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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***\$400,000 DONATION DESIGNATED TO FIGHT CHILDHOOD OBESITY***  
*Donor Challenges Community to Join the Effort*

***Stamford, CT (April 9, 2010):*** Today, the United Way of Western Connecticut announced the receipt of anonymous contribution of more than \$400,000 to fight the childhood obesity epidemic. The dollars will be used over a five-year period across the region that UWWC serves.

United Way of Western Connecticut has launched its *Strong Heart: Healthy Children* initiative with the announcement of this gift. Working with the well-established childhood obesity coalitions in Stamford (The Childhood Obesity Taskforce, under the leadership of Stamford Hospital) and Danbury (The Coalition for Healthy Kids), United Way will determine a comprehensive program to invest in to increase the health of children in the communities it serves.

“This contribution will help facilitate a comprehensive and collaborative community approach to solving this problem including clinical, fitness, educational and nutritional components,” states Michael Johnston, CEO of UWWC. “I believe with this funding that we can make a meaningful difference in the long term health of our community,” continued Johnston.

The statistics are rather alarming:

- Obesity has tripled in the past two decades
- According to the National Survey of Children’s Health, approximately 27.3% of children ages 10 to 17 years in CT are considered overweight or obese.
- The statistics are even more alarming for our minority children; African-American children are almost two times more likely than white children to be overweight or obese (44.9% to 23.2%) and almost one in three (32.4%) Hispanic children are considered overweight or obese.
- In our own community, only 19% - 54% of the students in our public schools are passing the standardized state physical fitness test (with the number being as low as 10% in individual schools).

From a clinical perspective, the implications of obesity have been extensively reported (greater risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, heart disease and even cancer). Yet this is more than just a health issue, it is an economic one as well. Today, the total cost of overweight and obese adults in our society is estimated at \$117 billion per year and that can only rise as this generation of children ages.

**The donor hopes this gift will raise awareness around the complexity and severity of childhood obesity. A challenge has been put to residents in our communities to join this effort. United Way will need additional donors, volunteers and advocates to help solve this issue. Residents can get involved by calling the United Way office at (203) 348-7711.**

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## **ABOUT UNITED WAY OF WESTERN CONNECTICUT**

United Way of Western Connecticut's mission is: "To improve lives by mobilizing the power of caring communities to create lasting change". We work to advance the common good by creating opportunities for a better life for all. Working with many partners, United Way is focused on the building blocks that we need for a good life: a quality education that leads to a stable job, income that can support a family through retirement, and good health. The towns covered within UWWC's region are Bethel, Bridgewater, Brookfield, Danbury, Kent, New Fairfield, New Milford, Newtown, Redding, Ridgefield, Roxbury, Sherman, Stamford, Warren and Washington. For more information about United Way of Western Connecticut, please visit: [www.uwwesternct.org](http://www.uwwesternct.org).

### **Note to Editor:**

Please see the service area of United Way of Western Connecticut listed above. If this article will appear in a publication within other towns in Fairfield County, please also contact Donna Pfrommer at 203-339-6312.