



United Way of King County

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## **\$500,000 gift from Microsoft helps United Way Close Opportunity Gap for Low Income Kids**

*Final year of \$25 million campaign to reach most vulnerable kids in King County will make it the largest privately funded Parent-Child Home Program in the nation.*

**Seattle – May 15, 2014** They speak Urdu, Arabic, Cambodian, Oromo and English, come from households bringing home less than \$25,000 a year and are between the ages of two and four. They are often isolated and not able to attend high quality child care programs or preschool.

And nearly 75 percent arrive not ready for Kindergarten.

Very few early learning funding efforts – public or private –have targeted these children. Yet the demand for these types of programs are great because more than 60 percent of children in Washington state under the age of five are not educated by preschool or child care programs, but instead by family members, friends and neighbors.

United Way of King County is entering into the final year of a \$25 million fundraising campaign to give these kids an equal chance to succeed through its Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP). Microsoft, which initially invested \$1 million when the program launched in 2010, has committed an additional \$500,000 in support.

“United Way of King County’s Parent-Child home program helps create a community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive,” said **Brad Smith**, General Counsel and Executive Vice President at Microsoft. “Microsoft is proud to support the development of youth and families throughout the region.”

The Parent-Child Home Program (PCHP) is a nationally-recognized program that sends a culturally competent professional, or “home visitor” to provide families with the tools, motivation and confidence to ensure their children are ready for kindergarten. PCHP works with families for two years, when children are ages two and three. Each week, the home visitor brings a gift of a book or educational toy, as many families do not have them in their homes, and help the parent learn to be their child’s first and best teacher.

“United Way of King County believes every child has tremendous potential and a successful community can realize it. Our vision is that, supported by their families and their communities, all children will have the social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills they need to thrive in kindergarten and beyond,” said United Way CEO **Jon Fine**. “By bringing a highly effective and targeted home visiting program to these

families, we will reduce the school readiness gap. Young children and their vulnerable families need more support, earlier, so that all children in our communities will have an equal chance for success.”

*Over the two-year program, 80 percent of children showed significant cognitive, social and emotional progress on every behavior change measured.* Further studies have shown that low-income children who completed PCHP went on to graduate from high school equal to the rate of middle class children nationally, and at a rate of 30 percent greater chance of graduating high school on time than their socioeconomic peers.

United Way began expanding participation in the program in 2010 with 160 families enrolled. Now in the final year of fundraising, United Way reports that 1,000 families are enrolled and with the successful completion of \$25 million will be able to provide the program to every family in King County who wants and needs the program each year.

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