



United Way of Anchorage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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90% Graduation by 2020 partnership boosts graduation rate

Back on Track helps 141 students earn diplomas

Anchorage AK – Twenty-eight Back on Track summer school students graduate from high school today. Their success is the goal of a partnership of United Way of Anchorage, the Anchorage School District and Covenant House Alaska in the Back on Track program, part of the of 90% By 2020 initiative to raise the Anchorage high school graduation rate to 90 percent in two years.

The students' celebration with family and friends today marks another milestone for Back on Track, which during the past two school years has helped struggling Anchorage high school students stay in school and graduate.

The program, with major funding from an AT&T Aspire grant, United Way, the school district and BP, identifies students at risk of not graduating due to failing grades, absence, unfinished course work, family issues, income, substance abuse or homelessness. Most are low income, and many are in the school district's Child-in-Transition program for students classified as homeless. The program provides credit recovery support in day, night and summer schools, and guides students to "wraparound" services -- transportation, food stamps, clothing, counseling, glasses, job help -- whatever the student needs to focus on earning the diploma. Students must do the work. If they have the will, Back on Track helps to find a way.

In the program's two years -- counting today's graduates -- 141 students at risk of not graduating have earned their diplomas through the Back on Track program. That's a good number. More than a number, it's 141 young people with diplomas that will open doors that otherwise would remain closed.

"The young men and women who graduate today are proof that cross-sector collaboration around shared goals yields the greatest results," said Michele Brown, president of United Way of Anchorage. "90% by 2020 is an ambitious goal. But these students that it's within range -- as long as we stay the course together."

About United Way of Anchorage

United Way of Anchorage mobilizes people and resources to make lasting, measurable changes in our community to improve lives. Our priorities are successful, prepared kids; strong, financially stable families; access to medical care for all; and a community making healthy lifestyle choices. United Way invites you to join the movement. www.liveunitedanc.org