

## For Immediate Release

### **Pathways Out of the Economic Storm** *United Way launches its Resiliency Report*

**June 5, 2009 – Calgary Alberta** – Calgarians have been hit hard by the economic downturn and United Way is responding. The organization has just completed an in-depth community assessment that looked at the impacts of current economic conditions. The **Resiliency Report** highlights the issues that need to be addressed and solutions to help those who are struggling.

“United Way is focused on creating a great city for everyone. The economic downturn is a harsh reality for a lot of us. We have taken a critical look at the impacts on the community and are now moving forward with a plan of action to help those in need,” says Ruth Ramsden-Wood, President of United Way of Calgary and Area. “The **Resiliency Report** highlights the needs of individuals who have been hit hard, and the issues agencies that serve them are facing,” she says.

Over the past few months, United Way has held focus groups to learn more about the difficulties Calgarians are coping with. The focus groups consisted of individuals in the community, and human service agencies. The **Resiliency Report** is based on the information collected during these focus groups.

Highlights of the report indicate:

- Agencies are seeing an increase in demand from Calgarians who are coming to them with multiple problems – the Calgary Women’s Emergency Shelter reported February 2009 had the highest number of domestic violence calls received in a month ever recorded in the shelter’s history. There was a 300 per cent increase in February 2009 compared to February 2008.
- The Calgary Counselling Centre saw a 40 per cent increase in stress-related calls in the first three months of 2009 compared to the first three months in 2008.
- Calgarians are giving up pets that they can no longer afford. Pet surrenders are up 300 per cent from last year.

United Way action:

Calgarians need access to the services and supports that can help quicker:

- Enhance the awareness of 211. 211 is a phone service provided to Calgarians that directs them to agencies and programs that can help.
- Release Hope for Hard Times. Created by United Way, this guide will offer support and resources to Calgarians who are struggling in this economic downturn.
- Form rapid-response task groups that will focus on three areas:
  - Decreasing wait times for services
  - Increasing support for basic needs, such as food, clothing and shelter
  - Increasing access to stress and personal coping services for individuals and families

For more information or a copy of the **Resiliency Report** click the link below

<http://www.calgaryunitedway.org/media/publications/Resiliency%20Report%20%28final%29.pdf>

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