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MAYOR’S OFFICE, UNITED WAY KICK OFF WINTER ASSISTANCE FUND

Area companies give $220,000 to make sure local residents stay warm

INDIANAPOLIS - January 10, 2008 — Mayor Greg Ballard and United Way of Central Indiana (UWCI) President and CEO Ellen K. Annala today kicked off the Winter Assistance Fund drive by accepting $100,000 from Citizens Gas and Coke Utility, $50,000 from Indianapolis Power & Light, $50,000 from Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust, $10,000 from The Indianapolis Foundation, a CICF affiliate and $10,000 from the Indianapolis Colts.

The Winter Assistance Fund helps low-income individuals and families avoid having their gas or electricity turned off during winter months.

"High energy costs are a hardship for many families," Ballard said. "By helping people who are unable to pay their bills restore or maintain their utility service, we can help ensure that no family is left in the cold, or forced to use alternative, unsafe heating sources."

United Way is the fiscal agent for the fund and coordinates fundraising.

“By helping address the immediate needs people have when they can’t afford winter energy bills, our social service agencies say they can then help them avoid the downward spiral toward costlier and more critical issues, such as hunger and homelessness,” Annala said.

The Winter Assistance Fund is for people whose income exceeds guidelines for government energy assistance, yet still have difficulty keeping up with high winter heating bills.

Last year, the fund helped 1,229 households, including seniors and families with children, by raising more than $303,017 in assistance. Organizers want to raise at least $350,000 this year. Today’s gifts put the fund within $130,000 of goal.

Customers of Citizens Gas and IPL will receive Winter Assistance Fund contribution envelopes in their gas and electric bills, making it easier for individuals to give to the fund.
Contributions are tax deductible and can also be made online at www.uwci.org, or by mailing a check to: United Way of Central Indiana, Winter Assistance Fund, Post Office Box 660054, Indianapolis, IN, 46266-0054

Residents can dial 2-1-1 to find the nearest neighborhood community center or township trustee office to apply for help through the Winter Assistance Fund.

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