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## You can't solve a problem if you don't know it exists *#unignorable colour shines spotlight on local social issues*

CALGARY— You can't solve a problem if you don't know it exists. In our busy world, important local social issues can often go unnoticed. United Way wants to change that. That's why United Way partnered with the Pantone® Color Institute™ to create **unignorable**— a colour developed specifically to highlight and bring attention to local issues in our communities. This new colour is the foundation of United Way's largest national integrated public awareness campaign to date, which formally launched in Calgary today with a fully wrapped CTrain that will provide a uniquely unignorable commuter experience.

"The unignorable colour is easy to spot. Social issues aren't," says Karen Young, president and CEO, United Way of Calgary and Area. "Things like poverty, domestic violence, and mental health struggles are holding people back from realizing their full potential. These are community issues that require community solutions. This is what United Way does. We bring people together to solve tough, complex social issues.

"We know people care about where they live, their families, and their community. The unignorable campaign is designed to provide all Calgarians with an opportunity to show their local love for these things. Ultimately, we need our community to show its support. But first, we need your attention."

The multi-media, fully integrated national campaign is attention-grabbing. It includes images designed by award-winning international illustrator Malika Favre, whose bold pieces have appeared on the cover of *The New Yorker* and within campaigns for *Vogue*, *BAFTA* and *Sephora*. Favre's customized designs captivate onlookers with the unignorable colour at the forefront, while the illustrations command attention to issues holding people back.



*Domestic Violence*



*Mental Health*



*Poverty*

“Poverty, domestic violence and mental health struggles are hurting our community,” says Katie Black, acting general manager, Community Services, City of Calgary. “In a city as prosperous as ours, no one should be left behind. When social issues are ignored, they threaten the quality of life we value as Calgarians – values of fairness, safety, diversity, and the opportunity to thrive. How we support people is a reflection of who we are as Calgarians.”

The City of Calgary and United Way of Calgary and Area are long-time partners who have worked closely together on many initiatives such as Enough for All, Community Hubs, and 211.

“No single individual or organization can solve social issues alone,” says Young. “But by working together, we can create stronger, more resilient individuals, families, and communities. Awareness through conversations and learning more about the issues is the first step to getting involved and making a difference.”

The campaign’s launch [film](#), directed by Montreal-based Benjamin Nicolas, uses colour as a universal language to remind everyone that poverty and inequality surround us. Awareness is just the beginning; the difference-maker is to act. The video and all video assets live on YouTube and United Way’s social channels.

If you love where you live, you can show your local love by taking action to #DoLocalGood and ensuring social issues in Calgary and the surrounding area are unignorable.

Visit [showyourlocallove.ca](#) to learn more about the issues, find out how the colour was created, and be part of the movement by sharing the campaign on social media using hashtag #unignorable.

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**United Way of Calgary and Area** brings together donors, corporations, agencies, and government to solve complex issues and improve the lives of more than 150,000 people every year. Since 1940, United Way has supported agencies that assist vulnerable Calgarians. Today, United Way invests in programs and collaborations that tackle root causes of social issues to help people overcome poverty, set kids up for success, and build strong communities.

**For more information:**

Lisa Rushka  
403-816-1038  
[lisar@momentumcommunications.ca](mailto:lisar@momentumcommunications.ca)

Sheila Rougeau  
Director of Communications  
United Way of Calgary and Area  
403-464-5021  
[sheila.rougeau@calgaryunitedway.org](mailto:sheila.rougeau@calgaryunitedway.org)

## Backgrounder

- Social issues like poverty, mental health, and domestic violence are big, complex issues that impact our communities every day. These issues often take hold over many years, making them difficult to see and too often easily ignored.
- Our goal for the #unignorable campaign is to raise awareness of the issues with Calgarians, spark conversations and compel people to act on issues we can no longer ignore as a community.
- We invite everyone to #DoLocalGood, learn more about these issues, and help us solve them. Learn more at [showyourlocallove.ca](http://showyourlocallove.ca).

## Poverty

- The number of Calgarians accessing Employment Insurance increased 111% from 2014 to 2017.
- 34% of Alberta food banks users say they have skipped meals so their kids could eat.
- There are currently 2,900 homeless Calgarians and another 40,000 households at extreme risk of becoming homeless.
- Affordable housing is five times less expensive than institutional responses to homelessness.
- In 2017, United Way of Calgary and Area investments supported 40,703 people in overcoming poverty.

## Mental Health

- 70% of adults with a mental illness indicate their symptoms first emerged during childhood and adolescence.
- Individuals with a mental illness are much less likely to be employed. Unemployment rates are as high as 70 to 90% for people with the most severe mental illnesses.
- Today is World Mental Health Day and the World Health Organization's theme this year is Young People and Mental Health in a changing world.
- The World Health Organization states that half of all mental issues begin by the age of 14, but most cases often go undetected and untreated. In terms of the burden among adolescents, depression is the third leading cause of mental illness; and suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15 to 29 year olds.
- In 2017, United Way of Calgary and Area investments supported 31,769 children and youth to succeed.

## Domestic Violence

- Between 2016 and 2017, 22,274 women and children were turned away from women's shelters due to overcrowding.
- In 2017, there were almost 5,000 victims of domestic violence in Calgary, a 16% increase over the previous year and 47% higher than the five-year average. These are just those that reported their abuse to police.
- Family violence and abuse costs Canada an estimated \$7.4 billion every year.
- In 2017, United Way of Calgary and Area investments supported 80,352 people in the area of strong communities.