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**United Way Silicon Valley's Inaugural Breakfast in Morgan Hill
Focuses on South County Programs that are Improving Lives**

SAN JOSE, Calif., February 25, 2010 – United Way Silicon Valley held an Inaugural Breakfast in Morgan Hill today to talk about programs and services that are improving the lives of people who live in Morgan Hill and Gilroy.

Morgan Hill Mayor Steve Tate, who serves on United Way Silicon Valley's volunteer Board of Directors, and Gilroy Mayor Al Pinheiro welcomed attendees. Tate is an active member of United Way Silicon Valley's South County Council, which meets regularly to identify community needs and engage local donors.

"The need is great in South County, where foreclosure and unemployment rates are high," said Carole Leigh Hutton, president and CEO of United Way Silicon Valley. "We are working with our partners to address the root causes of local problems and help people achieve financial stability."

United Way Silicon Valley partners with South County nonprofit agencies to improve local conditions, including Rebekah Children's Services, Community Solutions, Friends of Vision Literacy, and Gardner Family Health Network. Rebekah Children's Services was awarded United Way Partner Agency of the Year in 2009 for its exemplary work in helping children and youth achieve their potential.

United Way Silicon Valley also partners with St. Josephs Family Center to provide safety-net services to those in South County through United Way's Emergency Assistance Network. In the last six months of 2009, more than 9,000 clients received food thanks to this partnership. An additional 1,400 clients were able to get help with rent, utilities and food thanks to United Way's Urgent Community Response Fund, supported by a grant from Applied Materials.

United Way Silicon Valley is working with the Morgan Hill and Gilroy police departments so officers can reach out to people in need with information cards about United Way's 2-1-1 Santa Clara County (2-1-1 SCC). Police come in contact with many people who are in crisis and are in need of community services. United Way's three-digit phone number and website (www.211scc.org) provides a direct line to thousands of community services. The free, confidential service is available in more than 170 languages.

The top five reasons Gilroy residents called 2-1-1 SCC in 2009 were housing, legal services, public assistance programs, individual and family support services, and food in that order. The top five reasons for calls from Morgan Hill residents were housing, food, legal services, public assistance programs, and information services.

United Way Silicon Valley is also supporting efforts to bring thousands of dollars back into South County through free tax assistance to help those with low incomes claim the Earned Income Tax Credit and other tax credits. United Way recruits volunteers to help at IRS-approved Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) sites and provides laptop computers and printers donated by IBM. For tax year 2008, nearly \$600,000 was returned to workers who received help at VITA sites at Gavilan College and the Gilroy One Stop. Three VITA sites are located in South County this tax season.

Advancing the Common Good

United Way works to advance the common good by focusing on the building blocks for a good life – income, education and health – by investing in community programs, advocating for key public policies, and promoting volunteerism.

“United Way Silicon Valley is proud to say that lives are being changed in South County, even as we know there is so much more to do,” Hutton said. “By working with these communities, we can reduce the barriers to financial stability and get people the help they need for a better life.”

One in four Santa Clara County residents can’t meet their basic needs without assistance, and that number seems to be rising due to the recession. South County residents are more likely to face a number of barriers to financial stability, including low incomes, no high school diploma, and difficulty speaking English, according to United Way’s 2005 needs assessment.

United Way Silicon Valley strategically invests Community Action Fund dollars in programs – run by United Way and other nonprofits – that help people gain access to economic, educational and health-related opportunities. United Way Silicon Valley’s Community Action Fund also supports 2-1-1 SCC.

These programs are aimed at the root causes that keep people from achieving financial stability and include educational programs that help kids and teens succeed in school, literacy classes, job training services, financial education and matched-savings accounts to help low-income families and individuals build assets, counseling services, and health care. For a complete list of United Way Silicon Valley’s programs and strategic grants, visit www.uwsv.org and click on Community Investment under Our Work.

Taking a Stand

Funding alone can’t change community conditions. While United Way Silicon Valley has always advocated for important issues, its Board of Directors officially launched an initiative to advocate for policies that help people achieve financial stability and improve their health. United Way established an Advocacy/Public Policy Committee last June.

Currently, United Way Silicon Valley is taking a stand against hunger by urging U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi to add \$1 billion to the reauthorization of Child Nutrition Programs. Breakfast participants were asked to join the effort by filling out cards addressed to Congresswoman Pelosi pledging their support.

Getting Involved

With the rising demand for services, volunteering is another way everyone can make a difference and help meet the increasing need right in their own backyard. Volunteering rounds out the three ways people can support United Way Silicon Valley to make real change in their community – give, advocate and volunteer.

United Way Silicon Valley is focused on the building blocks for a good life: income, education and health. To drive positive change, United Way Silicon Valley helps people help themselves by identifying critical needs, mobilizing the caring power of the community, and aligning resources to achieve the best solutions.

For more information about United Way Silicon Valley, visit www.uwsv.org.

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