



**United Way
of Monroe County**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 17, 2008

Contact: Lori Garraghty, United Way Resource Development
Barry Lessow, United Way Executive Director
812-334-8370
barry@monroeunitedway.org

United Way Sets Goals with 2008-2009 Campaign Kick-Off

United Way of Monroe County began this year's fundraising campaign with a successful kick-off event Wednesday, September 17th. Sponsored by Indiana University, the outdoor luncheon was held at the DeVault Alumni Center, and featured IU Head Football Coach Bill Lynch. Other speakers included:

- Jo VanDerSnick, Community Campaign Chair and Vice President at Chase Bank
- Adelheid Gealt, IU United Way Campaign Chair and Director of the Indiana University Art Museum
- Anna Weigand, United Way Board Chair and Program Coordinator at the City of Bloomington
- Barry Lessow, United Way Executive Director

Today, United Way also launched "Take Action. Create Opportunity. LIVE UNITED." – an invitation for everyone to work together to be a part of lasting improvements in our community. "LIVE UNITED" is a year-round campaign that encourages people to give, advocate, and volunteer with the understanding that when we take action, we create opportunity.

Campaign leaders announced a fundraising goal of \$1,400,000. Last year, the campaign raised \$1,421,693, and the board set a goal that recognizes the economic pressures, but also hopes that people will be generous so United Way can help those who are in significant distress.

Executive Director Barry Lessow remarked, "Whether you think it's a matter of social justice or a matter of basic economics, the reality is that a community in which all people have opportunities for success is a better community... and one in which you and I also have greater opportunities for ourselves and our families." He reminded volunteers that, "Your work during this campaign will improve the lives of those who knock on an agency door... and that will ripple out in some very direct and very subtle ways to the entire community. We all give to United Way and we all benefit from United Way."

Jo VanDerSnick recognized the importance of the campaign and the commitment to local residents by United Way. “It is through this campaign that we will have the opportunity to make sure that people have the building blocks to create opportunity. The funds we raise over the next few months will provide agencies with the resources to do their work... work that we know is increasingly important when we see friends having trouble making ends meet. For instance, the Hoosier Hills Food Bank this year will provide over 2.3 million pounds of food to 85 agencies in 6 counties. According to those agencies, over half the people who need food are working.”

Heidi Gealt of the IU Art Museum said, “We are being asked today to see the world through the lens of Live United. What would that world look like? Would it be hungry, homeless, and afraid... or would it be hopeful, optimistic, and brimming with opportunity? Would it be characterized by inertia or by people who take action? United Way is asking us to see the world as one in which the players, us, take action to help create opportunity. On one level, the opportunity may seem to be for one person who appears at an agency needing assistance, but the impact accumulates until our Bloomington takes on the look of a healthier, stronger, more vibrant community.”

Anna Weigand remarked on the value and quality of the services provided by United Ways 26 member agencies. “My involvement is so my children can grow up in a community in which people have the building blocks of a successful life: an education that will lead to productive employment, earnings sufficient to support a family through retirement, and the essentials we all need: sufficient food, a stable place to live, access to affordable health care and the skills to manage life’s crises.”

Coach Bill Lynch reported that he benefited from United Way as a young man, and connected through a story about a former IU football player who has become tremendously successful because a few people, the right people, gave him a chance. Coach Lynch talked about three words he considers critical to success on and off the field: opportunity, teamwork, and leadership. Then Coach Lynch went for an extra point, reminding the audience of the message he gives his team of 110 players: to succeed, you need a goal, the skills to accomplish that goal, and the recognition that important goals do not come easily. “We are all leaders: with great enthusiasm and energy, knowledge and integrity, we get the job done.”

To reinforce the theme of “Take Action. Create Opportunity. LIVE UNITED.” the campaign will feature photos and stories of people throughout the community who give, advocate, and volunteer.

Those wishing to join United Way in making a lasting impact on our community can visit United Way’s web site at www.monroeunitedway.org and securely donate online via PayPal or credit card. Donors can also download a pledge card and contribute in the form of cash, check, credit card, automatic bank withdrawal, stocks and securities, 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 member agencies is encouraged to call Resource Development Director Lori Garraghty at lori@monroeunitedway.org or 812-334-8370.

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, it allocates resources to 26 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.

###