

# THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

— **Beyond Black and White** —

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## Our city makes a United effort

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There is much for Hamilton's people to be proud of.

We can boast about this city's great geography, terrific park and trails network, world-class university, grand architectural and historical heritage, and its diaspora of acclaimed artists, scientists, businesspeople, writers, educators and even comedians.

But they count for very little in comparison to this city's greatest asset: Its people and their spirit of compassion and generosity.

Hamilton, in grim economic times and with its unemployment rate rising faster than that of the rest of the country, not only met the 2009 campaign target of the United Way of Burlington & Greater Hamilton, but exceeded it. The goal was \$6,850,000.

Last week, United Way CEO Darrel Skidmore announced that fundraising had reached \$6,930,672.

What does that mean? It means Hamiltonians care enough to help and support their neighbours.

It means seniors and youth and people in poverty, or in trouble or in marginalized circumstances, will be less hungry, less cold, less despairing, less fearful of their futures than if that goal had not been met. They will have access to a wide range of services and programs to support and educate, to nourish bodies and minds. It means, to paraphrase the UW, a stronger, healthier and safer community.

It means fewer people will be left behind.

Hamilton has long been an extraordinarily giving city. In this space in 2005, we noted that more Hamiltonians gave to charity (83 per cent) than the average across Canada

(78 per cent), and they gave a lot more (\$347) than the national average (\$259). The reasons are elusive -- theories at best. The figures are three years old.

But clearly, it is still true that Hamiltonians step up when there is need. Of that, we can all be proud -- and very thankful.