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United Way of Western Connecticut Announces \$91,000 Investment in Food Access

Support will fund mobile food trucks, weekend food for children and local food guides in Danbury

DANBURY, Conn. (September 30, 2016) — United Way of Western Connecticut (UWWC), in partnership with the Meera & Ashok Vasudevan Foundation (MAVF) and Wal-Mart Stores, Inc., announced today that they will fund several initiatives to increase food access for **ALICE**[®] (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) households. The funding announcement is part of a larger initiative that UWWC is taking on to address food security in greater Danbury, greater New Milford and Stamford.

The Connecticut Food Bank will receive \$46,000 through a grant from UWWC and MAVF to expand the Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry program to bring produce, proteins and other fresh foods to locations in Danbury, New Milford and Stamford.

Thanks to the generous support of Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. for the third consecutive year, UWWC has received \$25,000 to help fund organizations that provide weekend food backpacks given to children in need in the Danbury and Stamford public school systems. The Connecticut Food Bank and Filling in the Blanks are among those organizations. It also includes funding for two additional refrigeration units for food pantries in Danbury.

“When our Board of Directors, Council members and staff reviewed the findings of our ALICE community conversations and surveys, we were struck by the real need in our communities for families to have access to food,” said Cindy Merkle, Board President, UWWC. “We knew our neighbors were struggling, but I don’t think that we fully understood the extent to which working individuals in our communities have to make tough choices between paying bills and putting food on their tables to feed their families. By partnering with The CT Food Bank and Filling in the Blanks to bring more healthy food resources to the community, I know we can alleviate some of the financial struggles of our neighbors.”

The Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry will visit sites in Danbury, New Milford and Stamford on a monthly basis to serve working households living paycheck to paycheck. Additional community resources will be offered during the food distributions. The program is expected to launch in November. Connecticut Food Bank Mobile Pantry locations and times are available at www.ctfoodbank.org/mobilepantry.

“We are grateful to United Way of Western Connecticut and the Meera & Ashok Vasudevan Foundation for their investment in programs that will help us address food insecurity in Western Connecticut,” said Connecticut Food Bank CEO, Bernie Beaudreau. “Partnerships like this help to build stronger, healthier communities for all.”

UWWC spearheads Food Collaborative groups in Danbury and Stamford to address food security. UWWC is also providing funding of \$10,000 to each food collaborative to support their efforts to make food more accessible in their communities. Each collaborative has a membership of nearly 20 representatives from food pantries, shelters, grocery stores and food banks. The Collaboratives have created food guides that provide clear information about access to food, organized daily and weekly food rescue efforts through Trader Joe's and Whole Foods, led corporate food drives, and jointly sought grants that have funded the purchase of new commercial refrigeration units.

To view the Danbury and Stamford food guides, please visit our website at:

Danbury food guide available in English and Spanish: <http://www.uwwesternct.org/danburyfoodcollaborative>

Stamford food guide available in English and Spanish: <http://www.uwwesternct.org/stamfordfoodcollaborative>

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ABOUT UNITED WAY OF WESTERN CONNECTICUT

United Way of Western Connecticut (UWWC) helps residents across Northern Fairfield County, Southern Litchfield County and the City of Stamford by focusing on the vital building blocks for a good life: Education, Financial Stability and Health. Our mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the power of caring communities to create lasting change. We are committed to ensuring that every child enters school ready to learn, every family is financially stable, and every community we serve is healthy and strong. We are particularly focused on a population that United Way identifies as **ALICE**[®] (**A**sset **L**imited, **I**ncome **C**onstrained, **E**mployed) in our communities. A United Way report published in November 2014 revealed that in Connecticut, 1 in 4 households has earnings above the Federal Poverty Level, but below a basic cost-of-living threshold. Combined with those who are struggling below poverty level, 35% of all households in the state are experiencing financial hardship. By leveraging the collective power of the community, we are focused on creating an environment where individuals and families are self-sufficient and can achieve financial independence. For more information about United Way of Western Connecticut, please visit: www.uwwesternct.org. Like us on Facebook www.facebook.com/uwwct. Follow us on Twitter <http://twitter.com/uwwesternct>. Follow us on Instagram <http://instagram.com/unitedwaywesternct>. Watch us on YouTube www.youtube.com/user/uwwesternct.

ABOUT MEERA & ASHOK VASUDEVAN FOUNDATION

Meera & Ashok Vasudevan Foundation (MAVF) is a fully funded initiative by Meera & Ashok Vasudevan, co-founders of Preferred Brands International, a Connecticut based food company that manufactures and markets TastyBite[®] and other natural and organic foods whose products are sold in several countries including the USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, UK, Japan and India. MAVF is dedicated to the idea that it is possible to permanently move people out of hunger and malnourishment in a manner that is sustainable, self-reliant and healthy. The Foundation will provide grants, collaborate with and support an ecosystem of grassroots organizations, non-profits, research institutions, think tanks, independent scholars, artists, and social entrepreneurs who are aligned with their mission.

ABOUT PHILANTHROPY AT WALMART

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are committed to helping people live better through philanthropic efforts. By operating globally and giving back locally, Walmart is uniquely positioned to address the needs of the communities it serves and make a significant social impact within its core areas of giving: Hunger Relief and Nutrition, Sustainability, Career Opportunity and Women's Economic Empowerment. Walmart and the Walmart Foundation are leading the fight against hunger in the United States with a \$2 billion commitment through 2015. Walmart has donated more than one billion meals to those in need across the country. To learn more about Walmart's giving, visit foundation.walmart.com.