

Lake Area United Way

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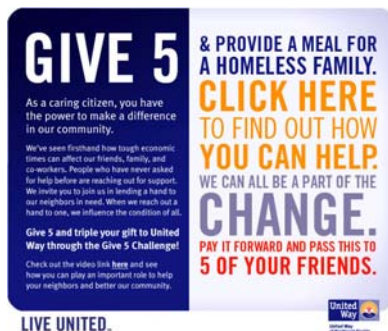
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Lake Area United Way Launches “Give 5 Tell 5” Campaign to Engage Younger Generation via Social Media Websites

(Griffith, Indiana) – In this tough economy, Lake Area United Way is trying to be creative in getting more young people engaged in the community by tapping into social media channels and providing newer ways and opportunities for them to give, advocate and volunteer.

United Way leaders believe that in order to help broaden its message and to reach new generations of young donors, it must start using the power of the internet and social networking sites to engage them.



So, the local non-profit community planning and fundraising organization is taking its first plunge into social media by launching a new advertising campaign called “Give 5 Tell 5” to reach brand new givers via websites like YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

“With the ‘Give 5 Tell 5’ campaign, we are looking to United Way’s future,” said Aria Mazer, 2009 LAUW Campaign Co-Chair. “We’re targeting high school and college students to drive the effort. This internet approach allows us to convey our message through the online tools they use every day to connect and communicate with one another.”

The new viral marketing campaign is asking a lot of young people to give a little by donating \$5 or more and then emailing the link to five friends and family. The promotion is LAUW’s first venture into social media and social networking. The campaign runs through next March.

To help deliver the message LAUW is tapping young people to help spread the word. The web-based promotion is centered on a one-minute viral video that

lets people know how their small contribution can have a big impact on their neighbors and their community.

"The goal is for us to build relationships with young generations, to inform them of our mission and work in the areas of education, family and financial stability, and health, and to invite them to give, advocate, volunteer and to live united," explained Mazer.

Aria along with her husband and 2009 campaign co-chair Rick Mazer came up with the idea and urged United Way to start tapping into the passion, energy and internet wizardry of young people. At the same time, Jana Kovich, a 2007 Lake Central High School graduate now enrolled at Indiana University's School of Public & Environmental Affairs Honor's Division in Bloomington, was completing a summer marketing internship with United Way.

During her stint, Kovich conducted an evaluation of the nonprofit's website. Her work helped make LAUW's website more compelling, interactive and user friendly.

As Kovich became more familiar with the group's mission and work in the community, she became a staunch champion and wanted to introduce United Way's new Live United message to her peers in a way it would resonate with them and compel them to roll up their sleeves and get involved.

Kovich encouraged her younger sister Alyssa and another friend - who happened to be Rick and Aria Mazer's daughter Racquel - to pick up the United Way banner and promote the message among their network of friends who were all on Lake Central High School's Dance Team.

"Everyone was invited to my mom and dad's house," said 'Rocky' as she's known to her friends. "We talked about ways to get involved and shared stories about how we live united. We even had a photo shoot with everyone wearing United Way tee-shirts, laughing and posing together."

That youthful energy generated that day translated into the Honor Students from Lake Central High School participating in United Way's Youth Day of Caring in August. The group helped clean the beach and restore hiking trails along Lake Michigan at Indiana State Park and along the National Lakeshore.

"It was a lot of hard work, but we all had a great time," Rocky added. "Living united means getting off the sidelines, encouraging your friends to join in, making some noise and being part of the solution."

Rocky's parents are proud that their daughter and her friends are volunteering. "There are so many good kids doing good work in our community," Aria Mazer said. "It just shows everyone has something to give - whether it's your time, talents or treasure. We need to encourage and provide them with opportunities."

For more information on Lake Area United Way's Give 5 Tell 5 campaign, go to: www.lauw.org as well as to YouTube: [Give 5 Tell 5 Lake Area United Way of Indiana](#) or to the group's Facebook page or on Twitter.

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PHOTO CAPTION:

2009 Campaign Chair Aria Mazer poses with students from Lake Central High School who are helping the Lake Area United Way engage local youth through social networking sites like Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. Front row left-to-right: Tiffany Marquiss, Crista Pyrzs, Alyssa Kovich; middle row: Aria Mazer, Racquel Mazer; back row: Joe Sczcerbowski, Matt Siedentopf, Seth Frey.