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Local United Way Shifts Focus and Goal **Emphasis on Partnerships to Cut Poverty in Half in Larimer County**

[Larimer County, CO] – After five years of research, assessment and planning, United Way of Larimer County today announced a shift in its approach to community giving. The organization will continue to direct donations to nonprofit programs throughout Larimer County, but will do so in a more concentrated manner, designed to have a more significant, long-term impact on community to help reach the goal of cutting poverty in half in Larimer County by 2025.

“This move is one that we entered into with a great deal of thoughtfulness and discussion,” said United Way of Larimer County’s president and CEO, Gordan Thibedeau. “We have some very serious issues that will require our long-term commitment and focus to repair. We can no longer afford to simply treat symptoms. We need to concentrate all we can on eliminating the root causes of these major issues and break the cycle while we still can,” he said.

Local United Ways across the country have been transitioning to a similar model, which is referred to as Community Impact, for some time now. Through Community Impact, United Way of Larimer County, like its counterparts in other communities, will focus its impact in three areas:

Education: Helping Children Succeed

Income: Creating Financial Stability

Health: Meeting Basic Needs for All

The idea being that when every person has his or her basic needs met, we create a more stable community for everyone. And, when families and individuals have enough income, they can thrive. When children enter school ready to learn, and finish high school, they are prepared to succeed in college, work and life.

“While the community needs to feed the hungry child today and house the homeless person today, we also need to create and support long-term strategies to reduce the need to feed that child in the future and provide shelter for that homeless person,” said Darcy McClure, vice

president of Community Investment at United Way of Larimer County. “The approach addresses issues now and in the future,” she stated.

One of the biggest shifts for the organization is in goal setting. While the local United Way continues the work it’s been doing for 53 years, this year there are two goals – a fundraising goal and an impact goal.

The 2011-2012 fundraising goal is \$8 million, a 10 percent increase over dollars raised last year from individual donors, corporate gifts, workplace fundraising campaigns, and leveraged dollars and grants. The contributions are vital to the work of United Way and to the organization’s impact goal - to cut poverty in half in Larimer County by 2025.

Thibedeau is quick to point out that United Way of Larimer County alone cannot reach this goal, and that this new approach is really a community goal. He said, “This work to reduce poverty in Larimer County will require many community partnerships and collaborations, and everyone working together in our community.”

The organization will begin measuring progress at the start of its next fiscal year, July 1, 2012. Poverty reduction and the impact of United Way’s work will be measured by Census Bureau data, local statistics and data points and strategic/funded partner organizations impact results through reports.

“While we do strongly believe that this shift in our focus is the right move for all of Larimer County. We do still support and want to provide assistance to the many wonderful nonprofit programs. We will continue to work closely with agencies to help them become more efficient and effective,” Thibedeau said.

For more information, please contact Pam Jessen, vice president, Marketing and Communications, at 970.407.7008 or pjessen@uwaylc.org.

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United Way of Larimer County is working with community partners, donors, and supporters toward long-term solutions in the areas of education, income and health to achieve greater community impact. Together, united, we can inspire hope, and create opportunities for a better tomorrow. That’s what it means to LIVE UNITED.