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FAMILYWIZE, UNITED WAY WORLDWIDE PARTNER TO OFFER PRESCRIPTION ASSISTANCE FOR MILLIONS OF FAMILIES

9,593 People in Whatcom County have Saved \$821,445 on Medication

Bellingham— United Way of Whatcom County, United Way Worldwide and FamilyWize Community Service Partnership—a unique national grassroots social enterprise that is improving the health and financial stability of millions of Americans who are uninsured or underinsured—today announced a new, 10-year, national partnership. Through a national education campaign and the distribution of free prescription savings cards, FamilyWize and United Way are on a mission to help millions of individuals and families get the medicines they need, and ultimately ensure that everyone has access to affordable prescription medications. The goal: to deliver \$1 billion in prescription savings. Locally, 9,593 people have already been directly helped by this program.

“We are proud to join forces with FamilyWize to help protect the health and well-being of Whatcom County,” said Peter Theisen, United Way of Whatcom County President/CEO. “The consequences of skipping medications can be devastating from disease progression to large medical bills and bankruptcy, which is why making prescriptions affordable and accessible for families is a priority for United Way.”

According to *Consumer Reports*, Americans who are struggling financially tend to skip their medicines or lower their dosages. [A Commonwealth Fund Biennial Health Insurance Survey](#) in 2012 shows 46 percent of adults in the U.S.—representing more than 80 million people—have either no prescription coverage or inadequate coverage, making medication unaffordable. Anywhere from 29 million to 44 million people annually will remain without insurance and prescription benefits over the next 10 years—as projected by the Congressional Budget Office (Kaiser Family Foundation, and Urban Institute).

“The FamilyWize card is the primary prescription benefit for millions without health insurance and a critical backup benefit for the underinsured when medicine isn’t covered by their health plan—which, sadly, statistics show the majority of American families struggle to pay for prescriptions,” said Dan Barnes, president and CEO of FamilyWize. “Without prescription assistance, families are left making difficult decisions between getting medications and buying food. The United Way national partnership will mean we can reach deep into communities across the country to help tens of millions of people afford the medications they need and deserve.”

"United Way is focusing on creating opportunity for all by improving health, education and financial stability," added Stacey Stewart, U.S. president of United Way Worldwide. "Our Partnership with FamilyWize helps us advance that cause, and 1,000 United Ways across America are helping people be healthier and more productive."

A core component of the partnership will be developing public outreach on health literacy for key United Way partners, such as community organizations and agencies, local governments, healthcare providers and others. FamilyWize will also create tools that United Ways can provide to partner agencies to help them distribute free prescription savings cards and information about prescription assistance.

"Working with nearly 1,000 United Ways, the partnership promotes a variety of grassroots initiatives," said Susan Gilmore, executive director of community engagement, FamilyWize. "These initiatives include health and financial resources for families and individuals through FamilyWize.org, which features links to local health departments, community centers, food banks and pantries, utility companies and housing assistance organizations."

Additionally, FamilyWize and United Way work with both large and small companies to reach employees and customers who do not have access to prescription benefits or choose to opt out of these benefits, providing them with an alternate access to affordable prescription medicine.

As the only prescription assistance service of its kind to pass 100 percent of its savings directly to its members, FamilyWize brings together millions of uninsured and underinsured individuals and families into one umbrella-buying group to offer savings. The average discount is 40 percent and is sometimes as much as 75 percent or more, similar to what pharmacies give the largest insurance companies and employers. Since 2005, FamilyWize has helped more than six million people get the medicine they otherwise could not afford, which accounts for more than \$600 million in direct savings on prescriptions.

The FamilyWize prescription card is accepted at more than 60,000 pharmacies nationwide, including CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, K-Mart, Target and Walmart. For more information, or to download a free prescription card or compare the discounted price of prescriptions at nearby pharmacies, visit FamilyWize.org.

About FamilyWize

The FamilyWize Community Service Partnership was established in 2005 to help all people get the medicine they need. Today, more than 80,000 community agencies, thousands of United Ways and the America's Promise Alliance Partners coordinate local distribution of the free FamilyWize prescription drug discount card, which lowers the cost of medicine as much as 75 percent or more. As of December 2013, the free FamilyWize cards have helped more than six million people save more than \$600 million. For more information, visit familywize.org/about-us.

About United Way of Whatcom County

United Way of Whatcom County's mission is to improve lives by mobilizing the caring power of our communities to advance the common good. They provide leadership that galvanizes and connects a diverse set of individuals and institutions, and mobilizes human and financial resources, to create long-term social change by advancing

Education, Income, and Health for all. United Way of Whatcom County's goals for the community involve: helping children/youth achieve their potential through academic success, ensuring individuals/families achieve financial stability and economic independence, and building individuals who are healthy and avoid risky behaviors. To learn more about United Way of Whatcom County visit www.unitedwaywhatcom.org or check out their Facebook page at <http://www.facebook.com/UnitedWayWhatcom>

About United Way

United Way is a worldwide network in 40 countries and territories, including more than 1,200 local organizations in the U.S. It advances the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key building blocks of education, income and health. United Way recruits people and organizations who bring the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done. LIVE UNITED® is a call to action for everyone to become a part of the change. For more information about United Way, please visit: <http://www.LIVEUNITED.org>

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