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FIFTH ANNUAL BUSINESS LEADERS FOR EARLY EDUCATION BREAKFAST WILL BE HELD ON MARCH 23

TUCSON, AZ (March 11, 2010) – United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona is pleased to announce that the Fifth Annual Business Leaders for Early Education Breakfast will be held at the Doubletree Hotel at Reid Park on March 23 from 7:00 – 9:00 a.m. The breakfast is sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Arizona.

The purpose of the breakfast is to inform the Tucson business community of the many economic advantages that can be gained by putting a stake in the ground for high quality early childhood education. Studies show that children in early childhood education programs are more likely to score higher in reading and math, more likely to graduate from high school and attend college, more likely to hold a job and more likely to earn more in that job. For every dollar we invest in these programs, we get nearly \$10 back in reduced welfare rolls, fewer health care costs and less crime.

““Because we know that the countries who out-educate us today will out-compete us tomorrow, we must raise the bar when it comes to early learning,” said LaVonne Douville, United Way Vice President. “It is our hope that the breakfast will empower local business leaders to support this crucial investment in the future of our community.”

The keynote speaker for the breakfast will be Robert Dugger, Ph.D. Dugger is an investment banking expert, Chairman of the Advisory Board of the Partnership for America’s Economic Success (PAES) and Chair of the Invest in Kids Working Group within the PAES.

Dugger has had an extensive career in the business, public and private sectors. He is the founder and managing partner of Hanover Investment Group, an investment firm that monitors fiscal conditions worldwide; at the national, state and municipal level. He was also managing director for fifteen years at Tudor Investment Corporation, one of the world's top asset management companies. Dugger led similar efforts while a senior staff member on the House and Senate banking committees during the 1980s and Policy Director at the American Bankers Association in the early 1990s.

In addition, Dugger is one of the founders of the PAES—a coalition of economists, policy experts and advocates mobilizing business leaders to improve tomorrow's economy through smart policy investments in young children today.

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- Business Breakfast announcement continued... -

“It is clear that at every level – if we invest more in the earliest years of a child’s life, the returns would be many times the expenditure,” said Dugger. “With a full commitment of resources, we could drive down K-12 education and adolescent criminal justice costs, significantly increase high school graduation rates, college attendance and job success...the long-term net benefits would be many millions of dollars,” he added.

Also speaking at the breakfast will be Helaine Levy; Executive Director of Diamond Family Philanthropies; Steve Lynn, Board Chair of First Things First; Dr. Lou Albert, President of Pima Community College (West Campus); and Dr. John Pedicone, Vice President of the Southern Arizona Leadership Council.

The Business Leaders for Early Education Breakfast is sponsored by BlueCross BlueShield of Arizona and hosted by the First Focus on Kids, First Things First, the Southern Arizona Leadership Council and United Way. Registration begins at 7:00 a.m. and the program will begin at 7:30 a.m. Tickets are \$25 (\$20 for chamber members) and \$200 for a table of nine. Seating is limited and registration is required. For more information, please contact Daniel Schmidt at dschmidt@unitedwaytucson.org or 520.903.3947.

United Way’s First Focus on Kids, with the support of the Diamond Challenge Fund, is making measurable progress toward improving quality in early care and education settings in Pima County and helping parents and early childhood professionals get the education and support they need to be successful working with our community’s young children.

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About United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona

*United Way of Tucson and Southern Arizona is working to advance 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 is dedicated to creating long lasting community change by addressing the underlying causes of the most significant issues. Our focus areas include: helping children and youth achieve their potential, promoting financial stability and independence, and improving people’s health. Living United means being a part of the change. **Give. Advocate. Volunteer. LIVE UNITED**. For more information about United Way, please visit unitedwaytucson.org.*

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