



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Community Winterhelp Needs Your Help to Keep People Warm in Tough Economy**

*Program to help low-to-moderate income families maintain their heat expecting strong demand*

LOUISVILLE, Ky. January 22, 2009 – The Community Winterhelp program kicked off last week to help families struggling to keep their heat on during this economic downturn. With utility prices higher than last year, more families out of work, and widespread concern about the economy, Board members anticipate a strong demand for services. Last year, 1700 families were provided \$275,000 in heating assistance, and this year directors anticipate serving over 2,100 households, an increase of over 20% from last year.

The Board of Directors anticipates needing \$340,000 to serve the increased demand this year, and so far the program has raised only about a third of what it will need. Individual contributions from area residents, the main source of funding for the program, are down by 11% over the same timeframe from last year. As an indicator of the increased demand for services, it is telling what others in our community are seeing.

Mary Elizabeth Miles, a Community Winterhelp Board Member and the Executive Director of Community Action Partnership which runs a federally supported program called LIHEAP to serve a similar purpose, relayed: “It is evident that the need for energy assistance is out there, as we have already served over 3,000 clients in our low income energy program since January 5, 2009. Based on this, it appears we will continue to serve more first time LIHEAP clients as well as a greater number of clients overall.” Community Winterhelp is bracing for a similar surge in demand for services, with support provided to a number of families who cannot access LIHEAP funding because their incomes are above the federal funding eligibility threshold.

Households with an immediate risk of losing their heat and with earnings up to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level (approximately \$42,000 for a family of four) are eligible to receive assistance through this the Community Winterhelp program. Financial assistance is provided primarily through community ministries in Jefferson County, along with Community Action Agencies in Bullitt, Hardin, Larue, Marion, Meade, Nelson, Oldham, Shelby, and Trimble Counties.

Donations can be made via the check off box on your LG&E bill, by mailing a payment to LG&E to the attention of their Customer Commitment Department, 820 West Broadway, Louisville, KY 40203, or though the website: [www.communitywinterhelp.org](http://www.communitywinterhelp.org)

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Community Winterhelp is a local, non-profit organization committed to serving families at risk of losing their heat during the harshest months of the winter season. Support is provided by donations from utility customers that are matched by LG&E/E.ON US on a dollar for dollar basis through April. Operations are overseen by a Board of Directors, and the Louisville Urban League serves as financial manager.

For more information about Community Winterhelp visit the website at [www.communitywinterhelp.org](http://www.communitywinterhelp.org).

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