



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Drhea Townsend Joins The Chamber's Franklin Initiative
as new Stay-in-School Counselor**

Bloomington, IN – January 14, 2010 - Beginning this month, Drhea Townsend joins the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce's Franklin Initiative as a Stay In School Counselor responsible for the program's initiatives in Bloomington High School South. This position is part of the Stay In School Partnership that the Franklin Initiative has with Monroe County area schools. Drhea joins Shaina Smith (Bloomington High School North) and Patty Goldman (Edgewood High School) who have been with the Franklin Initiative since October 2008.

The Stay In School Program is a partnership between the Chamber's Franklin Initiative and both local school districts aimed at raising graduation rates and preparing struggling students for life after high school. Funded by a grant from the AT&T Foundation, Stay In School Counselors in each of the three major high schools work individually with students who are at-risk of not graduating to improve attendance and academics, while preparing to continue their education or enter the workforce.

The program encourages students to stay in school through career education, job shadowing, mentoring opportunities, and exploration and identification of interests, aptitudes, and resources. Interactive consultations highlighting positive correlations between high school graduation, employment satisfaction, and personal success are additional tools used to ensure higher graduation rates.

"The Chamber's Franklin Initiative plays a critical role in helping to increase our area schools' graduation rates. We are fortunate to have Drhea as part of our Stay in School Partnership team," said Matt Wysocki, director of workforce development. "Her positive energy, proven skills and commitment to assisting young people succeed will allow her to make immediate contributions to this initiative."

Drhea received her B.A. in Social Work from Indiana University in 2004 and has five years experience providing case management, life skills, and additional support to children and families in the Bloomington community. Most recently, she worked for Centerstone, in Bloomington, as a behavioral health technician.

About the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce:

The Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce is a nonprofit membership organization serving as our community's leading advocate for business. We offer unique leadership opportunities, meaningful volunteer activities, and exclusive business-building programs focused on critical economic, civic, and social priorities. Chamber members support each other and community initiatives, sharing information and resources to help create economic opportunity and community well-being. At the Greater Bloomington Chamber of Commerce, we believe that better business leads to a better community.

Contact: Matt Wysocki
(812) 336-6381
mwysocki@ChamberBloomington.org
www.ChamberBloomington.org