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## Vanderbilt Community Alliance Launches Ad Campaign Featuring Vanderbilt Employees

*Ads urge Vanderbilt University to pay hourly workers a living wage*

**Nashville, TN- November 7, 2006** – The Vanderbilt Community Alliance (VCA) today launched an advertising campaign urging the Vanderbilt University Administration to pay all full-time employees a fair living wage. The current minimum pay for Vanderbilt employees is \$7.55 an 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.

The ads, which appear in *The Tennessean*, feature Vanderbilt employees from housekeepers to custodial workers. Employees Fred Butler, Marilyn Osborne, DeWayne Arbogast, and sisters, Carolyn and Margaret Lawless, are all featured in the campaign.

“These aren’t just faces in an ad; they are the men and women of Vanderbilt who keep the school running – without them, Vanderbilt would not be the venerable institution that it is,” said Tim Bowles, Co-Chair of the student organization Living Income for Vanderbilt Employees (LIVE).

“The absence of a living wage at an institution with as many resources as Vanderbilt is deplorable, it’s not right to have people who work and live on a subsistence level,” said Glenn Farner, labor leader and member of the VCA. “We are a community and we need to take care of each other; without dignity, respect, and fairness, there is no community,”

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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*VCA is a grassroots coalition of Vanderbilt University employees, students, faculty, community members, and labor organizations. 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.*