Business is anything but usual on Selkirk Avenue these days. Although a few vacant storefronts and abandoned lots dot the blocks that stretch from Main to Salter Street, Up Shoppe’s open sign shines brightly. Mannequins beckon to would-be customers while construction workers swing hammers noisily at the framework of a new building going up next door. An exuberant teen drags her dad inside, scooping the store for a summer outfit. “This place is great. It’s a real gem,” says her dad who works over at Health Sciences Centre. “I got my grad gown here,” beams the girl. “It was seven bucks!”

Owned and operated by the neighbour- ing North End Women’s Resource Centre, a United Way agency partner, Up Shoppe started as a clothing depot where women recovering from loss due to theft, fire or economic challenges could access affordable, sometimes free, replacements. When word got out of the good work they were doing, there were so many donations from individuals and surrounding stores, they were overwhelmed. Recognizing the program’s potential, United Way stepped up with secure, sustained funding, allowing the organization to attract a committed and qualified staff. “I quit a higher paying job to come work here,” says Sheila Holt, the store’s distribution coordinator. “I don’t regret it.”

Along with Corrine Campbell, retail coordinator, and Elyanna Angelova, community economic development manager, Sheila’s been able to build relationships with residents, and found some willing volunteers in the process. But there’s far more in store than a few good deals. Not only is it part of the revitalization of Selkirk Avenue, Up Shoppe has become an integral part of the community: a place where women can chat with vol- unteers and staff, and connect with each other and with programs and resources. Thanks to United Way’s support, staff have also developed several programs specific to the needs of neighbourhood women.

Women like Barb Roccola who partici- pate in the Community Wages Program, Up Shoppe’s open sign shines brightly. Mannequins beckon to would-be customers while construction workers swing hammers noisily at the framework of a new building going up next door. An exuberant teen drags her dad inside, scooping the store for a summer outfit. “This place is great. It’s a real gem,” says her dad who works over at Health Sciences Centre. “I got my grad gown here,” beams the girl. “It was seven bucks!”

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unite in Strong Communities

The health of our neighbourhoods and the well-being of individuals have a profound impact on our quality of life. United Way of Winnipeg supports programs that create safer, healthier neighbourhoods where people care and support one another, and where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected and accepted. The health of our neighbourhoods and the well-being of individuals have a profound impact on our quality of life. United Way of Winnipeg supports programs that create safer, healthier neighbourhoods where people care and support one another, and where everyone feels welcomed, valued, respected and accepted.