

## United Way of Winnipeg's 2005 Coats for Kids Drive Kicks Off Today at Luxton School's Family Centre

United Way of Winnipeg's (UWW) 2005 Coats for Kids drive to collect winter outerwear for children in Winnipeg kicks off today at Luxton School. Now 'til the end of January 2006, Winnipeggers are urged to donate gently-used children's coats, parkas, snowsuits, jackets, ski pants, toques, gloves and mittens.

"Coats for Kids is all about caring," says Linda Brazier-Lamoureux, Director of Community Investment at United Way. "It benefits both the child and the child's family. It enables parents—particularly those struggling with finances—to meet their children's basic needs."

"When our students receive a new parka or toque, their faces light up like a Christmas tree," added Tom Rossi, Principal of Luxton School. "Not only does the clothing keep them warm during winter, it works wonders for their self-esteem and confidence. That gives us all a great feeling."

Over 90,000 items of winter outerwear have been distributed to Winnipeg girls and boys since the first Coats for Kids collection drive over 16 years ago. United Way's partners in this year's Coats for Kids are: The Winnipeg Sun, CKY-TV and 1290 AM Radio—which provide media support to raise awareness of this important initiative—in addition to the City of Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service, Perth's Services Ltd., United Parcel Service (UPS), and Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape, a UWW-funded agency.

Luxton School has 287 nursery to Grade 6 students. With a staff of 34, the school offers classes in music, art, computer, physical education and basic French for grades 4 to 6, and extracurricular activities before, during noon hour and, after school. Its Family Centre is a meeting place where parents and students can learn together and is open to all members of the community. Luxton School was named after W.F. Luxton, Winnipeg's first public school teacher, who died in 1907.

Gently-used children's outerwear, especially Sizes 6X, 7 and 8, can be dropped off at any Winnipeg Perth's location or at any Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service fire station. Donated clothing is collected by UPS and then sorted at a United Way central warehouse, cleaned by Perth's, and sent to schools, daycare centres, community organizations and United Way agencies to be distributed to children who most need them.

Coats for Kids is further supported by mini Coats for Kids drives held at many schools, community organizations, businesses and agencies throughout Winnipeg.

To donate children's outerwear, please call United Way's Coats for Kids Hotline at 586-KOAT (5628).



United Way of Winnipeg is an independent, nonpolitical organization that works with Winnipeggers to build upon the strength of volunteers and voluntary action by engaging the whole community for the benefit of the whole community. Its mission: to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action.

2005 marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary for United Way Winnipeg. It was incorporated in 1965 through a unique partnership between the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the Winnipeg Labour Council. This strong relationship continues to this day, as UWW works to engage corporations, government, labour, and community organizations to find solutions to community social needs all year 'round.

By investing in strategies to make Winnipeg a stronger, more vibrant city for everyone, United Way ensures a stable network of services that will be there tomorrow. These strategies encourage successful children and youth; empower people who live in poverty, with disabilities, or who are left out because of age, culture, race or status; and building vibrant neighbourhoods where people can feel safe, welcome and part of their community.

United Way is the only volunteer-driven, community organization that provides core, as well as one-time funding to kick-start innovative solutions to community challenges. Winnipeggers have invested over \$270 million through United Way of Winnipeg since 1965.

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