



## **Community social services campaign kickoff prompts Minister to request meeting.**

***Over 85 agencies, 800 participants attend Queen's Park showcase.***

**TORONTO June 11/07** – The office of Ontario Community and Social Services Minister Madeleine Meilleur has requested a meeting with Toronto community social service agencies following a mass showcase and celebration of the sector's work at Queen's Park on June 5. The Minister's request was received by the joint agency and labour steering group that organized the event.

"There is no doubt that the very strong Queen's Park showing, and our campaign announcement requesting that the provincial government join with us to build strong communities with reinvestment in community social services, spurred the Minister's office to request the meeting," said Liane Regendanz, Executive Director of St. Stephen's Community House and a member of the steering group.

"This showcase and meeting is the first phase of a comprehensive campaign that will continue to unfold through the coming provincial election and afterwards," stated Regendanz. Fellow steering group member and President of Toronto and York Region Labour Council President John Cartwright added that, "Our goal is to forge an accord with the provincial government over the long term in order to revise funding frameworks for community social services and restore the deep budget cuts made to the sector in the 1990s."

Over 85 agencies and 800 participants braved chilly weather to put on a fantastic demonstration of the valuable work and role that community service agencies undertake. Stage performances from a multitude of community social service agencies and their clients unfolded throughout the afternoon as participants filled the Queen's Park lawns with workshops and tabletop displays.

After more than eight months of planning, steering team members are pleased with the cooperative and productive relationship among agencies and labour representatives that has characterized their work.

"We have a common cause and that is to press the government to strengthen agencies' capacities to meet their costs and provide fair wages and benefits for their staff," said Faduma Awow Mohamed, Executive Director of Labour Community Services.

Community Social Planning Council Executive Director John Campey is pleased that over 180 agencies, labour and community partners have now endorsed the Community Social Services Campaign, called 'Joining hands to build strong communities'. "This campaign is building so much positive momentum and pride in the work that community agencies do. That was evident at the June 5<sup>th</sup> event and it's the tone that we'll continue to set as we move forward in ever-increasing numbers in this campaign," added Campey.

Campey encouraged agencies, labour and community partners to include articles about the June 5<sup>th</sup> event in their newsletters and distribute postcards that have been prepared by the steering group among their members. More information on the Community Social Services Campaign is available at [www.socialplanningtoronto.org/cssc](http://www.socialplanningtoronto.org/cssc).

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