

MEDIA RELEASE

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UNITED WAY GIVES WINNIPEGGERS A VOICE!

United Way is giving thousands of Winnipeggers the opportunity to have their say! Urban Exchange is a chance for United Way to connect with Winnipeggers to talk about issues that are most important to them. It is an ongoing dialogue that will inspire new ways for individuals from all walks of life to think about and get involved in their community. It's a bold initiative that has never been done anywhere.

"We want to know how Winnipeggers view our city," said Gail Asper, Chair of United Way's Board of Trustees at today's media launch at The Forks. "And we want to know where United Way can focus our energies so that together, we can make changes to improve the lives of all Winnipeggers."

Urban Exchange is fun and easy to be a part of. The first step is to complete a survey either online at www.mycitymysay.ca, by mail or by phone. The survey asks some thought provoking questions about a person's views of Winnipeg and their priorities. In the very near future, Urban Exchange will expand to focus groups and face-to-face discussions. We want to make sure everyone has a voice... a voice that is equal and valued.

"We are looking for thousands of Winnipeggers to participate to ensure the responses we get are truly reflective of our city," said Derrick Coupland, Co-Chair of United Way's Urban Exchange Committee. "We are looking for people of all ages, from all cultural backgrounds and from all neighbourhoods, regardless of their income, education or abilities." More than 400 people have already filled out the first Urban Exchange survey and we are thrilled! While it is still early, we have found some common themes among the initial responses.

When we asked panelists, "What is the best thing about living in Winnipeg?" the top three answers were:

1. The people, family, friendly city
2. Affordable, reasonable cost of living
3. A great community spirit and sense of involvement

When we asked panelists to list their top three social concerns, the top five answers were:

1. Poverty
2. Youth crime and gang activity
3. Access to affordable housing
4. Neighbourhood decline
5. Crime

The input from both present and future Urban Exchange panelists will help direct United Way's investment of millions of dollars in our community. It will also help United Way identify new areas and challenges on which to focus its efforts.

United Way's 2007 Campaign Chair is urging all Winnipeggers to take a few minutes to have their say. "Urban Exchange is the key to making sure we do everything in our power to make this city stronger and safer for everyone," said Heather Grant-Jury. "Your say does matter and it will have an impact on where United Way dollars are invested." So donate your thoughts to Urban Exchange... IT'S YOUR CITY, YOUR SAY!

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