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**United Way of Otero County Changes name to Thrive in Southern New Mexico  
Local nonprofit envisions a growing thriving community**

**(Alamogordo, NM) June 20, 2017** – United Way of Otero County, the leading fundraiser for local nonprofits in Otero and Lincoln Counties announces the rebranding of their organization to, Thrive in Southern New Mexico (LetsThriveNM.org). With the purpose of refocusing their efforts on local issues, and continuing their mission of creating lasting change by harnessing collective compassion and resources, they will continue to partner with local nonprofits & businesses. With numerous individuals and families just scraping by, Thrive in Southern New Mexico believes that we were meant to do more, we were meant to Thrive. “Since I started with the UWOC in 2012, I have worked with many organizations that are committed to meeting the needs of this community. Unfortunately, these organizations are faced with federal and state funding cuts every year. With even more focus on local needs, Thrive in Southern New Mexico will continue to fundraise for these organizations, allowing them to focus on what they do best,” said Linda Elliott, Executive Director.

The United Way of Otero County, now Thrive in Southern New Mexico, has been a part of the community for over 51 years and has raised millions of dollars through the generous support of local individuals and businesses. The organization started out as the Community Chest, later transitioned to the United Fund and then became the United Way of Otero County, which allowed them to take advantage of the benefits of being a part of a larger branded organization. As the United Way Worldwide continues to grow and change, the small local United Way has come to find that the larger United Way Worldwide’s long-term goals do not align with the local United Way’s community goals. The UWOC board made the decision to refocus specifically on the needs of Otero and Lincoln Counties and move forward with an organization name change. Angelica Marquez, President of the board of Directors, “I have been with United Way of Otero County since 2011, and as Thrive in Southern New Mexico we will continue to raise funds and collaborate with our partner agencies as they work to improve lives in Otero and Lincoln Counties. The move from United Way Worldwide will allow Thrive in Southern New Mexico to better provide funding to local organizations, ensuring present and future growth to help meet the increasing needs of Otero County and Lincoln County.”

The emphasis of this organization has always been to support local non-profits in their missions to help children, families and seniors to grow and thrive in their community, and to partner with them in their missions. The separation from the United Way Worldwide will allow Thrive in Southern New Mexico to focus on those needs even more and as they continue to collaborate with local businesses, ensuring all monies raised here stay here. “For over five decades, First National Bank and its associates have been proud supporters of the community service efforts of the UWOC and its predecessor. We are looking forward to continuing that tradition as we work with Thrive in Southern New Mexico to provide support and assistance to our local communities and those that live here,” said Steve Muell, President of First National Bank.

UWOC is excited to move forward with the change to Thrive in Southern New Mexico and the opportunities it will bring for this organization, our local community, and the people of Otero and Lincoln Counties. Michelle Brideaux, Director of Fundraising & Public Relations said, “We know that when we work together to help each other we can and will accomplish so much more. We can create a community that is thriving in all aspects of life.”

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**About Thrive in Southern New Mexico:**

Thrive in Southern New Mexico brings diverse people & resources together to address the most urgent issues that our community faces. By working with local nonprofits and focusing on the most critical local needs, we move beyond the surface of our community problems to tackle the underlying causes. Thrive wants to make the greatest possible impact, focusing on: Strengthening & Supporting Families, Promoting Self-Sufficiency, Helping Children & Youth Succeed, Building Vital & Safe Neighborhoods, and Supporting the Vulnerable & Aging. For more information about Thrive in Southern New Mexico call 575-437-8400 or visit [www.LetsThriveNM.org](http://www.LetsThriveNM.org)