



Looking into and out for Canada's charities and nonprofits

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**Examiner et renforcer des organismes de bienfaisance et sans but lucratif au Canada**

## Charity Accountability Movement Well on its Way

**Toronto. Thursday, June 19, 2008.** More than 100 charities from coast to coast have signed on in the first phase of a newly re-launched donor assurance program. Imagine Canada has just approved the first roster of new Ethical Code participants.

The Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code (The Ethical Code) is a self-regulatory initiative that sets a framework for best practice in fundraising and financial reporting.

In 2007 standards in the Ethical Code were revised to reflect more accurately how charities raise funds and report on them to their supporters. New standards were added to address developments such as online giving and the need for enhanced security with respect to door-to-door canvassing. At the same time, compliance measures were enhanced in response to donor calls for greater transparency and accountability.

In January of this year the revised program was launched to the charitable sector. According to Imagine Canada, a national charity itself and the lead organization behind the Ethical Code, response has surpassed expectations. *"We are really encouraged by the level of commitment we're seeing. Charities are not just signing on the dotted line. They're undergoing pretty rigorous processes to make sure their commitment has legs,"* said Don McCreesh, Chair, Board of Directors, Imagine Canada.

Preliminary uptake from the sector is strong with the current list representing 120 charities both large and small Canada-wide and an estimated \$1 billion in fundraising revenue. With many other charities in the process of reaching compliance, Imagine Canada is projecting continued growth over the coming months and is inviting participating charities to join them in promoting the Ethical Code to their colleagues in the charitable sector.

*"We're building an accountability movement. Canada's charities recognize the importance of self-regulation and the Code tells their donors that they can be trusted,"* says McCreesh.

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Participating charities are clearly seeing the value of being part of something bigger than themselves. Carolyn Tuckwell, President and CEO of Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Vancouver, references the benefits to her organization:

*“As a small to mid-sized charity, we don’t always have the ability to demonstrate all of our expertise. Being part of this larger group of charities helps us advance our practices and take advantage of the current best practices in the sector.”*

Donors can feel confident that Ethical Code participants can be trusted to steward their contributions responsibly. The Code itself will evolve on an ongoing basis to remain in step with current practices in fundraising and financial management. Complaints will be reviewed by a volunteer committee of finance and fundraising experts and all charities are required to submit an annual report. As well, the Ethical Code works in tandem with other standards initiatives such as the Association of Fundraising Professionals’ Code of Ethics for individual fundraisers.

The Ethical Code is generously supported by: Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life.

For more information:

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