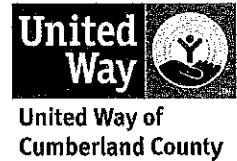


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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United Way Program Fosters Diverse Volunteer Leadership

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C.— Twenty-eight community volunteers received certificates of graduation from United Way of Cumberland County's 5th annual Multi-Cultural Leadership Development Program (MLDP). The graduates, along with proud friends, relatives, and community leaders, assembled in the Pate Room of the Cumberland County Public Library June 26, 2008 for the graduation ceremony.

The ceremony's keynote speaker, Councilman Charles Evans, spoke about the importance of being involved, and of giving back, to the community. He encouraged the graduates to find their passion and move toward it. Also addressing this year's graduates and guests was Queen Degraphenreid, 2008 chair of United Way's diversity committee and an MLDP graduate herself (2005). Shirley Stallings, vice president of finance, administration, and operations, greeted and congratulated the graduates on behalf of United Way of Cumberland County. Rev. Dr. Floyd Johnson, Jr. of William's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church gave the invocation, and dinner followed. United Way's community impact manager and coordinator of the MLDP, Crystal McNair, then recognized each graduate with a short bio and a certificate. At the end of the ceremony, representatives of non-profit organizations were invited to speak to the graduates about volunteer opportunities.

The MLDP was established to identify, train, and place minority leaders in volunteer leadership and policy-making roles within nonprofit agencies throughout Cumberland County. Graduates of the MLDP will be placed according to their interests and abilities, as well as board/committee needs. United Way of Cumberland County will also maintain a database of graduates for future placement. Out of 75 program graduates from 2004-2007, 58 are currently serving on boards or committees in Cumberland County.

The Multi-Cultural Leadership Development Program earned United Way of Cumberland County the 2008 North Carolina Association of Workforce Professionals Group Citation Award, as well as the 2008 Fayetteville-Cumberland Human Relations Commission Organization Award. The Group Citation Award, one of the highest honors the NCAWP presents, recognizes groups who made outstanding contributions to workforce development programs. The Organization Award is presented to an organization that provides activities, programs, and workshops that foster positive human and race relations; meets regularly; and is actively involved in the community.

MLDP participants are selected based on diversity of ethnic background, profession, community service, and demonstrated leadership ability. This year's program consisted of seven two-hour sessions covering the following topics: responsibilities of volunteerism, leadership and team-building skills, strategic planning and program evaluation for nonprofits, nonprofit marketing and communications, diversity and cross-cultural dialogue, board rules and responsibilities, legal and financial board responsibilities, and fund raising, grant writing and research for nonprofits.

2008 MLDP graduates are: Diana Amerson, Zina Bennett, Jacqueline Blue, Dayatra Brown, Carmen Cales, Carolyn de Jesus, Sonya Edmonds, Tina Estle, Kamina Fitzgerald, Dr. Annie

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Ford, Gayla Hicks, Meleisa Lane, Nikki Massey, Carrienne McClellan, Ricardo Morgan, Opel Nealy, Faye Nelson, Roger Ostrander, Victor Pace, Loletha Porter, Mona Powell, Harold Richardson, Kristin Sharp, Leslie Tukes, JurLonna Walker, DeSandra Washington, and Cassandra White Haire.

About United Way of Cumberland County

Started in 1939, United Way of Cumberland County is a nonprofit organization working to improve the quality of lives in our community by addressing critical human needs; including education, income, and health. By providing funding for more than 80 programs that address health and human service needs, United Way of Cumberland County supports both its partner agencies and the community as a whole. In 2007, one out of every two people was helped by a United Way agency.

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