

Volunteers Team Up with Detroit Lions in 9th Annual Hometown Huddle

By Brandon Seng, Michigan Nonprofit Association



The United Way for Southeastern Michigan teamed up with the Detroit Lions, the American Heart Association and the Boys and Girls Club of Southeastern Michigan for the 9th annual Hometown Huddle. The Lions long-standing association with Hometown Huddle is one of the longest-running and most visible charitable collaborations of its kind. This year, Detroit Lions players, volunteers and local area youth came together to build a \$65,000 fitness trail project.

“We know that kids today are not getting enough physical and outdoor activity. United Way is proud to participate in this project that specifically addresses that basic need,” said Michael J. Brennan, president & CEO, United Way for Southeastern Michigan. “This is a win-win partnership between organizations that are committed to mentoring and developing youth, and it is a tremendous example of what can be accomplished when we all work together.”

Detroit is one of 32 cities that participate in Hometown Huddle. Once a year, NFL teams join forces with United Way for a national day of community service. NFL players from each of the 32 teams put down their shoulder pads and pick up a paintbrush, a box of canned goods or a spatula to lend a hand to members of their communities.

Spearheading the Detroit Lions efforts in this year’s Hometown Huddle is defensive tackle Shaun Rogers and others from the Lions’ defensive line. Rogers, a 340-pound, two-time Pro Bowl standout, organized his linemates to help defray the expenses of the fitness trail.

“The NFL and the Lions have enjoyed a rewarding relationship with United Way for more than three decades,” said Tim Pendell, Detroit Lions Senior Director of Community Affairs. “We are excited about this opportunity to bring together our long-standing partners to promote the importance of physical education among our community’s youth.”

The completed fitness trail features ten individual stations, including: leg-stretch, chin-up, step-up, balance beam, knee-raise, sit-up, high jump, spring-up, push-up and hand walk. The trail surrounds the Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Athletic Field, located at the Gardenview Estates in Detroit.

For more information, contact or visit www.uwsem.org.