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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

UCC Celebrates 56 Years of Support Built with Community

*Milwaukee-based Nonprofit and Social Services Agency Applauds Partners, Donors and Friends of UCC;
Announces Estrella Brillante Award Recipients*

MILWAUKEE, WI — United Community Center (UCC) is proud to commemorate 56 years of unwavering service and transformational impact in Milwaukee. On Friday, April 24, 2026, UCC will host its 56th Anniversary Celebration, spotlighting the people, programs, and partnerships that have shaped a thriving and empowered community for over five decades.

This year's theme, "**Block by Block: For a Stronger Tomorrow,**" focuses on laying the groundwork for future generations as the organization focuses on efforts of expanding their Early Childhood Education Program, providing high quality education and care, building a stronger tomorrow and a foundation for lifetime academic success and improved quality of life for children birth to three years. Investing in childcare boosts the economy by reducing absenteeism, enhancing productivity, and helping to resolve the state's labor shortage. A strong workforce relies on accessible, affordable childcare, which enables parents to work, increasing labor force participation—especially among mothers.

"The needs of our community continue to grow and evolve," says UCC's CEO Laura Gutiérrez, "and we intend to be there every step of the way, building a stronger tomorrow, together. We are so grateful to our donors, volunteers, staff, Board of Directors, and community members who remain steadfast in our mission, fueling our ability to serve."

In 2025 alone, UCC programs touched thousands of lives:

- 18,000 individuals served across all programs
- 1,606 students educated in UCC's K-8 schools
- 566 people supported on their recovery journey
- 120 seniors served daily at our Senior Center
- 334 homes purchased in 2025 by first-time homebuyers
- 900+ participants graduated from the First Time Homebuyer Program
- 637 children enrolled in Early Learning Academies
- 700+ students across 25+ area high schools served through our Pre-College Program

The evening includes a powerful performance from the Latino Arts Strings Program, the unveiling of UCC's Student Wall of Fame honorees, and the presentation of two major recognitions: the Estrella Brillante Award, which honors individuals and partners who have been a bright, guiding light in UCC's journey and Excellence in Education Award, which celebrates outstanding educators who embody the heart of UCC's mission.

Estrella Brillante Award

UCC proudly announces the recipients of the Estrella Brillante Award, which recognizes individuals that have made immeasurable contributions to the community and are a bright, positive light to the community.

Greater Milwaukee Foundation: Accepted by Greg Wesley, CEO

Greater Milwaukee Foundation is a leader in Milwaukee and a valued partner in expanding opportunity for our community. For example, they serve as both funder and convener in the early education space, bringing organizations together to strengthen collaboration and access for young learners. Their commissioned research highlighting the need for additional early childhood seats has helped inform action across our city. Through their financial support and the advocacy of donor-advised fund holders who champion UCC's work, Greater Milwaukee Foundation continues to advance a stronger future for Milwaukee families.

Mike and Margie Munson

Mike & Margie became connected with United Community Center six years ago and quickly became active, engaged partners in our work. Beyond their generous financial support, they regularly attend UCC events, take time to build relationships with our staff, and seek opportunities to connect with and learn from our students. Their commitment to UCC families extends beyond UCC's campus through their support of St. Thomas More High School, where many UCC students continue their education, reflecting a shared belief in walking alongside students at every stage of their journey.

Zurn Elkay Water Solutions: Accepted by Jennifer Clearwater, Community and Public Affairs Manager

Zurn Elkay Water Solutions is a deserving Estrella Brillante: a shining star whose partnership with United Community Center spans more than 20 years. Their support includes recent giving to the *Raise the Roof for Kids* campaign to build the third floor of Bruce-Guadalupe Community School, ongoing investment in science education, and generous gifts-in-kind such as new water fountains across campus and advanced filtration systems. Zurn Elkay Water Solutions employees further strengthen this impact through dedicated volunteer service with UCC's elderly and preschool programs, and in 2025, their Employee Resource Group, ZE ¡HOLA!, selected UCC as its signature charity.

These honorees exemplify what it means to build a "stronger tomorrow", using their influence and generosity to shape brighter futures for the next generation.

For more information on UCC or its 56th Anniversary Celebration, please visit unitedcc.org or contact Leah Westberry at 414-649-2842 or lwestberry@unitedcc.org or Jennifer Steiner, at jennifers@unitedcc.org.

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About United Community Center:

The United Community Center (UCC) provides programs to Hispanics and near South side residents of all races and ages in education, cultural arts, recreation, community development and health and human services in an effort to help individuals achieve their potential by focusing on cultural heritage as a means of personal development.

Mission: To transform the lives of Hispanics, families and individuals of all ages by providing the highest quality comprehensive services in education, human services, health, community development and cultural arts.

Vision: An empowered and thriving Hispanic community where all achieve their fullest potential.