

MEDIA RELEASE

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



United Way
Winnipeg

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KOATS FOR KIDS CELEBRATES 20TH YEAR

With another cold winter right around the corner, United Way celebrated a milestone today, launching the 20th season of Koats for Kids with its partners at Elwick Community School in Winnipeg.

This year, thousands of children will find warmth and comfort in the generosity of Winnipeggers through United Way's Koats for Kids program, which collects and distributes new and gently used winter outerwear, free of charge, to Winnipeg children and their families. Since 1989, 120 000 articles of winter clothing have been distributed throughout the city.

"We are expecting close to 10 000 requests this year," said Barb Brown, United Way program manager for Koats for Kids. "This is a great opportunity for people to recycle their winter outerwear and do something good for the community at the same time."

Hosts and Koats for Kids spokespeople Sylvia Kuzyk, Laurie Mustard and Don Percy joined approximately 400 students, teachers and parents at Elwick to launch the program in style. Over the past few weeks, middle years' students at Elwick collected a generous harvest of winter outerwear which they proudly presented during the morning press conference. Students put up posters at schools and businesses in surrounding neighbourhoods, delivered flyers and even went door-to-door to make their coat drive a success.

"Our classes wanted to work together to ensure that all Winnipeg children and families had the opportunity to stay warm this winter," said Mrs. Collette, an Elwick teacher whose class participated in the drive. "Every time a student brought in a coat, they came in smiling from ear to ear because they felt good knowing that they were making a difference."

Koats for Kids is a partnership between United Way of Winnipeg, CTY, the Winnipeg Sun, 1290 CFRW, United Way agency partner Oyate Tipi Cumini Yape, Perth's, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service and AMJ Campbell Van Lines. These sponsors collectively provide in-kind support to promote the program and to collect, transport, clean and distribute donated clothing.

Individual donations of coats, scarves, mitts, toques, boots or ski pants can be dropped off at any Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Station, Perth's location or AMJ Campbell Van Lines office on Niakwa Road across from the mint. For larger donations, including school and workplace coat drives, please call 586-KOAT (5628) or email koatsforkids@shaw.ca to arrange for a pickup or drop off. Together, united, we're creating opportunities for a warmer winter and better lives for all Winnipeggers.

For more information please contact:

Kate Fenske

Manager, Media Relations and Communications

United Way of Winnipeg

Phone 477-5360 (office) | 330-5160 (cell) | kfenske@UnitedWayWinnipeg.mb.ca