



**United Way  
of Fresno County**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**UNITED WAY OF FRESNO COUNTY  
VITA/EITC VOLUNTEER PROGRAM 2009**

June 5, 2009 (Fresno, CA) -- As a result of United Way of Fresno County's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance/Earned Income Tax Credit (VITA/EITC) Volunteer Program, more than \$4.74 million in tax refunds have been returned to Fresno County tax payers. Through the efforts of more than 260 volunteers who participated, VITA/EITC Volunteer Program offered no cost tax filing services to working individuals and families with household incomes of \$40,000 or less. Since February 1, VITA volunteers have completed over 4400 tax filings in Fresno County resulting in over \$4.74 million in tax refunds. Tax payers received an average return of \$1069.81 for working families.

Before the tax season starts, VITA volunteers have already put in 32 hours each of tax preparation training and certification by the Internal Revenue Service. Over 260 volunteers help staff 33 VITA sites throughout the tax season offering no cost tax filing assistance. This year two VITA sites were located at local high schools, one at Roosevelt High School and the other at McLane High School both staffed by high school student volunteers and school staff. This year marked the first year that home-based small business owners were able to receive no cost tax filing assistance for the schedule C. In all, VITA volunteers assisted 26 small businesses in completing and filing their taxes at no cost to the business owner, saving small businesses' thousands of dollars in professional filing fees.

VITA volunteers also were apart of several events throughout the tax season, such as the First Lady Maria Shriver's WE CONNECT YOU event held in Fresno for the second straight year drawing over 400 people in attendance held at Manchester Center. Several VITA volunteers spent an afternoon at the Picayune Rancheria of the Chukchansi Indians offering no cost tax filing assistance to our Native American community. Other special events included partnerships with Wal-Mart and the One Economy Organization bringing a mobile no cost tax services vehicle to shopping centers, neighborhoods, and community centers throughout Fresno County.

During the 2009 tax season, VITA volunteers completed an estimated 39,787 hours of service. At the State of California minimum wage, these hours represent over \$338,186 dollars. The IRS estimates that through the VITA/EITC Volunteer Program, tax payers in Fresno County saved

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over \$1.3 million in professional tax filing fees. In this economy saving families money and helping them keep every penny of their total refund is essential to building a financially stronger community. The value VITA volunteers give back to tax payers and our community is tremendous.

United Way of Fresno County applauds all of the volunteers who made this season a huge success by giving time to the VITA/EITC Volunteer Program, advocating saving families millions of dollars, and volunteered to make a difference in our community. UWFC believes in the caring power of our communities to make long-lasting change and impact in community conditions. VITA volunteers are a great example of making this a reality. Congratulations to VITA volunteers!

**Taxpayers who have questions about VITA/EITC Volunteer Program, no cost tax filing assistance, or any one who would like to become a VITA volunteer, please contact May Gnia Vang, Financial Stability Program Manager at 559.243.3669 or dial 2-1-1.**