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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## United Way Announces \$1.9 Million Investment in Central Alberta

**Red Deer, Alberta** – May 7, 2015 – United Way Central Alberta is gathering at the Parkland Mall today from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. to celebrate the impact created by its community investments, and to announce the programs that will receive funding for 2015.

This event signals the completion of the investment process for United Way, where funds raised in 2014 are invested in Central Alberta communities. \$1,889,620 has been allocated to over 60 programs and projects across Central Alberta, an increase of 5.2% over last year. This investment in community impact is only possible because of the generous donations collected through workplace campaigns, individual donations, and fundraising events across the region.

“A little known fact about United Way investments is that the decisions are made by volunteers,” explained Brenda Farwell, Volunteer Chair of the Community Impact Council. “A team of 30 community-minded volunteers have spent more than 900 hours reviewing applications and deciding where the donations should go.”

“As with all of our investment decisions,” continued Robert Mitchell, CEO of United Way Central Alberta, “The priority is to get to the root causes of social issues so that people’s lives are changed for the better, and they can become more engaged and productive members of their communities.”

Guided by this objective, programs selected for support by the United Way fall into three priority areas: Education, Income and Wellness. Programs are funded for a minimum of 3 years in order to evaluate accurately the impact that a particular program is having. This year the Wellness area opened up for funding five new programs, with particular emphasis on short term intervention and counselling, and supporting opportunities for residents who are facing challenges to build the skills and community connections they need in order to live independently. The impact: Healthy People, Strong Communities.

Also of note is the continued investment that United Way Central Alberta is making in implementing 211 web and phone services across the region. 211 helps Central Alberta residents navigate the complex array of community, social, government and health services in order to find the specific support they need. 211 online services are currently available to all residents of Central Alberta. The City of Red Deer is leading the way in funding 211 phone service for the next three years – an example United Way hopes will be followed by other municipalities.

This year United Way Central Alberta is celebrating 50 years of creating community impact, which is a testament to the level of support and confidence Central Albertans have in the United Way. For more information on the Community Impact programs supported, readers are encouraged to visit [www.caunitedway.ca](http://www.caunitedway.ca).

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### **About United Way Central Alberta**

United Way’s mission is to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. By investing in programs that get to the root causes of socio-economic issues, United Way is able to change people’s lives and lift them to new levels of possibility. All donations are invested by active community volunteers and directed into Central Alberta communities to create community impact. Established in 1965, United Way Central Alberta celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

