2011 United Way Kickoff

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Greetings! I'm John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University. As students settle in across campus, and the Kalamazoo and University communities come together in celebration of century-old partnerships, I am reminded that, here at WMU, fall is a time for honoring traditions. One longstanding tradition is our involvement in the Greater Kalamazoo United Way campaign.

Each fall, WMU teams up with more than 350 of the area's leading employers to raise funds for local programs that directly impact the three pillars of a strong and sustainable society: education, income and health. Working with United Way allows us to increase the value of every contribution and focus millions of additional dollars into those areas that are key to making Kalamazoo a better place in which to live, learn and work. It's all about helping people stand on their own; because when you improve the quality of life for one, you make the community healthier and stronger for all.

The Greater Kalamazoo United Way is responsible for getting help to the causes that need it the most. But, without your contributions and commitment to this community, change wouldn't be possible. Last year, the annual community campaign raised more than 9 million dollars. Here at Western Michigan University, we exceeded our campuswide campaign goal by 5 percent to move up from sixth to fifth place among the county's top-10 giving organizations. It is a fact: Ours is a community that gives generously and consistently.
I know that again this year, we'll do our job to meet the needs of our people. Together, we can make sure Kalamazoo is synonymous with a high quality of life for all. I invite you all to be a part of real, lasting social change. You can give. You can advocate. You can volunteer. That's what it means to LIVE UNITED.