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Contact: Mari E. Mellick, CAE, Executive Director
Phone: 651-438-3337
Email: mari@unitedwayofhastings.org

**United Way of Hastings Recognizes Local Business Leaders and
Announces 2018 Funded Partner Agencies
Guest Speakers Scott Northard and Lexi Koren**

(Hastings, MN) – The United Way of Hastings (UWH) held a special event to recognize local businesses that contributed at leadership levels during the 2017/2018 UWH Annual Giving Campaign. UWH Funded Partner Agencies that will receive funding in 2018 were also announced. The exclusive event was held on March 28, 2018, at The Onion Grille, downtown Hastings.

“This was the first event of this nature for the United Way of Hastings where we could bring our business leaders together, recognize them for their donations this past year, and announce where a great deal of their funds will go in 2018,” said Mari E. Mellick, CAE, Executive Director. “I believe it was important for businesses to hear about their investments. Each 2018 UWH Funded Partner Agency spoke briefly about their funded programming and the difference those UWH funds have on our local community members who receive services. That was impactful.”

Each fall during the UWH’s Annual Giving Campaign, area businesses can donate at specific levels. These levels are marked by the iconic Hastings bridges. The top leaders that received awards were:

Arch Bridge Community Business Leaders

Elm Salon, Hastings Area Rotary Club, Merchants Bank, Premier Banks

Blue Bridge Community Leader

Conzemius Co., Edward Jones – Abra Hovgaard Agency, Endres Processing, Fluegel’s Lawn Garden & Pet, Graphic Design, Inc., Innovative Surfaces, Inc., The New Art of Dentistry, Treasure Island Resort & Casino, Schwebel, Goetz & Sieben, Storm Creek, Weis Builders, Inc.

UWH also recognized area businesses that offer payroll deductions as a way for their employees to invest in the Hastings community. The top workplace giving business leaders were:

Top 5 Workplace Giving Campaign Leaders

Xcel Energy, 3M, Dakota County, Intek Plastics, Smead Manufacturing Co.

The 2018 UWH Funded Partner Agencies were announced as:

360 Communities, Boy Scouts, DARTS, District #200 Community Education, Friends of the Mississippi River, Hastings Family Service, several initiatives at Hastings School (elementary, middle school, and high school), Legal Assistance of Dakota County, ProAct, and United Heroes League.

Other highlights of the event included guest speaker Scott Northard, Nuclear Fleet Manager at Xcel Energy. Scott is an accomplished business leader and community leader. He spoke about his role at Xcel Energy, how it has evolved over the years from when he began as an engineer in 1977. He referenced why Xcel Energy invests in local communities with the 3 Cs: Compassion—it’s a great cause; Choice—employees can designate their donations to specific areas of interest via payroll deductions; and Community—United Way helps build stronger

communities. Scott went on to stress the importance of business leaders supporting their local communities and how strong communities with strong workforces is good for everyone.

The other guest speaker was Alexis "Lexi" Koren, 2014 UWH LIVE UNITED Scholarship Winner and 2018 Dunwoody College of Technology Graduate. Lexi gave an emotional message about the challenges she faced growing up from her home life of abuse, to her own substance abuse, and a car accident that left her unable to walk. She spoke about perseverance and her pursuit to obtain an education. Lexi's message can be viewed at:

<https://www.facebook.com/HastingsCommunityTV/videos/1635279253174986/UzpfSTEzMjg3MzEzMzM5MTM0NToyMTcxMTU2MzA2MjI5Njc0/>.

A complete video of the entire event can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vXlCqOtbfWc>.

The UWH is an independent United Way that has been the Heart of Hastings for over 50 years serving Hastings and the surrounding rural communities within Independent School District #200. Its mission is to build partnerships to improve the lives of people in the Hastings community. Donations are accepted year-round. For more information about the initiatives and groups UWH funds, visit www.unitedwayofhastings.org.

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113 2nd St E, Ste 102, PO Box 353, Hastings, MN 55033
(651) 438-3337
www.unitedwayofhastings.org