

MEDIA RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release:
Monday, December 5, 2011**

NO COATS FOR KIDS!

The shelves and hangers at the Koats for Kids Volunteer Centre are empty. At the same time, demand for new and gently used children's outerwear is quickly piling up, and the need is urgent.

"It's the first week of December and already, we've received 970 orders – 350 more than we filled the entire season last year," said Donna Albak, United Way's Koats for Kids manager. "Right now, we have nearly 1000 kids waiting for coats and absolutely no inventory."

"We've been lucky the weather's been mild, but if there's one thing Winnipeggers can count on, it's the arrival of winter," said Albak. "And with the forecast calling for colder-than-average temperatures this year, we must do everything we can to get coats to these kids immediately."

Part of the reason for increased demand this year stems from a large number of families who've been displaced by flooding in northern Manitoba.

To meet the urgent need, United Way and its Koats for Kids partners are calling on Winnipeggers to clean out their closets and bring donations of gently used children's coats, ski pants, boots, mittens, hats and scarves to any Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Station or Perth's location.

In these extraordinary circumstances, United Way is also calling on workplace and school groups to consider organizing emergency coat drives. On the heels of Winnipeg's **We Day** event, it's a perfect way for young people to make a difference in our community and a great activity for those participating in the *We Schools in Action* program.

Larger donations may be dropped off at AMJ Campbell Van Lines at 12-1333 Niakwa Road, Monday to Friday between 8 am and 4 pm. Make sure to let us know about your coat drive so we can thank you properly.

For assistance arranging a coat drive at your school or workplace, call Melissa Campbell, United Way's Day of Caring manager, at 924-4273 or email mcampbell@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca.

Thank you for helping kids in Winnipeg stay warm and safe this winter.

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