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For more information, contact:
Melissa Mann, Director of Communications
317-464-2251
(cellular) 317-371-8529
mmann@indylink.com; www.indychamber.com

Lilly Endowment awards \$400,000 grant to Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Foundation to support Common Goal project
Community-wide initiative will graduate students, develop future workforce

INDIANAPOLIS –Marion County school superintendents and the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce have established a four-year aim rate for high school graduation that will put Marion County among the top performing urban areas in the country when it is achieved. To aid the process and develop critical programs to meet the goal, the Lilly Endowment has awarded the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce Foundation a grant equaling \$400,000 for the Common Goal project.

The community-wide initiative, Common Goal, will involve a broad range of interested parties, from civic institutions like United Way, the Center for Leadership Development and the Indianapolis Urban League, to the Mayor's office, guidance counselors, parents, teachers and students, all of whom will work collaboratively to raise the countywide rate from its current 70.7 percent to more than 80 percent by 2011.

Common Goal is forecasted to decrease the number of high school dropouts from 7.7 percent to 5 percent in the same four-year window, equating to helping more than 2,000 students graduate from high school.

"Common Goal is collaborative, it is affirmative and it is focused on outcomes," said Roland M. Dorson, president, Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. "This grant from Lilly Endowment will help us get students to the graduation finish line and develop a more positive, educated workforce in Marion County. We are grateful for the opportunity to positively influence our community alongside the Lilly Endowment,"

The initiative will include – among other things – "interventions" to engage the business community and partners in creating solutions for graduation success. The grant will support the development of Common Goal programs and collaborative efforts in the community, including, but not limited to:

- Developing a meaningful county-wide credit recovery program
- Placing a Common Goal coordinator in school districts to assist at-risk students and coordinate the engagement of volunteers
- Providing job shadowing opportunities
- Offering field experiences to help students learn more about the workforce
- Engaging mentors from the business community
- Identifying tutors to help students with their studies
- Increasing the number of college and university partnerships

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“This initiative represents our commitment to helping more than 2,000 children graduate from high school,” said William Corley, President, Community Health Network. “For years, we’ve invested many dollars into our juvenile justice system. Now we must reverse that trend and dedicate our time and talent to assist these students who represent our future. Indianapolis must invest in human capital to create a better tomorrow and the Lilly Endowment has that similar vision.”

** Marion County’s 11 school districts are: Beech Grove City Schools, MSD of Decatur Township, Franklin Township Community Schools, Indianapolis Public Schools, MSD of Lawrence Township, MSD of Perry Township, MSD of Pike Township, School Town of Speedway, MSD of Warren Township, MSD of Washington Township, and MSD of Wayne Township.*

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Founded in 1890 by Colonel Eli Lilly and a group of Indianapolis business leaders, the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce is the voice of the central Indiana business community. Today, with a membership of more than 4,000 businesses, the Indianapolis Chamber is still a voice of progress and improvement, bringing together businesses for a thriving community. For more information on the Chamber, visit indychamber.com.