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**RHODE ISLAND GOOD NEIGHBOR ENERGY FUND KICKS OFF  
31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL “WARM THY NEIGHBOR” CAMPAIGN**  
*Fund now open to all households in temporary crisis who qualify.*

PROVIDENCE, RI, November 23, 2016 -- The Rhode Island Good Neighbor Energy Fund (GNEF) announces the kick-off to its 31<sup>st</sup> annual “Warm Thy Neighbor” campaign to help Rhode Island households in temporary crisis, and who have not qualified for federal and state assistance programs, with the payment of their energy bills. At a kick-off event held last Wednesday morning at the United Way of Rhode Island, the administrator of the Fund, the initial seed money was received from the Fund’s sponsoring energy companies, National Grid, Pascoag Utility District, Dominion Resources, Petro Home Services, RISEC LP and TransCanada’s Ocean State Power, so that eligible households can begin receiving assistance immediately. The Good Neighbor Energy Fund’s 2016-2017 campaign goal is to raise \$400,000 and help more than 1,000 households.

In addition to the sponsoring energy companies, the Good Neighbor Energy Fund campaign relies on the generosity of individuals, families, local corporations and community organizations for support. Yellow donation envelopes are enclosed with energy bills from November through March to make it convenient to donate. Those interested in donating to the Fund can also send a check payable to “Good Neighbor Energy Fund” to United Way of Rhode Island, 50 Valley Street, Providence, RI 02909 or visit [www.rhodeislandgoodneighbor.org](http://www.rhodeislandgoodneighbor.org). The state’s local Community Action Program (CAP) agencies determine households who qualify for the Fund based on specific income and family member guidelines.

“With the sluggish economy combined with the arrival of colder temperatures we expect to see more of our neighbors in temporary crisis this winter season and in need of energy assistance,” said Michael Kirkwood, General Manager at Pascoag Utility District and Chairperson of the 2016-17 Rhode Island Good Neighbor Energy Fund campaign. “Let’s once again make a cooperative effort among the sponsoring energy companies, United Way of Rhode Island, the CAP agencies, the corporate community and residents across the state to exceed our fundraising goal and provide warmth to all the households who are eligible.”

A household is eligible for assistance from the Fund as long as its total annual income does not exceed 300 percent of the federal poverty level. For example, a household of two is eligible for the Fund if its annual income does not exceed \$48,060 while a household of four cannot exceed \$72,900.

(more)

“Like all our programs here, the Good Neighbor Energy Fund helps families and individuals succeed,” said Anthony Maione, President and CEO, United Way of Rhode Island. “We believe that people want to do the best they can for themselves and their families, but sometimes they need a little assistance. The Fund is for people in temporary crisis.” Maione added that anyone who thinks they may be eligible for energy assistance through the Fund can call the United Way 2-1-1 contact center which is free and available to Rhode Islanders 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### **About United Way of Rhode Island**

Because everyone needs help sometimes, United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) helps people. United Way invests in programs with clear results, including those that help children fall in love with learning, that help families meet their basic needs, and that offer training and education for jobs and careers. United Way also provides everyone with one number to call for help, 2-1-1. The organization’s fundraising costs are covered 100% by a trust. For more information, visit [www.LIVEUNITEDri.org](http://www.LIVEUNITEDri.org).

#### **About Rhode Island Good Neighbor Energy Fund**

Since its establishment in 1986, the Rhode Island Good Neighbor Energy Fund has raised over \$13.3 million and helped over 44,250 families in need of temporary energy assistance. For more information about the Good Neighbor Energy Fund or to receive assistance, contact either the United Way 2-1-1 in Rhode Island help line or a local Community Action Program (CAP) agency. Web: [www.rhodeislandgoodneighbor.org](http://www.rhodeislandgoodneighbor.org).