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## **Wilder Foundation's Neighborhood Leadership Programs Offer Training to Current and Future Community Leaders**

*Deadline is October 3 for Leadership Skills for Success*

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**ST. PAUL, Minn. (Sept. 18, 2007)** – The Wilder Foundation today announced that October 3 is the deadline for applying for the organization's Neighborhood Leadership Program's six-month training series designed to help participants build knowledge, skills and connections for effective community leadership. The training, Leadership Skills for Success, is open to anyone who works, lives or volunteers in the greater St. Paul area and is interested in becoming more involved in the community. The Wilder Foundation is a nonprofit health and human services organization that has served the greater St. Paul area since 1906.

Wilder Neighborhood Leadership Programs (NLP) have trained more than 400 community leaders since they began over a decade ago including, Carlene Coleman, a recent program graduate. Coleman says that participating in the program is helping her succeed in her current position as director for Faith in the City Personal Finance Center. The nonprofit organization, part of Lutheran Social Services, helps community members become financially stable.

"As a person of color, I want to affect positive change in the lives of people like me who are facing similar challenges that I did as a young girl. After graduating from Wilder's Neighborhood Leadership Programs, I am now using new skills that I learned to make a difference in my community," she added.

People interested in the training can register for Leadership Skills for Success for as little as \$100, making the training affordable as well as valuable. Actual program costs for each student are approximately \$2,500 and participants or their sponsors are asked to cover as much of the costs as possible.

During the six-month program, students learn many new skills, including gaining a greater understanding and awareness of themselves, developing effective working relationships with others and engaging in meaningful action in the community. Participants are also teamed with personal coaches to help establish one-on-one relationships between existing community and neighborhood leaders and NLP students.

As an added bonus, members of the 2007-2008 class will be the first to meet at the new Wilder Center, when the organization moves in January 2008. The new building is currently being constructed at the intersection of Lexington Parkway and University Ave.

According to Tom Kingston, president of the Wilder Foundation, the new Wilder Center will also play a role in building successful community leadership.

“In the early 1990s, Wilder set a goal to build stronger communities by taking a leadership role in training leaders who can help strengthen the communities. A key feature of the new building will be a community convening space for people to attend training, education and leadership events,” Kingston said. “The new Wilder Center will serve as a gathering place for community members and organizations, and help us build even stronger communities in the future,” he added.

There is space for 30 participants in Wilder’s upcoming Leadership Skills for Success training. Classes are held twice each month – one Monday evening and one Saturday – from November through April. Orientation is scheduled for Oct. 29. Child care and transportation services are available to participants on a limited basis. Participants who are registered students at Metro State University can also earn credit for independent study.

Anyone with questions about the Wilder Neighborhood Leadership Programs should call 651-642-4057 or e-mail [NLP@wilder.org](mailto:NLP@wilder.org). To learn more about the Wilder Foundation and the new Wilder Center, visit [www.wilder.org](http://www.wilder.org).

***About the New Wilder Center***

The 99,953 square-foot, four-story building will house approximately 300 employees from Wilder Programs, Wilder Research and Administration and Executive Offices, and is designed to accommodate more than 22,000 client visits each year. A key feature of the building will be a community convening space for up to 300 people to attend training, education and leadership events.

***About the Wilder Foundation***

The Amherst H. Wilder Foundation is a nonprofit health and human services organization that has served the greater St. Paul, Minn., area since 1906. The Foundation operates more than 70 programs and services that help children succeed in school; troubled youth and families; individuals and families maintain long-term housing; older adults remain independent; and organizations and individuals work for positive change in the community. Wilder Research is one of the nation’s largest nonprofit research and evaluation groups dedicated to practical research in the field of human services. Wilder Leadership Programs work to nurture and build the skills of emerging community leaders, and to renew the energy and commitment of experienced leaders.

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