



Employees Helping Students Succeed

*United Way's Invitation to U.S. Businesses
to Support Tutoring and Mentoring*

LIVE UNITED[®]



We **REALLY** need your help!



DID YOU KNOW THAT UNITED WAY HAS ALMOST 10 MILLION DONORS?

Imagine if just 10% of them volunteered to help kids succeed in school.

Americans value education and the opportunities that a good education provides. In contrast, when students drop out of school, unprepared for college and the workforce, we can all recognize the danger for families, communities and our nation as a whole.

The scope of the dropout problem is staggering. About one-quarter of all students—1 million students a year, 6,000 a day—fail to graduate on time. In some large urban districts, the percentage is closer to one-half of students, with the problem most acute for African American and Hispanic youth.

United Way has challenged ourselves and our partners to cut the number of high school dropouts in half by 2018. Achieving this goal requires reaching children from their earliest years through high school, strengthening their reading, math and other academic skills, as well as their involvement and engagement with their school and community.

VOLUNTEERS CAN HELP CHILDREN

- Enter school ready to succeed
- Read proficiently by 4th grade
- Make a successful transition into and out of middle school
- Graduate from high school on time
- Be ready for success in college, work and life

Together, we can serve as the “second shift of caring adults”—alongside parents, teachers, youth leaders and others—to give children these tools.



LESSONS from the Evidence

Recent research proves what people have anecdotally observed over the years: tutoring, mentoring, connecting with families and other personalized, relatively straightforward strategies make a difference.

Students Benefit: As one example of many across the country, when United Way of Northeast Florida involved corporate partners, education leaders and other stakeholders in a pilot initiative for middle-schoolers called Achievers for Life, students' academic performance and behavior improved. Elsewhere, a Pew Public/Private Ventures Study showed children with mentors were, among other benefits, less likely to skip school than those without mentors.

Employees Benefit: Employees who volunteer through their workplace report more positive attitudes toward their employer and their co-workers. Further, those who volunteer are more positive about their own physical and emotional health than non-volunteers.

Companies Benefit: Top-level executives recognize the bottom-line value of corporate citizenship because it enhances a company's reputation and image, is valued by customers and helps recruit and retain employees, among other benefits.

America Benefits: Halving the number of high school dropouts would have significant economic benefits. Workers with at least a high school diploma earn more throughout their lives than those who drop out. Moreover, well-prepared high school graduates continue their education, serve in the military or develop workplace skills that strengthen our economy and society.

EXPANDING THE REACH

Despite the positive evidence, here's the catch—many promising efforts remain at a smaller scale than what is needed because of a gap in volunteers and other resources. Your company can help close the gap when you support your employees' volunteer efforts.

What can they do, even within just an hour or so a week?

Volunteer readers read stories to individual students or to groups. To be a reader, all a person needs is to be able to read aloud, commit to visiting a classroom on a regular basis and share the joy of reading.

Reading Buddies develop a relationship with students online. Students and adults read and write together via the Internet. This is a great option when adults cannot personally visit with children on a regular basis.

Reading and Math Tutors work one-on-one with students, reinforcing what is being taught in the classroom so students keep up with their peers. When students fall behind, they often stay behind—but tutors make a difference.

Mentors connect with students beyond the classroom, providing advice, guidance and friendship. At the most basic level, mentoring is invaluable to show students that adults care about them and want them to succeed.

Graduation Coaches focus on at-risk students, supporting them academically before they reach the point of dropping out.

Will you join us?

United Way Worldwide, local United Ways and our many partners are ready to work to help recruit and support 1 million new volunteers over 3 years. We envision a year-round experience that provides ways to give, advocate and volunteer to help kids do well in school:

SPRING 2011

- United Way hosts an orientation for your company to explain the different opportunities and recruit your employees to serve as tutors and mentors.

SUMMER

- United Way and partners help you sign up, train and place volunteers, and conduct background checks.

FALL

- Volunteers start meeting with youths; they check in with United Way and partners to provide feedback and report progress.
- During the traditional fundraising season, United Way will invite employees to support education with a financial contribution—as well as to volunteer and advocate. United Way and partners thank and recognize volunteers.

WINTER

- Volunteers and their employers advocate on behalf of kids and schools.
- Volunteers register for spring tutoring and other volunteering opportunities.

SPRING 2012

- United Way holds a wrap-up ceremony for volunteers, and the program gets ready to repeat and expand in the next school year.

WHAT WE ASK OF YOU:

Companies can support this work in several ways:

- A financial investment to support infrastructure, technology and tracking;
- A commitment to supply a minimum number of new volunteers as readers, tutors or in one of the other roles described above;
- A willingness to allow employees to volunteer on a regular basis during work hours;
- A pledge to sustain the effort through a company-wide initiative or policy.

Through these proven ways of reaching youth, the workforce of today can help cut the dropout rate in half by 2018. What we do now means the workforce of tomorrow will be ready to take on the challenges facing our nation.



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