

## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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### **Rockford Police and United Way Announce Community Outreach Initiative, “Strong Neighborhoods Days”**

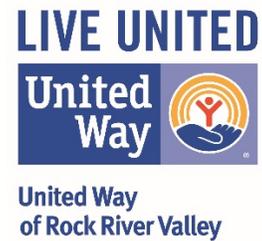
Rockford, IL - The Rockford Police Department and United Way of Rock River Valley will launch the first in a new series of community outreach events this week. “Strong Neighborhoods Days” block parties are a partnership of the Rockford Police Department and United Way of Rock River Valley. The block parties evolved from the success of the former “Cops on the Block” events that have taken place in previous summers.

“Strong Neighborhoods Days” block parties provide an informal opportunity for neighbors to meet and engage with district police officers. Activities include giveaways, bomb robot demonstrations, and tours of the Rockford Police mobile command center and select Strong Neighborhoods Houses. United Way will provide food, catered by Zina Horton from local favorite, Zammuto’s, and will also be distributing free t-shirts to attendees.

“Community engagement is a critical element to healthy and vibrant neighborhoods,” said Assistant Deputy Chief Michael Dalke. “Strong Neighborhoods Days is an opportunity to develop new and strengthen existing relationships with residents.”

The Rockford Police Department and United Way have been working closely together with the SwedishAmerican Health Foundation in the establishment of the Strong Neighborhoods House on Revell Avenue, and with Zion Development Corporation to identify houses on 8th Avenue and Irving Avenue that will be developed as Strong Neighborhoods Houses. These houses will serve as a space where officers can help facilitate problem solving and build a safer and healthier neighborhood.

“United Way is working with community partners to build safe and healthy neighborhoods. Strong Neighborhoods Days is an excellent way for police officers and neighborhood residents to get to know each other,” said Paul Logli, President and CEO of United Way of Rock River Valley.



The event will occur once a week on Thursdays for the next five weeks from 12:00 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. at the following locations:

- July 23, 2015 – Revell Strong Neighborhoods House (1233 Revell Ave.)
- July 30, 2015 – Irving Strong Neighborhoods House (312 Irving Ave.)
- August 6, 2015 – 8th Ave Strong Neighborhoods House (908 8<sup>th</sup> Ave.)
- August 13, 2015 – Morgan and Ferguson (1000 Ferguson. By St. Anthony of Padua Catholic Church)
- August 20, 2015 – Blackhawk Courts (338 15<sup>th</sup> Ave.)

Police officers and United Way volunteers will go door-to-door throughout the neighborhood to make introductions, distribute event information and invite residents to attend leading up to each event.

For more information, please contact Ashley Burks, community impact manager of United Way of Rock River Valley, at 815.986.4805 or [ashleyb@unitedwayrrv.org](mailto:ashleyb@unitedwayrrv.org).

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