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United Way and Peel Region offer grants to explore social enterprise

MISSISSAUGA (May 26, 2009) — Registered charities in Peel are invited to apply for grants of up to \$10,000 to explore the possibility of starting and operating a social purpose enterprise. Social Purpose Enterprise Technical Grants totalling \$52,500 are jointly offered by United Way and the Region of Peel to support the path of social purpose enterprise development from idea exploration and business plan preparation, through to project launch and growth.

“Social Purpose Enterprises are business created with the dual purpose of generating income while supporting a social mission,” explains United Way CEO Shelley White. “They provide life skills, job training and employment to individuals who are economically excluded such as at-risk youth, single parents and newcomers, as well as those on the fringes of the traditional workforce due to issues such as mental illness, addiction or previous incarceration.”

United Way launched its Social Purpose Enterprise initiative in 2007 as part of its poverty reduction strategy. Research conducted at that time identified the need for grants to give organizations the opportunity to investigate possible business opportunities for social enterprise. In response, five technical assistance grants were distributed in 2008.

“We learned that many organizations interested in starting a social purpose enterprise lacked the resources to explore the opportunity,” says Anita Stellinga, United Way’s Director of Community Investment. “Social Purpose Enterprise Technical Grants will provide funding for these organizations to hire the expertise they need to test the viability of ideas, conduct thorough research and properly prepare the organization to launch and sustain a social purpose enterprise.”

The application deadline for the Social Purpose Enterprise Technical Grants is **August 21, 2009 at 4 p.m.**

Applicants must be registered charities. Interested organizations are encouraged to attend an information session on **June 8, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.** at United Way, 5170 Dixie Road, Suite 300, Mississauga. To RSVP by June 1 for the information session, or for more information about this funding opportunity and how to receive an application, please contact Lorna Dixon, Senior Manager, United Way Community Investment, at 905-602-3621 or ldixon@unitedwaypeel.org.

United Way of Peel Region was established in 1967 and serves the communities of Brampton, Caledon and Mississauga. 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.