

## Guelph Community Foundation Marks 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

June 2, 2010 (Guelph) – During its recent Annual General Meeting, the Guelph Community Foundation took a moment to reflect on its first ten years in the community. Founding Member, Ken Hammill, remembers what started it all: “I knew about Community Foundations and the good work they were doing in communities across Canada. One morning I came across an article in the Globe and Mail and thought we should do this in Guelph. So I made two calls. The first was to Hugh Guthrie to ask him what he thought and he was immediately on board. The second was to Morris Twist, then Executive Director of the United Way. I didn’t want to compete with the United Way but complement its work by offering a new, perpetual source of community funding. Morris agreed and sat on our planning group. It made sense then and it makes sense now to build endowments today to sustain community programs in the future.” He jokes, “Even I can’t fundraise forever. It’s smarter to make the money work for us.”

Initial conversations led to the launch of the Guelph Community Foundation with one fund and \$13,000 in donations. To grow in the first few years, 40 people each contributed. Today, 100 funds from individuals and organisations - who share the principle of planting a seed today to provide shade for future generations - comprise a pool of \$6.7 million. A wide-range of community organisations have also received over \$1.6 million in grants.

“Many factors attract donors to the Guelph Community Foundation,” says Andrea Olson, GCF Executive Director. “First, just like people invest in their own retirement, they appreciate the concept of creating an endless, sustainable income stream for the future. And, just like their personal portfolio, donors also have gift options that fit their preferences, like gifts of securities, life insurance or bequests. Second, we can outline community needs and help donors identify an area of focus to direct their fund’s future allocations.” For example, the Musagetes Fund established in 2005 has provided over \$158,000 in grants for community arts and culture. Another, the Normal Earl Webb Fund – a \$1 million bequest received in 2005 and the single largest bequest received to date – in less than five years generated over \$80,000 in grants for programs ranging from food and shelter for at-risk youth, support for new mothers and families struggling with poverty to environmental education in schools.

Despite the roller-coaster markets of the past several years, The Foundation’s prudent investment practices meant that funds performed better than market averages and have now largely recovered. Also, wise stewardship to set funds aside in a “rainy day” reserve account and generous local donors allowed it to continue some granting when other Foundations across Canada were unable to do so.

Building on its successes over the last ten years, the Guelph Community Foundation is focusing clearly on **2020 Community Vision** for its second decade. Olson says, “We will continue to work with donors to connect them to causes that matter. We’re also focussed on growing our Community Fund which enables the Grants Committee to respond to changing community needs.” As an example, she points to the growing gap between rich and poor which emerged as a salient issue in The Foundation’s last Vital Signs Report. In response, the GCF focused its next round granting to address community poverty. “We will raise awareness of The Foundation and what it does in part by launching a new website that’s easy to navigate, engaging and comes equipped with feeds to enable charitable organizations to keep abreast of our grant deadlines.” Funding for the web-site project and specialized financial software was recently announced by The Ontario Trillium Foundation.

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**For more information about the Guelph Community Foundation, please contact:** Andrea Olson, Executive Director of the Guelph Community Foundation, 519-821-9216