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For Immediate Release

United Way of Quinte Recognizes Outstanding Volunteers and Businesses

At their annual campaign achievement celebration held January 18th at the Belleville Legion, United Way of Quinte Campaign Chair, Dr. Hal Wilson, announced the current status of the fundraising drive as \$1,444,644 or 90% of their \$1.6 million target. "While it's disappointing to still have some work to do, it's important to focus on the many successes that have occurred and celebrate the people and companies who've worked so hard on this campaign." Wilson added, "I can't say enough about the dedication and support of the staff, or the commitment of the volunteers on cabinet. It has been my distinct honour to work alongside this great team and we are all extremely proud of this tremendous accomplishment."

On that note, the charity took the opportunity to recognize some of those outstanding volunteers and philanthropic businesses with Spirit Awards in 10 different categories. The overwhelming generosity and support of this community will result in the continuation of many great programs that help make up the social services safety net of this community. "While we are here to celebrate the many achievements of this campaign," said Executive Director, Julia Gosson, "the harsh reality is that a \$150,000 shortfall will have to result in cuts to both our operating budget and agency funding." And with the frugality of an administrative budget of less than 4%, there isn't a lot of fat to cut; meaning the community funding pool will take the brunt of the fall. "The ramifications of a deficit this size is that the community will lose essential programs, services and perhaps even agencies."

United Way of Quinte has enjoyed many years of growth as of late making it difficult to sustain. Even though the goal setting process is comprehensive, evaluating such factors as historical giving, account knowledge and the community's capacity, many unforeseen circumstances such as employee layoffs, plant closures and reductions of in-kind donations impacting event revenues, posed to be too many hurdles for one campaign. "Our largest special event was down \$30,000; 2 of our Top 5 accounts were down more than 30% each for a total of \$40,000; employee layoffs and plant closures resulted in losses of \$25,000 and other event revenues came up short of last year's totals by another \$25,000," said Gosson. "We can generally withstand 1 or 2 hits of that magnitude but it's difficult to stay on track after 6 or 7 without any new money being infused to make up the difference."

The campaign will remain open for a few more weeks to process any last minute donations, but funding decisions must be made by Feb 15th so agencies can set their budgets and United Way of Quinte can regroup and start planning for 2007. It is still feasible to make a pledge that can be paid off throughout the upcoming year, or to run an employee payroll deduction campaign over 11 months. For further information please call 613-962-9531. United Way of Quinte funds 51 health and social service agencies throughout Hastings & Prince Edward counties.