

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

United Way
of Fort Smith Area



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United Way Executive Director Resigns

(FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, FORT SMITH, AR) — Angela Tilley, Executive Director of the United Way of Fort Smith Area, has announced her resignation from United Way effective May 15.

Tilley began her career with United Way in 1996. She served as Campaign Director for the organization from 1996 to 2001 and in 2001, Tilley was named Executive Director.

During her tenure as Executive Director, Tilley helped align United Way as a Community Impact provider in addition to a fundraising and allocating organization. By being a Community Impact provider, United Way works to identify the underlying causes of issues and works to offer initiatives and partnerships to address those issues. Tilley states that although many accomplishments and new initiatives have been developed by United Way in the last seven years, it has been a team effort, one that has involved a strong staff, volunteers and a supportive Board of Directors. A few highlights of those accomplishments include:

- Implemented Stuff the Bus in our five county area – providing more than 30,000 school supplies to children in need.
- Developed a partnership with Parents As Teachers Program and Kindergarten Readiness Forum. This forum offers a hands-on training for parents and pre-school providers and focuses on how to help children enter kindergarten ready to learn.
- Developed and implemented a community grant process that focuses on outcomes associated with Ensuring Children Succeed. Through this process, grants have been awarded to Lincoln Childcare Center and Belle Point Center for children whose families cannot receive DHS vouchers and to Parents As Teachers program to focus on parent outreach to the Hispanic community.
- Implemented Dolly Parton's Imagination Library for the community. This program sends more than 900 children - from birth to five years of age in Sebastian and Franklin counties - an age-appropriate hard-back book each month. The goal of the program is to encourage parent-child reading time and to increase a child's opportunity for success in kindergarten by helping them increase their vocabulary and early reading skills.
- Worked from 2004-2006 incubating a new non-profit for our area; the Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Crawford and Sebastian Counties. Through this work, United Way served as the lead administrative support for the agency.
- Under Tilley's leadership, United Way provided the avenue for front-line support for the Hurricane Katrina-Rita disaster work. United Way was the first organization to call a meeting to discuss how United Way and their community partners should and would react to servicing the evacuees. Because of this initiative, United Way and several partner agencies assisted the Sebastian County Emergency Management personnel and the Arkansas National Guard by working the front lines of the evacuation process. This action of the local United Way garnered recognition on a national level. United Way of Fort Smith Area was featured in a national United Way of America video about how United Ways should respond in a time of need. Tilley was then named to the United Way of America National Disaster Taskforce.

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- Tilley served as Chairman of the United Ways of Arkansas Board during their transition from a social organization to a formal/operating non-profit organization. As Chairman of the State Association, Tilley worked to formalize the organization by incorporating the agency, developing the necessary policies and procedures and forming various committees. The State Association had to be formalized so 2-1-1 could operate in Arkansas. 2-1-1 is a three-digit call number to help connect individuals to health and human service providers throughout the state. Tilley assisted in hiring a State 2-1-1 Executive Director so the program could become a reality. Arkansas 2-1-1 will launch in Arkansas in 2008.

Tilley stated, "This was a very difficult and challenging decision and one that I did not take lightly. I have a strong passion for the work of United Way and each of the United Way funded partners. But, I have dreamed of being able to spend the summers with my children and more time with them during the school year. I have decided that now is the time to make that dream a reality."

Larry Bates, Chairman of the United Way Board stated, "On behalf of the Board, the staff and our member agencies we want to extend our sincere gratitude to Angela for her vision and leadership over the past 12 years. She will be difficult to replace but leaves the organization in great shape. We understand and appreciate her reasons for making this change and wish her and her family the very best."

The United Way of Fort Smith Area, Inc. serves Crawford, Franklin, Logan and Sebastian counties in Arkansas and LeFlore and Sequoyah counties in Oklahoma. United Way works to identify the underlying causes of issues and works to offer initiatives and partnerships to address those issues. In addition, United Way provides funds to 32 community partners.