



## Press Release

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### **United Ministries and the Greenville Area Interfaith Hospitality Network (GAIHN) Unite to Expand Efforts to Address Poverty and Promote Self-Sufficiency in Greenville**

*Merger Will Increase the Reach and Broaden the Capability of Both Organizations*

GREENVILLE, S.C. (April 14, 2016) – After years of partnering to assist those in need in Greenville, United Ministries and GAIHN are making plans to join together by merging into one organization, creating greater capacity to serve those striving to achieve financial stability and self-sufficiency. The boards of both nonprofits have voted to proceed with the merger and a letter of intent was signed today. The merger is expected to be effected on July 1, 2016.

United Ministries and GAIHN complement each other in both their mission and programming. United Ministries, which has been working in the Greenville community for over 45 years, provides life changing opportunities and advocacy for those who are in financial crisis, lack education or employment skills, or who are homeless. The organization recently received the highest possible four-star rating from Charity Navigator. GAIHN assists local congregations to share hospitality in the form of emergency shelter, meals and short-term housing with homeless families that include children. They also work with clients to achieve self-sufficiency.

"The work of United Ministries and GAIHN shares many similarities," said GAIHN Executive Director Tony McDade. "We both assist and equip those who need a 'hand up' to become independent and productive members of our community. By joining together, community resources that support our organizations will be maximized and utilized more efficiently. As a result, more people will benefit from our services and we will be better positioned to expand our programs."

The planned merger is not focused on cost savings, although these are expected, emphasized McDade. The uniting of the two organizations is centered on growing the capabilities and reach of GAIHN and United Ministries. Operating as one organization will allow for enhanced program integration and increased accessibility for clients.

"We believe that joining these two strong agencies will create an entity that is uniquely positioned to serve as a leading organization on issues related to poverty and homelessness in Greenville," explained Alan Marshall, Chairman of the Board for United Ministries. "We want to play a key role in facilitating collaboration among all stakeholders who are working on these issues so that together we can identify and tackle community-wide goals."

"When the organizations come together, GAIHN will continue as before, but as a part of United Ministries," said McDade. "We are particularly excited about the opportunity to closely share information that will enable us to track participants' progress toward their goals of gaining financial stability and becoming self-sufficient."

**(MORE)**

According to United Ministries' Interim Executive Director Ethan Friddle, board and staff members from both agencies have been working with consultants since last fall to carefully consider and explore the possibility of merging. A grant from the United Way of Greenville County provided the resources to enable both organizations to complete initial due diligence prior to the joining of the agencies and fund other merger-related costs. The Community Foundation of Greenville has also supported the agencies' efforts to collaborate.

"Ultimately the decision of our boards was unanimous and we are all in agreement that uniting together will result in greater community impact," shared Friddle. "We are certain that GAIHN and United Ministries formally teaming up will be a real positive for Greenville County and those we serve."

### **About United Ministries**

*Located in downtown Greenville's West End, United Ministries has been working for 45 years to give every member of our community the opportunity to participate in the prosperity of our community. Originally established by local congregations to meet the crisis needs of people living in poverty, our agency has evolved to focus on developing the potential each family possesses to become self-sufficient – and even to thrive. Our integrated service model discourages dependency on charity and promotes the dignity of work. For more information on United Ministries please visit [www.united-ministries.org](http://www.united-ministries.org) or call 864-335-2614.*

### **About GAIHN**

*The Greenville Area IHN is a coalition of forty-two religious congregations collectively called GAIHN (Greenville Area Interfaith Hospitality Network). Uniting volunteers and facilities from diverse religious communities and faith traditions, GAIHN provides homeless families with safe, secure shelter while offering emergency assistance (including superb transitional housing), strategies to obtain affordable housing and permanent employment, and appropriate referral and guidance to help reintegrate families into the community as quickly as possible. For more information on GAIHN please visit [www.gaihn.org](http://www.gaihn.org) or call 864-271-3424.*

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