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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP) and
Youth Alternatives Ingraham (YI) Vote to Merge**

(Portland) The Boards of Trustees for the People's Regional Opportunity Program (PROP) of Cumberland County and Youth Alternatives Ingraham (YI) voted at their respective meetings this week to approve the merger of the two agencies and the integration of all programs and services to better benefit their clients and the larger community.

For more than 40 years, PROP and YI have been an integral part of supporting individuals and families in Cumberland County. As a merged and integrated agency, the organization will be more proactive and efficient in developing community solutions that are effective, collaborative and have measurable impact. Because the missions and programming of PROP and YI are aligned and complementary, a merger between the two organizations will encourage a more efficient use of scarce funding for service delivery by eliminating duplication in administrative costs. The new combined agency will continue to provide support in accessing healthcare, housing, child care and early education, and nutrition. It will also improve services to people living with persistent and chronic mental illness by creating an integrated, seamless system of care where people coming to the agency for help may access services through multiple channels yet only need tell their story once. The merger brings together two very strong service and advocacy organizations with longstanding experience in our community working for and with people who are economically challenged, families in need of reunification, and people living with mental illness and substance use disorders.

The new merged organization is expected to remain a Community Action Agency. Community Action Agencies were created as part of President Lyndon Johnson's national *War on Poverty* and have been addressing the causes and effects of poverty for 45 years.

The expected date of completion of the full merger and integration of operations, programs, and services is October 1, 2011. Michael J. Tarpinian, current President of YI, has been designated the

Chief Executive Officer of the new merged organization. A comprehensive process for determining a new name for the merged organization is underway and is expected to be announced in September.

For more information or to speak with Mike Tarpinian, Marc Doyon (Chair, PROP Board of Trustees), or Kristen Potter Farnham, (Chair, YI Board of Trustees), please contact Mike Tarpinian at the number listed above, or contact Jim Gemmell, Director of Communications at YI: (207) 523-5014; jgemmell@yimaine.org.

People's Regional Opportunity Program, [PROP](#), is the Community Action Agency for Cumberland County. Founded in 1965 to address the War on Poverty, PROP runs programs throughout Cumberland County and statewide including Head Start, WIC (Women's Infants and Children nutrition), Maine Youth Action Network, Fuel Assistance, Parkside Neighborhood Center and many others. The agency's mission is to transform communities by helping people in need build better lives, often by partnering with local organizations to offer program expertise and management. PROP employs 200 and has an annual budget of approximately \$17 million that is funded by federal, state, local and private donors.

[Youth Alternatives Ingraham \(YI\)](#) has its origins in two separate agencies: Youth Alternatives, which began in 1972 on Munjoy Hill in Portland serving children and families in need, and Ingraham, a behavioral health services provider for adults begun in 1967. Youth Alternatives Ingraham (the two agencies merged in 2007) is comprised of 30 integrated treatment, education, and advocacy programs serving more than 12,000 people annually. YI serves children, youth, adults, and seniors; individuals, families, and communities throughout Maine. The agency provides crisis services, counseling, psychiatric services, medication management, case management, advocacy, residential treatment programming, and parent and family education and supports. YI also provides services via a 24-7 crisis phone line and an information & referral service through 2-1-1 Maine. The organization has 260 employees and an annual budget of \$19 million from federal, state and private sources.

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