



## Press Release

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Fond du Lac Area United Way

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## Local United Way Improves Funding Format Needs-assessment results direct help where it's needed most

**FOND DU LAC, Wis. (July 27, 2009)** – In a major shift aimed at improving life in the Fond du Lac area, the United Way will use feedback from the community to determine how it will allocate funding to local programs and organizations.

Using information from a locally conducted comprehensive community-needs assessment, United Way will target programs that address three key new community impact goals: Breaking Cycles of Generational Poverty, Supporting Stability and Independence, and Improving People's Health and Wellness.

United Way will talk about these goals throughout the campaign season in its quest to raise \$1 million in local donations, a 25-percent increase over last year's goal. The 2009 campaign will kick off August 29, with the theme "A million reasons for creating lasting change."

"Our community spoke and we listened," said Tina Potter, executive director. This shift means United Way will fund programs that respond directly to community issues which were identified through the assessment process.

In its quest to improve the quality of life in the area, United Way in 2007 collaborated with the Fond du Lac Public Library and Fond du Lac County UW-Extension to conduct the first phase of a two phase needs-assessment process. The first part resulted in a L.I.F.E. in Fond du Lac County Report (Local Indicators for Excellence) which is a collection of hard socio-economic data across ten different indicators. Click on OUR REPORTS tab at [www.fdlunitedway.org](http://www.fdlunitedway.org) for more information.

The second phase, conducted in 2008 resulted in phone and online surveys and focus groups, in which nearly 400 persons were contacted and community themes and perceptions emerged.

The survey findings have been analyzed by the United Way Board of Directors, resulting in a shift in their community impact model for allocating funds. In general, United Way has broken down its targets under three goal themes:

- **"Building a Healthy Community"** aims to improve access to dental health services; alcohol, tobacco and other drug addiction prevention and services;

mental health access to services and support; and goals to reduce the rates of obesity.

- **“Building a Supportive Community”** will focus on access to child care and childcare certifications; access to affordable housing, shelter and transitional housing; access to transportation; support for child development and parenting; and services for children and family crisis management.
- **“Building an Educated Community”** will target programming to improve adult literacy; pregnancy support, parenting education and life skills training; access to service learning opportunities; increase/improve cultural awareness; enhance school readiness; access to extended and after-school learning; access to financial literacy training and counseling; access to disaster prevention and lifesaving training; and decrease the incidence of sexual abuse.

This targeted approach to giving is a departure from the organization’s traditional method.

“In the past, a Budget & Allocation Committee would make the allocation decisions based on the submitted needs of non-profit agencies,” said Potter.

“Allocations will now be driven by the community needs assessment. Following the assessment we worked within existing community groups whose focus is to determine priority areas. Allocations correspond to these areas of focus,” noted Potter.

“We realize that United Way is in a unique position to act as a catalyst to improve the quality of life in the Fond du Lac area. Hearing from the community directly has provided invaluable direction and clarity to how we can go about making real, positive and lasting change.”

**The United Way Campaign kick-off celebration will be held on Saturday August 29 at the Festival Foods parking lot beginning at 11:00 AM.**

For additional information on Fond du Lac Area United Way, visit [www.fdl-unitedway.org](http://www.fdl-unitedway.org) or contact Tina Potter at (920) 921-7010 or [director@fdlunitedway.org](mailto:director@fdlunitedway.org).

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