



**United Way
Community Services
of Monroe County**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way Sets Goals with 2005-2006 Campaign Kick-Off

United Way Community Services of Monroe County began this year's fundraising campaign with a successful kick-off event Friday, September 9th. Sponsored by Indiana University, the luncheon was held at in the Hoosier Room at the IU Memorial Stadium, and featured IU Head Football Coach Terry Hooppner as the keynote speaker. Other speakers included:

- Mark Moore, President/CEO of Bloomington Hospital and Community Campaign Chair,
- Gerardo González, Dean of the IU School of Education and co-chair of the Indiana University United Way Campaign,
- Barry Lessow, Executive Director of United Way.

The kick-off invigorated campaign leaders and strengthened their enthusiasm and dedication for this year's fundraising effort.

The theme of the campaign is "Improving People's Lives," and Executive Director Barry Lessow highlighted that United Way's 25 member agencies each have been successful in this mission: "At Rhino's Youth Center, for instance, half the teens in the after-school programs are considered low income. 30 youth in those programs last year were high school graduation age and all 30 did graduate; two were named National Merit finalists." United Way will strive to continue this success with the ambitious goal of raising \$1,450,000, an increase over the \$1,448,000 raised last year for the community (last year's fund raising total of \$1,614,475 included the combined federal campaign, which is reported separately this year).

Mark Moore recognized the importance of the campaign and the commitment to local residents by both United Way and Bloomington Hospital. He announced that the campaign has already experienced success: "This year, several local firms including GE, joined the member agencies in a 'Pacesetter' campaign. That early campaign had a goal of \$145,000. As of today, they have raised \$180,000."

Gerardo González also voiced his dedication to the campaign and called on faculty, staff, and student leaders to reach IU's goal of raising \$615,000 in support of United Way and its services. "In education, we see very clearly how important early development is to later success. So, my support of United Way comes also from my personal concerns that all families have the best opportunity to fulfill their potential," said González.

Coach Terry Hoepfner scored when he said he is a "Fan of United Way." He told the audience that the players and coaches at Nicholls State, located in Louisiana, wanted to play the scheduled game at Indiana even after hurricane Katrina. The IU Athletics Department did all they could to assist the opposing team in reaching their goal of competing against IU, and Coach Hoepfner believes that United Way does everything in its power to improve the lives of people in Monroe County.

The event also included the premiere of the new campaign video that portrays how, every day even in small ways, each of us can help our neighbors. The video will soon be available for viewing on the UWCS web site.

To reinforce the theme of "Improving People's Lives" throughout the campaign, United Way will highlight accounts of community members overcoming obstacles with the help of UWCS member agencies. Whether it is mentoring an at-risk child, providing emergency assistance to a disaster victim, or helping an elderly woman live independently, these stories prove that Bloomington is a better place because of donor generosity.

Those wishing to join United Way make a lasting impact on our community can download a pledge card from the web site www.monroeunitedway.org. Donors can contribute in the form of cash, check, credit card, or can choose to be billed. Those participating in workplace campaigns can contribute via payroll deduction. Any company interested in having a workplace campaign or any group that would like a presentation about United Way or our 25 member agencies is encouraged to call Resource Development Director Heather Allen at 812-334-8370.

United Way Community Services of Monroe County is a nonprofit organization with the mission to improve people's lives by mobilizing the caring power of our community. Through its Community Care Fund, it allocates resources to 25 member agencies that address the most pressing human service needs in Monroe County. United Way can be reached at 812-334-8370 or www.monroeunitedway.org.

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