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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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UNITED WAY ALLOCATES FUNDS TO LOCAL EMERGENCY FOOD AND SHELTER PROVIDERS

Bellingham—Whatcom County has received federal funds through the Emergency Food and Shelter Program (EFSP). The program awards funds to each county in the United States based on demographics, local employment rates and economic data. United Way of Whatcom County serves as the administrative agent in charge of allocating the funds and convenes a committee of local volunteers to decide where these crucial funds will be granted.

With a total of \$82,000 to allocate, the Emergency Food and Shelter Committee reviewed several grants and based their decisions on specific increasing community needs.

“These funds will provide a much needed boost to local programs who are serving the most vulnerable populations. We’re glad to be a part of making this process possible for Whatcom County,” said Peter Theisen, President of United Way of Whatcom County.

Under terms of the federal grant, local organizations chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary non-profits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice non-discrimination, 5) have demonstrated the capacity to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board.

For the first time EFSP funds were distributed to the Northwest Youth Services Positive Adolescent Program, the only housing program in the county that serves homeless teens. In addition, funds were distributed to the Opportunity Council’s Maple Alley Inn program, which serves healthy hot meals to individuals that are homeless or low-income. This program has expanded their hours to reach more individuals and to help reduce hunger in our community. Serving a different population, the Meals on Wheels program through the Whatcom County Council on Aging was given an increase in their allocation from previous year’s grants in order to ensure delivered meals for isolated and elderly individuals who are

not able to prepare meals otherwise. Studies show that 2/3 of caloric intake for these individuals comes from the delivery of hot meals from this program.

Other funded programs included a shelter program through the Opportunity Council, support for the YWCA and Womenscare Shelter as well as an increase in funds to the Bellingham Food Bank, which serves all of Whatcom County through several satellite food banks in multiple cities. The resulting split for funds was 60% for food based programs and 40% for shelter based programs.

United Way of Whatcom County has worked for over 50 years to improve lives by mobilizing individuals and organizations to create long-term change by investing in Education, Income and Health for all Whatcom County residents. 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>

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