



# *Community newsletter*

*Volume 1  
Winter 2013*



**United Way**  
**Lethbridge &**  
**South Western Alberta**

**Change starts here.**



On November 22nd, Jeff McLarty, United Way's Executive Director, and Sally Riley, United Way's Campaign Manager, had the chance to cool off for a good cause.

Along with nearly fifty University of Lethbridge business students and faculty members, the annual event is known as Chillin' For Charity.

Participants gathered pledges from the community before jumping into a freezing pool of water. All pledges go directly to the United Way's Community Fund.

With a whole new year around the corner, there's a feeling of excitement around the United Way office!

2012 saw many changes take place: between new staff coming on board, new volunteers stepping up to assist, and new board members helping us along the way.

Thanks to workplace campaigns, private donations and all sorts of exciting fundraising events, the United Way managed to raise nearly \$550,000 last year—quite an achievement - and 2013 should be even better!

Most importantly however: none of this would have been possible without the generosity of community members throughout South Western Alberta.

There are no words that can express how grateful and honoured we feel, when it comes to the topic of your giving.

Since 1941, due to people just like you, the United Way of Lethbridge & South Western Alberta has been able to raise and invest more than 12 million dollars for our funded agencies and programs.

## Did you know...?

A donation of just \$5.00 a month allows an individual who is recovering at home from an injury to get medical equipment on loan from St. John's Ambulance service, who may otherwise be unable to afford it.

**The United Way is your Gateway to Giving!**



**United Way**

## 2012 Funded Agencies



**Big Brothers  
Big Sisters**



**Boys &  
Girls Clubs**



**Camp  
Carmangay**



**CANADIAN  
RED CROSS**



**YWCA**  
LETHBRIDGE  
& DISTRICT  
A TURNING POINT FOR WOMEN



**Lethbridge  
Association  
For Community  
Living**



**Schizophrenia  
Society of  
Alberta**



**McMan**

**Youth, Family  
& Community  
Services**



Lethbridge  
Therapeutic  
Riding  
Association



LETHBRIDGE FAMILY SERVICES  
SINCE 1960



**WOOD'S HOMES**  
SERVING CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES



Lethbridge College  
Students' Association

**Food  
Bank**



**St. John  
Ambulance**



**STREETS  
ALIVE  
MISSION**



**Safe Haven  
Women's  
Shelter**



**Southern  
Alberta  
Self-Help  
Association**



**Claresholm  
Family  
& Community  
Support  
Services**



## One of our United Way funded agencies

One of the United Way's funded agencies over the last several years has been the Lethbridge Therapeutic Riding Association (LTRA). Located just a few kilometres outside of Lethbridge on Hwy 512, the LTRA is a charity that provides instruction in the caring for and riding of horses, particularly for those individuals with special needs.

Association President Will Crust started volunteering with the organization in 2001. "The LTRA's roots can be traced back to 1976, and in this location since 1989," he said.

Though it started with just a few volunteers and a small number of horses, the program has since grown to include dozens of volunteers, and a current 17 horses – all of whom assist more than 350 clients every year, each with their own unique challenges.

Clients suffer from a variety of neuro-muscular and behavioural conditions including Down's syndrome, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Fetal Alcohol Spectrum disorders and Alzheimer's Disease. Others include adults and children who are recov-



ering from strokes or heart attacks, or who deal with amputations and blindness. A special lift is on site for any clients who require a wheelchair.

"As long as they are physically able to saddle their horses, eventually ride their horses, and finally clean their horses up after their ride - age and disability don't really come into it," added Crust.

The time spent working closely with such majestic creatures is incredibly valuable, as it improves the physical, mental and emotional well-being of all those involved. Riding improves coordination and balance, strengthens core muscle groups and improves circulatory and respiratory systems.

Riding provides a healthy, outdoors activity for clients who often

can't participate in sports and games with other children, and can help with building self-esteem and confidence. Perhaps most importantly however, "Riding is fun!," Crust said. "Children don't realize this is therapy, since our barns don't smell like hospitals. Horses tend to pick up on how you're feeling, and there's this emotional bond that develops. So in a way, it's

like three-dimensional therapy..." Crust said.

The centre sees approximately 50 clients each week, providing each with a one hour session involving grooming, preparation, and eventual riding.

The LTRA has a mixture of horses on site in all shapes and sizes, just like the clients who ride them. Crust said that they've recently begun incorporating more Quarter Horses and Norwegian Fjords into the mix. "They're very even-tempered animals, and can carry a lot of weight without being too tall."

Clients simply require a referral from their physician. The LTRA then determines what time ...

*LTRA continued on page 6*



*At left: With a little bit of assistance, LTRA client Chadwick Farschou sits astride his friend 'Joe'. Farschou is wheelchair-bound, and riding offers a chance to exercise many muscles that may otherwise go unused.*

*At right: Visually impaired LTRA client Grant Brown takes his friend 'Reno' for a ride.*



## One of our United Way funded agencies

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) is one of the older charities in Canada – now almost 100 years.

It was formed near the end of the First World War; when many returning veterans were facing vision loss, primarily due to the use of poison gas in battle.

Quickly evolving into an organization meant to assist with similar eye issues across the country, the CNIB now has more than 700 employees across Canada; located in almost every major centre including Lethbridge and Medicine Hat. And with over 800 clients in our South Western Alberta region alone – it's clear there's no shortage of assistance needed.

Currently, more than 836,000 Canadians suffer from serious vision impairment, with that number expected to dou-



ble within the next two decades.

The most common cause of vision loss in Canada is Age-related Macular Degeneration, or AMD; with glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts following close behind.

When one factors in links to Multiple Sclerosis, brain injury and birth complications; plus accidents and other causes - significant vision loss is a much bigger problem than most people realize.

“There are even some medications out there these days, in which vi-

sion loss can be a potential side effect!” explained Bob Short, Coordinator of Community Development and Client Support Services at the Lethbridge CNIB office.

“The sad truth of it is, if you live long enough, you're likely to develop some type of eye problems.”

Short, who has been legally blind himself for many years due to a congenital condition; first experienced the value of CNIB services from the perspective of a client. He is currently the CNIB

Lethbridge chapter's only full-time staff member, assisted by two part time co-workers and dozens of volunteers.

Together, the CNIB crew attempt to find solutions to any vision-related problem – be it how to read a newspaper, watch a movie, or get around town independently.

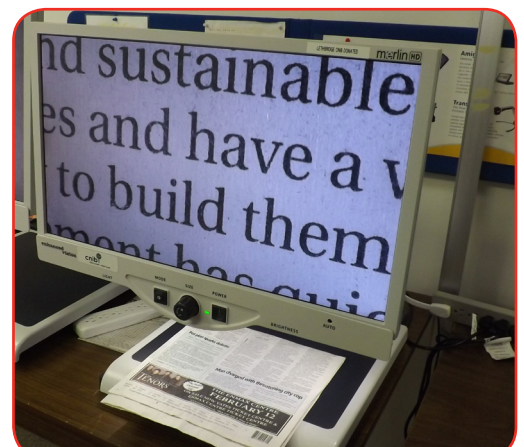
“The reality is, we're dealing with all kinds of clients. From those with poor vision to the completely blind, and from newborns to age 107,” Short said.

“Our bottom line at the CNIB is that our programs and services are all geared towards providing our clients with skills and confidence, enabling them to be independent enough and to live a full, happy, Canadian life.”

The CNIB can perform assessments and lend educational materials ...

*CNIB continued on  
page 6*

*Pictured below, are just several of the tools and specialized items that are available to those dealing with visual impairment, thanks to organizations like the CNIB.*





# Tip your charity night

Monday, January 14th included a fun collaboration between the Lethbridge Hurricanes hockey club, Mr. Mike's Steakhouse and Bar, and the United Way.

Patrons at the restaurant were encouraged to tip well throughout the evening, as all gratuities collected would be donated to a charity of their choice.

As if that weren't enough motivation, meals and beverages were served by Hurricanes players and even Twister, the team's mascot was in attendance.

The evening brought in approximately \$890 in donations.

The Hurricanes and the United Way have an ongoing relationship involving the sales of programs and raffle tickets at all home games.



## 2012 Workplace Giving Campaigns



Seen above, Chris Murray and the rest of the Murray Chev-Olds dealership crew, donated over \$25,000 to the United Way through their workplace employee pledge-matching campaign.



Here, Jeff McLarty, Executive Director for United Way of Lethbridge, accepts a \$10,000 donation from Mark Brown and John Arnold, Vice Presidents with the Royal Bank of Canada.



*Seen here: Will Crust,  
Association President of the  
Lethbridge Therapeutic  
Riding Association.*

### *LTRA... continued from page 3*

... of day is best for the client to ride, and which “four-legged therapist” may be the best fit.

While the United Way of Lethbridge & South Western Alberta were proud to present the LTRA with a donation in 2011, the riding group must gather most of its funding from other sources.

This means annual fundraisers like their Ride For Dreams, golf tournaments and auctions, plus a small surcharge for each six-week session of riding lessons.

United Way dollars were used to maintain horse health and fund two full six-week segments of operations. This allowed the LTRA to make their premises more modern without interfering in the programs themselves.

A small dedicated staff keeps the facility running: grooming and preparing several dozen horses each day, and educating the riders about how to develop a safe ‘working’ relationship with the animals. Since each client requires one or more volunteers to assist them during sessions, Crust estimates it requires around 1700 volunteer hours each year to stay operational.

One of the LTRA’s main challenges though, Crust said, involves marketing. “We’d love to see us get a bit more attention from local media.”

Crust would also like to see a new website created for the LTRA this year, and hopes to find some more volunteers to act on the group’s Board of Directors.

### *CNIB... continued from page 4*

...and often provides emotional or mental support or help with employment services. Additionally, the CNIB are well-connected to many related agencies with links to guide dogs, braille instructors and home renovation specialists.

A potential CNIB client needs merely ask their eye-care professional to refer their charts to the CNIB, and an intake interview will be arranged. This first meeting lends itself to a better understanding of the nature of the condition and its level of severity. This in turn gives both parties an idea of what the most immediate needs are and what tools and services will work best for their specific situation.

One aspect that the CNIB team is very proud of is the fact that their programs and services never cost their clients anything. All standard costs are covered by charitable donations and the support of organizations like the United Way. Plus, the CNIB can provide access to hundreds of specialized tools meant to assist with every tiny aspect of day-to-day living.

Ranging from folding canes to talking clocks, from handheld magnifiers to audio books - even items specific to game playing or movie watching; they’ve got something for everyone. Many of these can be found at the office itself, with hundreds more available via the CNIB website and catalog. Anybody can order these items online at any time - but if you’re a CNIB client, most – if not all – of the items’ cost will likely be covered.

It is partially through the support of funding from the United Way, Short said, that he now has much more time to get out into the community; meeting new people and visiting local seniors’ centres. The Lethbridge office used to be open just two days a week, but is now open Monday thru Friday. Clients are no longer required to make appointments before coming through their doors.

“A lot of the people I’m meeting,” Short said, “may have otherwise resigned themselves to thinking that a big part of their life is all over and done with. But they’re wrong. With the CNIB on their side, everything is still absolutely possible.”



# *A part of our history*

The United Way has a long history in Canada, as it originally began in 1917.

Over the early years it was known by many names; among them Community Chest, United Appeal, Red Feather & Fédération des Oeuvres de Charité.

The number of the Community Chest organizations would increase between 1919 and 1929 from 39 to 353, eventually surpassing 1,000 by 1948.

It was actually not until 1975 that these charitable fundraising organizations, in collaboration with several other large charities in Montreal and Toronto, adopted the name of United Way Centraide, recognizing the bilingual nature of Canada's culture and language.

More recently, Canada's United Way operations took an important step in 2003 when a nation-wide mission was announced— known as "Community Impact". This has enabled all United Way-Centraide offices across the country to share ideas and information, to better speak with one voice and assist each other in creating lasting, measureable improvements to life in our provinces.

Here in Alberta, the United Way of Lethbridge & South

Western Alberta chapter has been an active non-profit fundraiser since the mid 1980s. As one of the 119 member organizations of United Way of Canada-Centraide, we are able to make an impact - not only here in Lethbridge but as far south as the Canadian-US border, east to the County of 40-Mile, west to Pincher Creek and north to Nanton.

The United Way is able to direct charitable donations to any charity you desire. If none is specified, donations are shared between dozens of other local service agencies.

We are very proud to be involved with such a valuable agency, contributing a bit more to such a lasting history of giving.

Overseen by a volunteer Board of Directors and the Allocations Committee, we are able to provide funding and support for most registered charities that operate within our three main areas of focus:

- ***From poverty to possibility***
- ***Healthy people, strong communities***
- ***All that kids can be***

United Way of Lethbridge & South Western Alberta is very grateful to the thousands of people, plus hundreds of businesses & corporations, for the continued support of our cause.

Contributions were made through employee workplace campaigns, workplace special events, private sponsorships and corporate or estate donations.

Without this generosity and support, there would be no way we could continue giving back to the community via our funded programs and agencies. So on behalf of all affiliated charities and groups, and the individuals they are assisting every day...

## **Thank you!**



**Change starts here**

Give. Volunteer. Act.



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