

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Time to Act: Helping charities like WINS build a Calgary where no one is left behind**

*Amidst looming socio-economic challenges in Calgary, WINS stands ready to assist, but their capacity depends on your support.*

**CALGARY** – October 16, 2023 – Imagine not knowing where your next meal is coming from, braving the cold to access a public computer, attending job interviews on an empty stomach, all while battling sleep deprivation and the constant fear of losing your home. Despite Calgary's ongoing efforts to make progress, a troubling truth persists: one in four Calgarians struggles to afford their basic needs.

Calgarians and newcomers alike deserve a better quality of life, starting with affordable essentials like food, shelter, access to resources like technology and counseling, and a stable source of income to maintain an adequate standard of living. However, Calgary Foundation's [Quality of Life Report](#) reveals concerning statistics: “36% of parents skip meals to ensure their children can eat, 40% of Calgarians can’t afford to buy a home, and 88% of racialized Calgarians feel out of place because of their religion, ethnicity, skin colour, culture, language, accent, gender, or sexual orientation.”

When it comes to addressing these challenges, the spotlight turns towards charities. They are the ones filling in the gaps left by the government and for-profit companies, especially in areas such as homelessness, food insecurity, and mental health. Socio-economic challenges such as these may seem too large and extensive for anyone to tackle, but non-profits and charities possess the skills and capabilities to help those in need. However, non-profits and charities need your help and support to affect this change.

### **Now is the time**

It's time to shift our perspective on charities and recognize them as instrumental in building a Calgary where no one is left behind. In times of uncertainty, charities become lifelines for those in need. They act as a safety net – providing essential support when people find themselves in need of a helping hand.

As the city's homegrown social enterprise charity, Women in Need Society (WINS) has been tirelessly helping women, families, gender-diverse individuals, immigrants, and newcomers in Calgary for over three decades. WINS addresses critical issues, such as the heightened risk of poverty among single mothers, while also providing opportunities for growth and goal management through community support programs and employment services.

WINS aligns its work with the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals, but focuses on two main goals: SDG 1, which is no poverty, and SDG 2, which is zero hunger. WINS has been working hard towards these goals by preventing women from falling into poverty and providing them with basic needs for their families.

However, we've seen a big increase in the demand for our programs this year, with 65% more people coming to us for help with obtaining basic needs as compared to last year. This increase can be attributed to a variety of factors, both local and international.

In 2022, WINS provided over \$560,000 worth of essential goods, including clothing, houseware, and furniture, to individuals and families in need. By the start of October, WINS had already surpassed last year's total and had given away over \$700,000 worth of basic needs. With winter and the holidays approaching, along with current global events, this demand is expected to surge even higher.

Despite the increased demand for help, donations from individuals have been on the decline. As of October of this year, WINS has experienced a 30% decrease in the number of individual monetary donors compared to the previous year. Evidently, the need for help is growing, and charities like WINS are feeling the pressure.

### **The role that YOU play**

By supporting charities like WINS and promoting a culture of generosity and empathy, we can collectively work towards building a more resilient Calgary. It is crucial – now more than ever – that we lend our support to charities. The question now is how can each one of us contribute to this cause? Here are some impactful ways:

**Donate your preloved items:** If you find yourself needing to declutter your everyday items or downsize your residence, take a moment to think twice before discarding them. Instead of simply disposing, consider donating these items to charities like WINS. Your old clothing, household goods, or furniture can find a new home with someone in need.

**Invest in dreams:** Another way to help is by investing your financial resources in initiatives that have the power to transform dreams into reality. Many charitable organizations rely on monetary donations to fund their programs and provide essential services to those who need them. By contributing financially, you enable these organizations to continue their vital work, whether it's providing food, education, or opportunities to those who need it most.

**Share your expertise:** Your time and skills can be an invaluable asset to charities and nonprofits. Consider volunteering your time to support their various programs and initiatives. Whether it's helping with operations, assisting with fundraising events, or participating in community activities, your involvement can have a direct and positive impact on the lives of those facing adversity.

**Support sustainable shopping alternatives:** Funds generated from your purchases go directly into supporting our community programs and services. These provide crucial support to individuals and families who are facing challenges and striving to improve their lives. So, every time you thrift at WINS, not only are you finding treasures, you are also becoming a part of the solution and helping us make a positive difference in the lives of those who need it most.

Women in Need Society



Together, we can pave the way for a brighter future for all Calgarians, ensuring that these socio-economic challenges just become a chapter of our history rather than a painful part of our present. It's time to act and make Calgary a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. Together, everybody WINS.

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### **About WINS**

Since 1992, Women in Need Society (WINS) has been committed to helping people in need in Calgary through our community programs and services that provide basic needs, emotional support, and vital resources. These programs enable individuals to build resiliency that inspires them and their families to thrive. We are able to do this through revenues generated through our Thrift Stores and the More Store and through the generous donations of Calgarians like you.

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