

MEDIA RELEASE

Phone (204) 477-5360 Fax (204) 453-6198 Web www.UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca



**For Immediate Release:
Wednesday, October 28, 2009**

KOATS FOR KIDS CELEBRATES NEW SEASON, NEW HOME

United Way of Winnipeg's Koats for Kids program is already heating up! Today, United Way and its partners celebrated the launch of the program's 21st season and marked the grand opening of the new Koats for Kids Volunteer Centre at 3172 Portage Avenue with an official "mitten cutting" ceremony.

"For a kid, a coat is much more than just a piece of clothing," said CTV's Sylvia Kuzyk, who hosted the media conference along with fellow Koats for Kids spokespeople Laurie Mustard and Don Percy. "It's a chance to build friendships while building a snow fort. It's the difference between watching through a window and being there among your friends – just being a kid."

As part of United Way's commitment to helping children and youth achieve their potential, Koats for Kids has been warming kids up for success in school and life since 1989. In that time, more than 136 000 articles of new and gently used winter outerwear have been collected and distributed free of charge to thousands of Winnipeg children and their families.

With space generously provided by the City of Winnipeg, the new Koats for Kids Volunteer Centre allows plenty of room for more Winnipeggers to get involved and help expand the program. Already, volunteers from Investors Group and Ceridian have each participated in a Day of Caring to ready the Centre for the launch. Many were on hand for the ceremony along with students from Charleswood School who recently held their own Koats for Kids clothing drive.

Koats for Kids is a partnership between United Way of Winnipeg, CTV, Winnipeg Sun, 1290 CFRW, Perth's, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service and AMJ Campbell Van Lines.

With the forecast calling for another cold winter - and in light of economic uncertainty over the past year - more Winnipeg families than ever need help keeping their children warm and safe this season. Koats for Kids is counting on Winnipeggers generosity to help thousands of Winnipeg children weather this winter in warmth and comfort. Right now, there is an immediate need for people to help ready donations for distribution. Volunteers are encouraged to contact Donna Albak at United Way. Call 586-KOAT (5628) or koats@unitedwaywinnipeg.mb.ca.

Donations of coats, ski pants, hats, mittens, scarves and boots may be dropped off at any Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Station or Perth's location. Larger donations may be dropped off at AMJ Campbell Van Lines on Niakwa Road, across from the Mint. To request winter outerwear, please contact the school, daycare or United Way agency partner in your area.

For more information please contact:

Kris Owen
Director, Communications
United Way of Winnipeg
Phone 477-5360 (office) | 391-3799 (cell) | kowen@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca