



## **Toronto Community Housing Youth R.E.A.C.H. Beyond the Block** *Youth transitional employment initiative launches today*

**TORONTO, February 21, 2007** – In partnership with Goodwill, Local 416 CUPE and Teamsters Union Teamsters Local 847, Toronto Community Housing today launches R.E.A.C.H. Beyond the Block, a youth transitional employment initiative designed to give youth tenants paid employment, life skills learning, hard skills development and job coaching for one year.

Naidia, a participant in the first phase of R.E.A.C.H. Beyond the Block, has been working in Goodwill's Community Outlet and Recycling Centre for over six months. "The program has been a life changing experience. I will take with me the knowledge I have acquired, the friends I have made, and the advice that I have been given. I now feel confident in my skills and future. I hope to learn many new skills and meet new wonderful people." Naidia will work for the next six months at Toronto Community Housing, with mentoring inputs from CUPE Local 416 and continuing job coaching from Goodwill.

"Addressing the social and economic needs of youth is a key to creating sustainable healthy communities," says Derek Ballantyne, CEO of Toronto Community Housing. "Experience has shown us, it is not enough to provide jobs. This initiative is a comprehensive approach that will truly help youth create and maintain sustainable livelihoods."

R.E.A.C.H. Beyond the Block builds on Goodwill's existing R.E.A.C.H. (Real Employment to Achieve Community Health) initiative. "This initiative is a unique response to the youth employment needs in Toronto because it enables youth facing barriers to employment to access paid work and learning opportunities in a safe and supportive environment," says Dr. Ken Connelly, President and CEO of Goodwill. "We are delighted to be working with Toronto Community Housing on this exciting extension of R.E.A.C.H."

The launch will take place at 275 Shuter Street at 10:00 am. Derek Ballantyne, Dr. Ken Connelly and the youth participants will be in attendance.

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