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FAITH IN ACTION MCHENRY COUNTY RECEIVES AT&T'S EXCELERATOR COMPETITIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT

In the very near future the more than 200 volunteers reporting hours to Faith in Action McHenry County (FIAMC) will have an easier time of it thanks to the provision of a \$5000 grant from AT&T's 2007 Excelerator Competitive Technology Grants Program. The grant which is designed to focus on helping nonprofits fully integrate technology into their ongoing operations and community outreach, was recently presented to FIAMC, a faith-based service organization dedicated to working with McHenry County Seniors who live at home.

"This is a great advancement for our organization" says Rhonda Anderson, Executive Director of FIAMC. "This grant allows us to improve our website in a way that allows for some practical improvements, such as efficiency of reporting volunteer hours. The net impact of this grant and the resulting website redesign with significantly help us to improve delivery and service."

AT&T Excelerator is a key component of AT&T AccessAll, a major initiative to bring technology to underserved communities. AT&T Excelerator seeks to fund projects that build the technology infrastructure of nonprofits, enabling them to increase their organizational effectiveness and/or service delivery capability

To qualify for the grant, the major focus of an organization and project must have had emphasis in either the area of education, community development, health and human services or arts and culture. Organizations/projects also must target 51 percent or more underserved populations:

FIAMC began on November 1, 1998 with receipt of \$25,000 from the Robert S. Woods Johnson Foundation to establish an Interfaith Volunteer Caregiver Program for the elderly in McHenry County utilizing guidelines from the national Faith in Action program. FIAMC began under the umbrella of Family Services and became a stand alone not for profit organization in 2000.

FIAMC currently utilizes over 300 volunteers from faith congregations and the community at large to provide services to care recipients, 60 years of age and older,

living in their own home, apartment, or with a family member in McHenry County. Such services include friendly home visits and phone calls, shopping and errands, home maintenance and repairs, light yard work, light household chores, respite services and daily assurance calls. Anderson anticipates that the AT&T grant will not only improve communication to both care givers and care receivers, but by improving volunteer reporting of hours the grant will make it easier when applying for future grants. The non-profit organization relies on local donations and grant monies to keep their cost of service to \$5.81 per hour. FIAMC does not charge for the services that they provide to their care receivers.

“Our McHenry County service providers are fiscally responsible, always putting first their clientele and service accessibility,” says Senator Pamela J. Althoff a presenter at the grant ceremony. “But in today’s world, technology is crucial for accountability purposes. It’s encouraging to note that our providers can partner with a reputable firm like AT&T to meet both these important priorities.”

For more information about FIAMC, please call Rhonda Anderson at 815.455.3120 or e-mail at Rhonda@fiamchenrycounty.org.