

**Updated August 17, 2006**

**Press Release - Sears Unity Place Grand Opening**

June 21, 2006

For Immediate Release

**Sears Unity Place Grand Opening**

United Way of Quinte and their fellow tenants from 249 William St, were pleased to announce the grand opening of Sears Unity Place at celebrations held earlier today. At the event a generous crowd of onlookers watched as the United Way Board President, Heather Candler, Sears Canada representatives, Martin Queen & Geoff Scott, Belleville Mayor, Mary Anne Sills, and United Way of Quinte Executive Director, Julia Gosson cut the ceremonial red ribbon. Greetings were brought by each of these dignitaries.

Martin Queen and Geoff Scott expressed their corporation's continued commitment to the community and how pleased they were to be the lead sponsor of this resource centre. Sears Distribution and Catalogue Centre contributed over \$65,000 to the project and has been honoured by having the centre named Sears Unity Place. The Mayor commended United Way of Quinte on the initiative and the creative approach that was taken to ensure that no donor dollars were used during this capital renovation. United Way Board Chair Heather Candler, "This is a shining example of a true community collaboration. In less than one year the vision of creating a resource centre where shared overhead and administration costs work to the advantage of the local agencies is a reality."

Julia Gosson reported that over 40 local businesses supported the project with donations of cash, and in-kind materials and services, this total exceeded \$125,000. Everything in the building was sponsored or donated said Gosson, "from the paint on the walls to the carpet on the floors, to all of the labour necessary to complete the work." Permanent recognition for these companies was unveiled in the form of a donor wall. We'd like to thank every company and individual for their role in the successful completion of this project", said Gosson.

Sears Unity Place is the new home of CNIB, Continuing on in Education, Brain Injury Association, Big Brothers Big Sisters of H &PE, The Quinte Homework & Enrichment Centre, and United Way of Quinte. The building was donated by Rentx Group in January of 2005 and is now at full occupancy. The unique rental arrangements, see the non-profit tenants proportionately sharing the operating costs of the building. This reduces the agencies operating budgets allowing them to reduce waiting lists, increase staff and put more money in to programming.

After the brief ceremony, guided tours were given of the facility and refreshments were served. United Way of Quinte funds more than 100 programs in 51 health and social service agencies throughout Hastings & Prince Edward Counties. For more information contact, Julia Gosson at 962-9531.