

## **UNITED WAY'S NEW DIRECTION INFORMATION IN A Q & A FORMAT**

### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS :**

**Q.** What is your campaign goal this year?

**A.** We have set a financial target of \$5million. Our goal is to give everyone in Windsor Essex the opportunity to give and to raise as much money as possible to support our new direction.

**Q.** How much money have you lost?

**A.** Due to the downturn in the economy and the softening in the manufacturing sector, we have seen a decline of more than \$4 million in pledges over the past 5-6 years. We have managed this reduction through cuts to agency programs and reductions in our internal budget.

**Q.** It must be challenging at United Way these days. What are you doing?

**A.** Over the past couple of years, we have reviewed what we're doing and we are making significant changes. These changes are based on an extensive community consultation. We've also talked to our colleagues across the country to find out what they are doing to have maximum impact. As a result of this research, we will be making positive changes in 2010.

**Q.** Yes, but what are you doing?

**A.** We are focusing on what's most important to residents of Windsor Essex in a way that we can have the maximum impact. Over the next 5 years, United Way will invest its time, energy and financial resources on:

- Meeting Basic Needs
- Social & Cognitive skills development
- Parent Education & Support
- Adult literacy and Employment Skills
- Neighbourhood engagement

**Q.** Why 5 years?

**A.** Five years provides us with time to track our progress on the priorities. At the same time, we will partner with others in the community to identify emerging needs and changes in Windsor-Essex. We will adjust and amend our plan based on this analysis and as funds permit.

**Q.** How did United Way decide where it can have the maximum impact?

After the community priorities were identified, we did extensive research and analysis. We wanted to pinpoint the underlying factors, the roadblocks that are getting in way of success when it comes to these priorities. We found the same roadblocks, or barriers coming up again

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and again, regardless of the priority. We also looked at all of the data on Windsor & Essex County - census, employment, income, crime, housing standards and educational test scores. These statistics show how well we are doing as a community when it comes to these priorities. Last, but not least, we researched "best & promising practices", ways of working and tackling these issues that are getting positive results.

Q. When will this new direction start?

A. In 2010

Q. What happens to the programs and agencies that you are now funding? Will they have to re-apply?

A. The agencies currently funded by United Way, along with other community organizations, will be invited to apply under the new direction. If an agency applies and is not selected, the agency will be provided with transition funding for part of 2010. In addition to funding, at an agency's request, we will work with the agency to assist during the transition.

Q. If a program is no longer funded, what happens to the people who depend on the program?

A. During the transition we will work with agencies to see if there are other ways of meeting the needs of their clients. We will invest the funds that donors entrust to United Way where they can have the maximum impact. We will also work with agencies and community partners to help minimize any negative impacts, where possible.

Q. Why are you changing direction?

A. Because we must. It's time. Take a look at the economy. Our community is changing. We need to change as well.

In spite of our best efforts and the efforts of organizations across Windsor-Essex, social problems are becoming more complex and needs are growing. This phenomenon is not limited to Windsor-Essex. It's occurring across the country. But it prompted us to stop and thoroughly examine what we're doing and where we are putting our time and our resources. We also have fewer resources. To respond to changes in Windsor-Essex, we need to change the way we work. We will focus on specific community priorities and the root causes of social issues. It's necessary and it's the right thing to do.

Q. You say this is happening across the country. Are other United Ways also changing?

A. Yes, and because United Way is a national movement, we can benefit from the knowledge in other communities and learn from them. But United Way's strength is also local. Because each community has its unique set of circumstances; we will use what is helpful and relevant for Windsor-Essex County.

Q. How many agencies will be cut?

A. United Way currently funds over 90 programs at 41 agencies across Windsor-Essex. We will know which agencies will be part of the new direction when we complete the application and review process in March 2010.

Q. Who decides what will be funded?

A. Our volunteer Board of Directors makes the final decision. All applications are reviewed by a volunteer committee called the United Way Impact Council. The Impact Council is made up of volunteers with a variety of skills and talents including finance, program outcomes and evaluation, and experts relating to United Way investment priorities.

Q. You now have less money. How is this affecting United Way 's own budget?

A. This year staff have taken a salary reduction. We have reduced our staff. We are realigning our work to achieve every efficiency possible, while at the same time being effective in our role.

Q. I have always been able to direct my United Way donation to a specific organization or cause that is important to me. Can I still direct my gift?

A. You can now direct your United Way donation to the Community Fund and/or to one or more of United Way investment priority areas as follows:

- Meeting Basic Needs
- Social & Cognitive skills development
- Parent Education & Support
- Adult literacy and Employment Skills
- Neighbourhood engagement

You can also direct your donation to other United Ways in Canada. A cash or cheque donation can be forwarded to a specific organization, however, a service fee will apply.

Q. Why have you changed how donations are directed?

A. To be consistent with our new direction. In the past, donations were accepted to agencies that were funded by United Way. Moving forward, we will accept donations that support the priorities and the new direction. The new direction supports priorities that address the root causes of social issues.

Q. What if someone does not want to make a donation because of the changes to donor directed giving?

A. We certainly hope that donors do choose to continue to support the community through United Way. The direction is in response to community conditions and community needs.

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