



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

***Washington Park Neighborhood and MPD  
Awarded National MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Award***

***Mobilizing Residents/Partnerships leads to improved neighborhood safety***

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(December, 2<sup>nd</sup>-Milwaukee) Last night the United Methodist Children's Services and the Milwaukee Police Department accepted the national MetLife Foundation Community- Police Partnership Award for Excellence in Civic Engagement for improving safety in the Washington Park neighborhood, east of Milwaukee's historic Washington Park. More than 560 police departments and community organizations applied for the recognition, and Milwaukee received a record-setting three of eleven awards. A previous event in October honored award recipients in the Harambee and Riverwest neighborhoods.

"The Washington Park Neighborhood has worked very hard to engage our residents and law enforcement to improve the safety and well-building of our community. This award is a great honor for Washington Park and our partners," Perry Huyck, Executive Director, United Methodist Children's Services.

Speakers included Mayor Tom Barrett, Alderman Russell W. Stamper II, District Attorney John Chisholm and MPD Chief Edward Flynn. MetLife Agency Sales Director Derick Klug presented the award, which is accompanied by a \$15,000 contribution to United Methodist Children's Services of Wisconsin, Inc. Guests included neighborhood residents and city leaders at a community dinner at Community Care, 3220 West Vliet Street, Milwaukee.

"Collaboration between community-based groups and police departments can reduce crime, stimulate housing and economic activity, and improve quality of life in lower-income neighborhoods," said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. "The Washington Park partnership is an exemplary model for groups nationwide."

In 2010, United Methodist Children's Services (UMCS) became the convening agency for the Washington Park Partners (WPP), a collaborative of residents, businesses, nonprofits, and city agencies committed to making their neighborhood a thriving community. Major initiatives cited for this award included the development of one of the city's first Neighborhood Improvement Districts, creation of a Good Neighborhood Agreement for area businesses and in 2012, receipt of a highly competitive federal grant through the Department of Justice Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation Program, designed to improve public safety through collaboration, community engagement and enforcement.

"Washington Park is taking a comprehensive approach to revitalization, and the local leaders have been very effective at working with law enforcement to create a thriving community. LISC is proud to shine a light on these successes," said Leo Ries, Executive Director, LISC Milwaukee.

Last year, 1,000 residents participated in block parties, beautification projects and other neighborhood improvement projects. Public safety teams encouraged convenience and liquor stores to make physical improvements and sell healthier food options. Calls for service at these locations plummeted and confirmed incidents dropped more than 50%.

Other strategies targeted vacant and problem properties, with efforts ranging from the creation of a local Landlord Alliance to the rehabilitation of blighted properties by Habitat for Humanity. Milwaukee Police deployed officers in “hot spots” and worked with residents to increase use of the City’s online reporting system, while also conducting workshops with youth to reduce conflict and improve mutual understanding. Crime has dropped more than 30% in the last year alone, with even more marked declines around specific problem locations targeted by the partners.

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**About UMCS:** Based upon our fundamental belief in God’s love, United Methodist Children’s Services of Wisconsin, Inc. (UMCS) values the dignity, potential, and worth of each individual, and creates a nurturing environment and sense of community in which miracles happen. UMCS was organized in 1962 and has provided programming for children and families for 51 years. Perry Huyck has been the Executive Director for 33 years and was instrumental in the purchase and move into in the Washington Park neighborhood for the past 24 years. UMCS programming includes 70 units of affordable housing with supported services representing over \$14 million of real estate investment, a State licensed childcare center, an emergency food pantry and clothing bank, as well as housing several neighborhood partners within its building and a sustainable neighborhood initiative. In 2010, UMCS became the convening agency for Washington Park Partners (WPP). WPP is a collaboration of residents, organizations and businesses working to make the Washington Park community a wonderful place to live, work and play.

**About MetLife Foundation:** MetLife Foundation was created in 1976 to continue MetLife’s long tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. Since its founding through the end of 2013, MetLife Foundation has provided more than \$600 million in grants and \$70 million in program-related investments to organizations addressing issues that have a positive impact in their communities. Today, the Foundation is dedicated to advancing financial inclusion, committing \$200 million over the next five years to help build a secure future for individuals and communities around the world. ([www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org))

**About LISC:** The Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) supports comprehensive, collaborative and community-driven efforts that transform neighborhoods into healthy and sustainable communities of choice and opportunity. Since 1995, Milwaukee LISC has been working towards this vision by providing more than \$100 million in funding, financing, and technical assistance to Community Development Corporations (CDCs), Non-Profit Developers, and Policy & Advocacy Organizations in Milwaukee. LISC’s national Community Safety Initiative has participated by supporting alliances between communities and law enforcement to reduce crime. LISC has administered the MetLife Foundation Community-Police Partnership Awards since 2002. ([www.lisc.org](http://www.lisc.org))