

Calling Americans into Action to Volunteer

Objective:

Inspire Americans to get off the couch and get involved in their communities.

Strategy:

Convey the message that one person alone cannot solve the problems faced by communities and overtly ask the viewer for help.

Media Plan:

The NFL furnished more than \$53 million in public service airtime to United Way's *Lend a Hand* campaign over the two years.

Results:

United Way voluntarism grew ... on the website, in the number of people who volunteered directly for United Way and in the number of people who were matched to volunteer opportunities in their communities through United Way.

A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

Nearly 35 years ago, the **National Football League (NFL)** and **United Way of America (UWA)** were pioneers in setting the standard for corporate social responsibility. Decades later, this partnership—focused on improving lives and communities—is the most visible and longest running sports/charity collaboration in history, and the NFL and United Way have achieved the status of industry leaders.

When the NFL/United Way partnership was first discussed in 1973, United Ways across the country collectively raised \$800 million annually. Since then, United Way's brand awareness has reached 96% and giving to United Way has soared to nearly \$4 billion making it the largest privately held charity¹. Today, United Way is more than 1,300 local organizations that work to create lasting positive changes in communities and people's lives by addressing the underlying causes of the most significant local issues.

Generating more than \$6 billion in annual revenue, the NFL, under Commissioner Roger Goodell, is widely regarded as the most successful and profitable professional sports league in the world. According to the latest Harris Poll on American attitudes towards sports, twice as many people name professional football (30 percent) as their favorite sport over other major sports leagues. The NFL's charitable activities and the highly-visible ads with United Way have helped build the NFL into the top community-oriented major sport league. At 58%, the NFL receives the highest percentage in a study on positive images of major sports leagues.² Arguably, it is the sport that defines American culture.

A NEW FOCUS

While no other vehicle has been more effective providing visibility for United Way than the NFL partnership, two years ago, the NFL and United Way of America sought to use the power of these two great brands to do more—to inspire Americans to make their communities better places to live and work by volunteering.

“Our research tells us that 94% of Americans believe volunteering is important but only 27%³ actually volunteer. To move the needle on our community's most pressing problems, we know we must engage our most important resource—people—to volunteer, invest and care about making a long-term change in community conditions,” explained UWA Brand Strategy and Marketing EVP, Cynthia Round. “That's why we're using this great platform that the NFL provides to encourage more Americans to get personally involved in their communities.”



TARIK GLENN, Indianapolis Colts Offensive Tackle and United Way Volunteer

The objective of inspiring people to volunteer in their communities led **Gotham, Inc.**, the pro bono advertising agency for the NFL/United Way partnership, to develop the *Lend a Hand* public awareness campaign. The *Lend a Hand* campaign conveys the message that one person alone cannot solve the problems faced by communities and overtly asks the viewers to help by going to www.unitedway.org to find ways to get involved in the community.

United Way Stats⁴

1.06 million
Direct volunteers for United Way

9.5 million
Hours of volunteer service to United Way

1.145 million
United Way referrals to volunteer opportunities

\$3.976 billion
Dollars raised by United Way

1 Chronicle of Philanthropy's annual survey of the 400 charities that raise the most money in the United States

2 MarketTools Study published in *BrandWeek*, January 2005

3 Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor

4 Data from the 2005/06 United Way Database II Survey, UWA Research (latest data available for a 12-month span)



Click on a thumbnail to view the ads from the Lend a Hand campaign. Windows Media Player required.

Check out other *Lend a Hand* marketing tools at <http://studio.unitedway.org/lahmt/>

For more information about the NFL/United Way partnership, go to www.unitedway.org/nfl

To help viewers better understand United Ways' work and the many ways they can get involved, each of the ads in the *Lend a Hand* series is focused on a specific issue that United Ways are tackling in communities across America—homelessness, literacy, mentoring, senior support and crisis response. Additionally, each one dramatizes the point that solving community problems requires collective community action.

In anticipation of the increased traffic, UWA revamped its public website to ensure that visitors could easily find their way to volunteer opportunities in their communities by entering their zip code or contacting their local United Way or Volunteer Center. During football season, the *Lend a Hand* campaign was prominently featured on United Way's homepage. In year two of the campaign, Spanish-language TV and radio ads were created and UWA launched www.unitedway.org/espanol—a Spanish-language adaptation of United Way's website.

During the 2005 and 2006 football seasons, the *Lend a Hand* campaign reached nearly 85% of American households as the NFL provided United Way more than \$53 million in public service airtime on ABC, CBS, FOX, NBC, ESPN, NFL Network, DirecTV, CNN Airport Network, Westwood One and Infinity.

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS

There is evidence in every metric that United Way voluntarism has grown since the campaign began ... on the website, in the number of people who volunteered directly for United Way and in the number of people who were matched to volunteer opportunities in their communities through United Way.

Volunteer Matching: While the *Lend a Hand* campaign aired, volunteer matches grew steadily in local communities across the country and online through Volunteer Solutions— United Way's online volunteer matching application that helps connect individuals to volunteer opportunities in their communities.

Online

- **Visits** to Volunteer Solutions increased by 21% during the two-year period the *Lend a Hand* campaign aired.
- **Referrals** to volunteer agencies through Volunteer Solutions increased by 35% over the two-year period the ads aired.

In Local Communities

- United Ways across the country tallied 1,145,547 volunteer referrals in 2005 (latest available data). United Ways affiliated with Volunteer Centers estimate that 37% of their referrals resulted in a match providing more than 9.5 million hours of volunteer service—a 10% increase over 2004.*

Direct Volunteers: Separate from volunteer matching, approximately 20,000 more people volunteered **directly** for United Way for a total of 1.06 million volunteers in 2005, including more than 350,000 Day of Caring volunteers. The value of this volunteer time was \$161 million.*

Giving: While the *Lend a Hand* campaign is primarily focused on voluntarism, it drives viewers to visit unitedway.org where they can help the community in a number of ways including financial contributions. During the 2005 United Way campaign season, giving to United Way increased to \$3.976 billion.*

* Data from the 2005/06 United Way Database II Survey, UWA Research (latest data available for a 12-month span)