

# The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

Dear Prime Minister,

November 21, 2008

Re: Helping Canada's Charities and Communities during difficult economic times

As the Government of Canada prepares to release its Economic Statement next week, we urge you to consider the important role of our federal government in supporting Canadians through the work of Canada's charities and nonprofits in our communities and around the world, particularly during periods of economic hardship. Over the past days and weeks, Canadians have heard and read in the media that demands on charitable organizations have begun to rise while donations may be increasingly at risk in light of the diminished capacity of individual and corporate donors to give.

The Government of Canada ensures that important programs and services are delivered to Canadians through direct grants and contributions, and through tax measures that have an important stimulative effect on giving. Both are critical forms of financial support, especially during difficult economic times.

We urge the Government of Canada to maintain existing levels of funding to Canada's charities and nonprofits through its grants and contributions programs. The many Canadians who serve their communities in these organizations in every reach of the country, a number of whom have joined us in signing this letter to you below, strongly believe that now is not the time to reduce support to communities through federal funding cuts. We are not asking for new support but a commitment to hold the line.

We also urge the Government of Canada to consider special short-term measures that will have an important stimulative effect on individual and corporate giving. In the past two years, your Government has introduced tax measures that have, in those economic circumstances, proven very effective in stimulating new charitable gifts. The adoption of short-term stimulative tax measures to leverage more private support, could assist in preserving critical donor revenues at a time when these funds will be needed most.

Imagine Canada is mandated by the undersigned, and by over 1,000 charitable and community organizations and institutions that serve as our members, to discuss these proposed measures with you and your officials and look forward to doing so.

Yours very truly,



**Marcel Lauzière**  
President & CEO, Imagine Canada



**Don McCreesh**  
Volunteer Chair, Imagine Canada

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#### SUPPORTED BY:

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Maehara, President & CEO; **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Canada**, Bruce MacDonald, President & CEO; **Calgary Chamber of Voluntary Organizations**, Katherine van Kooy, President & CEO; **Canadian Aids Society**, Monique Doolittle-Romas, Executive Director; **Canadian Association of Gift Planners**, Susan Manwaring, Chair of the GRC Committee and Diane MacDonald, Executive Director; **Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation**, Beth Easton, CEO; **Canadian Cancer Society**, Barbara Whyllie, CEO; **Canadian Conference of the Arts**, Alain Pineau, National Director; **Canadian Cystic Fibrosis Foundation**, Cathleen Morrison, CEO; **Canadian Diabetes Association**, Ellen Malcolmson, President & CEO; **Canadian Environment Network**, Susan Tanner, Executive Director; **Canadian Federation of Voluntary Sector Networks**, Paula Speevak Sladowski, Secretariat; **Canadian Foundation for AIDS Research**, Kerry Whiteside, Executive Director; **Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association**, Sharon Baxter, Executive Director; **Canadian Lung Association**, Nora Sobolov, President & CEO; **Canadian Liver Foundation**, Gary Fagan, President; **Canadian Orthopaedic Foundation**, Angelique Berg, Executive Director; **Canadian Women's Foundation**, Beverley Wybrow, CEO; **Centraide Quebec**, Pierre Métiévier, Président & Directeur général; **Children's Miracle Network**, John Hartman, Chief International Officer; **Community Foundations of Canada**, Monica Patten, President & CEO; **Community Services Council Newfoundland and Labrador**, Penelope Rowe, President & CEO; **Crohn's and Colitis Foundation of Canada**, Dr. Kevin Glasgow, CEO; **Easter Seals Canada**, Max Beck, Chief Executive Officer; **Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations**, Russ Dahms, Executive Director; **Federation des centres d'action bénévole du Québec**, Pierre Riley, Executive Director; **Federation of Community Organizations of the Halifax Regional Municipality**, Margaret Fraser, Executive Director; **Foundation Fighting Blindness (Canada)**, Sharon Colle, Executive Director; **Gordon Foundation**, Patrick Johnston, President & CEO; **Habitat for Humanity Canada**, David Hughes, President and CEO; **Hearing Foundation of Canada**, Heather Ferguson, President; **Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada**, Sally Brown, CEO; **Health Charities Coalition of Canada**, Deirdre Freiheit, Executive Director; **Hope Air**, Doug Keller-Hobson, Executive Director; **Huntington Society of Canada**, Don Lamont, Executive Director & CEO; **Kidney Foundation of Canada**, Paul Shay, National Executive Director; **Kids Help Phone**, Tom McAllister, President & CEO; **Maytree Foundation**, Alan Broadbent, Chairman and Ratna Ornidvar, President; **Multiple Sclerosis Society of Canada**, Yves Savoie, President & CEO; **Muscular Dystrophy Canada**, Catherine Sherrard, CEO; **Muttart Foundation**, Marion Gracey, President and Bob Wyatt, CEO; **Ontario Nonprofit Network**, Lynn Eakin, Coordinator; **Opera.ca**, Micheline McKay, Executive Director; **Osteoporosis Canada**, Julie Foley, President & CEO; **Ottawa Chamber of Voluntary Organizations**, Tim Simboli, Chair; **Ottawa Community Foundation**, Barbara McInnes, President & CEO; **Ovarian Cancer Canada**, Elisabeth Ross, CEO; **Parkinson Society of Canada**, Joyce Gordon, President & CEO; **Philanthropic Foundations Canada**, Peter Warriner, Chair and Hilary Pearson, President & CEO; **Pillar Nonprofit Network (London)**, Michelle Baldwin, Executive Director; **Social Planning Council of Winnipeg**, Wayne Helgason, Executive Director; **Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus Association of Canada**, Jody Stadnyk, Executive Director; **Sport Matters Group**, Ian Bird, Senior Leader; **St. Joseph's Healthcare Foundation Hamilton**, Robert Donelson, President; **United Way/ Centraide Calgary and Area**, Ruth Ramsden-Wood, President & CEO; **United Way/ Centraide Canada**, Al Hatton, President & CEO; **United Way/ Centraide Lower Mainland**, Michael McKnight, President & CEO; **United Way/ Centraide Ottawa**, Michael Allen, President & CEO; **United Way/ Centraide Winnipeg**, Susan Lewis, President; **University of Western Ontario**, Ted Garrard, Vice President (External); **Vancouver Foundation**, Faye Wightman, President & CEO; **Voluntary Organizations Consortium of British Columbia**, Tim Beachy & Barb MacLellan, co-Presidents; **Volunteer Alberta**, Karen Lynch, Executive Director; **Volunteer Canada**, Ruth MacKenzie, President; **Volunteer British Columbia**, Justin Ho, President, Board of Directors; **WaterCan/ Eau Vive**, Gary Plum, Executive Director; **YMCA Canada**, Wayne Perkins, President & CEO; **YWCA Canada**, Paulette Senior, CEO