



United Way
of Northeast Florida

ATTN: News Director/ Assignment Editor
****** Media Release ******

For Immediate Release: April 16, 2009

Contact:

Elizabeth Ash, Communications Manager (904) 390-3226

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

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

United Way Raises \$24.8 Million
Salute to Community Champions and Leadership Partners

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. (April 16, 2009) – United Way of Northeast Florida announced today that it raised \$24,830,590, or 94 percent of its goal, during the 2008 campaign. With 250 guests gathered at a breakfast meeting, United Way leaders congratulated longstanding community partners, award-winning campaigns, and United Way supporters for their hard work, resolve, and commitment.

“When our campaign cabinet and the Board of Trustees were setting the annual goal, the economic crisis was already on every single mind in the room. However, the LIVE UNITED message, with its commitment to education, income, and health, served as a reminder that our goal had to be driven by the needs in our community, and not the probability of success,” said 2008 Campaign Chair Marty Lanahan at today’s event. “Throughout this campaign, I’ve seen the commitment of First Coast individuals. I’m grateful for the tremendous companies and organizations that supported this year’s United Way campaign.”

“This is a remarkable achievement in light of the economy,” stated Kevin Twomey, Chairman of United Way’s Board of Trustees. “United Way was fortunate that companies in industries where business and employment remained steady did well, raising as much or more money for United Way than they did last year. These campaigns grew by more than \$1.7 million.”

In a survey of other United Ways, the local affiliate found that peer organizations were experiencing double-digit shortfalls. With today's results, United Way of Northeast Florida will experience a 4.8 percent decrease from the 2007 campaign.

More than 1,000 companies and organizations led campaigns that touched more than 223,000 individuals. Results included a new million dollar donor and a company campaign that exceeded \$1 million for the first time, CSX Transportation, Inc. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida, Vistakon, CSX Transportation, Inc., and Publix Super Markets, all million dollar companies respectively raised a combined total of more than \$5.6 million.

This year, a new award recognizing outstanding service and advocacy among community nonprofit partners and volunteers was implemented in honor of the late Sherwood H. Smith, a long-time community advocate and former Executive Director of the Jacksonville Community Chest, now United Way of Northeast Florida, for fifteen years.

To honor his life and service, Mr. Smith's son, Sherwood H. Smith, Jr. and family endowed a gift to United Way of Northeast Florida. The Sherwood H. Smith Children's Champion Award provides for two annual awards of \$1,000 recognizing the efforts of un-sung heroes. Leon Baxton, Communities in Schools, received the award for exemplary service, for his work in dropout prevention and youth service. The second award for children's advocacy was presented to Nancy Dreicer, Director of Florida Department of Children and Families' Northeast Region, for her work in raising awareness of children's needs within the state foster care system.

Special recognition was given to four couples, whose personal match gifts spurred giving to United Way's Give 5 campaign. Launched in February, this internet-based viral campaign encouraged young adults to donate five dollars and pass the message to five of their friends. Inspired by the opportunity to cultivate new donors and generate needed revenue for essential programs, Delores Barr and J. Wayne Weaver were joined by Elizabeth and Mike Cascone, Irene

and Gaspar Lazzara, and David and Linda Stein, resulting in a triple match for every five dollar donation to the Give 5 campaign.

“Through the generous support of our donors and community partners, United Way is ensuring that we remain committed to improving the lives of First Coast families and children,” said Connie Hodges, President of United Way of Northeast Florida.

ATTACHEMENTS

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 pro-active 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.

###