



For Immediate Release:

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United Way of Larimer County Challenges Community

Be a Volunteer Reader, Tutor, or Mentor and Help Children Succeed

[Larimer County, CO] – United Way of Larimer County is excited to announce the launch of its Readers, Tutors, Mentors Challenge as part of its focus to help children succeed in all communities across the County.

Currently there are nearly 500 volunteer readers, tutors and mentors needed in Larimer County. United Way of Larimer County's Volunteer Center, which connects nearly 10,000 volunteers a year to local projects, is recruiting new volunteer readers, tutors and mentors for local nonprofit organizations between now and July 2012.

"We know that children who read by 3rd grade are more likely to graduate high school and less likely to live in poverty," said Darcy McClure, vice president of Community Investment at United Way of Larimer County. "United Way is investing all resources – financial, volunteer hours and community partnerships – into our focus areas of education, income and health. Recruiting volunteer readers, tutors and mentors is a direct investment in helping children succeed in our community," she explained.

According to Compass of Larimer County, 313 local high school students dropped out during the 2009-2010 school year. Without strong reading skills, students often fall behind and ultimately drop out. "Readers, tutors and mentors can play an important role in increasing academic success and engagement in learning," said McClure.

According to Sara Vlietstra, president of Fort Collins Read Aloud, a local nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers, "United Way is helping us recruit volunteers so we can better meet the literacy needs of the community." She said, "It is going to take the whole community to work together to accomplish our goal of giving children literacy for a lifetime."

The local United Way joins United Way Worldwide's effort to engage one million new volunteers as readers, tutors or mentors to help improve the academic success of young people in the local community and across America.

Anyone interested in signing up to be a volunteer reader, tutor or mentor can go to www.unitedwayoflarimercounty.org or call Jamie Suess in the Volunteer Center at 970.407.7065.

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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.