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**United Way Partners with Welfare Reform Liaison Project to Distribute
Thousands of “Hygiene Kits”
*Over 500 Kits Distributed So Far***

High Point, NC - Through a partnership with the Welfare Reform Liaison Project (WRLP), the United Way of Greater High Point has been selected to coordinate the distribution of 3,000 “hygiene kits” to homeless and low-income individuals in High Point. Thanks to funding through the federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the kits are totally free to all parties, and contain vital health and hygiene products. Recipients must be 18 years or older, be at 200% or less of the federal poverty guideline, and must be residents of Guilford County.

The hygiene kits are expected to significantly benefit local shelters, which are being inundated with clients due to the extreme cold weather of recent weeks. “This donation couldn’t have come at a better time as so many in our community are struggling with financial issues, unemployment, and in so many cases, loss of housing,” said Bobby Smith, President of the United Way of Greater High Point.

Clients of Caring Services and other area non-profits were trained by Welfare Reform Liaison Project to pack 6,000 kits for Guilford County, half of which will be distributed in High Point. These clients are employed to prepare the kits as part of a job training program at WRLP, sorting, inspecting, and packing 25 plus items into each kit. (25 items per kit x 6,000 kits = 150,000 pieces, a significant training opportunity.) The skills they learned will hopefully assist them in gaining permanent employment in either the distribution or inventory control fields. Separate kits were developed for males and females, and their contents vary accordingly.

United Way is working with almost two dozen local agencies and churches to implement this new program. The first several hundred kits went to agencies who are participating in the annual “Point in Time” homeless count in Guilford County. Another 200 are going out this month to other agencies not related to Point In Time Count, and distribution will continue through September 2010.

“Hopefully, the kits will encourage some homeless individuals to come forward to be counted,” said Smith. “The Point In Time Count is a critical tool in assessing the issue of homelessness in Guilford County, and the strategies we develop to help deal with it. Additionally, since each person counted represents an extra \$1,300 per person, the Point In Time Count and the Census count later this spring means extra federal dollars will be received for our community.”

To date, 16 non-profit agencies and churches are scheduled to receive kits, which are still being assembled at the WRLP facility on Dorris Avenue in High Point. Recipients include The Salvation Army, Open Door Ministries, Leslie’s House, American Red Cross, I Am NOW, and Caring Services, among others.
