

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**United Way
of Monroe County**

UNITED WAY OF MONROE COUNTY RAISES \$1,400,137

Bloomington, IN – United Way of Monroe County celebrated the conclusion of its 2010-2011 community campaign earlier today.

During the media event, United Way leaders announced the campaign raised \$1,400,137, and recognized those who worked hard to raise much-needed funds to improve our community. Also highlighted were achievements from the past year and the impact of current initiatives.

United Way of Monroe County improves people’s lives by addressing critical needs today and works to reduce those needs tomorrow. Together with their network of community partners and 24 member agencies, United Way creates and supports comprehensive solutions that help make our communities stronger.

Barry Lessow, United Way Executive Director, commended those who helped with the campaign. “Every day in this community, people think about the causes they care about and make the decision to give to them, advocate about them, and volunteer for them. We call that living united. When it can make a difference, people in this community will come together and work. Whether that work means serving meals, mentoring a child, or making phone calls to donors, that is how we can improve people's lives. We appreciate the work of our campaign chairs, their cabinet, and the workplace campaign coordinators. The entire community will be better because of the individual donors and workplace leaders who stepped up.”

United Way and their member agencies focus on programs that ensure Monroe County residents have access to the building blocks of opportunity: Education, Earnings, and Essentials. Education is the path to increased earnings, so United Way works to ensure children have the cognitive skills and social support to enter school ready to learn and graduate school ready to earn. United Way also supports services people need to maintain stable employment, strengthen their financial knowledge, and develop a solid relationship with a bank or credit union. This helps them build financial stability for themselves and their families. The essentials of sufficient food, stable housing, a community safety net, counseling, low-cost medical visits, and referral services are supported by United Way and help ensure every family can be successful.

Monroe County Assessor and Campaign Chair Judy Sharp announced the campaign total. She remarked, “Even though the economy has been challenging, our community came together. The United Way campaign saw 15% more new donors this year than last.” She went on to say, “We set an ambitious

goal of \$1,400,000 for this campaign. I'm pleased to announce, that even with all the challenges, individuals and companies gave a total of \$1,400,137! I want to thank everyone who donated, everyone who supported these efforts, and everyone who helped us reach our goal."

Mark Franklin, of German American, serves as the United Way Board President and has been instrumental in developing the United Way Loaned Executive program. He emphasized the impact loaned executives had on achieving the goal during this campaign. "Loaned Executives play a valuable role in the success of the Community Campaign by providing additional support and resources for workplace campaigns. Among the 55 companies assigned to a Loaned Executive, overall employee giving increased." On 'loan' from their employers, these eight volunteers spent time each week during the campaign calling new workplaces, making visits, presenting information, and bringing back results. Mr. Franklin expressed that United Way is currently recruiting Loaned Executives for the next campaign.

Christy Gillenwater, President and CEO of the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce and United Way board member, challenged businesses to deepen their involvement with United Way. "Businesses that support the United Way campaign provide leadership in doing so." She went on to say, "United Way focuses hard on the issues that we know will improve people's lives. With the community's support, United Way addresses critical needs and makes investments that will reduce the demand for those needs in the future. This helps create a better educated workforce and also creates a better, safer, more economically-stable community."

Several workplaces received awards for their outstanding contributions to the campaign. Indiana University, Indiana University Health Bloomington, and General Electric received the Pillar Award for each raising \$50,000. A complete list of award winners is available at www.monroeunitedway.org.

Thanks to generous donations, vital programs will be supported throughout the coming year. By supporting partnership initiatives and member agencies that work in the areas of education, earnings, and essentials, United Way ensures that families who need assistance can address the underlying issues they face.

The impact of donated dollars over the past year include:

- 46% more low- to moderate-income people were able to file their taxes through the Free Community Tax Service.
- The Monroe County Dropout Prevention Coalition, a partnership initiative, hosted two summits in 2010 and produced a service guide for at-risk youth. Serving as a model for other communities in the state, the Coalition is focused on improving college access and success for students in Monroe County.
- Monroe Smart Start, started by United Way in partnership with the Community Foundation, developed a community-wide School Readiness Definition. This birth-to-five coalition also created and distributed the Pillars of Parenting, parenting tips to give children the best start.
- Along with partners from Brown, Greene, Monroe, and Owen counties, United Way led the formation of the Financial Stability Alliance for South Central Indiana. The Alliance is increasing the fiscal strength of at-risk residents.
- 86% of parents with children enrolled in Monroe County United Ministries' childcare program indicate they are now more aware of how they can support their child's development and education

at home. 76% of parents said enrolling their child in MCUM improved their own educational or employment opportunities.

- 65% of Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program alumni agreed that their Big helped them reach a higher level of education than they thought possible. 42% completed a 4-year degree, a rate nearly double that of their parents.
- All of the residents who lived at Middle Way House The Rise in 2010 increased or maintained their earnings upon exiting the program.
- The number of jobs secured through Options' work support program increased by 33% during 2010.
- All of the 182 families that were provided rent and mortgage assistance through Salvation Army were able to avoid eviction from their homes.
- Shalom Community Center provided over 7,000 bus tickets to help residents obtain transportation to jobs, school, health care, and social service agencies.
- 90% of the youth in Rhino's after school program who smoked cigarettes have since quit smoking with the assistance of Rhino's staff.

Improving people's lives is United Way's most important job. We all win when children succeed, our neighbors are financially stable, and all families are strengthened.

United Way of Monroe County is a nonprofit organization that improves people's lives by addressing critical needs today and working to reduce those needs tomorrow. Through its Community Action Fund and grant opportunities, United Way works with 24 member agencies and community partners to focus resources on the building blocks for a better life: education, earnings, and the essentials. You can find more information at www.monroeunitedway.org.

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