

**Joint Release – Office of the Mayor and United Way of Calgary and Area**

## **Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative leadership announced**

Stewardship Committee will create the plan to fight poverty

**Calgary, AB – January 11, 2012:** Today, Mayor Naheed Nenshi and United Way are announcing the full membership of the Stewardship Committee for the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative. Starting immediately, this 18-member committee will create an inclusive, multi-sector plan for poverty reduction in Calgary. The Co-Chairs of the committee are well-known Calgarians Steve Allan and Cathy Williams. (A full list of committee members appears in the backgrounder.)

“Poverty lessens our great city every day; we must take action rather than pass the buck between other levels of government, and now we have the team in place to do that,” said Mayor Nenshi. “This is a group of very effective individuals who have demonstrated great integrity, compassion, and a commitment for getting things done. I’m confident they will do an excellent job of creating a poverty reduction plan that brings together all the organizations that fight poverty in every part of Calgary.”

The Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative is jointly funded by The City of Calgary and United Way of Calgary and Area with an investment of \$200,000 by each party. The Stewardship Committee will work with poverty reduction experts throughout Calgary to prepare a comprehensive plan of action. Although modeled on Calgary’s successful 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness, the resulting plan may not be a single big idea and instead involve a suite of actions from many organizations across many sectors.

“This boils down to answering the question “how can we improve the quality of life for all citizens in Calgary?” said Heather MacDonald, Acting CEO of United Way of Calgary and Area. “Our collaboration with The City of Calgary and so many interested and dedicated partners shows how serious the entire community is about making positive and lasting change against poverty.”

“We will ensure that this is a very collaborative process engaging all of Calgary's anti-poverty experts to find the best solutions,” said Co-Chair Steve Allan.

Selection of the participants on the Stewardship Committee balanced government, community, and business representatives. Group dynamics, strategic non-traditional thinking, diversity, and passion for the issue at hand were also important considerations.

One of the first actions by the Co-Chairs was to work with the Office of the Mayor, United Way, and The City of Calgary to select the Executive Director of the Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative. Derek Cook, currently a research social planner in The City of Calgary’s Community and Neighbourhood Services department, will take on the role of Executive Director immediately.

“We received over 30 stellar applications for a short term contract, and it was a unanimous decision to hire Derek Cook,” said Co-Chair Cathy Williams. “Both Steve and I are looking forward to working with Derek. He brings a strong background in collaborative leadership and the ability to work thoughtfully and effectively with corporate and community leaders and those living in poverty.”

The first meeting of the committee will be in late January and an update on the committee’s progress will be shared with City Council in March 2012.

**Mayor Nenshi, Heather MacDonald, and the Stewardship Committee Co-Chairs are available for comment today upon request.**

For interviews and more information, please contact:

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **Calgary Poverty Reduction Initiative Stewardship Committee**

#### Leadership

##### *Steve Allan, Co-Chair*

Steve Allan was born, raised, and educated in Calgary. Steve is the Chairman of the Board of the Canadian Tourism Commission and past volunteer Chairman of the Board and President of the Stampede. He has received many awards for his community involvement including recognition as Calgary's Citizen of the Year in 2006 and a Lifetime Achievement Award by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta.

##### *C.L. (Cathy) Williams, Co-Chair*

Cathy is a senior leader in Calgary's oil and gas industry, past volunteer Chair of Mount Royal University's Board of Governors, and a member of the Advisory Board of the Dean of the Business School at Queen's University. She is currently Managing Director of Options Capital Ltd. In 2008, she was named to the Women's Executive Network Hall of Fame.

##### *Derek Cook, Executive Director*

Derek Cook has over 20 years of experience in the field of social work and community development. For the past twelve years, Derek has worked for The City of Calgary as a Research Social Planner in the Community Services Department where his work has involved conducting socio-economic research, trend analysis and policy development with specific expertise in issues of poverty, diversity and the labour force.

#### Membership

Shannon Bowen-Smed, President and CEO, BOWEN Workforce Solutions

Carlene Donnelly, Executive Director, Calgary Urban Project Society Health and Education Centres

Corinne "Cori" Ghitter Director of Recruitment and Professional Development, Fraser Milner Casgrain

Jeff Loomis, Program Director, Momentum

Gael MacLeod, Alderman, Ward 4, The City of Calgary

Dr. Dave Marshall, retired President, Mount Royal University

Carol Ann Elizabeth Mason, Executive Director, Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary

Bob McInnis, Executive Director, Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids

Brian K. Petersen, Co-Head Investment Banking, Managing Director, Head of Energy, Stonecap Securities

Michelle Rempel, Member of Parliament, Calgary Centre-North

Dr. Gayla Rogers, Professor and Former Dean, Faculty of Social Work, University of Calgary

Sheenah Rogers, Founder and Principal, Anstice Communications

Nashir Samanani, Board Chair, United Way of Calgary and Area

Wayne Stewart, Former President and CEO, Calgary Homeless Foundation

Alina Turner, Vice-President, Strategy, Calgary Homeless Foundation

Teresa Woo-Paw, Member of the Legislative Assembly, Calgary-Mackay