

# News Release



Harvard Family  
Research Project



## For Immediate Release

## Media Contacts:

Media Contact for United Way of Northern Nevada  
and the Sierra: Melissa Achurra, KPS3 Marketing  
Phone: 775-686-2115  
Email: [melissa@kps3.com](mailto:melissa@kps3.com)

AT&T: Timi Aguilar  
Phone: (303) 488-9469,  
Email: [timiaguilar@aguilarpr.com](mailto:timiaguilar@aguilarpr.com)

## **AT&T and United Way Release *Family Engagement for High School Success Toolkit*** *Informed by Best Practices from United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra*

**Reno, Nev. (December, 09, 2011)** – Recognizing the role that family engagement plays as part of a comprehensive strategy to keep teens in school and ensure that they graduate prepared for the future, [AT&T](#),\* [United Way Worldwide](#), and Harvard Family Research Project unveiled a toolkit that will help schools, educators, community organizations and PTAs develop and execute more effective strategies that engage families in helping at-risk high school students get back on track. United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra (UWNNS) contributed key learnings and best practices from family engagement strategies in the local community.

The [Family Engagement for High School Success Toolkit](#) is designed to help nonprofits develop strong parent-school-community partnerships and provide networks of support to keep students on the path to high school graduation. Developed by United Way and the [Harvard Family Research Project](#) with financial support from AT&T, the toolkit will help local United Ways and other nonprofits:

- Identify how to spot ninth graders who are at risk of dropping out, considering factors such as attendance, behavior and academic performance.
- Enlist and enroll the right partners and work creatively to reach parents of at-risk kids.
- Work with parents, schools and partners to apply research-based strategies and promising practices to get at-risk students back on track to graduate high school.

The toolkit was developed as part of a family engagement pilot project that AT&T supported with a \$2 million contribution to United Way in 2009. This initiative allowed 15 local United Ways, including UWNNS, to work with their communities to pioneer strategies for bringing families, school leaders, community partners and students together. The toolkit distills the successes, strategies and lessons learned in the 15 pilots to help other communities plan and implement effective family engagement approaches to help kids stay in school.

“As one of the original chapters chosen to participate, UWNNS is passionate about this toolkit,” said Karen Barsell, CEO and President of UWNNS, “We believe that the parental engagement and education that this program provides will increase the success of high school students, not only in Washoe County but across the country, achieving the United Way’s goal of cutting our nation’s dropout rate in half. Adult caregivers and other family members play a critical role in keeping students engaged and motivated to succeed in school and this toolkit will help achieve this.”

AT&T is committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. As evidence of its commitment, AT&T launched Aspire, a \$100 million high school success and workforce readiness initiative in April 2008. AT&T Aspire is one of the largest-ever corporate commitments to address high school success and workforce readiness.

The toolkit is available online at [www.hfrp.org/HighSchoolSuccessToolkit](http://www.hfrp.org/HighSchoolSuccessToolkit).

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### **About Philanthropy at AT&T**

AT&T Inc. (NYSE:T) is committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its philanthropic initiatives and working with other organizations, AT&T has a long history of supporting projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic

achievement; and address community needs. In 2010, more than \$148.2 million was contributed through corporate-, employee- and AT&T Foundation-giving programs.

### **About United Way of Northern Nevada and the Sierra**

The foundation that nurtures and supports healthy lives is made up of three, interconnected 'building blocks' – education, financial stability and health. United Way is ideally suited to create positive, lasting change by addressing all three areas as one – through proper expertise, capacity and relationships. Join us! Bring your passion, knowledge and resources to get things done all across our community. We all win when a child succeeds in school, when a neighborhood turns around and when workers have solid jobs. For more information, call 775-322-8668 or visit [www.uwnns.org](http://www.uwnns.org).

### **About United Way**

United Way is a worldwide network in 40 countries and territories, including more than 1,200 local organizations in the U.S. It advances the common good, creating opportunities for a better life for all by focusing on the three key building blocks of education, income and health. United Way recruits people and organizations who bring the passion, expertise and resources needed to get things done. LIVE UNITED® is a call to action for everyone to become a part of the change. For more information about United Way, please visit: <http://LIVEUNITED.org>.

### **About Harvard Family Research Project**

Since 1983, Harvard Family Research Project (HFRP) has helped stakeholders develop and evaluate strategies to promote the well being of children, youth, families, and their communities. HFRP works primarily within three areas that support children's learning and development—early childhood education, out-of-school time programming, and family and community support in education. Underpinning all of this work is a commitment to evaluation for strategic decision making, learning, and accountability. Building on the knowledge that schools alone cannot meet the learning needs of our children, HFRP also focuses national attention on complementary learning. Complementary learning is the idea that a systemic approach, which integrates school and nonschool supports, can better ensure that all children have the skills they need to succeed.