



**United Way  
Toronto**

## **Inclusive, Safe, Healthy Neighbourhoods**

Cities Centre, UofT  
Thursday, October 16, 2008



## **Overview of Presentation**

- Discussion of three chains of events that led to our neighbourhood focus
  - Socio-political changes in the late 1990s
  - Growing concern for a new deal for solutions
  - Federal government launch of a pilot project on neighbourhood revitalization
- Overview of UWT's current neighbourhood work



## The 1990s Climate of Concern

- Fraying of social safety net
- Provincial downloading of programs to city
- Evidence of growing poverty - of families falling behind
- “Closed government doors”
- Limited financial tools of cities to raise revenue

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Early Documentation of Trends & Building Solutions

- A Community at Risk (1997)
- Toronto at a Turning Point (1999)
- Decade of Decline (2002)
- Member agency conferences & consultations (1999 – present)
- Mayor’s Task Force on Homelessness
- Space Task Force – *Opening Doors*

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Setting a New Path

- 2003 UWT adopted new strategic Plan *Community Matters*
  - Formalized new roles of research, public policy, collaborative work, community development

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Deepening Our Knowledge

- Poverty by Postal Code (2004)
- Torontonians Speak Out (2004)
- Examination of geographic distribution of UWT funding

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Focusing our Efforts

- 2004 adopted new priorities
  - Neighbourhoods
  - Youth
  - Newcomers
  - Systemic issues (poverty, housing)

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Collaborative Work to Build & Advocate Solutions

- Big City Mayor's Group – *New Deal for Cities*
- Toronto City Summit Alliance – *Enough Talk*
- Strong Neighbourhood Task Force
  - Off-shoot of the TCSA and recommendations in its report *Enough Talk*
  - SNTF was a broad coalition of community leaders, formed in 2004, and co-chaired by the UWT and the City of Toronto
  - Its 2005 report *A Call to Action*, developed blueprint for strengthening high need, underserved neighbourhoods in Toronto
  - Identified 9 neighbourhoods for immediate investment; increased to 13 later in 2005

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Testing Solutions

- Action for Neighbourhood Change
  - Federally-funded pilot project in 5 Canadian cities to demonstrate the importance of ground-up, resident-led community revitalization
  - Initiative influenced by *Poverty by Postal Code* and Statistics Canada research evidence of growing concentration of neighbourhood poverty.
  - A partnership of United Way of Canada, The Caledon Institute of Social Policy, Tamarack: an Institute for Community Engagement, National Film Board of Canada, and five city United Ways
  - ANC Launched in Toronto in Scarborough Village in 2005, one of the newly identified “priority neighbourhood areas”

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Taking Action – The City of Toronto

- Creation of Neighbourhood Action Tables
- Creation of Neighbourhood Action Partnership Tables
- \$1 million in new funding for each of 13 priority neighbourhood areas

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Taking Action – United Way of Toronto

- Adopted Neighbourhood Strategy in spring 2006, aimed at:
  - Increasing the leadership & influence of residents over neighbourhood conditions
  - Strengthening the social infrastructure, services & programs in high-need inner suburban neighbourhoods
  - Mobilizing & leveraging donor & other funding for investment in priority neighbourhoods
  - Increasing public & political understanding of the need for strong neighbourhoods

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Taking Action – United Way of Toronto (cont'd)

- Community hub initiative: creation of new hubs in 8 priority neighbourhoods
  - Seeking \$1M gift to seed development of each hub
  - Seeking participation of other funders to contribute to core, on-going funding costs
- Community Development Grants: to build agency capacity to engage in community development work
  - Targeted to high need inner-suburban, but not “priority neighbourhoods”
- Targeted funding to the inner suburbs
  - 75% of all new UWT funding each year to inner suburbs
  - Seek to bring 2 new agencies from inner suburbs into UWT membership each year

---

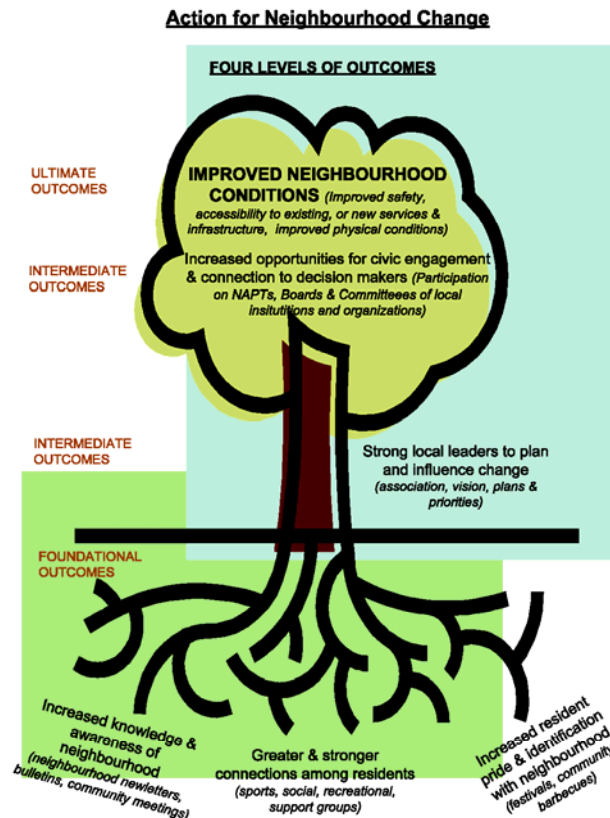
Without you, there would be no way.

# Taking Action – United Way of Toronto (cont'd)

- Action for Neighbourhood Change
  - Building resident leadership and influence in neighbourhoods
  - Targeted to all 13 priority neighbourhoods
  - Quick Start operates in parallel with ANC, providing pool of funds for resident projects
  - Capacity building component also operating in parallel, emerging as “Community Builders Institute”

---

Without you, there would be no way.





## Early Impact - ANC

- Building connections and social capital – breaking through deep and widespread social isolation
- Building pride and identification – celebrating who we are through community festivals, barbecues, picnics, pot lucks
- Building knowledge – understanding our neighbourhoods through community walks, oral histories, newsletters
- Neighbours Taking Action – community garden projects, community clean ups, community kitchens, community beautification projects, arts and recreation programs for children and youth, fitness and well-being classes, small community infrastructure projects

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Taking Action – Partnerships

- Youth Challenge Fund – UWT and Ministry of Children & Youth Services initiative
  - \$15M to start/ \$15M challenge achieved September 2008/ \$15M in new funding, targeted primarily to the 13 priority neighbourhoods
  - 99 projects funded to date
  - Funds spaces for youth to meet and expansion of existing youth programs or creation of new programs that:
    - Build youth leadership in the neighbourhood
    - Improve learning and education
    - Generate income for youth through innovative, entrepreneurial ideas
    - Inspire youth through participation in arts and culture, recreation or the environment

---

Without you, there would be no way.





## Taking Action – Partnerships (cont'd)

- Expansion of Community Health Centres – Ministry of Health:
  - Co-development of CHCs and community hubs in 5 priority neighbourhoods – Eglinton East/Kennedy Park, Crescent Town, Jamestown, Weston-Mt.Dennis, Westminster-Branson
  - Eglinton East/Kennedy Park slated to open in summer 2009
  - Weston-Mt.Dennis and Crescent Town slated to open in fall 2009
  - Still negotiating sites for Jamestown & Westminster-Branson hubs

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Taking Action – Partnerships (cont'd)

- Involve Youth – a neighbourhood-based youth engagement initiative of UWT, City of Toronto and Heritage Canada
  - in 6 priority neighbourhoods
  - supporting African-Canadian and racialized youth
- Pathways to Education, with Pathways Canada
  - increasing high school graduation through mentoring, parent-student support, financial incentive and transportation
  - Launching in 2 high-need, inner suburban neighbourhoods - Rexdale and Lawrence Heights

---

Without you, there would be no way.



## Next Steps for UWT

- Continue implementation of community hubs, ANC, YCF, Involve Youth, Pathways to Education, etc.
- On-going evaluation and course correction of Neighbourhood Strategy
- Continue to monitor and research neighbourhood trends
- Continue to seek major gifts to support neighbourhood work, continue to raise awareness of importance of strong neighbourhoods



---

Without you, there would be no way.