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**SevenDays™ 2017 expands to spread interfaith, kindness message;
Peace Walk to begin at Union Station**

(Kansas City) – In the continued effort to overcome tragedy produced by hatred, bigotry and ignorance, **SevenDays™ Make a Ripple, Change the World** will take place for the third year in the Greater Kansas City area **Tuesday, April 18 through Monday, April 24, 2017**.

SevenDays™ 2017 continues the healing journey following the murders that took the lives of Dr. William Corporon, his grandson Reat Underwood and Teresa LaManno outside of Jewish facilities in April 2014. The three lost their lives at the hands of a convicted Neo-Nazi shooter.

Determined to turn tragedy into triumph, family members and friends joined together to create something positive to overcome this senseless hate crime.

Sponsored by the Faith Always Wins Foundation and LaManno-Hastings Family Foundation in partnership with several organizations, **SevenDays™** promotes interfaith dialogue by engaging all people to discover commonalities and overcome evil with acts of kindness.

“Our world does not have to be divided to be unique and provide opportunities of education which lead to prosperity,” said Mindy Corporon, Reat’s mother and Dr. Corporon’s daughter. “The LaManno family and my family felt evil at our core, on April 13, 2014. The tragedy that has changed our lives forever is propelling us to make a difference for others. While we are most interested in our own community, the Kansas City Metropolitan area, it is clear that much of the United States is in need of the kindness, understanding, love and compassion we promote through **SevenDays™**,” Corporon said.

“I have learned that the severe pain I feel from the deaths of my father and son is subdued when I help others...when I reach out to others. Through education, we can eliminate

fear. When we eliminate fear, we break down barriers of communication. When we communicate, we can make a ripple and change the world," she said.

"SevenDays is more important now than ever," said William LaManno, husband of Teresa LaManno. "We continue to mourn and remember the loved ones we lost, but must keep in mind the innocents that we continue to lose on nearly a daily basis. These efforts remind us that we must come together as a community, a city and as a nation. We all have common ground but we must work together to nurture it and put aside what divides us," he said.

The decision to move the **Faith, Love and Walk** to Downtown Kansas City, Missouri, was made with much thought. We realize that what **SevenDays™** has to offer is bigger than the location of the shooting. Hate crimes have to stop. Organizers hope that their presence in the living room of Kansas City - Union Station - the same location where 800,000 people peacefully celebrated our Kansas City Royals World Series victory would be the perfect backdrop to the final day of our **SevenDays™** event.

The events we have planned this year are incredibly enriching and exciting.

SevenDays™ of Kindness

Everyone has the power to make a ripple and change the world – and that's what **SevenDays™** is all about. Beginning with Day One on Tuesday, April 18, each of the **SevenDays™** has a special theme - Love, Discover, Others, Connect, Go, You and Onward. Day One will include a special interfaith program at The Temple, Congregation B'nai Jehudah including a rabbi, minister and an Imam.

Each day of the **SevenDays™** event will provide an opportunity for participants to engage digitally and in person. Our team of volunteers has created resources for educators, learners and organizations such that participation can be at each person's desired level of engagement. Each day will feature special activities – everything from speakers and films to workshops and hands-on community service projects. Suggested kindness activities for the community are in the planning stages. Community groups and organizations are invited to create their own and share them through **SevenDays™** social media sites using #givesevendays. All ages are encouraged to participate. Additional information about the themes, activities and sponsored events will be continuously updated on the **SevenDays™** website.

For 2017, the annual **Faith Love & Walk** will take place on Monday, April 24, taking off from the heart of Kansas City at the historic Union Station. The walk will begin at Union Station, with a route traveling north to circle the grounds of the National World War One Museum and

Memorial before a celebratory conclusion back at the station. Registration for the walk will be available after the first of the year at www.giveseventdays.org.

SevenDays Youth Board & Button Contest

Sixteen area high schools students have been chosen to serve on the **SevenDays™** Youth Advisory Board.* This group is comprised of students from a variety of faiths including Atheist, Christian, Hindu, Jewish and Muslim, reflecting the importance of diversity in making change.

The Youth Board is currently planning activities including a pre-walk event at Union Station and creating digital learning resources for our participants.

A signature of **SevenDays™** has been giving out colorful buttons with designs reflecting each day's theme. This fall, a button-design contest took place inviting area high school students to submit their artwork for consideration. Designs from eight different students were chosen for the 2017 SevenDays buttons, which are now in production.** Each student will receive a \$250 award for their design. The buttons will be available beginning in February.

Kindness essay competition

The second annual **SevenDays™ Make a Ripple, Change the World Scholarship** competition for high school seniors has kicked off this fall. Seniors are encouraged to create a project addressing one or more of the SevenDays themes, execute it and submit an essay about its impact. Five \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded for higher education tuition. Full details can be found on the SevenDays web site.

Faith Love & Song highlights local musical talent

Music is a universal language with tremendous healing powers. Submissions are now being taken for the third annual **Faith, Love & Song** songwriting competition, sponsored in partnership with the RRACE (Racial and Religious Acceptance and Cultural Equality) Foundation. Kansas City Drs. Ekkehard and Sieglinde Othmer founded RRACE in protest of blind prejudice and intolerance.

“Our goal is to create art and music that gives voice to the need for acceptance of diversity and compassion for other human beings regardless of racial, religious, and cultural backgrounds,” the Othmers said. “We believe that the ideas of love, tolerance, and acceptance for others can be creatively expressed through the spirit of competition.”

Youth ages 14-21 are asked to submit original compositions that address the subjects of racial, religious, and/or cultural equality and acceptance. This song competition is aimed at promoting understanding, tolerance and acceptance through the arts. Submissions will be taken until Feb. 15, 2017. The top winner will receive a \$5,000 scholarship and the finalists will

perform during SevenDays. Complete rules and details for the song competition will be available on the SevenDays web site in December.

A variety of volunteer opportunities are available for SevenDays™; those interested are urged to regularly check the web site for details and registration.

While most **SevenDays™** events are free of charge and open to the public, there will be a participation fee for the Faith, Love & Walk on April 24. The fee does include a commemorative T-shirt; other **SevenDays™**-themed items are also available through the web site's shop.

During the first two years of the **SevenDays™** effort, more than \$89,000 has been given to various nonprofit organizations that further interfaith and kindness. The Reat Griffin Underwood Memorial Foundation and The LaManno Hastings Family Foundation are equal beneficiaries of net proceeds and donations of **SevenDays™** to continue this important work. Donations are tax deductible.

For more information about **SevenDays™**, please contact Ruth Baum Bigus, (913) 707-7746 or at ruthwrite1@gmail.com. Additional information is also available at www.givesevendays.org.

***SevenDays™ 2017 Youth Advisory Board Members**

(Name, high school & faith)

Dawson Gardner, Blue Valley High, Catholic (chair)

Nathan Safir, Blue Valley North, Jewish

Blake Mendenhall, Shawnee Mission West, Jewish

Athena Tran, Blue Valley North, Muslim

Caitlin Riffer, Blue Valley High, Christian

Mahrukh Jamal, Blue Valley Southwest, Muslim

Sydney Osterlund, Blue Valley High, Catholic

Sumaya Hussaini, Blue Valley Southwest, Muslim

Shaktivail Arunachalam, Blue Valley High, Hindu

Areej Arshad, Blue Valley North, Muslim

Elaine Zhu, Blue Valley High

Roshini Thirumalai, Blue Valley West, Hindu

Sydney Galamba, Blue Valley North, Jewish

Belal Jamil, Blue Valley High, Muslim

Ahmed Shabbir, Blue Valley North, Muslim

Lucy Lui, Blue Valley High, Atheist

****SevenDays™ 2017 Button Designer Winners**

(Name, high school, faith, Day of design)

Gabbie Gillespie, Blue Valley Northwest, Christian/Methodist; Day One/Love

Kaitlin Yu, Blue Valley High, Agnostic; Day Two-Discover

Davis Bloom, Blue Valley Southwest; Day Three-Others

Juliet Holmes, Blue Valley High, Buddhism; Day Four-Connect

River Hennick, Hyman Brand Hebrew Academy Jewish; Day Five-Go

Jonah Lee, Blue Valley Northwest, Christian/Presbyterian; Day Six-You

Emily Fisher, Blue Valley Northwest, Christian; Day Seven-Onward

Cassie Forcellini, Blue Valley Southwest, Catholic; General Button/Make a Ripple

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