FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – United Way of Greater Portland (UWGP) is pleased to announce its first investments in Thrive2027, our community's commitment to three ten-year goals to drive measurable and meaningful change in Greater Portland.

The goals are to ensure more kids are successful in school, more families and individuals can afford to live and work here, and more people are living long, healthy lives.

“Thrive2027 is our community’s commitment to make our region stronger for everyone who calls it home,” said Katie Fullam Harris, Thrive2027 Council Co-Chair, and SVP, Government Relations and Accountable Care at MaineHealth. “If we thoughtfully and intentionally work together toward a shared vision, we can make long-lasting change in our community.”

In fact, more than 140 businesses, public institutions, foundations and non-profit organizations have pledged to work together to achieve these goals. United Way of Greater Portland is aligning its work behind Thrive2027.

“United Way of Greater Portland is playing its part to ensure the success of Thrive2027 through its public policy, direct services support, community engagement, and systems change initiatives,” said Mike Simonds, Thrive2027 Council member, outgoing UWGP Board Chair, and CEO of Unum US.

The $250,000 investment was made to three community initiatives.

The Children’s Initiative
To maximize the opportunity for children, adults, and communities to live longer lives, the prevalence of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) must be reduced before toxic stress irreversibly impacts health. The Children’s Initiative, a trauma-focused prevention and intervention program for children and young adults, will both prevent and buffer the impact of ACEs during childhood and adolescence. The program will offer evidence-based mental health treatment to children and parents regardless of ability to pay and train family-serving providers on ACEs and trauma.

“We know that today’s children will lead our community tomorrow. Ensuring their healthy development is essential,” said Anne Dalton, Co-Chair of the Thrive2027 Goal 1 Cabinet, incoming UWGP Board Chair, and Chief Officer for Strategic Initiatives at the Association of Junior Leagues International.

Maine Medical Center – Preble Street Learning Collaborative
Individuals experiencing homelessness are more likely to become ill, have greater hospitalization rates, and are more likely to die young. The MMC–Preble Street Learning Collaborative bridges identified gaps in health care services for Portland’s homeless population, including evidence-based treatment for those with substance use disorders. The Learning Collaborative will increase access to medical care through increased case management, psychiatric evaluation, medication assisted treatment, improved housing stability, and referrals to address the high rates of other significant health challenges.

“We know that when a community opens pathways to health, everyone benefits,” said Dana Totman, Co-Chair of the Thrive2027 Goal 3 Cabinet, UWGP board member, and President of Avesta Housing. “We are thrilled to support this program that will have positive impact on individuals and on the entire community.”
SmilePartners
Dental disease, in spite of being largely preventable, is a major cause of absenteeism in school and work, and one of Maine’s leading causes of avoidable emergency room visits for pain and infection among adults living in poverty. SmilePartners is designed to support long-term financial well-being and successful entry by this underserved population into the dental system.

“This program is changing lives,” said Julie Chase, Co-Chair of the Thrive2027 Goal 2 Cabinet and Dean of Business & Community Partnerships at Southern Maine Community College. “It not only improves health, but also self-esteem and self-worth for individuals trying to better their lives and economic opportunities.”

Investments were made to programs based on the alignment with more than one of the Thrive2027 Goals and ability to produce measurable results that have the greatest impact on our community’s well-being.

Thrive2027 is our community’s commitment to three ten-year goals and serve as a vision and blueprint to all.

“The key to the success of Thrive2027 is two-fold: financial support and community partners working together in a different way.” said Tony Cipollone, Co-Chair of the Thrive2027 Council, UWGP Board Member, and President of the John T. Gorman Foundation. “These initiatives are making changes in our systems to create an environment of opportunity for all. We’re excited with this first step and anticipate many more over the next ten years.”

For more information, visit www.unitedwaygp.org and www.thrive2027.org.

###