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NEWS RELEASE

United Way engages Charlotte region in Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge

Virtual learning program aims to build awareness and understanding about race matters

CHARLOTTE (December 16, 2020)—As part of our commitment to leading the fight for racial equity and economic mobility across the Charlotte region, United Way of Central Carolinas invites the community to join its virtual Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge. The activity takes participants on a 21-day journey of learning and self-discovery that aims to help develop more effective social justice habits around issues of race, power, privilege and leadership.

The Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge begins on **Monday, January 18, 2021** in honor of the slain civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., whose life's work around civil rights and equality remains relevant in light of the many challenges we continue to face as a nation. Dr. King's commitment to serving others will also be part of the Challenge, with weekly call-to-action opportunities that benefit area nonprofits.

The Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge is part of a national dialogue and effort to address how inequity and racism affect our lives and communities, providing a powerful opportunity for people to unite and gain a deeper understanding.

There is no cost to participate in the self-guided Challenge; community members may register in advance at uwccEquityChallenge.org. Once the Challenge begins on January 18, participants will receive an email each weekday through February 15 with a selection of readings, videos, podcasts and ways to take action.

Each day's content focuses on a different topic and participants are encouraged to reflect on the information through a daily journal and discussion guide. Topics include racial identity, intersectionality, housing affordability and homelessness, legal system inequity and allyship. The content also includes subjects focusing on United Way's community impact areas of education, health and financial stability.

"Black and Brown people continue to face tremendous obstacles to achieve economic mobility across our country and here in the Charlotte region. This project allows each of us to examine the systems and policies that have historically disadvantaged those populations and benefitted others," said United Way of Central Carolinas President and CEO Laura Yates Clark.

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Early support for the Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge has come from a variety of Charlotte-area corporations, including Truist Financial Corporation, Lowe’s and Bank of America serving as Presenting Sponsors and Equity Champions for the community-wide initiative.

Ally Financial, Atrium Health, Duke Energy and McGuireWoods have also joined the effort as Equity Ally Sponsors. Ernst & Young, First National Bank, Gambrell Foundation, Grant Thornton and Knight Foundation have committed to the project as Equity Partner Sponsors supporting weekly community service activities as part of the Challenge. All sponsors have the opportunity to share the Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge activity with their employees to encourage participation.

“We are thankful for the generosity of our corporate partners who continue to show their support for the work we do at United Way during challenging times and beyond,” said United Way of Central Carolinas Chief Development Officer Clint Hill.

United Way’s fight for the education, health and financial stability of every person in our community is inseparable from the fight for racial equity—made clear through COVID-19’s disparate health and economic impact on communities of color. As a community leader, convener and advocate, United Way is uniquely positioned to lead the fight for racial equity.

The Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge supports United Way’s racial equity work in the community, including investments in our [Unite Charlotte](#) and [United Neighborhoods](#) initiatives. Through the Challenge, United Way hopes to build understanding, strengthen partnerships and help launch a lifelong commitment to improving equity and dismantling systemic racism in our community.

“Unique learning opportunities like the Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge help raise awareness about the role that race plays in our society and underscore the importance of the funding that United Way provides to disinvested neighborhoods to build stronger communities and improve racial equity,” Yates Clark said.

At the end of the Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge, United Way will host a virtual Racial Equity Town Hall on February 23, 2021 with keynote speaker Dr. Eddie Moore, Jr., a racial justice educator who co-created the Challenge concept several years ago. The event will bring together Challenge participants and subject-matter experts for a deeper dive into racial equality and will highlight shared knowledge gained from the Challenge experience.

Organizations and businesses interested in adding their name to the list of supporters helping United Way to spread the word about the Racial Equity 21-Day Challenge should submit the form at www.uwccEquityChallenge.org/supporter.

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