



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact:** John Conrad  
721-9311 (office)  
416-2678 (cell)  
john.conrad@uwforysth.org

### **Grant Will Help Improve the High School Graduation Rate in Forsyth County**

**Winston-Salem, NC ...** A \$137,500 grant from United Way Worldwide (UWW) will strengthen United Way of Forsyth County's efforts in education. Working collaboratively with a wide range of community partners, **United Way of Forsyth County is committed to improving the high school graduation rate from the current rate of 73 percent to 90 percent by 2018.**

UWW's Increasing Teacher Effectiveness (ITE) Challenge Grant is designed to **help states and local communities develop communication and advocacy strategies to empower and support effective teachers and create tools that United Ways across the system will be able to use.** Communities in North Carolina, Texas, and Florida have received the grant. United Way of Forsyth County joins its counterparts in Iredell, Lee, and Rowan Counties as recipients of the award in North Carolina.

Research shows that teacher effectiveness is one of the most significant determinants of students' academic success throughout their school careers. By advancing policies to promote teacher effectiveness, **the United Way project should also help boost high school graduation rates, college readiness, and workforce readiness, especially among low-income and minority students.**

Dr. Sharee Fowler, Director of the Empowering Effective Teachers Initiative in Forsyth County, remarked that the grant provides an exciting opportunity to build upon existing efforts in the community that are focused on making a significant impact on student success. Currently, **United Way of Forsyth County invests more than \$3 million annually in programs to enhance student success.** In addition, through its innovative Graduating Our Future initiative, United Way is supporting strategies that target tutoring, counseling, enrichment, and family engagement activities to help our community's most vulnerable youth succeed.

Since rolling out pilot programs at Parkland Magnet High School and Philo Magnet Academy in 2008, Graduating Our Future has produced astounding results. **Fifty-four more 9<sup>th</sup> graders passed the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Parkland last year than in 2007, a 40 percent increase.** (Failing the 9<sup>th</sup> grade is a common precursor to dropping out of high school in the future.) **The number of students passing End-of-Grade tests at Parkland has improved by 29 percent over the same period. At Philo, the number of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students passing End-of-Grade tests in math and reading has improved by 87**

**percent and 151 percent respectively. Among all Philo students, the scores have improved by 67 percent and 63 percent respectively.**

“We look forward to furthering our collaboration with students, parents, educators, administrators, local business leaders, elected officials, and others in the coming months to advance the goals of this challenge grant,” said Mike Wells, senior partner at Wells Jenkins Lucas & Jenkins and chair of United Way of Forsyth County’s board of directors. “Working together, integrating our networks, and building on the foundation already laid by those in our community who’ve been working on this issue, will be an important first step. **We are excited about this initiative, not only because it’s the right thing to do for our children, but, as an organization, it aligns with our strong commitment to education, income, and health through LIVE UNITED.**”

For additional information, please contact Dr. Sharee Fowler at 721-9375.

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