

Rick and Aria Mazer to Lead 2009-10 Lake Area United Way Community Campaign

First Husband and Wife to chair local annual fundraising drive

June 4, 2009 - Rick and Aria Mazer have been named the first husband and wife team to lead the annual community campaign for the Lake Area United Way (LAUW).

Rick Mazer is Horseshoe Casino's regional president and general manager. Aria is very active in the community and supports numerous philanthropic causes focusing on women's health issues; nurturing strong, healthy and self-reliant families; helping children and youth to succeed in school and in life; fighting domestic violence; and supporting the arts in Northwest Indiana.

As Co-Chairs, the Mazers will be visible champions for the 2009-10 LAUW campaign. It is the largest single fundraising effort in Northwest Indiana raising more than \$5.2 million annually to support a network of critical health and human services through 33 member agencies and community initiatives that assisted over 280,000 local residents in 2008.

The Mazers are assembling a strong team of local leaders and community activists to advocate for LAUW, educate the community about the growing need for critical health and human services, and to motivate businesses, and their employees as well as individuals to support the campaign.

"We are thrilled to have Rick and Aria Mazer, two highly respected leaders in our community, serve as Lake Area United Way's Campaign Co-Chairs," said Brad Vosberg, regional retail sales manager for First Midwest Bank and 2009-10 LAUW Board President. "They are already making plans and asking other leaders to step up to the community's call for help."

In addition to United Way, the Mazers give their support and time to Angels on Assignment, American Heart Association, Calumet College of St. Joseph, Crisis Center, Indiana Black Expo, Michael J. Fox Foundation, St. Jude House, Tradewinds, and South Shore Arts.

Recently, Rick was presented with the Lakeshore Chamber of Commerce Business Person of the Year Award and received the 2008 Champion of Diversity by Indiana Minority Business Magazine.

In March, the St. John couple received the prestigious Raoul Wallenberg Humanitarian Award, presented by the Midwest Region of the American Committee for Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem. The hospital located in one of the most troubled spots in the world cares for Arabs and Jews, treating patients of every race, religion and nationality.

Three key areas that the St. John couple and their United Way Campaign Cabinet will focus on is new business cultivation, expansion of the United Way Regional Leadership Circle and Tocqueville Society's leadership giving programs, and engaging young leaders to get involved.

"In these hard economic times, the need for United Way is greater than ever, and its mission more relevant," said Aria Mazer. "Those affected by the recession and life's hardships are not strangers. They are family, friends, co-workers and neighbors in need."

"There is no doubt that these are difficult times – the toughest our region has seen in decades," added Rick Mazer. "Those of us with jobs are indeed the fortunate ones. Through our support of United Way, we are giving help and hope to families and individuals struggling to get through their daily lives."

The annual fundraising campaign will kick off in September. As of yet, no campaign goal has been set. Last year, LAUW raised \$5,229,000 surpassing its goal of \$5.2 million.