

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Impact Poverty Holds Second Meeting**

Paducah, KY July 13, 2010 – The Impact Poverty Task Force held its second meeting Friday, July 9 at the Paducah City School System Board of Education.

This meeting focused on data related to potential causes and effects of poverty in Paducah and McCracken County. When introducing the data presentation, Kristin Williams, facilitator of the study said, “The purpose of reviewing the data is to raise questions to lead the course of the study. When we see statistics jump off the page that is an indicator of where we need to dig down and understand issues causing that phenomena. We will leave today with many more questions than answers.” More meetings will be dedicated to data analysis in the fall.

The most heavily discussed data was related to educational attainment and poverty levels among homes with women as single parents. A 2008 U.S. Congressional Report cites that “children living in single, female-headed families are well over four (4) times more likely to be poor than a child living in a married couple family and in 2008, 43.5% of all children living in a single, female-headed family were poor.” According to the 2006-08 American Community Survey conducted by the U.S. Census, in 2008 37% of the single, female-headed families in McCracken County and 43.5% in Paducah were in poverty. Childcare is an added expense when the single mother works. Rosa Scott of Care Bear’s Day Care and Impact Poverty Task Force member said, “Childcare can be very expensive. Some facilities in Paducah charge upwards of \$140 per week.”

In both the city and county, the educational attainment of the single, female-headed households in poverty was significantly higher than all families in poverty, an issue that troubled the Task Force members because, generally, the higher the educational attainment, the lower the rate of poverty. More analysis was requested to understand this issue in our community.

The Task Force also discussed the process for the development of a plan and realistic strategies to address the issue of poverty in our community. Concern was raised that the group not spend a year “in a bubble” without significant feedback and interaction with those in poverty, today, in Paducah/McCracken County. Assurance was given that quality input from those the strategies will most impact will be solicited and implemented throughout the course of the group’s work. The Steering Committee will be meeting to discuss the course of work and report back to the full group in September.

Ashley Wright, executive director of the Paducah-McCracken County United Way announced that the Impact Poverty page had been added to the United Way of Paducah-McCracken County website, [www.unitedwaypaducah.org](http://www.unitedwaypaducah.org). “All presentations, minutes, press releases and data related to the study will be posted to the page,” said Wright. She encouraged members to share the page and the community, at large, to check it frequently as new data and information is provided.

In August, the Impact Poverty Task Force members will undergo a day-long training by Terie Dreussi Smith, M.A. Ed. and OCPSII. Smith co-authored *Bridges Out of Poverty: Strategies for Professionals and Communities* with Ruby Payne and Philip DeVol.

The goal of Impact Poverty is to develop a 10-Year Plan to reduce poverty in Paducah and McCracken County and break the cycle of generational poverty for its citizens. The United Way of Paducah-McCracken County is spearheading this effort.

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