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## **AT&T Supports United Way of the Bay Area as Part of New Initiative that Engages Families to Improve High School Success**

**SAN FRANCISCO, December 10, 2009** — AT&T\* and United Way Worldwide (UWW) today announced that United Way of the Bay Area has been awarded a UWW/AT&T *Family Engagement for High School Success* grant of \$50,000. This funding is part of a new initiative designed to help parents and caregivers of at-risk students get more involved in their child's education. AT&T has contributed \$2 million to the program through AT&T Aspire, a \$100 million national initiative focused specifically on high school success and workforce readiness.

United Way of the Bay Area will utilize the grant to partner with the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) and plan a family engagement project at Burton High School. Burton is located in the city's Excelsior district, which has traditionally struggled with crime and poverty. The goal of the project will be to build positive home-school relationships and foster an inclusive atmosphere between school staff, parents and caregivers. The effort will also strive to improve parenting skills and work to improve student attendance and graduation rates.

"By supporting innovative programs that connect families with their children's education, we can help ensure that Bay Area students are successful – not just in school, but in life," said Loretta

Walker, AT&T Vice President, External Affairs – Bay Area. “We look forward to working with United Way of the Bay Area on this important initiative.”

United Way in the U.S. has set ambitious national goals in education, income and health – including cutting the nation’s high school dropout rate in half by 2018. The new family engagement initiative is part of United Way’s national strategy to meet that goal.

“We at United Way would like to thank AT&T for its vision and generous support that will help Bay Area youth succeed in school and life,” said Anne Wilson, CEO, United Way of the Bay Area. “The Family Engagement initiative is a strong fit for United Way’s goals around empowering young people to achieve independence. As we focus on helping thousands more young people in the Bay Area graduate high school healthy and ready for their next step in life, we recognize the pivotal roles that parent and family engagement play in a student’s current and future success.”

United Way of Bay Area is one of 15 local United Ways receiving a matching grant through this initiative to identify best practices for family engagement to boost high school graduation. The 15 sites will use funds to increase family-community-school partnerships to build successful learning in high school. An additional five local United Ways will receive capacity building support for family engagement work.

This new initiative responds to recent research funded by AT&T and conducted by Civic Enterprises and Peter Hart Research with America’s Promise Alliance, *“On the Front Lines of Schools,”* where the voices of our nation’s education practitioners reflected their outlook on the high school dropout crisis. One of the key findings of this research was that the majority of teachers (63%) and principals (51%) felt increasing their schools’ parental outreach programs would do a lot to reduce the number of high school dropouts.

To find the most qualified state and local United Ways for this project, AT&T and UWW developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) in tandem with four national partners: the National Parent Teacher

Association (PTA), Communities in Schools, Coalition of Community Schools, and American Association of School Administrators (AASA). The Harvard Family Research Project is engaged to oversee the evaluation component of this program.

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**About Philanthropy at AT&T**

For 25 years, AT&T and the AT&T Foundation have been committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its philanthropic initiatives and partnerships, AT&T supports projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic achievement; and address community needs. As the AT&T Foundation celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2009, more than \$160 million was contributed through corporate-, employee- and AT&T Foundation-giving programs in 2008 alone.

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**About United Way of Bay Area**

United Way of the Bay Area is a nonprofit organization that creates pathways to prosperity for the most vulnerable in our community by focusing on the essential building blocks of education, income and health. We help children achieve their potential, promote financial stability for low-wage adults and strive to improve health for everyone. United Way convenes partners across sectors, advocates for policy change, runs community programs and educates residents about the issues most vital to a resilient community. Founded in 1922, United Way of the Bay Area serves Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo and Solano Counties. For more information, visit [www.uwba.org](http://www.uwba.org).