

Executive Director's Report

This past year we celebrated 50 years of history in Kamloops and now the region. The economic challenges of the past year are the catalyst moving us to new heights to meet the responsibilities we have to our communities. We also know that through adversity, new ideas emerge and possibilities become apparent because we tend to look at things differently – we have to. Although this has certainly been the most challenging Campaign in recent years, it has also offered many new learnings and gifts.

I remember standing beside Bob Hughes, Executive Director of ASK Wellness, on a sunny September afternoon at the opening of Henry Leland House – this was the second time we had met that day. That morning was our Opening Ceremonies Breakfast for the Campaign and I was still floating from the excitement generated by 500 people and Tony Ryan's rousing call to action. Bob looked over and smiled and said "this is **such a great day for our community**". That exchange characterizes what I have witnessed this year in Kamloops. Henry Leland House is a partnership of three organizations and one example of how we are recognizing that the sum really is bigger than all the parts and the only way we can meet the changing needs of our community.

A community plan to end homelessness in Kamloops has taken form and many new players have been integral to its formulation. Our office hosted 12 breakfast meetings in October for 36 people who were committed to working together to identify recommendations, and to develop strategies. The individuals invited to participate in the sessions were diverse in their skills, knowledge and expertise. Participants needed to set cynicism aside, overlook organizational boundaries and leave egos at the door in order to look at how we as a community, can make Kamloops a city where everybody has a home. This process was only the beginning but set all of us on solid ground building a foundation of collaboration on a critical community issue. We look forward to bringing this work to the community seeking civic engagement and action.

Our Board has developed a new framework for working with agencies to replace the historical United Way system where only Member Agencies were funded. Our relationships with Agencies were based solely on funding purposes and did not address other needs that both partners could benefit from. Going forward, the Board has determined that funding is dependent on three key strategies: organizations need to be aligned with our priority areas; show continued improvement to advance these areas; and be able to measure outcomes. At a time when the problems facing our communities are so complex, there are no single solutions.

We are very excited about the new relationships we are developing with citizens and organizations in the Cariboo. Time spent in 2009 learning from community wisdom in Logan Lake, Ashcroft, 100 Mile, and Williams Lake has resulted in priorities identified by local people who in turn determine how funds raised are invested locally. Our 2009-2012 Strategic Plan identifies regional expansion as a main focus and the Board is committed to providing the resources to do so. Building on the success of "Access Kamloops", an on-line resource directory, funding for "Access Williams Lake" has been granted.

The fall of 2009 also saw the Success By 6 Business Engagement Initiative take wing with new leaders in the business community coming to join the Council and work together to develop a framework that helps business support young working families.

Our Youth Engagement Strategy continues to evolve as we reflect and redefine how best to engage youth. 2009 saw the first Youth Day of Caring involving a diverse group of youth, mentors and sponsors, and plans for 2010 are building on the success of that experience. \$10,000 in Youth Grants was allocated through a process driven and monitored by youth and mentored by the Board. We recruited for youth representation on the Board and look forward to the new ideas and opportunities emerging from this relationship.

Our Labour Program is also emerging from its infancy role. We have a merging partnership with the Kamloops and District Labour Council. United Way was happy to sponsor and play a role in the organization of the annual Labour Day Picnic in Kamloops. We are pleased to have strong representation on the Board from the Labour Council to help us understand the critical role this partnership can play.

Effective Non Profit Board Leadership is critical to maintaining a strong network of support services as well as providing preventative strategies for a healthy community. In 2009 I facilitated Volunteer Leadership Development sessions for 12 organizations in Kamloops and have numerous requests for 2010. This is one example of how United Way helps build capacity in the nonprofit sector. Community Service is the key to success.

I hope you find within the articles and stories in this report, reason and opportunities to join all of us in our mission to improve lives and build community. Thank you.

Brenda Aynsley