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UCS OF JOHNSON COUNTY TO HONOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

*Fred Logan, Senator Tim Owens and Harvesters' BackSnack Program
named 2011 Human Service Award winners*

OVERLAND PARK, Kans. (November 28, 2011) – United Community Services (UCS) of Johnson County has announced its 2011 Human Service Award winners.

Fred Logan, UCS Citizen of the Year. This award recognizes an individual who has provided lasting contributions that enhance the well-being of Johnson County residents. While his service to the community spans many areas, Fred Logan is most known as a champion of public education. Logan has been instrumental in sales tax, local option budget and bond issue campaigns that ensure excellence in Johnson County schools. His support is not limited to the K-12 system – he promotes quality education in our universities, community colleges, and technical schools. He has served as the Chairman of the Johnson County Community College Board of Trustees and currently serves on the Kansas Board of Regents. Fred Logan knows that a strong educational system leads to better job opportunities, better wages and an improved quality of life.

Senator Tim Owens, UCS Distinguished Public Service Award. This award recognizes outstanding public service by a government official who has advanced human services to improve the quality of life for Johnson County residents. Whether it's working to ensure the community has a safety net for social services to improving DUI legislation to representing children in need of care in his private law practice, Sen. Owens is passionate about human service issues. He was elected to the Overland Park City Council six consecutive times. He was appointed to represent the 19th District in the Kansas House of Representatives and was re-elected three times. He currently serves as Kansas State Senator for the 8th District. Sen. Owens wants his constituents to know that the government is not the enemy. "The closer you get to people, the better you can understand their needs," he said.

Harvesters' BackSnack Program, UCS Excellence in Community Service Award. This award is given to a human service organization or partnership that has significantly improved the lives of Johnson County residents. Through a partnership with Harvesters: The Community Food Network, the BackSnack program provides backpacks filled with nutritious, child-friendly food to low-income children for the weekend. BackSnack students have improved grades, are healthier, plus they have fewer discipline issues and better attendance. Harvesters provides the food and backpacks while volunteers from community partner organizations clean, pack and deliver them to schools. These Johnson County partner groups include Asbury United Methodist Church; Community of Christ Church, Olathe; Gardner Church of the Nazarene; Hands to Hearts KC; Merriam Christian Church; New Journey Church; St. Aidan's Episcopal Church; St. Andrew Christian Church; St. Luke's Episcopal Church; St. Michael's and All Angels Episcopal Church; St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church; and Village Presbyterian Church. Currently, 12,000 children live in families with income below the poverty level and schools wanting to be served by the BackSnack program have grown accordingly. This year 1,165 students in the Shawnee Mission, Gardner and Olathe school districts receive backpacks. The Blue Valley and De Soto school districts will join the program next year and plans call for nearly 2,500 Johnson County students to participate by the 2013-2014 school year.

“Again this year, we’re pleased to honor two individuals and one organization that have worked diligently to improve the lives of those living and working in Johnson County,” said Carol Gonzales, UCS board president. “It is fitting that we take a moment to honor the impressive work they have done and continue to do in our community.”

Presentations honoring the recipients will be made during the UCS annual meeting on Dec. 2, 2011. Winners were selected by the UCS Board of Directors. Nominees for individual award winners must be Johnson County residents and cannot be currently serving on the UCS Board.

About United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS)

Since 1967, UCS has been working to improve health, social and economic conditions in Johnson County. We provide data about changes in community demographics and needs that help identify gaps in services and emerging issues that will impact the services provided by public, non-profit and faith organizations. UCS data and analysis help funders and policy makers understand the impact of their decisions on people in our community.

UCS-facilitated task forces, forums and coalitions help groups to come together and build a stronger service delivery system for the most vulnerable citizens. Our efforts to leverage resources also help secure funding for this community’s human service organizations. Simply put, UCS helps the people who help people. UCS is a 501(c)3 organization. Contributions are deductible for tax purposes. To learn more, visit www.ucsjoco.org.

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