



United Way of Anchorage

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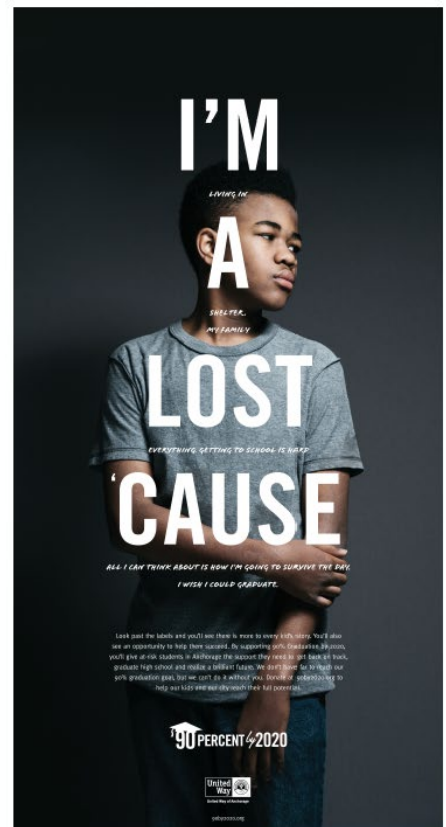
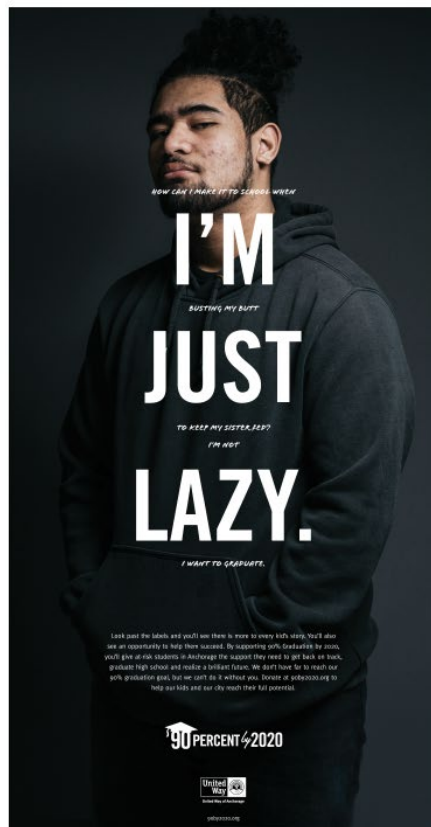
Date: January 22, 2019

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## New Campaign Confronts Labels to Focus Attention on Graduation Rate

**Anchorage AK** – This week United Way of Anchorage launched a new media campaign that invites the community to look more closely at students who struggle to graduate high school. Called “Look Past the Labels,” the campaign draws attention to the out-of-school barriers some students face.

The campaign uses common labels – bad kid, lazy, hates school – to prompt viewers to look more closely, beyond the stereotypes, to see the full story of students who want to succeed.



“As the 90% Graduation by 2020 community collaboration gets closer to its target date, we are focused on helping those students struggling the hardest to walk that graduation stage,” said Michele Brown, United Way of Anchorage President. “The students most likely to drop out are those facing difficulties outside of school that affect their ability to engage with school.”

(More)

“For these students, we often don’t see the whole story. Labels are too easy but can prevent understanding that the community can help these students cross those barriers and take full advantage of the opportunities school provides,” said Brown.

In print advertisements, the student’s story is revealed between the headlines. In the campaign videos, students will come into focus as the headline expands to make way for the full story.

The 90% Graduation by 2020 is a multi-sector community collaboration that began in 2006 to increase Anchorage’s graduation rate, which had been stubbornly at about 60 percent. The 2018 graduation rate was 80.7 percent, a sizeable growth but we’ve got to push to reach the community goal.

Research from December 2018 shows that 64 percent of Anchorage-area residents believe that achieving a 90 percent graduation rate is the role of “the whole community,” not just “students and families” or “the school system.”

“There are opportunities to help support students at every age,” said Sonya Hunte, United Way of Anchorage’s Vice President of Education Impact. “90% Graduation by 2020 is a collaboration of community partners, volunteers, and donors who work together to focus on early literacy for pre-school children, and on attendance and school connectedness for primary grades. One example of impact is that over the past 18 months, 161 students on the verge of dropping out instead earned a diploma.

“This success proves that we, as a community, can increase our graduation rate if we target our attention and the right resources on the right student at the right time.”

The Look Past the Labels campaign received support and in-kind donations from Spawn Creative, Anchorage Daily News, Alaska Public Media, and First National Bank Alaska.

To see the entire campaign and find ways to get involved, visit [90by2020.org](http://90by2020.org)

### **About United Way of Anchorage**

United Way of Anchorage is a community of donors, advocates, volunteers, and partners who fight for the health, education and financial stability of every person in our community. LIVE UNITED.

[www.liveunitedanc.org](http://www.liveunitedanc.org)



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