



Like most of the non-profit organizations in our communities, I would describe 2008 as a year of challenges, with some surprises and some calculated wins. As an organization we have been anticipating and planning for change since 2004, as United Ways across the country aligned on a community impact agenda. We must be locally relevant and make a measurable difference in the communities where we raise funds. We have worked at the Board and Staff levels to develop our skills and expertise to meet this new agenda and I am happy to report that we have achieved our goals for 2008 in this regard.

At our AGM in 2007 we declared a desire to formalize our relationship with Labour. We realized the first step in this through the hiring of Bob Lavallee as our Labour Program Coordinator in April of 2008. This was done in partnership with the Canadian Labour Congress and the Kamloops and District Labour Council. We are the first United Way in the British Columbia Interior to have a Labour Program, and we look forward to learning from Bob's experience and knowledge to build on our partnership with Labour.

Francy Hayward left her position as the Community Development Coordinator in June to become a mom, and Danalee Coates is continuing in this role. Both of these additions to our staff are important parts of changes to our role in the community. With their skills, our role in community development is emerging and this will help us work more effectively with new partners in the Thompson Nicola Cariboo Region.

We have secured funding through Success By 6 to hire Marcy Keehn on a part-time basis. She coordinates our regional Success By 6 initiatives and works with new Aboriginal Success By 6 initiatives in the Cariboo and North Thompson.

In 2007 United Way of Canada Centraide developed the UWCC Standards of Excellence and our United Way undertook a comprehensive review of governance, operations and results at a Board retreat in the spring of 2008. It was a most valuable exercise for Board and Staff, as we reevaluated our role and our ability to achieve our goals as a "community impact" United Way. Through a grant from United Way of Canada Centraide we have documented our journey and committed to a Governance Review Process that we can share with other United Ways and non-profit organizations.

We have recruited new Directors to the Board to help us achieve the three goals of our Strategic Plan to 2012. Broadly stated, our objectives are to expand our reach in the Cariboo and North Thompson, to develop our role as a community leader, and to plan for continued sustainability. In light of the recent changes in the economy, the need for all of these is critical.

As you read through our Annual Report, look at the faces of the people who make a difference in our communities. What keeps all of us engaged, passionate and inspired can be seen in the lights of their eyes and the smiles on their faces. Open your heart. Lend your muscle. Find your voice.

Brenda Aynsley
Executive Director
Thompson Nicola Cariboo United Way