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## **Businesses Contribute More than \$1 Million to Common Goal** *Community investment matches Pacers Foundation contribution of \$500,000*

**INDIANAPOLIS** – The Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce today announced more than \$1 million in community contributions to Common Goal, the Chamber’s initiative to raise high school graduation rates in Marion County. Common Goal, a community-wide collaborative effort, intends to raise the Marion County high school graduation rate to 80 percent by 2012, a 10 percent increase over a four-year period. When achieved, Marion County public schools will be among the top-performing urban schools in the nation.

In June, the Pacers Foundation donated \$500,000 to the Chamber’s Common Goal initiative. In order to generate additional funding, they urged the community to “match” their investment to bring the total community investment to at least \$1 million. Indianapolis businesses have surpassed the challenge by raising \$937,500 since June. The total amount of contributions to Common Goal now exceeds \$1,709,200 since the program’s inception in 2007.

“When the Pacers Foundation, Pacers Sports & Entertainment, Indiana Pacers and Indiana Fever made its \$500,000 commitment to Common Goal almost six months ago, we ‘challenged’ the community to join with us in this important effort by at least matching our contribution,” said Rick Fuson, Chief Operating Officer of Pacers Sports & Entertainment. “We are heartened and appreciative that today we are able to recognize so many partners who have met and exceeded that challenge.”

“We can make the biggest impact by working hand in hand with key community leaders and programs such as Common Goal and marshalling significant resources,” said Dennis Bassett, CEO of Chase in Indiana. “Together, we can build momentum for change in Marion County public schools.”

The contributing businesses include the following:

Chase	\$300,000
AT&T	\$200,000
Wal-Mart	\$100,000
Community Health	\$100,000
St. Vincent Health	\$100,000
Ivy Tech	\$100,000
WellPoint	\$25,000
State Farm Insurance	\$12,500

**TOTAL raised toward \$500,000 match (June - Dec.): \$937,500**

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Representatives from each contributing organization received recognition and a gift from the Pacers Foundation at today's press conference held in the Chase Tower in downtown Indianapolis.

"This community collaboration for Common Goal proves that Indianapolis is dedicated to educating the young people who will become leaders of our city," said Roland Dorson, President, Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. "We are only in our first year of the program and have already received tremendous support from the community. It is especially encouraging to see such generosity from the business community in these challenging economic times; however, we still need others to get behind the cause. By working together, even in a tough economic climate, we will be able to see our 'common goal' achieved."

More than \$4,848,425 is needed to fund the four-year program. More than 35 percent of this amount was raised in the first year of the program, but donations are still needed to support the full objective of Common Goal. Ninety percent of each dollar raised goes directly to the strategies inside the schools that work to increase graduation rates. This percentage is expected to increase in the coming years.

"Community Health Network is engaged with Common Goal not only to provide funding for this important initiative, but also to provide mentors for students," said Bill Corley, Chair of Common Goal and President of Community Health Network. "We believe that improving educational skills in the 11 school districts in the metropolitan area is crucial to the long-term success of Indianapolis. Improving the graduation rate from 70 percent to 80 percent within the next four years is a goal every business should strive for because it will provide for a brighter future for Indianapolis."

Through the efforts and funds provided by Common Goal:

- A mentoring program with Junior Achievement has been established to guide students to graduation. Nine graduation coaches have been placed in eight high schools to identify students in need of interventions and social services.

- Reading programs are available for below-level and struggling readers.

- Computer-aided instruction has been implemented to help students catch up on credit hours.

- Internships are being offered through Indiana InternNET so students can relate their classroom experience to real life.

- Every high school in Marion County participating in Common Goal has designed research-based initiatives and best practices for implementation in their respective schools.

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#### *About Common Goal*

*Chaired by Community Health Network President William Corley, Common Goal is a collaborative effort that includes all 11 Marion County public school superintendents, the MindTrust, City of Indianapolis, United Way of Central Indiana, Center for Leadership Development, Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL), the Urban League and the Indiana Department of Education. In addition to the targeted 80 percent graduation rate, Common Goal also will decrease the dropout rate from 7.7 percent to 5 percent by implementing customized intervention strategies. Mentors will be recruited to work directly with students to help them stay on course for graduation. For more information, visit [CommonGoalIndy.org](http://CommonGoalIndy.org).*

#### *About the Greater Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce*

*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 4,300 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](http://IndyChamber.com).*