LIVE UNITED™

United Way

United Way of Greater Williamsburg

March 16, 2009

Dear Mr. Wanner,

Thank you for making the time and providing the opportunity for citizen input.

2009 marks the 60th year of service by the United Way of Greater Williamsburg to its community, which includes James City County, the Bruton section of upper York County and the City of Williamsburg. As with its several hundred counterparts across the country, this United Way is a separate entity, a Virginia non-stock corporation, governed by a board of directors selected from the community. Since 1949, $32 million has been raised, all of which has stayed within and been invested in our local community.

The United Way campaign is unrivaled in the broad base of its support. Virtually every employee group of consequence conducts an annual employee drive to benefit United Way. Corporate giving is forthcoming from all sectors. Professionals of all types are generous in their support. Finally, retirees organize mailings each year in most area neighborhoods.

The driving force of a United Way campaign are volunteers ... from the General Chairman to the employee campaign managers to the neighborhood leaders it is a voluntary effort with the most modest staff support. Fundraising is only part of United Way's mission. Putting the funds, once raised, to the best and most productive uses is the other facet of the mission. As with the Campaign, volunteers are the driving force of the United Way's efforts to identify current critical needs and invest resources in programs targeted on the needs.

Altogether including fundraising, fund distribution and other core functions, there are 609 volunteers involved in United Way. This number does not include the annual Day of Caring, a United Way organized event mobilizing more than 800 volunteers who work together on a wide variety of community improvement projects.

Collaboration is crucial in identifying and addressing the critical health and human service needs of Greater Williamsburg. Long committed to the unquestionable benefits of partnering, United Way has been and remains, a willing participant and frequent leader in the creation of useful, pragmatic collaborations. The Historic Triangle Funders Forum brought together the primary funding sources. Responding to identified needs, provider coalitions were formed creating frameworks for coordinated planning and action in the areas of substance abuse, homelessness and senior services.

United Way funding is still channeled to partner agencies; however, it is now focused on specific programs that must be calibrated to measurable outcomes. Further, eligible programs must address one of the five critical need areas identified by United Way's Community Investment Committee: Health and Wellness, Self-sufficiency, People in Crisis, Children and Youth and Senior Independence.

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Finally, with the invaluable support of James City County, the United Way provides a safety net for citizens in the most dire straits through its Information and Referral program. Every day a steady stream of people from the community either call the information and referral Help Line or find their way to the office. They come with a combination of crisis needs: no food, no money for medicine, lack of transportation to essential health care, utility shut off, eviction or just plain desperation. Present economic circumstances are apparent in United Way's information and referral service statistics - there were 12,000 contacts in 2008, a 35% increase from 2007.

Marshall Warner, Executive Vice President of Chesapeake Bank and United Way's 2009 General Campaign Chairman, and I look forward to meeting with you Tuesday, March 24. Once again, thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Sharon E. Cornelius

Sharron E. Cornelius
Executive Director

continuing to advance the common good in 2009

Through our mission - **by mobilizing our community** - we are effectively and efficiently addressing the needs of **OUR** community. We can accomplish this more collectively than any one of us can on our own.

Collectively we work through:

* **Partnerships**
* **Task Forces**
* **Coalitions**
* **Networking**

This includes our local government, the Faith community, health & human service non-profits, businesses, Historic Triangle Substance Abuse Coalition, Historic Triangle Funders Forum/PACE, Kids First Coalition, Network for Latino People, Senior Services Coalition, GWAVA (Greater Williamsburg Area of Volunteer Administrators), VOAD Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster), Food Network, FEMA, Homeless Task Force and the list goes on.

To further our ability to **Advance the Common Good** and to better understand the ever changing needs of **OUR** community during these difficult economic times, United Way will continue to work with local health and human service providers. We will hold a community meeting to bring agencies together to network and provide information on how to update resource listings on-line and promote the Virginia Easy Access website. We want all agencies to have access to current resources so they can most effectively help their clients. With the help of the Virginia Gazette, we will continue to produce the Info-Line - a complete community resource guide for all community activites including classes, camps and contacts.

During the past year, the United Way and the funded agency programs have responded to nearly 40,000 requests for assistance . . . helping individuals in the greater Williamsburg area by educating, mentoring, feeding, housing, counseling and providing transportation.

United Way will continue to work on building the 5 community focus areas to create a vision of how to more cohesively address the issues and needs in each of the 5 focus areas:

* **Health and Wellness**
* **Self Sufficiency**
* **Children and Youth**
* **People in Crisis**
* **Senior Independence**

We hope that together, we can develop a common agenda to meet the changing needs of **OUR** community in 2009 and beyond.