

# PRESS RELEASE

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of Jackson County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## **UNITED WAY COMMUNITY NEEDS CAMPAIGN RAISES OVER \$2.3MM**

**UWJC reaches \$2, 337,270 or 95% of goal during “tough” campaign year**

JACKSON, Michigan, (February 7, 2007). The United Way of Jackson County announced that the community had raised more than \$2.3 million dollars during the 2006 Community Needs campaign. The announcement was made at their campaign celebration breakfast this morning at the Gene Davis Banquet Center.

“No one can say it’s been easy,” said Mike Shore, Board President of United Way of Jackson County and Vice-President of Risk Management for Consumers Energy. “It’s been a hard time for many of us in our community. But it is during times like this that we really need to help each other, and the community has responded generously.”

The campaign was led by exceptional performances by several organizations. For example, Foote Health Systems increased their campaign by over \$24,000 or 17 % from 2005. “We know how difficult these times are for many people in Jackson,” said Nancy Cerqueira, Director of Volunteer Services and coordinator for the United Way campaign at Foote. “Our employees felt the need and stepped up big time this year, and we’re really proud of them.”

Consumers Energy led all campaigns by raising over \$910,000, an increase of nearly 4% over 2005. Joe Eckert, United Way’s Division Chair at Consumers Energy, made sure all employees had a chance to join the campaign. “We really had great

participation this year. Over 82% of our employees made a contribution. It just shows what you can do if you can get everyone involved and participating.”

The Jackson area Meijer stores also had an excellent campaign, increasing their contributions by \$11,000 or 47%. “We took the extra effort to make sure every one of our associates heard about United Way and the wonderful programs they support in the community”, said Ray Steffner, manager of the Meijer’s Airport Road store. “When you see the impact your contribution can make, and when you hear first hand from someone whose life has been changed for the better, you just want to do everything you possibly can to help out.”

The United Way community campaign supports Jackson County residents through a combination of over 45 different programs and community collaborations. More than 30 local human service organizations partner with the United Way to target six prioritized needs in Jackson County:

- Growing families safe and sound,
- Overcoming hardships and forging pathways to self-sufficiency,
- Fostering health & well-being physically, mentally and emotionally,
- Supporting success in school and preparedness for life,
- Promoting a safer community, and
- Building a coordinated service delivery system.

For further information on United Way programs and services call the Jackson County United Way office at 784-0511.