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UNITED WAY TAKES ACTION IN UNDER-SERVED NEIGHBOURHOODS ACROSS TORONTO

\$3.5 million in private donations and United Way investments enable new community hub facility, resident-led associations and youth programs in 13 priority neighbourhoods

TORONTO, October 2, 2006 – United Way today announced major initiatives in its continuing plan to strengthen social services across Toronto, including a new community hub facility in east Scarborough, a major resident-led neighbourhood engagement initiative, and a program to reach out to young people in neighbourhoods facing the greatest need across the city.

The announcement was made at the future site of a 15,000 square-foot community hub that will provide programs and services to residents in the neighbourhood of Eglinton East/Kennedy Park in east Scarborough. Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC), a resident-led neighbourhood engagement initiative, is being introduced in four of the 13 priority neighbourhoods. United Way is also supporting an initiative to reach out to and engage young people in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods.

Today's announcement was set in motion by two major donations to United Way. Philanthropists Don and Anna Johnson have donated \$1 million to fund the facility, while the T.R. Meighen Family Foundation has donated \$500,000 to support the youth engagement initiative in two of the priority neighbourhoods. United Way will be investing another \$500,000 in each of the first four neighbourhoods to get the ANC initiative off the ground, for a total of \$2 million over the next two years. ANC will enable resident groups to identify challenges in their neighbourhoods and to build action plans to revitalize their communities.

"United Way has ambitious plans for making Toronto's neighbourhoods better, safer and stronger – but we can't do it alone," said Frances Lankin, President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toronto. "We are investing in neighbourhoods in a new way, bringing private donors, governments, community leaders and residents together for a better city for us all."

Construction at the 15,000 square-foot Eglinton East/Kennedy Park community hub will begin in early 2007. The facility will house a number of social programs and services, including a satellite Community Health Centre (CHC), one of nine announced by the McGuinty government last fall targeting the 13 priority neighbourhoods throughout Toronto.

"The Ontario government is pleased to work with United Way of Greater Toronto to help promote strong, healthy communities," said Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman. "Good health is about more than treating illness, it's also about addressing issues that contribute to healthy lives and healthy communities. Community Health Centres are an important way for local residents to access services and information to promote healthier living."

West Hill Community Services, a multi-service United Way member agency servicing the east Scarborough neighbourhood, will operate the new community hub facility in the Eglinton Avenue and Brimley Road area.

ANC is being introduced in the neighbourhoods of Eglinton East/Kennedy Park, Weston-Mt. Dennis, Lawrence Heights and Steeles-L'Amoreaux. ANC is modeled – and named after – a successful resident-led community revitalization pilot project taking place in Scarborough Village, in the Markham and Kingston Road area. United Way's goal is to establish ANC initiatives in each of the 13 neighbourhoods in the next two years, as well as additional community hubs in neighbourhoods where none exist.

This announcement represents a critical next stage in United Way's Neighbourhood Strategy, a five-year plan to strengthen 13 priority neighbourhoods across the GTA. The Strategy was implemented this year by United Way following the Strong Neighbourhood Task Force, a United Way-City of Toronto collaboration that looked at ways to strengthen the social infrastructure of neighbourhoods facing the greatest need across the city. The 13 priority neighbourhoods have since been designated by the Mayor's Community Safety Plan as areas that require focused investment to strengthen neighbourhood supports.

"The issues facing each neighbourhood are different and require different approaches and solutions," said Mayor David Miller. "Our Neighbourhood Action teams are working to find ways to plan and deliver services – particularly services for youth – in a more coordinated and effective way. I applaud United Way's commitment to bringing about true community-based programming and co-ordinated services under one roof."

The announcement of a new CHC for the Eglinton East/Kennedy Park neighbourhood last year prompted West Hill Community Services and United Way to look for ways to leverage the opportunity and integrate services around the new CHC. United Way then approached Don and Anna Johnson with a plan that would see the multi-service community hub come together and allow United Way to begin opening ANC initiatives across the city.

"We were attracted to this project because of its ability to touch so many lives," said Don Johnson, a Senior Advisor at BMO Capital Markets and a member of United Way's Major Individual Giving Cabinet. "United Way made a compelling case that this community hub would ensure this neighbourhood gets the services it needs."

The T.R. Meighen Family Foundation is a private charitable organization that supports programs for youth at risk in southern Ontario, New Brunswick and the Montreal areas.

"We're pleased to be supporting youth initiatives," said Kelly Meighen, president of the T.R. Meighen Family Foundation. "United Way and the City of Toronto are putting an innovative approach in place to engage youth to have a say in how to improve their neighbourhoods."

In 2006, United Way of Greater Toronto aims to raise \$100 million for the community. For 50 years, United Way of Greater Toronto has been working to create lasting change in the lives of Torontonians. Through research, partnerships with business, labour, government and volunteers, and by funding a network of 200 health and social service agencies, United Way identifies needs and takes action to support people and develop strong communities.

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Media contact:

Lyn Whitham, United Way of Greater Toronto
416-359-2055 – lwhitham@uwgt.org