



United Way
of Peel Region

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Funding to help agencies explore social purpose enterprise concepts

MISSISSAUGA (March 2, 2009) — Thanks to a new funding opportunity created jointly by United Way and the Region of Peel, four nonprofit agencies in Peel will have the resources to explore innovative business concepts that create social change and improve lives. The new Social Purpose Enterprise (SPE) Technical Assistance grants, totalling \$47,500, will enable the agencies to develop ideas for a social purpose enterprise, assess its feasibility, and develop a business plan.

This new funding opportunity complements United Way's general Social Purpose Enterprise grants program launched last year. A total of \$43,520 is also being provided this year to two enterprises that received grants in 2008, to support their continued development and expansion.

"A social purpose enterprise is a business operated by a nonprofit organization to address social needs while also generating revenue," explains United Way CEO Shelley White. "It provides a supportive, flexible working environment that enables vulnerable people to maintain employment and gain job skills and experience."

When United Way launched its Social Purpose Enterprise grants program last year, only agencies that were already operating such an enterprise were eligible. However, during last year's application process United Way learned that many agencies are interested in social purpose enterprise but lack the resources to even explore the idea. The Technical Assistance grants program was created by United Way and the Region of Peel to address this issue.

"The Social Purpose Enterprise grants are a key component in United Way's poverty reduction strategy," says United Way's Director of Community Investment Anita Stellinga. "By investing in social purpose enterprise, we help at-risk individuals obtain an improved quality of life through employment and on-the-job training."

One of the recipients of a Technical Assistance grant is **Interim Place**, an agency that provides community support and outreach services for abused women and their children. Interim Place is receiving **\$10,000** to develop a business plan and probe the feasibility of operating a community catering business. The project will create economic opportunity for women as well as providing job training and business experience.

“Poverty restricts women’s choices and is one of the main reasons that they stay in abusive relationships,” says Cindy Cowan, Executive Director of Interim Place. “This grant enables us to explore the feasibility of engaging the talents of women to create a viable social enterprise that provides them with business experience and economic returns.”

The three other agencies receiving first-time SPE Technical Assistance grants are:

The Canadian Mental Health Association: Receiving **\$17,500** to explore the start-up of a cleaning service and a café. Both businesses will be operated by consumers of mental health services and will provide them with tools to function independently in the community.

Ontario March of Dimes, Mississauga: Receiving **\$10,000 for** a feasibility assessment and business plan to explore an employment-based initiative in partnership with Sherwood Digital Copy. The initiative will provide job training and income opportunity for individuals with disabilities.

Peace Ranch, Caledon: Receiving **\$10,000** to assist in market research, analysis, financial planning and management of a market garden. The garden will provide employment opportunity and income for those living with mental illness. Produce grown in the garden will be sold at local markets.

Social purpose enterprises receiving funding for a second year from United Way of Peel Region are:

DestinationCafé.ca, operated by Supportive Housing in Peel: Receiving **\$25,000** to assist the café with its continued focus on marketing and business operations. The café opened in December 2006 and provides a safe and flexible work environment for individuals living with mental illness. The Port Credit enterprise sells freshly roasted, organic and Fair Trade coffees.

License to Clean, operated by St. Leonard’s House in Brampton: Receiving **\$18,520** to expand the business and develop marketing niches. St. Leonard’s provides long term-residential care for homeless men with serious mental illness or those who have been in conflict with the law. License to Clean offers all types of commercial, industrial and residential cleaning, maintenance, landscaping, moving and small renovations.

United Way of Peel Region was established in 1967 and serves the communities of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. Through its Community Fund, United Way invests in services, programs and initiatives that result in resilient people, strong families, and vibrant neighbourhoods and communities. The mission of United Way of Peel Region is to engage with our community, through partnerships, to ensure people are cared for, connected and included.

- 30 -