

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Joey Wallace

VP for Marketing and Communications

803.748.7282 (office)

803.553.0622 (cell)

jwallace@uway.org

Inclement Weather Center Set to Open

Center is a partnership between City of Columbia, Transitions and United Way of the Midlands

Columbia, S.C. (November 6) – United Way of the Midlands, in partnership with Transitions, Salvation Army and the City of Columbia, will operate an Inclement Weather Center at 191 Calhoun on nights that are expected to drop to 40 degrees or below between November 6 and April 1.

“We’re pleased to work with the City of Columbia and other MACH (Midlands Area Consortium for the Homeless) partners to ensure our city’s homeless have shelter this winter,” said Mac Bennett, President and CEO of United Way of the Midlands. “We’ve already seen some record breaking weather this year, and it’s crucial that people have somewhere to go when temperatures drop below 40 degrees.”

A decision to open the Center will be made daily at noon. To find out if the shelter will open on a particular night, call 2-1-1 or go to www.midlandshomeless.com

“This partnership is so exciting because it allows us to leverage talent, expertise and resources from across Columbia to not just to shelter, but serve those among us who need it most,” said

Mayor Steve Benjamin. “Homelessness isn’t just a neighborhood issue, a downtown issue, a business issue or a public safety issue. It’s not just about service providers or churches or even city government. It’s about all of us. This is a community issue and I’m excited because after all the discussion and debate we’re ready to move forward, to meet this challenge as a community and to overcome it together.”

Adult men and women who want to use the Center will be picked up at the City Transit station on Laurel and Sumter streets between 5:45 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Guests will not register in advance. The Salvation Army will prepare hot meals for dinner in along with a small breakfast and services such as showers. The shelter will close every morning by 7:00 a.m.

“My sincere thanks and appreciation are extended to all of our partners and to the staff at the City of Columbia for all of their work related to the opening of the Inclement Weather Center,” said City Manager Teresa Wilson. “I am proud of the commitment and dedication demonstrated by our team at the City and by those who represent our partner agencies. This collaboration and partnership is a true example of how we can work together toward a common goal and implement a plan of action for a worthy cause. As we move forward to officially open the Center, we will continue to work together to provide shelter and other resources to those who need assistance during periods of inclement weather.”

How can I help?

- Anyone wishing to volunteer to serve meals or donate food should contact Jennifer Lambert with Salvation Army at Jennifer.lambert@uss.salvationarmy.org or 803.223.9969.
- Anyone interested in volunteering in other capacities should contact John Dawkins with Transitions at jdawkins@transitionssc.org or 803.724.1089.
- Anyone who would like to donate money can do so through the United Way of the Midlands website at www.uway.org.

###

About the City of Columbia

Columbia, South Carolina was founded by the General Assembly in 1786. Columbia was South Carolina's first planned city. As the state capital and largest city, Columbia's population has reached approximately 129,276 (2010 U.S. Census). The City of Columbia works closely with neighborhood organizations to increase the lines of communications between neighborhoods and Columbia City Hall. The City of Columbia has approximately 2200 employees on staff. The City of Columbia is dedicated to providing the highest quality services to our citizens.

Our Mission

The City of Columbia's mission is to provide bold leadership and exemplary services to advance the quality of life for everyone.

Our Vision

We Are Columbia...together we will build a world class city.

About United Way of the Midlands

United Way of the Midlands is the most organized, efficient and accountable system for investing in the community. With more than 85 certified partner agencies, United Way works to identify and respond to the critical human service needs of Calhoun, Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Orangeburg and Richland counties. Funds are raised through workplace campaigns, grant writing and individual donations. For more information, please visit www.uway.org.