



The Strong Start KT Murphy School Neighborhood Initiative April 2015

The United Way of Western Connecticut (UWWC) wants to ensure that all children are ready for kindergarten and is committed to an initiative that provides both a broad community perspective and a targeted focus on two specific at-risk neighborhoods in Stamford and Danbury. In Stamford the **KT Murphy Elementary School** neighborhood will be the focus of our work.

Modeled after Thrive in Five in Boston and the Harlem Children's Zone, this initiative identifies all families with children under 5 who will be entering kindergarten at **KT Murphy Elementary School** in the future. The goal is to have every child enter ready for kindergarten success.

The UWWC is partnering with and funding service providers in the areas of early literacy, parenting skills, early developmental screening and school orientation events. The initiative will eventually support programming to ensure the financial stability and long-term health of the children and their families. Measuring outcomes is a key component of this work. United Way is committed to raising funds to support the sustainability of the Neighborhood Project.

Work in progress:

- **Membership Rewards Program:** in partnership with local businesses, we will develop a membership rewards program in which families who participate in activities that help their children will receive incentives or support from the businesses they frequent.
- **Parenting Classes:** beginning in the winter of 2015, through Domus and Saint Joseph's Parenting Center, a group of parents from the KT Murphy Elementary School neighborhood are participating in parenting classes designed to teach and reinforce basic parenting skills.
- **Transition Night:** in May 2015, KT Murphy neighborhood children entering kindergarten in the fall of 2015 will have the opportunity to attend a hands - on math and literacy night designed to help with the transition from preschool to kindergarten.
- **Imagination Library:** UWWC is offering the Imagination Library program to every child under five. The program is an early literacy initiative that provides a new age-appropriate book each month to children birth to age five – for free!
- **Help Me Grow:** in partnership with Family Centers, we hope to bring the Help Me Grow program to KT Murphy families this fall. Help Me Grow is a free statewide program that services children from birth to 8 years old, connecting their families to community services and resources related to child health, behavior, development and learning.
- **Philanthropic Partners:** UWWC will partner with community funders to support the initiative. The work is urgent because the span of birth to five offers the most critical time to positively develop a child's brain, and will set the stage for future success. We know that family/caregiver influence is critical and we are aiming to fund more programs to work directly with KT Murphy families.



KT Murphy Neighborhood Visits—Tuesdays in June **10:00-11:30 a.m.**

The United Way of Western Connecticut will host community tours of the KT Murphy Neighborhood Project in June. The purpose of the tour will be to introduce the community to the Neighborhood Project, learn about the needs of the Cove and East Side neighborhoods we serve and meet some of the key players involved in the work. Please consider joining us on one of the following Tuesdays:

Tuesday, June 2
Tuesday, June 9
Tuesday, June 16
Tuesday, June 23

Our schedule will be as follows:

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| 10:00 a.m. | Meet in front of KT Murphy Elementary School, 10 Horton Street |
| 10:05 a.m. | Meet with KT Murphy Elementary School staff, tour building |
| 10:40 a.m. | Travel to Saint Joseph's Parenting Center |
| 10:50 a.m. | Observe Effective Communication parenting class (in Spanish) |
| 11:05 a.m. | Meet with Saint Joseph's Parenting Center and Domus Kids staff to learn more about parenting programs funded by UWWC |
| 11:20 a.m. | Wrap up and close |

To give us an idea of how many people will join the tour, please RSVP to Karen Brennan one week prior to tour date.

For more information on how you can be involved, contact Karen Brennan at the United Way, 203-883-6700 or karen.brennan@uwwesternct.org.