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Free Tax Preparation Assistance Available

Many local residents who need help filing their 2009 income tax returns can take advantage of free tax preparation assistance offered by United Way of Knox County.

This free tax assistance allows clients to save tax preparation fees in addition to claiming tax credits for which they may be eligible. Last year, United Way volunteers assisted 355 clients in filing federal income tax returns, representing over \$450,000 in refunds and a savings of more than \$71,000 in tax preparer fees.

United Way's tax assistance program began three years ago with the goal of increasing the financial stability of local residents. Millions of dollars in tax credits, such as the Earned Income Credit, go unclaimed by Knox County residents each year. This is money that could be used to purchase necessities and boost savings for low and moderate-income families.

In order to aid residents in claiming this money, United Way has partnered with The Ohio Benefit Bank. The Benefit Bank operates a web-based program which walks clients through preparing their tax returns. Community volunteers serve as counselors who provide one-on-one assistance. Clients can e-file their returns and, if eligible, receive refunds through direct deposit in 7-10 days.

Those who qualify can schedule appointments, Monday through Friday and occasional Saturdays at United Way's office at 110 East High Street in Mount Vernon. Additional tax clinic dates are scheduled for Danville. To qualify for preparation assistance, you must have had a gross household income of less than \$57,000 in 2009. Also, The Benefit Bank cannot support rental, real estate, farm, Schedule C business, and clergy income, as well as most capital gains. To see if you are eligible and to schedule an appointment, call United Way at 740 397-5721 extension 101.