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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way Announces \$45,000 in Additional Funding to Help New Britain's Children Succeed

September 28, 2009 (New Britain, CT) – Early childhood learning and middle school achievement in New Britain received an added boost from United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut (UWCNCT).

The organization, operating locally as United Way of New Britain and Berlin, recently approved \$45,000 in funding for two New Britain initiatives. The New Britain Discovery Collaborative will receive \$20,000 and The *Well Managed Classroom* initiative will receive \$25,000.

United Way has supported the New Britain Discovery Collaborative since 2004. The Collaborative—an initiative of the William Caspar Graustein Memorial Fund—is a partnership between the Fund and local parents, childcare providers, social service agencies and government that seeks to improve outcomes for local children.

In the first five years of its operation, the Collaborative increased preschool enrollment in New Britain from 38% to 79%. In the spring of 2008, the Collaborative began its second phase, developing a community blueprint for the city's young children with the input of many local groups and individuals.

United Way's award will help support implementation of the blueprint, which focuses on improving school readiness, encouraging family literacy and advancing the health of mothers and children. The blueprint will be unveiled later this fall.

Helping children and youth succeed academically and effectively manage their own behavior is the aim of United Way's award for the *Well-Managed Classroom (WMC)*, an innovative classroom management model currently in use at three New Britain middle schools. United Way introduced the model to the New Britain Consolidated School District and has awarded funds for its implementation ever since school principals decided to adopt the model. United Way's co-investor in *WMC* is the Community Chest of New Britain and Berlin, Inc.

WMC was developed by Boys Town in Omaha, Nebraska, to help reduce the amount of disruptive behavior in the classroom, thereby increasing the time available for teaching and learning. Through the model, teachers, administrators and staff are trained to teach preventively and intervene around certain social behaviors. Students, in turn, are taught distinct elements of successful classroom behavior. For instance, they learn how to follow instructions, how to get the teacher's attention, how to give and receive criticism and compliments, and how to disagree appropriately.

The *WMC* model has been used at Louis P. Slade Middle School since 2006 and at Roosevelt and Pulaski Middle Schools since 2007, with significant results. “Our use of the *Well Managed Classroom* model has resulted in a 60 percent reduction in the number of referrals to the office for discipline, and it has led to gains in all grades on the Connecticut Mastery Test because teachers can spend more time teaching and less time disciplining,” said Mark Fernandes, principal of Louis P. Slade Middle School. “It has helped us create a climate where more learning goes on,” he added.

Recent results from the 2008–2009 school year affirm that the more closely a teacher adheres to the *WMC* model, the more academically engaged his or her students are. Students for whom most classes were taught by teachers who closely follow the model had significantly higher grade point averages and significantly lower rates of unexcused absences, office discipline referrals, and suspensions.

United Way’s support for *WMC* and the New Britain Discovery Collaborative is part of its larger community goals of ensuring success for children and helping families become more financially stable while providing a safety net of services for those in need.

Gifts to *Community Investment* through the United Way Community Campaign—happening now through November 20th—are used to support these key goals in the 40 communities served by United Way of Central and Northeastern Connecticut, including New Britain and Berlin.

During 2008, workplaces and individuals in New Britain and Berlin contributed almost \$541,000 to the United Way Community Campaign, and more than \$946,000 in *Community Investment* funds were returned to the people of New Britain and Berlin through health and human service programs that address their needs.

To learn more about United Way’s work in New Britain and Berlin, contact Liz Buczynski at (860) 223-9294 or lbuczynski@unitedwayinc.org. To learn more about the United Way Community Campaign, please visit www.unitedwayinc.org.

Our mission is to engage people to improve lives and change community conditions.