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For Immediate Release

United Way of Quinte Refocusing the Mission

United Way of Quinte launched their annual appeal at the Quinte Mall this morning with a full breakfast and agenda for the 250 supporters in attendance. While there were plenty of announcements and guest speakers, the real surprise of the day came when the fundraising organization announced a new strategy for the campaign: no goal.

Executive Director Julia Gosson indicated that the agency was refocusing their mission and rather than emphasizing the dollars and comparing the campaign progress to previous years, "we want to highlight the programs and services that are funded by your donations." It's important for the community to have a strong understanding of how much of their contributions are spent. "Most donors can name a few of our funded agencies," said Gosson, "but few fully comprehend how far reaching our organization is." We think that by educating the public about the impact their gift can have, we will see a positive increase in campaign revenues.

Last year we raised \$1,455,000 and we think collectively, we can do better. All told, the agencies that United Way of Quinte currently funds provide over 33,000 meals on wheels to more than 650 clients; they provide emergency food supplies & nutritional counseling to more than 17,000 people and over 60,000 contact hours were spent on literacy training. We know there's a need to do more than what we are currently funding. More than: 90 adults, youth and children who are at risk of homelessness need emergency housing; more than the 1,200 people who received assistance during a financial crisis need help; more than 25 children with disabilities need therapeutic sessions.

For the 1st time in 3 decades the 2006 UWQ campaign fell short of its \$1.6 million goal. The 10% shortfall was deemed an unsuccessful campaign instead of celebrating the incredible accomplishment of raising \$1,455,000. "We want to change that focus this year," said Gosson. "We're not trying to hide anything by not having a financial goal, we just feel the timing is right for a fresh approach."

With tremendous leadership from the Board of Directors the organization is under going a complete overhaul, revamping bylaws, improving policies, assessing funding priorities, training agencies on outcomes measurement and delving even further into community building. Their innovative ideas are gaining them national recognition and they look forward to sharing this information with the public.

"Our print media partners at Osprey have agreed to help us share our success story and assist us with this new strategy by running an 11 part series during campaign," said the Executive Director.

Jim Ambrose, Publisher for the Intelligencer said "These weekly features will start on September 11th and will provide the readership with a solid understanding of where

their United Way contribution ends up and processes taken along the way. We look forward to educating the community about the terrific programs and services they fund with their gift and are proud to support United Way of Quinte with this new approach."

"We hope the community will join us on this journey and upon learning of our strengths and the leadership role we're playing, will feel confident that United Way of Quinte continues to be the best choice for donors wishing to make the biggest impact on their community" Gosson said.

Dr. Hal Wilson has returned for a second year as the Campaign Chair and feels confident that The Mission is definitely possible referring to the agencies theme. "With an incredible team of fundraising volunteers and professional staff coupled with a generous community, we'll be able to achieve new heights and do more than last year." Wilson said with confidence. He noted that "whether you're an employee giving \$1 per week through payroll deduction, a corporation contributing tens of thousands of dollars or somewhere in between, together we can make a difference in the lives of more people than we've ever done before."

Many businesses are already embracing this new approach within their company campaigns. Sears Distribution Centre and Call Centre have invited all the United Way funded agencies to set up displays during their campaign so their associates can learn about the 50 organizations and see how their donations are used to provide services. Others have gotten rid of the traditional thermometers and instead of setting financial goals, are setting targets for employee participation, "focusing less on the total given and more on increasing the number of donors will ensure success in both areas," says Kim Egan of GH Manufacturing. "As a small private-owned company it is difficult to measure our own success against an industrial leader like Procter & Gamble. Tracking participation rates, levels the playing field. P&G sets a wonderful example for the manufacturing sector and when combined with many smaller campaigns like ours, it makes the industrial division almost 50% of the total campaign. We're proud to be in the company of so many philanthropic organizations, large and small."

United Way of Quinte featured 2 of its funded agencies at the campaign launch, cnib and Community Living Prince Edward. Both organizations spoke briefly about the services they provide in the area and gave compelling arguments for supporting United Way of Quinte.

Adam, Nicole and Elizabeth spoke on behalf of Community Living Prince Edward about the benefits of the Peer Mentoring Program at PECL. This program sees leaders in the school mentor students with disabilities to make links and connections within the life of the school community by promoting inclusion and participation in events and activities that foster a school culture that recognizes the valuable contributions of all students, regardless of their abilities.

Representatives from cnib were happy to showcase the orientation, mobility and vision assessment services they provide in the community through a variety of simulation devices. "While the national restructuring of the cnib lead to the closing of our local branch offices in Belleville, it's important for the public to know that we still provide services here and that we continue to be proud partners with United Way of Quinte," said Stuart Jones, Manager, Service and Operations, East Region, cnib.

Introductions were made of the new campaign staff Connie Reid and Sara Marlin. Connie has 8 years experience with this United Way and returned after a 7 year hiatus. Sara is a lifelong resident of the Quinte area who just recently graduated from Brock University. "Their complimentary skill sets should make for a winning combination," said Gosson "we look forward to the successes the organization will enjoy as a result."

For more information on United Way of Quinte or how to donate to their fundraising campaign, please call 613-962-9531.