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## **Vanderbilt Community Alliance Launches Grassroots Effort Urging Vanderbilt University to Pay a Living Wage**

*New website [www.vandycommunity.org](http://www.vandycommunity.org) launches today*

**Nashville, TN- October 24, 2006** – The Vanderbilt Community Alliance (VCA) today announced the launch of a grassroots coalition of Vanderbilt University employees, students, faculty, community members and labor organizations who are calling upon the Vanderbilt Administration to compensate all full-time hourly staff with a living wage.

VCA's new website, [www.vandycommunity.org](http://www.vandycommunity.org), provides information and grassroots tools for community members who support their efforts to persuade Vanderbilt University to adopt socially accountable compensation for the employees who keep it running.

“What we are asking for is not unreasonable,” said VCA Co-Chair Randy Dillard. “Full-time hourly Vanderbilt employees should not need to work second or even third jobs or collect government assistance just to meet basic needs.”

The current minimum pay for Vanderbilt employees is \$7.55 per hour. According to estimates by the Economic Policy Institute and Wider Opportunities for Women, the amount of money needed to pay for housing, childcare, food, transportation, healthcare and taxes in Nashville, TN is \$10.18 per hour, equaling a cumulative yearly income of \$21,000.

Vanderbilt University, the second largest employer in Tennessee, has historically resisted adopting a living wage due to supposed budget and economic restraints. Meanwhile, Vanderbilt chancellor, Gordon Gee, is the third highest paid university chief in the U.S., earning an annual \$1.3 million. Tuition exceeds \$40,000 per year for full-time undergraduate students, and the university endowment exceeds \$2 billion.

The full-time hourly Vanderbilt employees are currently engaged in contract negotiations with the Vanderbilt Administration regarding such issues as wages, retirement and healthcare benefits, and mandatory parking fees. VCA believes that change is long overdue, and urges the Administration to fairly compensate the employees that keep it running.

For more information or to get involved, please visit [www.vandycommunity.org](http://www.vandycommunity.org).

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*With a focus on dignity, respect, and fairness, VCA was founded to raise awareness and fight for a living wage for the hard working, full-time hourly employees that keep the university and medical center running – groundskeepers, custodians, heating, air and refrigeration technicians, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, dining service workers and painters.*