

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way Launches Impact Poverty

Paducah, KY-June 9, 2010 –The United Way of Paducah-McCracken County has formed a Task Force entitled ***Impact Poverty*** to study, evaluate and create a plan to address poverty in Paducah/McCracken County.

“The United Way Board was obviously concerned to learn of a recent rise in the number of people living in poverty, particularly in Paducah. This was brought to our attention by John Williams, Sr. and was based on some very detailed research.

“United Way has been working for several years to go beyond just meeting individual needs and find ways to help our community begin to really solve problems. This new poverty data led us to take the definitive step of creating the Task Force to work with the community to address root causes of poverty, not just continue reacting to its effects,” said Georgann Lookofsky, past chair of the United Way.

Impact Poverty will collect, interpret and analyze existing data related to poverty and identify the major contributing factors unique to our community. They will also evaluate existing initiatives that offer support or transition to people living in poverty. The goal of the study is to develop a 10-year plan to address poverty in Paducah and McCracken County as well as provide strategies to break the cycle of generational poverty. Recommendations in the plan may be directed towards local and state government, existing service providers, new initiatives, and the business community, at large. A Steering Committee will guide the course of the work. Its members include John Williams, Sr., Judge Cynthia Sanderson, McCracken County School Superintendent Nancy Waldrop, Paducah City School Superintendent Randy Greene, Michael Byers representing the Paducah Chamber Board of Directors, Georgann Lookofsky, past chair of the United Way, Kristin Williams facilitator for the process and, Ashley Wright, United Way Executive Director.

Impact Poverty is comprised of approximately 40 community, educational, civic, religious, and business leaders who will begin work in June. They will meet monthly and hope to present findings and a 10-Year Plan to the community by summer 2011. Early in their work, members will spend a day together receiving the nationally recognized “Bridges out of Poverty” training.

“In consulting with other United Ways around the U.S., we found that many are using this training to better understand poverty’s impact on people and communities and improving the likelihood of welfare to work. We are excited that one of the books’ co-authors, Terie Dreussi Smith, will be conducting the workshop for ***Impact Poverty***,” said Ashley Wright.

Kristin Williams, the group facilitator said, "Poverty is an exceedingly complex issue and not one that can be solved quickly or with one single solution. Because of its complexity, it is important to approach it from as many different angles and as many different viewpoints as possible. I am a strong believer in the power of a diverse group of people passionate about positive change putting their hearts and ideas together to address our community's issues."

Impact Poverty is being funded through the United Way and private local contributions.

Impact Poverty Task Force Members:

Gary Adkisson

Cynthia Alston

Sherry Anderson

James Berry

Brenda Brown

Jim Brown

Olivia Burr

Michael Byers

Anitha David

Bill Evans

Danny Fugate

Randy Greene

Doug Harnice

Jon Hayden

Tina Hayes

Lisa Heine

Deana Henschel

James Hudson

Georgann Lookofsky

Maurie McGarvey

Chris McNeill

Patty Mills

Bill Mogan

Gerry Montgomery

Melanie Nunn

John Operle

Marianne Potina

Stephanie Reese

Cal Ross

Charlie Ross

Mark Rowe

Cynthia Sanderson

Rosa Scott

Cintia Sutton

Nancy Waldrop

Gerald Watkins

John Williams, Sr.

Kristin Williams

Ashley Wright