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

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*
Setting a New Path

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

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Deepening Our Knowledge

- Examination of geographic distribution of UWT funding

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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
  – Offshoot 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”

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
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, ongoing 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 though 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.

• 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

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