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March to the Finish

United Way needs help 'closing the gap'

Is using a 'doggone Saintly' incentive

(New Orleans) - With approximately one month left in the annual fundraising campaign, **United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area (UWGNOA)** is projecting a \$500,000 shortfall and requires immediate support to meet the ever-increasing needs of our seven parish region.

UWGNOA serves Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington Parishes. Funds are primarily raised through workplace campaigns, from individuals, and, since the 2005 hurricanes, from regional and national grant funders.

But as economic conditions remain challenging locally and new crises occur worldwide, direct funding to our United Way is diminishing. Partner agencies are experiencing budget cuts when the needs of the community are at an all time high. "Vital agencies such as Second Harvest Food Bank, Dryades YMCA, Kingsley House and St. Bernard Project all depend on United Way for funding," said United Way for the Greater New Orleans Area President and Chief Executive Officer, Gary Ostroke.

"Our campaign goal is driven by the needs of our community. Our goal is attainable, but it will take everyone working together to *close the gap*. We need you to join our March to the Finish," Ostroske continued.

"The number one reason people do not give is because they have not been asked. So today, we are asking for help through a gift to United Way. No matter how big or how small, every dollar counts. And every dollar raised here, stays here. It helps your family, friends, co-workers or even you. Without the support of United Way, thousands in the Greater New Orleans area will suffer," said United Way Chief Operating Officer, Michael Williamson.

For every \$50 an individual donates to United Way throughout the month of March, their name will be entered for an opportunity to receive one of three *Drew Brees and Blue Dog* autographed prints. The silk screen, by renowned Louisiana artist George Rodrigue, measures 26 by 43 inches and features Super Bowl MVP Drew Brees and Rodrigue's signature "Blue Dog" image. The print is signed by both the artist and the Saints quarterback, and is one of only a handful remaining, none available commercially.

If you would like to join United Way March to the Finish, please give today at www.unitedwaynola.org or call us at (504) 827-6814.

United Way works with our nonprofit partners to target community needs through more than 130 programs and over 20 initiatives that make our region a better place to live, work, and raise our families.

- People in our 7 parish region were helped more than 900,000 times in 2008. When all data is compiled, that number is expected to grow for 2009
- In 2009, VIA Link 2-1-1 Information and Referral Line handled over 77,000 service request calls
- Over \$4.4 million in Earned Income Tax Credits were returned to local hardworking people from free tax preparation services
- 50,000 volunteers were recruited and placed in neighborhood development work, disaster relief, and recovery and rebuilding efforts
- Over 2.5 million hours of childcare were provided. United Way works to ensure that children are ready to learn when they enter elementary school so they are able to succeed academically