



**United Way
of Greater Toronto**

Attention: Business Editor / Social Issues Reporter

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For Immediate Release

United Way Hosts First Ever National Conference on the Benefits of Social Enterprise

Toronto – Some of the world's leading experts on Social Enterprise (SE) will converge on Toronto November 15 to 17 to share their knowledge and expertise on how to help people in need get off the street and back into the workforce. The two-day conference, hosted by United Way of Greater Toronto, is the first of its kind in Canada and will demonstrate how not-for-profit and community investment organizations can connect social aims with business initiatives.

Social enterprise is quickly emerging as an exciting new form of social investment that combines social impact with business outcomes. United Way is already a leading catalyst in the social enterprise sector. Through the Toronto Enterprise Fund, United Way provides funding to established not-for-profit agencies in Toronto, which provide employment or training leading to employment, for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. To date, United Way has funded 12 social enterprises in the city including **River Restaurant**, a restaurant and lounge employing and training homeless and at-risk youth; **Growing Green Jobs**, an urban farm that provides training and work experience for individuals with persistent and severe mental health issues; **Inspirations**, a studio space for homeless and marginalized women to develop skills and micro-businesses in arts and crafts production; and **St. John's Bakery**, a wholesale and retail bakery that provides employment, apprenticeships and training to homeless and at risk people.

Representatives from not-for-profit organizations, social enterprises, funding institutions, philanthropic organizations, socially responsible businesses and government agencies from across Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom will attend the conference.

Keynote speakers will include:

- **Mike Lewis**, Executive Director, Centre of Community Enterprise. Mr. Lewis has overseen numerous micro-credit projects within Canada.
- **Charles King**, Founder and President, Housing Works, Inc., a minority-controlled, community-based, not-for-profit organization that provides advocacy, housing and support services for homeless men, women and children living with HIV/AIDS.
- **William Ninacs** Ph. D., President, Coopérative La Clé. Mr. Ninacs has been involved in SE in Canada for over 25 years, notably as the coordinator of Québec's first community development corporation.

The Canadian Conference on Social Enterprise will take place from November 15 – 17 at the Marriott Hotel, Toronto. Sessions run from 9:00 to 5:00 p.m. daily and will include visits to social purpose enterprises such as Foodshare, Turnaround Couriers and A-way couriers.

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