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**\*\*\*\* Media Release\*\*\*\***

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**Contact:**

Craig TerBlanche, Media Contact, (904) 685-5214

Connie Hodges, President and CEO (904) 390-3218

Janet Owens, Vice President of Marketing & Communications (904) 390-3245

**Tough Economy Demands New Solutions**  
**Gen X and Y Provide Leadership**  
*Local Philanthropists Join Effort*

**Northeast Florida (February 5, 2009)** – In this tough economy, United Way of Northeast Florida is getting creative in raising money. With state budget cuts, downsizings, layoffs, mergers, and foreclosures, United Way’s annual campaign stands at \$800,000 less than last year. At the same time, there is an ever-growing need for services among First Coast children, families and individuals. With the economy’s decline, funds to provide crucial assistance are decreasing.

United Way leaders believe that in order to help close the needs gap the organization must broaden its reach to more Northeast Floridians and new generations of donors—young people who may never have given to United Way before or may not be employed within traditional workplace giving settings.

So, in addition to targeting companies and employees, United Way is now using YouTube and Facebook in a new campaign called "Give 5" to reach brand new givers.

“With the Give 5 campaign we are looking to United Way’s future,” said Connie Hodges, President of United Way of Northeast Florida. “We’ve targeted the 20 to 30-year-olds and have turned to our young professionals group, Atlantic Circle, to drive the effort. This internet approach allows us to convey our LIVE UNITED message through the online tools these younger workers regularly use to communicate.”

This viral campaign is asking a lot of people, especially new givers, to give a little by donating \$5 or more and then e-mailing the link to five friends. The campaign kicked off today at the 5 Points Theatre on Park Street and will run through March.

To help deliver this message United Way of Northeast Florida is tapping young adults in the community to use social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to spread the word. The Web-based “Give5” campaign is centered around a one-minute video that lets people know how their small contribution can have a big impact on their neighbors and their

community. To learn more, to donate, or to download the Give5 video, visit [www.Give5Live.org](http://www.Give5Live.org).

Knowing the vital services and programs, and more importantly, the families, children, and individuals who'll be affected by reduced funding, United Way is pulling out all of the stops to close the gap while developing a new group of donors.

Nonprofits have always operated on a tight budget, but today the needs are growing—by leaps and bounds—even as income to these organizations is shrinking. And United Way is seeing the impact all across the community:

- Emotional crisis calls to United Way 2-1-1 have increased 50 percent over last year.
- 2-1-1 calls for food, shelter, clothing, and furniture have increased by 126 percent compared to last year
- And for the first time in the 17-year history of Full Service Schools of Jacksonville, the waiting list for counseling services for children is at an all-time high.

To maximize the impact of the individual gifts, it was announced that Delores Barr and J. Wayne Weaver had committed \$100,000 for a 3-to-1 match for each \$5 gift. The couple invited others to join them in the gift matching program. Several have stepped forward including Elizabeth and Michael Cascone, Irene and Gaspar Lazzara, and David and Linda Stein for a grand total of \$175,000 in matching dollars.

“With this match, a simple gift of \$5 donated through United Way can provide such services as a hot meal for a homeless family,” Hodges said. “It will provide one student with a week of afterschool activities including homework assistance or it can provide a frail senior two, home-delivered, hot meals.

United Way is also asking its loyal donors to pass the message to their friends and colleagues who they believe may want to participate in the Give 5 campaign.

Local young professional groups that are leading the effort in addition to United Way's Atlantic Circle include: IMPACTjax, JCCI Forward, Guys with Ties, Thursday Night Drinking Club, and Rotaract.

**United Way of Northeast Florida works to create real, long-lasting change in Northeast Florida by focusing on the building blocks for a good life. In partnership with volunteers, community organizations, and leaders, United Way is creating opportunities to improve life for people in Baker, Clay, Duval, Nassau and northern St. Johns counties. In addition, United Way leads United Way 2-1-1, a 24/7 information referral hotline; Life: Act 2, a proactive response to an exploding senior population; and Full Service Schools, a community approach to removing barriers to academic success. For more information, call 904-390-3200 or visit [www.liveunitednortheastflorida.org](http://www.liveunitednortheastflorida.org).**

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