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PRESS RELEASE
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Wesley Community Services Drafts Kentucky/Ohio Officials for “March For Meals” Campaign

Cincinnati, Ohio – In the fight to end senior hunger by 2020, Wesley Community Services (Wesley) announced today that at least 13 local, state and congressional representatives will deliver Meals-On-Wheels to their constituents as part of “**March For Meals Week**”, March 21-25. Each unit of government declared March 21-25, 2011, “**March For Meals Week**” by official proclamation. In coordination with the national Meals-On-Wheels Association of America, hundreds of elected officials across the country will deliver meals to seniors to demonstrate their support for their local Meals-On-Wheels program.

“We are excited about the response we received from officials at all levels of government to our invitation to participate,” said Stephen Smookler, Executive Director, Wesley Community Services. “We have congressmen, state representatives, mayors and administrative personnel delivering to their constituents.”

This year’s participants include Ohio Senator Eric Kearney, Congressman Steve Chabot, State Representatives Peter Stautberg, Denise Driehaus, and Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune. Also participating are Amberley Village Mayor Merrie Stillpass, City of Montgomery Mayor Gerri Harbison, City of Forest Park Mayor Charles Johnson, Village of Lincoln Heights Vice-Mayor Gary Brown, City of St. Bernard Vice-Mayor Curtis Walden and Director of Human Services Kirk Kavanaugh from Boone County, KY, where Wesley recently obtained funding to provide meals in Boone County, the first out-reach effort in Northern Kentucky.

Amberley Village Mayor Merrie Stillpass said, “I recently had the opportunity to participate in the Wesley Community Services Meals on Wheels deliveries. To see the meal recipient’s appreciation and the special relationship with the driver was incredible. Malcolm’s (meals driver) awareness of individual nuances prepared us before each visit. Often the driver is the only person they have interaction with on a daily basis. It was a truly rewarding experience!”

A meal’s client, Ms. Mimi Ninio, stated after her visit with Mayor Gerri Harbison of The City of Montgomery, “This was a privilege that I will never forget,” and “it’s something wonderful going on with the Meals-On-Wheels...It’s really a good thing you are doing.”

Mayor Charles Johnson of Forest Park delivered meals to Ms. LaVern Miller who said, “Wesley meals are fantastic...my favorites are the cheese omelets and Italian chicken....Sue Ann, my driver is wonderful, best person I ever met... she feels just like family.”

In 2010, Wesley Community Services' Meals-On-Wheels program delivered nearly 250,000 nutritious meals, including physician-prescribed Senior Choice™ meals for individuals with diabetes, cardiac disease, kidney disease, high blood pressure, and swallowing and chewing problems.

March For Meals is initiated and sponsored nationally by the Meals-On-Wheels Association of America (MOWAA) to raise awareness of senior hunger and to encourage action on the local level. Senior Nutrition Programs across the United States promote March For Meals in their local communities through public events, partnerships with local businesses, volunteer recruitment, and fundraising initiatives. The campaign takes place in the month of March because it was during this month that Congress passed the Older Americans Act, which included the creation of Senior Nutrition Programs.

An integral part of the 2011 March For Meals campaign is for Americans to team up with their local Meals-On-Wheels program and Take the Pledge to end senior hunger in America by 2020. This national movement comes at a time when MOWAA research studies have shown that the problem of senior hunger in America is growing worse, with one in nine seniors at risk of hunger in the United States. (Take the Pledge on MOWAA's website at www.mowaa.org.)

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About Wesley Community Services: Wesley Community Services (Wesley) fosters and supports seniors seeking to remain in their home for as long as possible through the provision of essential home-based services including Meals-On-Wheels, Specialized Transportation and Home Care. Wesley also has a Pet Portions program (free pet food for clients' pets) and PetKare program (vouchers for veterinary services for clients' pets). Wesley serves over 2,300 seniors and individuals with disabilities, is funded by the Council on Aging of Southwestern Ohio, and is a United Way partner agency. For more information about Wesley Community Services call 513/661-2777, or visit www.wesleycs.org. Wesley Services Organization is the parent entity of Wesley Community Services and Lincoln Crawford.