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United Way of Washington County, MD Becomes Volunteer Connector

HAGERSTOWN, MD (October 6, 2014) –On October 1, 2014, Volunteer Washington County transferred its role as the community's volunteer connector to United Way of Washington County. "United Way believes that volunteerism is a powerful engagement tool; creating positive benefits for the community and individual," stated Melissa Reabold, United Way's executive director. "United Way embraces the philosophy of volunteerism in its Give Advocate Volunteer activities. Taking the role that was generously provided to us from Volunteer Washington County is a gift that we will foster for more volunteer growth and support of local agencies." The current site will soon be redirected to United Way's website; however, users of the current website will not be affected.

Volunteer Washington County, founded in 2011, was created to be a clearinghouse between individuals who were interested in serving in a volunteer capacity and agencies in our community. Volunteer Washington County Board of Directors unanimously approved the move at their September Board meeting. "Volunteerism is so important to our community; we are excited to see Volunteer Washington County continue to live on as part of the United Way," said Sam Cool, Volunteer Washington County, Board Chairman.

Volunteer Washington County received its federal nonprofit status in April 2011 and launched the website, http://www.vwcmd.org/, in May. It was formed in response to a community need identified through the Strategic Community Impact Plan and strong interest from Sam Cool, Bernadette Wagner and Roxanne Ober, founding members of the organization. This group created a volunteer movement that continues to grow today. The website averages 1,500 hits per month from area residents who are matched with an agency.

Volunteerism is a key component that makes America a leader. In 2012, according to the Corporation for National and Community Service, about 64.5 million Americans gave 7.9 billion hours of volunteer service valued at $175 billion in 2012. Today, the national value of one hour of volunteer service is $22.55/hour. The economic contribution of this service is far reaching and impacts all aspects of a community.

Last year, United Way of Washington County had 1,164 volunteers; most of these were Day of Caring participants. If the average was four hours/volunteer, this could be valued as $104,993 in services to advance the common good in Washington County. United Way is one of many agencies in our county with ongoing volunteer needs. "Because of its unique relationship with local businesses who partner in the annual campaign and agencies," Ms. Reabold commented, "United Way is in a position to take on the role that was created by the passionate founders of Volunteer Washington County."

Mission: Through strategic leadership and investments, United Way of Washington County, MD will impact community improvement and inspire collaborations to address critical needs in Education, Income and Health.

United Way of Washington County is located at 33 W. Franklin Street, Suite 203 in Hagerstown, MD. For more information please visit our website at www.unitedwaywashcounty.org.

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