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NEWS RELEASE

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## **The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation announces new strategic direction**

*Evolving to reflect the emerging needs of the community  
and the changing priorities of funders and partners*

**ST. PAUL, Minn. (October 14, 2009)** – The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, continuing on its legacy of more than 100 years of serving the most vulnerable people in greater Saint Paul, today announced it will be transitioning its organizational structure and services to ensure the Foundation remains true to its mission and preserves its endowment fund for future generations. Over the years, the Wilder Foundation has continuously evolved to remain relevant to its clients, partners and the community it serves. In these very challenging economic times, the Wilder Foundation finds itself at another pivotal point in its history.

Funding from many sources has not kept pace with total costs to run all of Wilder's programs over the last five years. As funding decreased, the Wilder Board of Directors allocated additional endowment dollars to make up the funding gaps. The Foundation anticipated funding sources and the economy would recover sooner, including the 17% loss to its endowment fund. This has not occurred, therefore as the percentage of endowment use reached unsustainable levels, Wilder's Board and management embarked on a six month, intensive strategic planning process. The goal was to develop an operating model that addresses the new economic environment while still maintaining the Wilder endowment for future generations.

“The Wilder Foundation is taking this proactive approach in defining a new strategic direction due to changes in service delivery, shifting priorities of funders and the very challenging economic times facing all organizations,” said Tom Kingston, Wilder Foundation President. “We are refining our programs and operations to align for the future – focusing our services on where we can have the greatest positive impact within the East Metro area.”

The Foundation will focus its future work in three areas:

### **Children and Families** - especially low-income and at risk youth and their families through:

- Community mental health services
- Educational reform and school services
- Social adjustment services for new immigrants
- Family housing with supportive services
- New alternative service(s) for children's out-of-home placement

**The Elderly** – especially low-income seniors living in the community through:

- Adult Day Health Program
- Assisted Living Programs
- Health and Wellness Programs
- Services for Caregivers
- Geriatric Dental Care
- Home-delivered Meals

**Community Research and Leadership** – especially focusing on issues affecting our most vulnerable residents and neighbors, through:

- Wilder Research
- The James Shannon Leadership Institute
- Youth Leadership Initiative
- Convening and Public Affairs

To reach these strategic objectives, Wilder will reduce its endowment spending by \$5.4 million, which is approximately 35% of its annual endowment use. Its annual budget will also decline by approximately 35%. Very difficult decisions were also made to transition out of other programs:

- Children’s Placement Services (Foster Care and Children’s Residential Services)
- Home Health Agency and Homemaker Services (primarily serving elderly)
- Employment Services with correctional facilities
- Housing Management Services
- Neighborhood Leadership Program

Timelines for completion of these changes will vary based on the unique needs of Wilder clients, but it is anticipated that the majority will occur within the next nine months. Approximately 200 full-time equivalent employees will be impacted by these transitions.

“Going forward, our more focused organization will continue to be a leading social services provider for those most in need of our assistance,” said Kingston. “We are committed to convening the community around critical issues and working with our partners to address the emerging needs of East Metro residents. Our decision to redefine our strategic direction will ensure that Wilder continues to address community needs today and for future generations.”

Kingston, having recently announced his plans to retire in June 2010, is committed to leading Wilder through this period of transition. The Foundation’s next leader will take the helm of an organization well-positioned for the future.

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***About the Wilder Foundation***

*For more than 100 years, the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation has combined direct service, research and community development to address the needs of the most vulnerable people in greater Saint Paul. For more information on the Wilder Foundation, visit [www.wilder.org](http://www.wilder.org)*