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**COMMUNITY ECONOMIC RELIEF FUND GETS \$1.5 MILLION BUMP,
THANKS TO LILLY ENDOWMENT**

*48 agencies have helped thousands affected by shaky economy;
67 percent are 'new' clients*

INDIANAPOLIS...April 29, 2009 -- "First responders" in Central Indiana who are answering rising numbers of calls for human care services during the shaky economy can count on another \$1.5 million deposit in the Community Economic Relief Fund (CERF), announced United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) today.

Lilly Endowment Inc. has committed an additional \$1.5 million to the fund, and St. Luke's Methodist Church in Indianapolis has also joined the effort by making a \$8,600 contribution. The St. Luke's gift is being matched dollar-for-dollar by the Moore Foundation.

Created Dec. 10, 2008, by a group of local philanthropies, the \$3.2 million fund has since been supplementing resources of 48 agencies that help people with emergencies such as paying rent, mortgage and utility costs, food, health care and other crisis needs. Lilly Endowment provided \$2 million for CERF at that time.

"Lilly Endowment continues to be impressed by the compelling needs of those most affected by current economic conditions and the collaborative and strategic approach to those needs demonstrated by CERF and its funders," said N. Clay Robbins, president of the Endowment.

Since Jan. 1, community health agencies receiving CERF assistance have helped some 4,200 households with health-related needs such as filling prescriptions and paying for doctor and dental care, according to Christie Gillespie, UWCI's director of agency services.

And 126,000 households – including 52,000 children and 15,000 seniors – have benefited from food deliveries from hunger-prevention agencies supported by CERF, Gillespie added. CERF has provided additional funding to the current budgets of these agencies to help address the dramatic increase in need.

Sixty-seven percent of the households helped so far by CERF were new clients of the agencies that Connect2Help's 2-1-1 telephone service referred them to, Gillespie said. A media awareness campaign supported by CERF that encouraged people in need to call for help without delay is credited for generating a spike in 2-1-1 calls and referrals. A CERF grant also enabled Connect2Help to enhance and expand its technological and staff capacity to respond to increased demand.

***Addressing today's needs.
Reducing tomorrow's.***



Gillespie said agency stories of people being helped are “hard to read because they describe choices no one should have to make.”

Examples include a nurse who quit taking her blood pressure meds when she lost her job and insurance; a single, laid-off mother who couldn't get to job interviews because she couldn't afford car repairs; and a working man facing utility disconnections because his employer asked him not to cash his last three paychecks when operating funding ran short.

Of the people helped through CERF funds, 35 percent reported recent unemployment (less than 13 weeks), 32 percent reported being unemployed more than 13 weeks, and 32 percent reported reduced employment, according to United Way.

Joining Lilly Endowment and UWCI to create the fund in December, 2008 were the Central Indiana Community Foundation, Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, Inc., Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, Efroymsen Family Fund, Indianapolis Retirement Home Fund and individual donors. CERF support is in addition to the funding for human services which these funders regularly provide.

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Serving six Central Indiana counties, **United Way of Central Indiana** (UWCI) helps sustain vital human services by working exclusively with proven human service agencies that direct life-changing opportunities. UWCI also helps reduce the needs of future generations by helping ensure that kids enter school ready to learn and graduate school ready to earn.