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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Let’s WIN KC**

**October 5, 2023 KC Health Dept, 2400 Troost Ave, KCMO 64108**

**Ken Lumpkins | [team@letswinkc.com](mailto:team@letswinkc.com)**

**816.622.3372x702**

***Olympian Muna Lee and Basketball All-Star Michael Watson Team Up To Promote Mental Health & Physical Fitness***

***KCMO Health Department Launches Team Up to Win Campaign on World Mental Health Day***

Kansas City, Missouri – As World Mental Health Day approaches on October 10th, the Kansas City Health Department is launching new communications to support its mental health initiative, Let’s WIN KC (LWKC). This fall’s new creative campaign, titled **Team Up to Win**, continues the work started in 2022 of providing essential resources and awareness for mental health and overall well-being. With Team Up to Win, this year builds on the first year’s focus on individual action and personal reflection, now working to inspire people and organizations to come together for community-wide health betterment. Champion athletes and KC natives, Muna Lee and Michael Watson serve as ambassadors of the new campaign.

Let’s WIN KC was conceived in response to the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the many forms of loss it caused, ranging from job loss to loss of life. This loss exacerbated anxiety and depression and the need for mental health support. Let’s WIN KC works to move people beyond the state of losses to winning, by educating the community, particularly low socio-economic residents, about key available resources.

The agency, Blue Symphony LLC, developed and launched LWKC. According to Marketing and Creative Director, Ken Lumpkins, “We found that we’ve been able to effectively reach hundreds of thousands in the community and drive real impact. In fact, we were told by a mother that we helped save her son’s life by simply providing contact information to resources.” Lumpkins states, “A popular tool we created is a laminated wallet card that helps people manage anxiety, depression, and anger *in the moment*.” This simple yet powerful tool contains proven techniques and essential contact information that can be a lifeline. The cards can be picked up at the KCMO Health Department at 2400 Troost Avenue or ordered online at letswinkc.com.

LWKC draws inspiration from the world of sports, demonstrating the parallels between winning and losing in games and life. The new Team Up to Win communications feature esteemed champions, Muna Lee and Michael Watson. Both are graduates of Central High School in Kansas City, Missouri. Muna, a two-time Olympian, was a standout world champion in track and field. She represented the nation in the 2004 and 2008 Olympics. Michael Watson, a basketball prodigy, left an indelible mark on the UMKC Kangaroos, earning recognition as UMKC’s all-time leading scorer, having his number retired by the university. He signed a free agent contract with the NBA’s Boston Celtics in 2004 and played professionally for 10 seasons in Poland, Turkey, Italy, France, and his native Puerto Rico. Athletes are especially appropriate for the campaign because physical fitness is an important component for mental health. They also have a base of fans that can be reached and supported. Athletes, as well as the city’s professional sports teams are being invited to support this effort.

The new campaign launches on Tuesday, October 10th, which is World Mental Health Day, a global initiative mobilizing efforts to support mental health, reduce the stigma, and advocate for good mental health practices. A variety of tactics, including digital, print, and outdoor will be released throughout the year. Live events will be hosted, including for the second year in a row, the LWKC team-up with The KnowJoey? Foundation’s Turkey Tuesday food donation event on November 21st, followed by WIN Wednesday, November 22nd. Wednesday’s event is the food distribution fair where those in need can receive food donations, nonperishables, plus health and wellness resources. Both events are held at Kansas City Urban Youth Academy 1622 E. 17th Terrace Kansas City, MO 64108. New this year, at a separate location is a wrap-up, hot-plate meal event.

For details, resources, more events or to get involved, please visit letswinkc.com.

*The Kansas City Health Department is dedicated to enhancing the well-being of Kansas City residents by providing essential resources and support. Through innovative campaigns like Let’s WIN KC, we aim to foster a community where mental and physical health are prioritized.*

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