



United Neighborhood Centers
of Northeastern Pennsylvania
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For Immediate Release:

November 4, 2009

**United Neighborhood Centers Annual Thanksgiving Food Basket
Program Marks 30th Anniversary**

Agency estimates more than 50,000 families with children served throughout the years

Scranton, PA – As the holidays draw near, many local families begin preparing for abundant feasts and old family traditions. However, for many more, the holidays can mean a struggle simply to provide a Thanksgiving turkey for their children. For the past thirty years at United Neighborhood Centers (UNC), Thanksgiving has remained a time to help those struggling families prepare for their own holiday traditions with a Thanksgiving food basket. This year, as UNC organizes its annual food basket distribution, community participation is as important as ever.

In 2008, the Feed-A-Friend Thanksgiving Food Basket Program fed nearly 2,000 families with children and cost approximately \$24,000. Funding for this program comes directly from community members and donations, and with the increase in need seen throughout the year at local food banks and pantries, UNC expects it will need to raise at least \$30,000 in 2009, at a cost of \$35 per family, to meet the growing demand.

“Over the past 30 years we have been able to provide more than 50,000 families with a Thanksgiving dinner, and we expect to serve approximately 2,000 again this year” said Michael Hanley, UNC Executive Director. “While this is an exceptional number, we recognize that there are still many more who need our help to provide this holiday meal for their family, and we hope that the continued generosity of community members will help us meet that challenge both now and in the years to come.”

The Feed-A-Friend Thanksgiving Food Basket Program specifically serves community families with children under 18 years of age. Any family who wishes to receive a Thanksgiving food basket must pre-register at UNC’s Community Services Building, 410 Olive Street in Scranton, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. and 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Thursdays. To qualify families must bring proof of income such as access cards, unemployment records, current pay stubs and any form of documentation showing family members living in the household. The last day to register is Friday, November 20.

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Distribution of food baskets will take place on Tuesday, November 24 at the Watres Armory in Scranton beginning at 10 a.m. Each pre-registered family will receive a Thanksgiving basket including a frozen turkey, potatoes, carrots, bread or croutons, cranberry sauce, celery, onions, apples, pumpkin pie mix, pie crust mix, non-dairy whipped topping, and canned vegetables.

United Neighborhood Centers is currently accepting both monetary and traditional Thanksgiving food donations to assist in the Thanksgiving Feed-A-Friend Food Basket Program. For more information or to make a donation please call 570-346-0759.

About United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA

United Neighborhood Centers of Northeastern Pennsylvania is a private, not-for-profit, grass-roots United Way agency that offers direct and general advocacy services for youth, singles, families and senior citizens in combination with programs that foster independence and self-sufficiency. The agency's mission is to work together with neighbors to provide services and create opportunities which empower individuals and build strong interdependent communities.

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