

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way Celebrates Successful Tax Season

Over 350 local families receive free tax assistance.

During the Tax Counselor Appreciation Luncheon on May 7, United Way of Knox County volunteers celebrated the success of the 2009 Free Tax Preparation Assistance program.

For the third year in a row, United Way volunteers assisted Knox County families with filing their federal and state income tax returns for free. In 2009, 355 households were served, an increase of 50% over the number helped last year. These families received over \$450,000 in refunds. As the average tax preparation fee per client is \$200, United Way clients saved over \$70,000 in preparation costs. Thirty-seven percent of clients were able to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit, a refundable federal income tax credit for low and moderate-income working individuals and families.

The tax program is dependent upon community members who serve as volunteer Tax Counselors. This season 32 local volunteers participated, serving over 300 hours at United Way's tax office. Volunteers serving the most hours included Rodney Collins [serving 26 families], Carol Harding [serving 19 families], and Lou Toscano [serving 13 families]. Additionally, the program would not have been possible without the support of the following: Osteopathic Heritage Foundation; BriarLane, Ltd.; Embarq; and The Energy Cooperative's Operation Round-Up Foundation.

The 2009 tax season marked United Way of Knox County's third year partnering with The Ohio Benefit Bank to offer free tax preparation assistance. The Ohio Benefit Bank is a free, web-based, counselor-assisted program designed to connect low and moderate-income Ohioans with access to work supports, including tax credits. For more information on this program, visit obb.ohio.gov and to learn more about United Way's Financial Stability Initiative, call 740 397-5721.

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