

# **United Way – Central and Northern Vancouver Island**

## **Speaking Notes**

**Chris Dragseth – Chair, Community Investment Committee**

### **Agency Meeting**

#### **Beban Park**

**November 25, 2009**

### **Introduction**

The United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (UWCNVI) is in the process of transforming its activities beyond the traditional campaign and allocation related activities. It is building on past community involvement to play a stronger leadership role. This work will require that community needs are routinely assessed and opportunities to assist with capacity building either through direct support or through knowledge brokering are pursued.

In support of this transformation, over the past year, the UWCNVI engaged with communities through the use of an independent consultant. The UWCNVI sought community input on the role that the UWCNVI could play in these communities. These consultations have taken place during this period in communities on Vancouver Island where the UWCNVI hopes to provide assistance and play a leadership role. The consultations involved the communities of Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Parksville/Qualicum, Port Alberni, Comox Valley and Campbell River. The feedback that the UWCNVI received will inform and assist us in making funding decisions resulting from the 2009 Campaign.

Future UWCNVI decisions on strategic direction will take into account community feedback and consider the consultant recommendations.

### **Our focus with the United Way will be on making the biggest impact possible.**

The UWCNVI decisions will be based on:

- addressing the needs of the entire service area,
- recognizing community differences,
- minimizing the administrative burden; and,

- maximizing the benefits to the community.

This brings me to the purpose of tonight's meeting.

We are here tonight to provide you an overview of the work to-date by the United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island and what that means to your organisations. Specifically, we'll be talking about the 2010 allocation process.

I would like to provide you with some background and a snapshot of where the Board sees our future directions for the United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island.

### **Background**

In June 2008, the United Way Central and Northern Vancouver Island (the Board) established the Community Investment Committee (CIC). The purpose of the CIC is to review and make recommendations to the Board on the allocation process for the annual campaign and to provide recommendations on the longer term strategic direction for the UWCNVI. The Committee is made up of Board members and represents the entire service area: Ladysmith to Campbell River.

The Committee's initial work was confined to the mid Island from Ladysmith to Qualicum portion of the service area with the focus being:

- to look for opportunities to achieve the biggest impact wherever possible when allocating campaign funds,
- to streamline the application process, and
- to establish a strategic direction for investing campaign funds.

Many of you saw the benefits of this approach last year with a revised application process for the 2009 funds. In addition to this progress, another key outcome from the Committee's work was to organise community consultations. The purpose of these consultations was to seek input on where the community felt that the United Way could make the biggest impact. To this end, The Board hired Linda Dier to conduct these consultations.

### **Community Consultations**

Linda Dier lead the community consultations for the mid Island area (Ladysmith to Qualicum), Comox Valley, Campbell River and Alberni Valley/West Coast. These community meetings went very well with valuable feedback from all communities. The communities were appreciative of the opportunity to work with the CNVI United Way.

So we are on a very solid footing for future work. The reports from these consultations can be viewed on our United Way website: [www.uwcnvi.ca](http://www.uwcnvi.ca).

### **Pilot Impact Council (Nanaimo/Ladysmith)**

As an outcome of the mid Island consultations, the notion of an Impact Council came forward. As part of this evolution the Board established a pilot “Impact Council” made up of practitioners within the field.

The Impact Council (IC) was established to:

- Assess the strengths and capacity of Ladysmith-Nanaimo
- Conduct needed research to support decisions
- Create short and long term goals for the allocation process
- Identify areas for allocation priorities
- Review grant applications and make decisions for funding
- Ensure needed training and capacity support is made available to interested social service agencies
- Provide advice and suggested policies to the CIC.

The Council members are:

- Anne Williams, Chair; retired – formally from VIHA
- Steve Hancock – Ministry of Children and Family Development
- Ian Kalina – Boy and Girls Club
- Elizabeth Pennell – School District 68, and
- Anita McLeod – Town of Ladysmith.

For the 2009 allocation process, applications that focused on children and youth were directed to the “Impact Council” for their review and recommendations to the Board.

As far as the longer term perspective, the mid Island consultations were considered by the Pilot Impact Council. Based on these consultations the Pilot Impact Council for the mid Island made recommendations for consideration by the Board. The Impact Council has recommended and the Board has adopted the following areas of focus for future allocations and work:

- children,
- youth, and
- seniors.

So for 2010, the funding focus will be on these three areas. Additionally, throughout the consultations capacity was a key theme. This will be a fourth area where the Board will be conducting additional work which may provide for some funding opportunities..

To guide the decision process, the Impact Council established and the Board has adopted the following high level principles which will serve as evaluation criteria to target the “impact” that the United Way Central and Vancouver Island would like to make:

1. How does the proposal advance United Way’s vision for the communities?
2. Is the program proactive and forward looking?
3. Does the program have impact? Does it demonstrate increasing capacity? Is it addressing the social determinants of health?
4. Does the program have partners? Is it a collaboration or partnership?
5. Is the program a “Best” or “promising” practice?
6. Is diversity part of the program? ( diversity includes ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation etc)
7. Are volunteers utilized in program delivery?

As far as the 2010 allocation process, the Council will continue to consider application proposals utilizing the three areas of focus along with the capacity element and will be providing recommendations to the Board. Their sphere of influence will be from Ladysmith to Qualicum. Additional local expertise from the Oceanside area will be required at the table.

### **Current Status**

As far as the rest of the service area, formative work will take place in late 2009 and early 2010 to establish Impact Councils in the Comox Valley and Campbell River in 2010. Given the transformation on the Island for the UWCNVI, these communities are at a difference stage than mid Island. So the Board has much more work to do to bring a cohesive support network throughout our service area.

### **Future Directions**

#### **Longer Term Strategic Direction**

As I noted earlier, the Board is in the process of transforming our activities beyond the traditional campaign and allocation related activities. The allocation process will be more tightly focused, with an emphasis on where can we make the biggest impact. The

Board will be putting in place Impact Councils made up of technical experts who can provide **impartial advice** on allocation and strategic directions.

Beyond the fund raising campaign and allocation process, the UWCNVI will be looking for opportunities to make a difference by playing a leadership role in areas such as knowledge brokering, building partnerships, training, etc. These actions will become increasingly important as we move forward.

### **Conclusion**

As you can see, the UWCNVI has embarked on a very ambitious change agenda. We acknowledge that you are part of that change and in some cases by adopting an approach that focuses on “impact” may have potential ramifications on your operations. The Board has not made these decisions lightly. We have heard from the communities what they would like the UW to do in their communities. At the same time, we know that we will never have enough money to meet all the demands being asked of the UW. It is with this background that the Board has ventured down this path.