PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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FIRST AMERICAN GIVES BIG FOR SECOND YEAR IN A ROW

Beloit, WI — For the second year in a row, participants in First American Credit Union's Initiatives for Tomorrow (i4t) leadership program utilized an $8,000 budget to give back to members experiencing hard time as part of the credit union's Big Give.

Modeled after "Oprah's Big Give" reality show, First American's Big Give challenges its three future leaders to impact members or charitable organizations in need. Unlike last year where the participants completed their 'gives' individually, the group worked together to complete the community reinvestment initiative.

One goal of the project is to promote the importance of giving back to the communities we live in at the staff level. First American has been a long-time supporter and partner to numerous charitable organizations, and proudly, its staff at every level accumulated more than 500 volunteer hours in 2009.

"We get hundreds of requests for donations every year," said CEO Tracy Blaske. "This program provides an effective avenue for employees to take ownership of how we disburse our donation funds."

After witnessing the rising unemployment rate in the Stateline area coupled with financial hardships of the credit union's membership, i4t participants chose to focus this year's Big Give on First American members. Members were encouraged to submit in 100 words or less why they should be selected for the Big Give. During the one month application period the credit union received 38 responses.

The i4t participants had to perform background checks, research laws, and conduct interviews for each of the semi-finalists, then make a final selection as to who they felt worthy of the 'gives'. According to the participants, the toughest part of the process was making the final selection, especially considering the overwhelming need in our community.

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The credit union is pleased to announce the six recipients of 2009's Big Give were Jessica Dodson, Ella Ferguson, Judith Giglio, Jessica Klinkhammer, Jason Clemons, and Ruth O'Brien. The 'gives' were multi-faceted including purchasing school supplies, paying fees, assisting with dental work, providing financial assistance with daily expenses, helping with loan payments, registering a vehicle, and simply offering moral support. Applicants not selected for the 'gives' received resources to help them with their current situation.

"I think I can speak for all of us when I say, we didn't expect the tremendous emotional and physical toll each of us experienced," exclaimed i4t and Staff Accountant Angela Hollenbeck. "We got involved with our recipients and their stories. It really makes you sit back and think about what's important in life."

First American Credit Union is a member-owned financial cooperative serving anyone who lives or works in Winnebago County, IL, Walworth County, WI, Green County, WI and Rock County, WI. Founded in 1933, the credit union has $157 million in assets and serves more than 18,500 members. For more information about the credit union, visit www.firstamericancu.com.

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