



April 23, 2009

Dear Community Leader:

Even before the economy tanked, it was important not to waste charitable donations made by our neighbors or the work contributed by so many selfless volunteers. Now, with budgets so tight, it's absolutely critical. That's why we're holding **COMPASSION '09**, a community roundtable designed to unite all who are caring for people in need. The goal: determine what our most critical problems are *right now* and find ways to tackle them more effectively.

**COMPASSION '09** will be held on Thursday, May 14, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Ernest and Ruby McSwain Extension Education and Agricultural Center in Sanford. It's entirely free, and your participation is essential to our success. This gathering is being sponsored by a coalition of ministries and social service organizations, with coordination through the United Way of Lee County.

**This is no "throwaway" conference, and you won't just sit around and listen to an endless parade of speakers.** Your contribution begins when you register and give us your "top five" community needs. We'll compile those lists and develop breakout strategy sessions around the most pressing issues.

During **COMPASSION '09**, you and your colleagues will have a chance to analyze those needs and work together to generate some ways to ease the problems and deliver services more effectively throughout Lee County. Then, we'll pass those suggestions off to a work group that will be asked to help make it all happen.

**COMPASSION '09** also will include a look at Lee County's current emergency disaster plan and what our community will soon face from thousands more residents coming as a result of the military Base Realignment and Closing effort now taking place around Fort Bragg. What will this mean for your ministry, human service agency and our entire community?

Enclosed is a flyer and registration form. **Please reserve your spot today, but make sure you RSVP no later than Thursday, May 7.** **COMPASSION '09** may be free, but its results will be valuable. For us all.

Sincerely,

**Jan**

Jan Hayes

Executive Director

United Way of Lee County