

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way annual meeting and campaign awards at Day of Thanks breakfast Mar. 24 Three Gold Key service award winners recognized; Annual campaign awards given

(Canton, OH) Mar. 19, 2010 – United Way of Greater Stark County and their board of directors will host an annual meeting breakfast on Weds., Mar. 24 at 7:30 a.m. at The University Center at Kent State University Stark Campus. In addition to featuring a recap of United Way past year accomplishments, campaign highlights and awards, Gold Key service awards will be presented to James Edwards, Dr. Mona Shay and Mack Smith.

The cost to attend the event is \$20 per person. A deluxe breakfast is included. To register, please contact Judith Cross, executive administrative assistant, at (330) 491-9960 or judith.cross@uwstark.org by Mar. 17 to reserve your seat.

Since 1961, United Way has recognized community leaders and volunteers for the impact that they have made on the Stark County community through the Gold Key Service Award. The award recognizes those who have continually demonstrated the highest degree of personal dedication and service in a voluntary capacity to the United Way or its service providers.

Gold Key honoree James Edwards is an active volunteer with the American Red Cross, both with the Stark County Chapter and as a National Disaster volunteer. Since 1999, Jim has been involved with our disaster response program. He and his wife Mary were the first to volunteer to take the local Emergency Response Vehicle to New York City leaving on Sept. 12, 2001. Jim has been on 14 national assignments and has responded to countless local disasters. He has been a member of the Stark County Chapter's board of directors representing the disaster program, served a term as the Stark County representative to the Northern Ohio Blood Region and for the past three years has coordinated the calendar for the entire Disaster Action Team. In addition to his organizational efforts, as a Disaster Action Team volunteer, Jim is on call for one week each month for 24 hours per day. His willingness to volunteer allows the Red Cross, any time of day or night, to assist families and individuals when they experience total loss.

Dr. Mona Shay will be presented with the Gold Key Award for her support of the Western Stark Free Clinic as a board member, chairing the Medical Committee, and for organizing and making a personal commitment to a unique 2009 Day of Caring event at the Clinic and to those in need in our community. At the time, the Clinic was booking new patients for appointments averaging 60 to 90 days out. At the Day of Caring event she coordinated, Dr. Shay not only spent many hours of her own time seeing patients and overseeing residents from Ohio University Osteopathic Residency Training and Medical Education programs as they saw patients, but also closed her private office to allow her nursing staff to volunteer that day as well. In all, 64 new patients were seen that day including 35 new patients. The backlog was significantly reduced from months to days. However, her contribution did not stop there; Dr. Shay also provided food and beverages for the volunteers who had signed up to assist on the United Way Day of Caring.

Gold Key award recipient Mack Smith has served as the Board Chairman of the Greater Stark County Urban League since the merger between the Canton and Massillon affiliates in 2006. Mack was responsible for doing what many saw as improbable, making a Massillon and a Canton organization

work together. However, the real test of his leadership began in July 2008 with the realization that the agency was in a financial crisis. At that time Mack stepped out of his role as chairman and into an administrative capacity. He notified key constituents of the problem, including the national organization. He spoke with the funding agencies to advise them of the situation and then he took the lead to address staff and his fellow board members. It's at those times that a Board Chair becomes a crisis management expert, a media relations guru and a strategic management provocateur. Mack has been consistently focused during some of the roughest times in the Urban League's history. At a time when he could have abdicated his responsibilities, Mack re-doubled his efforts to make sure that he left nothing to chance and every possible avenue for improvement explored. Mack has taken countless hours from his full time employment to meet with key constituents and to draw up a recovery plan. In the end, Mack has been the guiding light through a very difficult time. Because of Mack's commitment to the organization there continues to be a resource for the inner-city communities of Stark County.

A history of Gold Key award recipients can be accessed at http://www.uwstark.org/Gold_Key_Service_Award.php.

United Way of Greater Stark County is a not-for-profit organization that seeks to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways by mobilizing thousands of people around a common goal: advancing the common good. United Way funds programs that focus on Early Education & Care, Graduation & Training and Family Stability. United Way believes these are the building blocks for a good life and that a quality education leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, a safe place to live and good health.

For more information about United Way visit www.uwstark.org. Headquarters are at 4825 Higbee Avenue NW, Suite 101, Canton, Ohio 44718. Dial (330) 491-0445 to reach the offices.

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