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**Media Contacts:** Sally Fabens  
[sally.fabens@uwa.unitedway.org](mailto:sally.fabens@uwa.unitedway.org)  
703-836-7112, x 401

Alissa Neil  
[alissa@alissaneilpr.com](mailto:alissa@alissaneilpr.com)  
212-431-4411

Amy Fox  
[amy.fox@edelman.com](mailto:amy.fox@edelman.com)  
202-326-1735

**UNITED WAY AND AMERICAN THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT PROJECT LAUNCH  
COMMON GOOD FORECASTER<sup>™</sup> LINKING INCREASED LIFE EXPECTANCY AND  
INCOME WITH HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES**

***Web-Based Tool Demonstrates How Education Rates Have Ripple Effect on Well-Being***

Alexandria, VA (May 13, 2009) – [United Way](#), the nation’s largest nonprofit, and [American Human Development Project \(AHDP\)](#) today announced the release of the [Common Good Forecaster](#)<sup>™</sup>, a Web-based tool that forecasts how conditions might change in a community if educational outcomes were to improve. The tool can drill down to the county level for communities across the country.

“The Common Good Forecaster is a great tool to help inspire communities across the country to see the real life connections between education and a quality life – healthier individuals, kids who are more fit, reduced crime and brighter futures for our young people,” said Brian Gallagher, president and CEO of United Way. “In one of the most challenging periods in our nation’s history, if we take decisive action to make sustainable progress in education a priority, we will advance the common good for all people.”

“It’s widely acknowledged that more education leads to better jobs and bigger paychecks,” Kristen Lewis, co-founder of the American Human Development Project, said. “Through the Common Good Forecaster we illustrate – in very concrete terms – the wide-ranging, non-economic benefits of education, as well. And we do this by using the most recent official statistics available on American states and counties.”

The *Common Good Forecaster*<sup>™</sup>, found at both [measureofamerica.org/forecaster](http://measureofamerica.org/forecaster) and [liveunited.org/forecaster](http://liveunited.org/forecaster), can answer such questions as:

- To what degree might higher levels of education in a certain county boost incomes and lower the poverty and unemployment rates?
- How might changes in the educational level of a particular state affect the incarceration rate? The percentage of adults who are obese? Voter turnout in the next election?

For example, it will show that if everyone moved up one rung on the educational ladder, average life expectancy would increase by almost two years and a person with the median national income would, over the course of his/her lifetime, increase his/her income by well more than \$400,000.

Sarah Burd-Sharps, co-founder of AHDP, added, “The Common Good Forecaster shows that investing in education pays huge dividends in areas we all value: longer, healthier lives, greater economic security, more robust civic engagement, fewer people behind bars, and brighter prospects for the next generation.”

Last year, United Way announced a bold goal to cut high school dropout rates in half by 2018. The [Common Good Forecaster](#)<sup>™</sup>, which will help United Way mobilize communities to action by demonstrating the future impact of improving education today, is part of United Way’s new Education Action Plan blueprint for making progress toward the 10-year goal. Other strategies of the plan include parent engagement, literacy volunteerism, mentoring and business leader engagement along the entire birth-to-21 education continuum. The plan also encourages focus on school readiness, 4<sup>th</sup>-grade reading proficiency, middle school transition and ensuring youth are in school or working by 21.

[U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan](#), who gave the keynote address today at United Way’s national conference in Detroit, said, “I want to challenge all of us to think differently not just about how we use resources but about how we interact with each other. We need more meaningful partnerships with stakeholder groups like United Way, which has done tremendous work increasing parental involvement, improving adult-child mentoring programs, and helping child care facilities get the resources they need. We cannot do this important work in silos.”

United Way and its partners agree that this work will require innovative new strategies and partnerships across all sectors – businesses, nonprofits, governments and individuals. For more information, visit [LIVEUNITED.org](#).

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***About United Way***

[United Way](#) is a worldwide network in 46 countries and territories, including nearly 1,300 local organizations in the U.S. that advance the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key building blocks of education, income and health. The United Way movement creates long lasting community change by addressing the underlying causes of problems that prevent progress in these areas. LIVE UNITED is a call to action for everyone to become part of the change. For more information about United Way, please visit: [LIVEUNITED.org](#).

***About American Human Development Project (AHDP)***

The [American Human Development Project](#), an initiative of the nonpartisan Social Science Research Council, works to introduce to Americans a well-honed framework used around the world to assess human well-being: the human development approach. The project’s aim is to stimulate fact-based public debate about and political attention to issues that affect people’s well-being and access to opportunity. Its hallmark is the American Human Development Index, a composite measure that paints a portrait of how Americans are doing today and empowers communities with a tool to track progress in areas we all care about: health, education, and standard of living.