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COL. JARRELL S. MITCHELL HONORS LATE WIFE WITH $50,000 GIFT TO UNITED COMMUNITY MINISTRIES (UCM) FOR THE PATRICIA R. MITCHELL CHILDREN’S ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES INITIATIVE

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United Community Ministries (UCM) is pleased to announce a $50,000 gift from Jarrell S. Mitchell, Col. USAF (Ret), to establish The Patricia R. Mitchell Children’s Enrichment Opportunities (CEO) Initiative, as a tribute to his late wife Patricia R. Mitchell.

“We are grateful to Col. Mitchell for this very generous gift to honor his beloved wife, Patricia, and her dedication to service,” says Nichelle A. Mitchem, UCM Executive Director. “The Patricia Mitchell CEO gift will allow UCM to enhance our programs that serve children and youth ranging in age from prenatal through high school, so they can grow and thrive. As Professor James J. Heckman, Nobel Laureate in Economics, has aptly stated: ‘The investments we make today in disadvantaged young children [and youth] promote social mobility, [and] create and foster a vibrant and inclusive society and economy.’ Because of the efforts of our community and generous donors such as Col. Mitchell, UCM is able to actively work to ensure a brighter economic future for vulnerable children, youth, and families in our community.”

Patricia Mitchell was a registered nurse, but her passion was helping children. Her nursing career began in Alaska where she supplemented her professional support to the native communities by also focusing on the children. She taught, nurtured, helped, and guided children throughout the state and even started a Girl Scout organization for native children. “As she and I navigated

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through the numerous locations of my many years of military service, she was always active in community associations dedicated to making things better for all – especially children,” says Col. Mitchell.

“We became long-term residents in the area served by United Community Ministries, and Pat became an active UCM supporter,” he continues. “She also worked for Inova Mount Vernon Hospital as a visiting nurse – a position she thoroughly enjoyed since it brought her closer to her patients and their families. It was not long before Pat had me interested in UCM’s mission, and over about 40 years we continually supported UCM with our time and monetary resources.”

Col. Mitchell served in the United States Air Force for 28 years and lived with his family in the UCM service area for many of those years. His last tour of duty was at the Pentagon as Chief of the Engineering Division. He retired in 1987 and then worked as a consultant to the Cities of Miami; Seoul, South Korea; Atlanta; and the Metropolitan Washington Aviation Authority, in support of the design and construction of their airport development programs. He and his wife resided in the Mount Vernon area of Alexandria until her death in 2011, after which he permanently relocated to Sun-City Center, Florida. They raised two sons, John and Douglas, who both attended Groveton Elementary School, near UCM. John and his wife Sara reside in Chicago, where they are each attorneys and very active in business and community affairs. Douglas lives in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, where he is a Boeing 777 Captain with Emirates Airline.

Col. Mitchell served on the UCM Board of Directors from 2002 to 2007. “During my time on the UCM Board, it became apparent that our client base was expanding rapidly. Our services were increasing in demand, but our resources were not increasing proportionately. Our Nation and our community suffered serious economic setbacks during my tenure on the Board, and I am pleased the Board and our community were able to meet the groundswell of demand. Recently, when it came to my attention that UCM was once again facing demands expected to exceed resources, I wanted to help and that is the basis for my donation.”

For almost three decades, UCM has brought opportunity, hope, and a brighter future to children and youth in the Mount Vernon community. UCM provides children and youth with enrichment opportunities designed to ensure that they are aware of their potential and the opportunities surrounding them, so they can reach new heights in their young lives.

“All young people have tremendous skills, talents, and abilities which require nurturing to be fully realized,” Mitchem continues. “Towards that goal, UCM provides a variety of programs where children and youth are encouraged to explore, are challenged and supported in their growth –and in turn are set on a path of lifelong learning. Within each area of UCM’s work with children and youth, we offer unique services and/or practices that enrich their lives. The Patricia Mitchell CEO Initiative supports these unique services, strengthening the interwoven fabric that ideally creates a continuum of care from before they are born through high school graduation.”

The Patricia R. Mitchell CEO Initiative supports the following UCM children’s programs:

- **Healthy Families Fairfax**: Beginning with prenatal services, the Healthy Families Fairfax home visiting program successfully prevents child abuse and neglect through an evidence-based curriculum that helps at-risk families meet immediate needs, offers emotional support to help new parents cope with the stresses of parenting a newborn, teaches basic parenting skills, models positive parenting, and links families to medical providers to ensure that immunizations and well-care visits are on schedule. Families are provided one-on-one support by specially trained Family Support Workers for up to three years.

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- **UCM Early Learning Center**: Operating since 1986, the UCM Early Learning Center is a Virginia Star Quality Rated program that provides early care and learning for up to 82 infant through kindergarten-aged children. A unique service is its in-house early intervention and prevention program, whereby all children receive free developmental screenings; and all children aged three and older receive free vision, dental, and hearing screenings. A full-time Child Development Specialist supports families whose children need intervention services. For social-emotional development, the Early Learning Center uses Al's Pals and an evidence-based curriculum that helps young children regulate their own feelings and behavior. By creating classroom environments of caring, cooperation, respect, and responsibility, UCM’s educators have more time for creative teaching.

- **Youth Development**: Elementary and middle school students without access to affordable after-school programs are welcomed at UCM’s two community centers and in the Forward Steps program. Youth participate in activities to improve their academic achievement and to develop and strengthen social and leadership skills. Youth have access to computers and friendly, helpful staff who provide education and support, so that children may use technology to complete homework assignments or participate in other academically enriching activities.

“Each of these program areas creates a safe, reliable, nurturing environment for children – whether in their own homes as infants, or in one of our community centers as older youth,” says Mitchem. “But beyond that, each UCM program also provides an opportunity for youth to develop long lasting, productive relationships with knowledgeable, caring, trustworthy adults. It is these relationships that pave the way for youth to benefit from their potential and propel themselves toward success – academically and socially.”

Programs such as these can only be established and maintained and achieve success through the efforts of the community. It is with this belief that John, Douglas, and Jerry Mitchell have established The Patricia R. Mitchell Children’s Enrichment Opportunities Initiative. “We sincerely appreciate the Mitchell family’s commitment to invest in access to opportunity and a better future for thousands of children in need,” says Mitchem. “Together, we are truly changing lives – and every young life changed contributes to a stronger community for us all.”

**United Community Ministries (UCM)** mobilizes the power of community to equip, educate, and empower people to measurably improve their lives. For the past 46 years, UCM has provided a vital connection between people in need and the people committed to helping them thrive. Services include:

- **Immediate Help.** For families and individuals in crisis, UCM provides food, financial aid, and counseling.

- **Education and Employment.** Services such as job training and coaching, full-day early care and learning, ESL and citizenship classes, and parental education help people achieve stability.

- **Community Engagement.** UCM’s neighborhood centers, with after-school programs and leadership training, engage youth and families in broader social networks for success.

In Fiscal Year 2014, thanks to generous community support, UCM provided life-changing assistance in the Alexandria portion of Fairfax County to more than 11,000 individuals in 4,152 families.

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