



Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Campaign Kicks Off to Assist Southwest Alabama Residents in Applying for Tax Returns up to \$4,824 for Working Families

December 10, 2008 – Mobile, Alabama – Local community service organizations and the IRS have combined efforts to initiate a public outreach campaign in Baldwin, Escambia, Mobile, Washington and surrounding counties to encourage low income working families to utilize the free Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program and to claim the Earned Income Tax Credit. The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) sponsored by the IRS, offers free tax return assistance to low and moderate income people (approximately \$42,000 and below) who cannot prepare their own tax returns.

“The Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) remains the single largest federal aid program for working families. EITC provides a maximum credit up to \$4,824 for working families earning less than \$41,646 for the 2008 tax year. Research indicates one in four eligible taxpayers may not claim the Earned Income Tax Credit; simply because they are not aware of the program,” said Elaine Beck, Internal Revenue Service.

Millions of dollars in Earned Income Tax Credit go unclaimed in Southwest Alabama each year. In 2007, over 51,000 families in the Mobile area received the Earned Income Tax Credit resulting in over \$125 million returned to these families. To qualify for Earned Income Tax Credit, individuals must file a tax return, even if they did not earn enough money that mandates tax filing. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) encourages financial institutions to partner with the VITA program and the FDIC Money Smart program which is a comprehensive

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financial education curriculum designed to help individuals outside the financial mainstream develop financial skills and positive banking relationships.

This year's campaign aims to inform residents about EITC, which provides eligible families with a tax refund as well as free tax preparation, tax credit education, and general financial service counseling. The coalition of community partners include: Internal Revenue Service, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Mobile Community Action, The Community Foundation of South Alabama, Retired Senior Volunteer Program, Envision Coastal Alabama, Goodwill Easter Seals and Boat People S.O.S.

Information about locations and hours of operation can be obtained by calling 211 for free tax preparation information.

About The Community Foundation of South Alabama

The Community Foundation of South Alabama (CFSA) is a publicly supported, nonprofit foundation that plays a key role in addressing the needs of the community. The mission of CFSA is to strengthen the future of nonprofit organizations by funding innovative programs that make life better in Southwest Alabama. The CFSA provides funding to nonprofit organizations in an eight county region including Baldwin, Choctaw, Clarke, Conecuh, Escambia, Mobile, Monroe and Washington counties. By building permanent endowments, The Community Foundation of South Alabama can ensure grants are available to support the community forever.

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