

**PRESS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Tax Credit Offers Welcome Relief for Struggling Families*

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MESA, Arizona, January 27, 2010—With most workers getting W-2 forms from their employers over the next few days, Mesa United Way is working overtime to get the word out about a tax credit that many lower-income people may not know about. The federal Earned Income Tax Credit can be worth several thousand dollars even for a household that owes nothing in taxes.

The Internal Revenue Service estimates that one in four taxpayers who are eligible for the EITC don't claim it because they don't know about it, says Don Jensen, who coordinates the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for Mesa United Way. And many more workers who saw their income cut last year may be eligible, he says.

A married couple filing jointly with three or more children and an income of up to \$48,279 may be eligible for a credit of as much as \$5,657. The credit can be an especially welcome boost for struggling families during tough economic times, Jensen says.

Eligible taxpayers aren't always aware of the EITC because claiming it requires several complicated tax-preparation steps. Mesa United Way has recruited over 75 VITA volunteers trained to help eligible taxpayers navigate the filing process.

"This Friday (Jan. 29) has been declared Earned Income Tax Credit Awareness Day because we're trying to make more workers aware that they may be entitled to it," Jensen says. "Beginning next week they can stop by any of our four sites around Mesa, find out if they qualify, and then we'll help them prepare their federal and Arizona tax returns at no charge so they can get their check as soon as possible."

Here are Mesa United Way's free tax-preparation sites:

\*Mercy Housing "Villas de Merced," 520 N. Mesa Drive. Mondays 6-9 p.m., Feb. 1-April 12.

\*Mesa Community College Main Campus, Kirk Student Center, 1833 W. Southern Ave. Tuesdays 6-9 p.m., Feb. 2-April 13; Thursdays 6-9 p.m., Feb. 4-April 15 (closed March 18); Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 6-April 10 (closed March 20).

\*Mesa Community College, Red Mountain Campus, Acacia Village, 2305 N. Power Road. Tuesdays 6-9 p.m., Feb. 2-April 13 (closed March 16); Thursdays 6-9 p.m., Feb. 4-April 15 (closed March 18); Saturdays 9 a.m.-1 p.m., Feb. 6-April 10 (closed March 20).

\*A New Leaf-Mesa CAN, 635 E. Broadway Road. Fridays 10 a.m.-2 p.m., Feb. 5-April 9; Saturdays, 10 a.m.-2 p.m., only on Feb. 20, March 20 and April 10.

For more information visit the Mesa United Way Web site at [www.mesaunitedway.org](http://www.mesaunitedway.org) or call 480-969-8601.

*About Mesa United Way*

Mesa United Way addresses our community's most critical issues through our Community Care Fund. We partner with businesses, government, and nonprofit organizations to advance the common good and carry out our call-to-action to LIVE UNITED by encouraging everyone to Give, Advocate, and Volunteer. Mesa United Way is an independent organization serving the City of Mesa in Maricopa County, Arizona. Join the movement. LIVE UNITED. For information about the Community Care Fund, visit [www.mesaunitedway.org](http://www.mesaunitedway.org) or call (480) 969-8601.