

## United Way of the Greater Dayton Area 2008-2011 Priorities Report



In March 2007 the United Way of the Greater Dayton Area Board of Directors approved the 2007-2010 Strategic Direction that established three overarching priority areas – **Positive Youth Development, Financial Stability Leading to Independence, and Health and Well-Being for Individuals and the Community** – to focus our Community Impact work to create sustained and lasting positive changes in the lives of children, families, and individuals in Montgomery, Greene, and Preble Counties.

Working within that framework, staff completed the 2007 Community Assessment Update to dig deeper into findings from the comprehensive needs assessment published in 2004 and to identify emerging needs, affirm ongoing needs, and develop a deeper understanding of core services. A Priorities Team, comprised of seasoned United Way volunteers along with community leaders and agency staff with expertise in data analysis, used the findings to recommend the following priorities to guide the 2008-2011 allocations process and community initiative efforts.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly given the current economic transition occurring in our region, the 2007 Update affirmed that the needs identified in the 2004 Community Assessment remain. **With increased poverty in all three counties, overall needs are growing.**

### Emerging Needs

#### **Early Childhood Development**

- Affordable Quality Daycare
- Early Literacy and School Readiness

#### **Self-Sufficiency**

- Financial Literacy
- Increased Technical Skills
- Foreclosure Intervention/Prevention
- Job Retraining
- Crisis Intervention for Dislocated Workers and their Families
- Adult Literacy Skills
- Increased Knowledge of Careers

#### **At-Risk Family Structures**

- Support for Single Mothers
- Support for Isolated Single Elderly
- Support for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren
- Support for Pregnant and Parenting Teens

Three trends surfaced in the 2007 Update to shape the emerging needs. The growth in unemployment and its resulting effects on families and a continued high rate of single parents, combined with increased community-wide attention on the importance of early care and education, led to the identification of Early Childhood Development as an important component of all overarching priorities as it affects youth development, family stability, and the health and well-being of the child. Increased poverty and unemployment affect self-sufficiency and support the need for services that enhance financial stability. With growth in all of the populations living in at-risk family structures, that trend came forward as another emerging need area that touched on all three overarching priorities.

## **Core Services**

### **Basic Needs**

- Emergency Food
- Safe, Affordable Housing
- Emergency Shelter
- Emergency Housing for Individuals, Families, and the Disabled

### **Crisis Intervention and Prevention**

- Services for Abused and Neglected Children and Youth and Youth Witnesses of Violence
- Counseling for Families and Individuals
- Domestic Violence Support Services
- Services and Access for the Elderly and Disabled (data affirms Food, Respite Care, Home Health Care, Day Programs, and Legal Assistance)
- Transportation

### **Youth Development**

- Quality, Safe, Affordable After-school Programs *with Asset-Building Components* (data supports Alcohol/Drug Prevention, Volunteerism, Career Awareness, Math and Science Proficiency, Literacy, Dropout Prevention, Weekend/Summer Food, and SCHIP Outreach)

The 2007 Update affirmed many priority needs from the 2004 Community Assessment. The consistency helped illuminate core services for United Way funding. Basic needs are exactly that – basic. If unmet, youth do not thrive, families are not stable, and the health and well-being of both individuals and our community is compromised. Similarly, addressing a crisis or preventing a situation from becoming a crisis cuts across the three priority areas. Research affirms both the need for quality after-school programming and the benefits of the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets model for positive youth development.

## **Advocacy**

- Access to Health Care for the Under and Uninsured
- Awareness of Community Violence
- Barriers to Services for Non-English-speaking Residents

Loss of employer-provided insurance, the lack of free medical clinics in Greene and Preble Counties, and underutilization of government programs (SCHIP, Medicare/Medicaid, and prescription assistance by target populations) were driving factors behind the focus on access to healthcare. Disturbing trends in crime and safety, which historically correlate to increased financial pressures and economic inequity, suggest a need for Awareness of Community Violence to combat violence as the all-too-frequent default response. With the changing multicultural makeup of our region, especially the growing Hispanic population, data supports effort to remove barriers for non-English-speaking members of our community. The depth of the needs in the three advocacy areas go beyond the scope of United Way funding. Yet, United Way can play a role in helping to educate the community and collaborating or convening to seek solutions.