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BRAVERY REWARDED

Philanthropist's surprise six-figure donation eases worries

Elinor Gill Ratcliffe's surprise six-figure donation, in memory of Edward Bevan Ratcliffe, to help implement a strong new workplan over the next twenty months, has inspired the Canadian Unitarian Council, which was already preparing to go ahead with an ambitious national program by way of a projected budget shortfall.

Recently awarded the Order of Canada, Elinor Gill Ratcliffe C.M., O.N.L. is nationally known as a humanist, builder, dreamer, visionary and philanthropist. Through the Gill Ratcliffe Foundation, she has made numerous generous donations to organizations throughout Canada.

Jennifer Dickson, Executive Director at the CUC, was astonished to open an envelope from Kingston and find inside a cheque for \$138,000. "I was overwhelmed with joy and gratitude," said Ms. Dickson. "The amount covers a 2010 anticipated deficit to be sure, but more important, it demonstrates Elinor Gill Ratcliffe's support of the principles and intended results of the workplan. It also highlights the importance that Unitarians place on generosity and optimism."

As the CUC approaches its 50th anniversary in 2011, the Board of Trustees decided to strengthen national services and the voice of Canadian Unitarians, and draw down from funds handed over by the US-based Unitarian Universalist Association, when the CUC became autonomous eight years ago. "There was intense discussion around the Board table," Ms. Dickson recalled, about the decision to operate at a deficit.

"I can't begin to explain the immense benefit this thoughtful contribution will provide," said Ms. Dickson.

Ms. Ratcliffe said that the reason she decided to send the money to the CUC was that she felt it was the appropriate time to make such a donation for all the reasons above.

The Canadian Unitarian Council/Conseil unitarien du Canada (CUC), is an association of 48 congregations located across Canada with about 5,000 individual members. Arising out of the work of outspoken reformers and dissenters within the Christian tradition five centuries ago, the Unitarian movement today includes Universalists and flows in a broad religious stream augmented by Humanist, earth-centred, Buddhist and other progressive beliefs.

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