2019

(Youngstown, OH) - In 1919, a group of business leaders came together to create a unified front to address the concerns they had about the future of children and adults in our Valley. These 11 men created the Community Corporation, and this year what is now known as the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley is celebrating the generations of impact made by the organization.

The United Way held an Anniversary Lunch on February 11 to celebrate the incorporation of the organization. They were joined by current board members, long time United Way supporters, and sponsors of the Centennial Celebration.

"It is truly an honor to be serving as President of this great organization. 100 years is an amazing accomplishment." said Bob Hannon, President of the United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley. "Our United Way has been known by various names throughout the last century - The Community Chest and The Community Corporation - but our core mission has remained the same, to help our friends, families, and neighbors in need. And our current staff is proud to carry on that tradition."

The original mission of the non-profit organization was "to promote the general welfare of the community of Youngstown, Ohio, and vicinity, and for such purpose to receive, use and disburse money and other property either directly or through others." Asael E. Adam chaired the very first campaign and raised \$328,234 in 1919. Since then, there have been five Executive Directors/ Presidents with Hannon being the sixth, 31 Board Chairs, and 100 Campaign Chairs raising more than \$165 million for the Mahoning Valley.

"For a century, United Way has been part of the fabric of the Mahoning Valley, helping its residents thrive," said Ted Schmidt, PNC regional president of Youngstown, United Way board chairman and former campaign chair. "As a Main Street Bank, PNC is helping to continue that tradition of lending a hand to our friends and neighbors in need."

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**100 YEARS UNITED: GENERATIONS OF IMPACT**



PNC Bank is one of four Presenting Sponsors joined by Greenwood Chevrolet, The Muransky Companies, and Sweeney Chevrolet Buick GMC that are helping United Way celebrate this milestone anniversary. These four companies all have a great history with the United Way, and each have had representatives either serve as one of those 100 Campaign Chairs or sit on the Board over its history.

One of those past Campaign Chairs was Doug Sweeney of Sweeney Chevrolet Buick GMC. He chaired the 2007 campaign, helping the United Way raise \$2.8 million. His daughter Alexa Sweeney Blackann now serves on the Board.

"The United Way's impact in our community is both immeasurable and inspiring. A community that lifts each other up in times of need is a community where we want to live and work." said Alexa Sweeney Blackann, Vice President, Sweeney Chevrolet Buick GMC. "As a nearly 100 year-old organization ourselves, it's that same spirit of giving and community service that Sweeney Chevrolet Buick GMC aspires to."

In the 1940's, legislation passed by Congress opened up the door to United Way's main form of fundraising, the workplace campaign. For the past 75 years, employees from companies across the Valley have donated out of their paychecks to support United Way. Currently, workplace giving makes up about 50% of the annual campaign along with corporate and foundation gifts and grants. In our recent history, companies like Greenwood Chevrolet have stepped up to incentivize donors by providing great prizes like Lordstown-built Chevy vehicles.

"At Greenwood Chevrolet, we are dedicated to serving our community and partnering with agencies who go the Extra Mile to unite our Valley by helping those in need," said Greg Greenwood, Owner/Operator of Greenwood Chevrolet in Austintown and Greenwood's Hubbard Chevrolet. "As a proud partner of the United Way's Centennial Celebration and exclusive sponsor of the Cruze or Cash Giveaway for the 9<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, it is our privilege to serve alongside a group who has been committed to our Valley for 100 years. We look forward to continuing to dedicate our time, talent and resources to ensuring the efforts of the United Way make generations of impact for centuries to come."

In the 2000's, United Way of America and local United Ways began the process of transition from organizations that raise and distribute funds, to organizations that direct financial and human resources to impact key community needs and facilitate change. The United Way of Youngstown and the Mahoning Valley officially made the transition to the Community Impact Model in 2015 with the introduction of the Success After 6 initiative launching it at the Youngstown Community School. Success After 6 was built off of the successful Success By 6 program created in 2009 that focuses on kindergarten readiness. This transition was in large part made possible by the support of Presenting Sponsors, Chris and Ed Muransky. They are also "Adopt-a-School" sponsors at the Youngstown Community School, and were there with us as we started the program.

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“We congratulate United Way for 100 years of service and thank you for impacting the lives of those in critical need.” said Chris and Ed Muransky, The Muransky Companies, “We are especially proud to support the Success After Six program because we truly believe nurturing children is our number one responsibility.”

In addition to the United Way-led initiatives like Success After 6, Success By 6, Imagination Library, and several mentoring programs, United Way boasts a strong history with numerous non-profits in the Valley. It currently funds 51 programs in education and emergency services run by 35 agencies.

Two of the past United Way presidents attended the Anniversary Lunch. Bill Brennan was the longest serving executive director. He took the helm of the organization in 1969 and served until 2002. Don Cagigas followed in his footsteps, serving from 2000 to 2008. Hannon then took over in 2008.

In 2019, United Way will celebrate with a public awareness campaign in which each quarter will take a different look at the organization's history. The first quarter presented by Greenwood Chevrolet, will celebrate the actual anniversary. The second quarter presented by PNC Bank, will take a look back at the history of United Way in the Valley and this will include an exhibit at the Tyler History Museum. The United Way will also host its Centennial Champions, a black tie-preferred gala in honor of its 100th anniversary. This is a twist on its traditional Champions Among Us fundraiser, a successful format United Way will return to in 2020.

In the third quarter presented by The Muransky Companies, United Way will celebrate its current achievements that include Success After 6, the Day of Caring, as well as officially kick off its 2019 Annual Campaign. Then finally, the fourth quarter presented by Sweeney Chevrolet Buick GMC, will wrap up the Centennial Year.

To continue its impact for the next 100 years, United Way is re-launching its Planned Giving Legacy Society by providing information to donors on how they can include United Way as part of their legacy and help improve the lives of children and families in the Mahoning Valley for years to come.

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