

## **Rush County Receives \$50,000 Grant for Countywide Wellness Programs**

**Indianapolis, Indiana and Rush County, Indiana – August 31, 2006** — Winning Communities announced today that Rush County, Indiana has received a one-to-one matching grant from the Indiana Association of United Ways for \$50,000. Rush County will utilize the grant funds, along with an additional \$50,000 raised within the community, for developing life long wellness programs for its citizens.

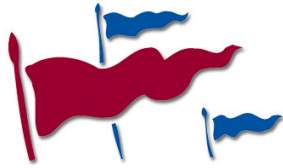
The Rush County Life Long Wellness Program will include the following programs:

- Children's Program: Bi-weekly educational sessions on nutrition, fitness and active lifestyle; fitness testing; training sessions; "Healthy Bucks" awards program for participation
- Adult Program: "Biggest Winner" contest with six 12-week challenges; bi-weekly education, fitness testing and exercise training sessions; prizes and other incentives for participation; "Mr. or Ms. Rushville Fitness" award
- Family Program: 5K walks/runs to raise money for fitness trails; volleyball and softball tournaments; "Day in the Park" for family fun and fitness; "Healthy Bucks" and family prize trip giveaway as incentives for participation
- Tobacco Programs: Children's programming: tobacco prevention with instruction, games, videos and incentives for participation; Adult programming: tobacco cessation classes with benchmarks and incentives for participation; Quarterly wellness class on second hand smoke dangers

Rush County will use grant funds for incentives, staff, equipment and promotion of the various life long wellness programs. Rush County plans to use conference space in the newly renovated Rush Memorial Hospital for conducting some of the community programs. Rush County also plans to establish a new, Life Long Wellness Committee composed of representatives from Rush Memorial Hospital, the City of Rushville, Rush County United Fund, Chamber of Commerce, ECDC, County Commissioners, Rush County Community Foundation, and other leaders from Rush County. The wellness committee will continue to hold fundraisers, and seek the help of community and business donations and explore other grant opportunities to sustain its life long wellness program.

"The Life Long Wellness program will be the first of many community impact projects addressed by the United Fund in the years to come," said Pam Leisure, Executive Director of the Rush County United Fund. "The collaborative efforts by the seven partners, Jim Dittoe of Winning Communities, the Leadership Academy, and citizens have produced a road map for future projects touching the diverse citizens of Rush County. The neat thing about implementing some of these projects is that the community benefits as a whole, young and old alike, which further strengthens the mission of the Rush County United Fund."

This spring, Rush County underwent a countywide strategic planning process, facilitated by community development firm Winning Communities, Inc., to analyze the present conditions and future state of the county. After several steering committee and community planning sessions, Rush County completed its final community vision and action plan this summer. Aside from the county's current plans to improve life long wellness, Rush County also plans to achieve other objectives in the areas of community and economic development, life long learning, image/beautification, countywide communications, infrastructure/technology



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and social services. Rush County has established a Winning Communities task force to carry out the measurable objectives outlined in its vision and action plan.

“I congratulate the people of Rush County for their vision and desire to improve the community’s overall health and well-being,” said Jim Dittoe, president and founder of Winning Communities, Inc. “Rush County’s life long wellness program should be a model that other Indiana communities follow. Perhaps then, the state can raise its status to become one of the healthiest states in the U.S.”

**About Winning Communities:**

Winning Communities is a community planning consulting company that has facilitated numerous community vision and action plans for cities, towns and counties throughout the United States. Jim Dittoe, President of Winning Communities, Inc. has been building community progress for more than 30 years, and has developed a unique certification program called the Certified Winning Communities program, which is open to any county, city or town that seeks to create a vision and action plan for its future success. The Association of Indiana Counties, the Community Bankers Association of Illinois and the Community Bankers Association of Indiana formally endorse the Winning Communities program. For more information about Winning Communities or the Certified Winning Communities process, contact Jim Dittoe at (317) 402-0524, email jim @ winningcommunities.com or visit [www.winningcommunities.com](http://www.winningcommunities.com).

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