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United Way of Chittenden County Honors Volunteerism and Advocacy at fifth annual LIVE UNITED BREAKFAST, Launches 2015 Community Campaign

September 24, 2015 (Burlington, Vermont): United Way of Chittenden County honored 48 local volunteers during the fifth annual Building Block Awards ceremony at the LIVE UNITED Breakfast, presented the annual ADVOCATE Award and announced the 2015 Community Campaign goal. Award winners volunteer in variety of roles within United Way core programs or funded programs through local nonprofits and were nominated by friends and colleagues.

At the event six volunteer storytellers recounted inspiring personal experiences that shone a spotlight the power of community service. Executive Director Martha Maksym said, “Each year, this event pays homage to the incredible people that serve our community – we were proud to share the stage with treasured volunteers, board members and supporters and invite them to share personal stories about their unique connection to our community. Their stories are the greatest motivation to join the movement to Give. Advocate. Volunteer.”

Storytellers included Chris Lyon of Seventh Generation, Owen Milne of Red Thread, Lauren Glenn Davitian of CCTV, Kevin Gallagher of Optima, Patrick Brown of the University of Vermont and United Way of Chittenden County Executive Director Martha Maksym.

Michael Seaver, President of the Board of Directors, thanked the event sponsor – the Argosy Foundation – as well as Mutual of America and in-kind sponsors the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts and Lake Champlain Chocolates.

Fifth Annual ADVOCATE Award Presented

Executive Director Martha Maksym shared a personal story about the trials of “finding her voice” before she spoke about the importance of advocacy and presented the sixth annual ADVOCATE Award to Vermont Interfaith Action, a grassroots coalition of 12 congregations in Chittenden County and Central Vermont. “These congregations come together in understanding that while reasonable people of faith can and do have different opinions on government policies, people across faiths can and do hold common values – and it is these values that bind us together,” said Maksym.

Community Campaign Goal Announced

2015 Community Campaign Chairperson Jim Cohen of Hadley Financial Group thanked the volunteers that guide the annual campaign and called upon attendees and the community to help achieve United Way’s goal of raising \$3.75 million to support local human service programs and strategic initiatives. Cohen leads over 100 volunteer ambassadors that will unite and inspire local businesses and their employees to donate to United Way of Chittenden County through a workplace campaign. “When I think of the work to be done to meet our goal, I believe the key to success is storytelling,” said Cohen. “Our stories are the greatest motivation to join our Campaign, and each of us has a unique one. The best way to be an ambassador for the common good and inspire others is by sharing your story.”

Volunteer Awards Presented

“This event is our opportunity to recognize the precious gifts of time and caring that advocates and volunteers offer our community. Volunteerism and advocacy leverage the gifts of resources from our donors and are critical elements of the work that we do. Time is a precious gift,” said Director of Community Impact Amy Carmola before reading the names of 48 volunteers who were nominated by colleagues and friends. All 48 award winners were honored with certificates and presented with a gifts donated by Lake Champlain Chocolates and the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts.

About United Way of Chittenden County:

United Way of Chittenden County unites our whole community to solve complex problems and harness the power of people to create a stronger Chittenden County. United Way convenes advocates, organizations and institutions to address the community's most pressing issues, focusing on the building blocks of a vibrant community: Education, Income and Health. The problems facing our community are complex; they are issues that no single organization or individual alone can solve – real change is possible when nonprofit, public and private sectors work together. United Way has the networks, partnerships and strategic initiatives to improve the lives of our family, friends and neighbors.

For more information, get involved or campaign at your place of business, visit www.unitedwaycc.org.

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