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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Surge After School Program Loses Major Funding

The Surge After School Program was funded by the New York State Education Department 21st Century Learning Center Grant and the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Advantage Grant and managed by the United Way of Seneca County. Both sources are federal programs that run through individual states and scheduled to end their funding in June 2009 and October 2009 respectively. Without these funding sources, the Surge program closed June 30, 2009. With news from the New York State Education Department regarding their lack of funding for the next five years, United Way is searching for other funding to continue the program.

This round of applications was highly competitive - 371 applications totaling \$191 million were reviewed with only \$30-35 million available statewide; only \$10 million was available for rural communities. According to Jennifer George, Surge Program Coordinator, "This program was a community effort as a multitude of partners supported and assisted in this process including legislators Senator Nozzolio and Assemblyman Brian Kolb. We extend our gratitude to each and every one of them."

The Surge Program currently operates in all four school districts in Seneca County including:

- Romulus
- Seneca Falls
- South Seneca
- Waterloo

The purpose of this program is to provide quality after school programming for middle and high school students that incorporate academic support, cultural enrichment and social interaction.

Overall, a total of 683 students were served by the Surge Program for the 2007-2008 school year. In total over the past three years, 2,757 students were served during current 21st CCLC and Advantage funding 2005-2008.

The original 21st Century Grant was a 4.5 year grant and will expire on June 30, 2009. The Advantage Grant technically ends on October 24, 2009. Sustainability is key for this program: in that vein United Way of Seneca County applied for the new cycle of 21st Century Grant funding with a negative response. A new wave of Advantage funds has become available and an application was filed. Requests for support from legislative member items

have also been submitted. Community partners are actively strategizing options to sustain the Surge Program for the long term.

The Surge Program is an important and meaningful asset to the community. Seneca County school superintendents have been meeting to discuss how they can continue to assist students and families during the afternoon hours. The way in which they do this will most likely change, but their goal is to continue to support students and their families. Further details will be forthcoming as plans are developed.