

United Way week kicks off

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Comparable to a massive cargo jet poised for a mercy mission, United Way of York Region will throttle up, take off and reach for the sky at Monday's launch of United Way Week.

Are you on board?

At the helm, United Way of York Region CEO Daniele Zanotti will use the outdoor grounds of State Farm's Aurora corporate facility as the runway, introducing a new survey, campaign strategy and special events from Oct. 5 to 10.

Last year, Mr. Zanotti used a similar open air venue in an empty field in Richmond Hill to unveil "...if addressed", a report on the pace and face of growth and where it was occurring in York.

The 2008 campaign raised a record \$7.45 million for local priorities and programs.

Monday, shoulder to shoulder with 2009 campaign partners, Mr. Zanotti will share the findings of a regionwide Nielsen Company followup survey, "...addressing our strengths". He will also reiterate United

Way's intent to break last year's fundraising milestone by \$200,000.

The organization's findings from the Nielsen survey and community meetings across the municipalities identified our region's greatest strengths, Mr. Zanotti hinted.

These include helping our youth grow up strong, enabling individuals and families to achieve economic independence and improving the well-being of individuals and communities.

"Pace of growth is so often associated with increasing needs but our meetings across the region turned that perception on its head. We heard stories of strength, opportunities and resilience," he said.

"We heard that, in addition to municipalities and neighbourhoods, we are a region of communities in communities, culture, faith, interests and perspectives."

The survey, he added, tells the story of York Region today and the region going forward in the midst of growth and change.

"It is the story of a caring, committed and strong region," he said.

The release of the study kicks off United Way Week, supported by the Region of York, all nine municipalities and both school boards, said York Region Media Group vice-president and regional publisher Ian Proudfoot, who also serves as chairperson of the United Way Community Campaign.

"The week and the report are a call to action to every resident, business and community group to join us in building a better life for everyone," Mr. Proudfoot said.

United Way Week runs Monday to Saturday and celebrates the one in three people touched by United Way, more than 300,000 people whose lives have been positively changed by United Way's network of 100 programs and 39 agencies.

You are invited to the 9:30 a.m. event. State Farm is at 333 First Commerce Dr., north of Wellington Street, in Aurora.

To donate funds or volunteer hours to the 2009 United Way of York Region campaign, visit www.uwyr.on.ca or call 905-474-9974, ext. 242 or toll free, 1-877-241-4516.