



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 7, 2006

Contact:

Barry Lessow, United Way Executive Director

barry@monroeunitedway.org

Susan Engle, Capacity Building Specialist

812-334-8370

**SOCIAL ENTERPRISE EXPERT VISITS BLOOMINGTON**

“Nonprofits will redefine the way they look at themselves, conduct business, generate resources, and choose leadership,” That’s how nationally known expert Martha J. Perry describes the ‘social entrepreneurship movement’ that is revolutionizing the way some nonprofits do business.

In an era of declining government support, many nonprofit organizations are seeking ways to diversify income streams through operating social enterprises.

During her visit on June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2006, Ms. Perry, Associate Executive Director of the McCune Foundation, spoke to over 80 Monroe County community representatives about social enterprise. During her presentation, ***“Creating and Nurturing a Regional Social Entrepreneurial Environment,”*** Perry discussed her experiences in the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania area, and the potential for Monroe County nonprofits to pursue social enterprises.

Local nonprofit leaders were excited to learn more about how social enterprise might strengthen social service organizations by generating more sustainable income sources. “Martha presented a sort of Social Enterprise 101 that was both informative and useful—a road map to developing programs and businesses locally,” said Charlotte Zietlow, economic development coordinator at Middle Way House, Inc. and member of the Social Enterprise Committee.

Through the initiation of small ventures that create both social and financial outcomes, nonprofits like Middle Way House now seek a “double bottom line.” Middle Way House operates several small social ventures including Middleway Food Works, a catering business that provides living wage jobs for women, and Confidential Document Destruction.

Another existing example of social enterprise in Monroe County is Stone Belt LeatherWorks, an enterprise devoted to crafting fine leather goods while providing education and support to people with disabilities.

Leslie Green, Executive Director of Stone Belt Arc, is also a member of the Social Entrepreneurship Committee, a group of community leaders who helped to bring Mrs. Perry to speak in Bloomington. According to Green, “The gathering of nonprofit, business, and government groups helps get the community in tune with the concept of social entrepreneurship. I hope these sectors can work together to further explore ideas and create a fertile ground for the development of social enterprises within this community.”

Committee member Barry Lessow, Executive Director of United Way, commented “nonprofits in Monroe County continuously seek new opportunities to serve the community more efficiently and effectively. We look carefully for initiatives that have the potential to reduce budgetary pressures and bring programmatic impacts. Our job now is to identify and pursue those enterprises that have a realistic ability to contribute to our mission.”

The concept of social entrepreneurship has recently expanded to Indiana University, where graduate students are learning to apply business methods to meeting social challenges in the new Social Entrepreneurship Program, a collaboration of the Kelley School of Business and the School of Public and Environmental Affairs.

“The program is intended to give the students a solid understanding of new venture creation and sustainability (Kelley principles) while maintaining a focus on the essential social mission of the organization (SPEA classes),” said Kristin Centanni, an MPA student involved in the new certificate program. Centanni, who is working with Middle Way House to produce business analyses for social enterprises Food Works and Confidential Document Destruction, believes that “a diverse group of committed individuals is essential to create the supportive foundation needed for a community interested in the ‘social entrepreneurship movement’.”

After the workshop, community leaders from all sectors met and planned to take further action. “We feel we have some clear next steps—determining what sorts of businesses might be needed and feasible to develop in this community, figuring out what various organizations can bring to the creating of such businesses, and working out the financing, implementation, training and start-up of these businesses,” said Zietlow.

According to United Way's Lessow, "we have already added social entrepreneurship materials to our Nonprofit Resource Center. We invite any nonprofit that would like to learn more about these opportunities to look through these books and journals."

Ms. Perry's visit was sponsored by the United Way of Monroe County, the Social Entrepreneurship Program of Indiana University, Ivy Tech Community College-Bloomington, and the South Central Indiana Small Business Development Center.

*Sponsor Descriptions:*

United Way works with 27 certified member agencies and other partners to ensure that Monroe County residents have access to sufficient food, housing, health care and emergency services. United Way also invests in programs that strengthen children and youth, support efforts for seniors to remain independent, and promote workforce preparation. United Way can be reached at 334-8370 or [www.monroeunitedway.org](http://www.monroeunitedway.org).

The Indiana University Social Entrepreneurship Program trains qualified graduate MBA or MPA students to apply business methods to meeting social challenges. A joint program of the Kelley School of Business and the School of Public and Environmental Affairs, the Social Entrepreneurship Program focuses on the practical application of the latest academic research in socially responsible business approaches to meeting the real world needs of area nonprofits, businesses and public agencies.

Ivy Tech Community College - Bloomington serves its diverse communities as a comprehensive community college by creating and sustaining strategic partnerships for the purpose of delivering high quality educational and training programs.

The South Central Indiana SBDC offers a wealth of free and low cost information, management counseling, and educational services designed to support Indiana small business owners and potential entrepreneurs. Their mission is to help Indiana business grow and create new jobs within the state.

-END-