

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

United Way partners with Fishers Foods, Stark County Early Childhood Communications Collaborative to bring Shop & Learn to local parents, children

8-week program kickoff Nov. 7, 1-3:00 p.m. at Massillon, Canton stores

(Canton, OH) Nov. 2, 2009--United Way of Greater Stark County announces a new community initiative to help parents better connect with their children as well as provide them with the building blocks essential to foster learning as they grow.

United Way has partnered with Fishers Foods and Stark County Early Childhood Communications Collaborative to introduce an 8 week educational program designed for children ages 0-5 years old. Shop & Learn will begin Sat., Nov. 7 and will end Thurs., Dec. 31. The kickoff event will be held on Nov. 7 from 1-3:00 p.m. at Fishers Foods' Cherry Avenue, Cleveland and 44th and Lincoln Way E. locations.

Every two weeks a new activity will be posted for parents to complete with their children. The activities will focus on colors, letters, numbers and shapes. After each activity card is completed, parents can take their activity and punch cards to the customer service desk to receive an educational prize donated by Stark County Early Childhood Communications Collaborative's Early Experiences Last A Lifetime initiative for their children. However, prizes are while supplies last and only one can be claimed per activity period per household.

"Furthering education is one of United Way's primary focuses. Our goal is to prepare youth to succeed in school and enjoy learning throughout the rest of their lives and in turn, help parents share their joy of learning with their children," said Maria Heege, United Way President and CEO.

Focusing on learning from an early age has proven effect on children as they grow. Approximately 95% of a child's brain capacity is developed by age 3, says the Child Development Institute. While the child's brain is developing only synapses that are used will be retained. However, early education is left mainly in the hands of parents because the State of Ohio only allocates 1.3% of its budget to the development of young children, says Early Experiences Last A Lifetime.

For more information on Shop & Learn, please visit www.uwstark.org or www.earlyexperiences.org.

United Way of Greater Stark County is a not-for-profit organization that seeks to improve lives in measurable and lasting ways by mobilizing thousands of people around a common goal: advancing the common good. United Way funds programs that focus on Early Education & Care, Graduation & Training and Family Stability. United Way believes these are the building blocks for a good life and that a quality education leads to a stable job, enough income to support a family through retirement, a safe place to live and good health.

For more information about United Way visit www.uwstark.org. Headquarters are at 4825 Higbee Avenue NW, Suite 101, Canton, Ohio 44718. Dial (330) 491-0445 to reach the offices.

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