



United Way
of Hampshire County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE/October 1, 2015

Contact:

Jim Ayres, Executive Director

Office - 413.584.3962 x 106

Cell – 413-348-6622

jim@uwhamshire.org

United Way of Hampshire County Seeks Community Input to Inform Investment Strategies for Children & Youth Programming

NORTHAMPTON, Mass., October 1, 2015—The United Way of Hampshire County is reaching out directly to community members to shape its programming for children and youth in Hampshire County.

Through an online survey, UWHC is asking people who live and work in the county for their thoughts, opinions and perceptions about area needs and challenges.

“As your local United Way, we are consistently asking the question of how we can best address our local area’s needs and aspirations. Input from the community is crucial,” says Executive Director James Ayres. “What we learn will help drive how we will invest over one million dollars, over the next three years, for initiatives to help our kids.”

Through its annual campaign, UWHC rallies approximately \$1.3 million annually from individuals and businesses throughout Hampshire County to fund strategies that create a better life for all. The United Way directs its advocacy, problem-solving efforts, and community funding toward three program areas— Children & Youth, Health & Safety, and Economic Security—the building blocks of a good life and a strong community.

UWHC recently held a series of listening sessions throughout the region with Children- and Youth-Serving professionals. Themes that emerged included the importance of prevention, engaging whole families and addressing needs early. These experts also stressed the importance of strategies that break down social isolation, make use of collaboration between agencies, and are supported by research. UWHC aims to build on the input from those sessions with its community survey.

UWHC invites input from all parts of the Hampshire County community. To participate in the survey, visit www.surveymonkey.com/r/UWHC2015.

UWHC has administered similar surveys in relation to its Health & Safety and Economic Security program areas in prior years.

Thanks to the success of recent annual community campaigns, UWHC has been able to increase overall funding to local programs and initiatives in each of the past nine years. The survey will be active through October 9, 2014.

###