

United Way joins government in cutting funding to agency

BY ROGER VARLEY
Staff Writer

In what could prove to be a fatal blow, the United Way is terminating funding to Family and Credit Counselling Services (FACCS) of York Region.

Wyn Chivers, executive director of the United Way of York Region, said Thursday the trouble agency's annual \$130,000 allotment will end Feb. 11.

The announcement came hard on the heels of a Ministry of Community and Social Services decision made public last week to cut its funding of \$204,000 to FACCS.

Money from the United Way, the ministry and the Solicitor-General's ministry — which suspended its funding of about \$190,000 late last year —

accounts for roughly two-thirds of the agency's annual revenues of about \$740,000.

The major portion of United Way funds (\$90,000) went into FACCS's individual, couples and family counselling programs. Credit counselling accounted for \$30,000 and the remaining \$10,000 was applied to the Resolve program, which offers counselling and support services to women in abusive relationships.

Chivers said Thursday an operational review of the agency started in November — the first of its kind in five years — identified serious problems with the way FACCS was being governed.

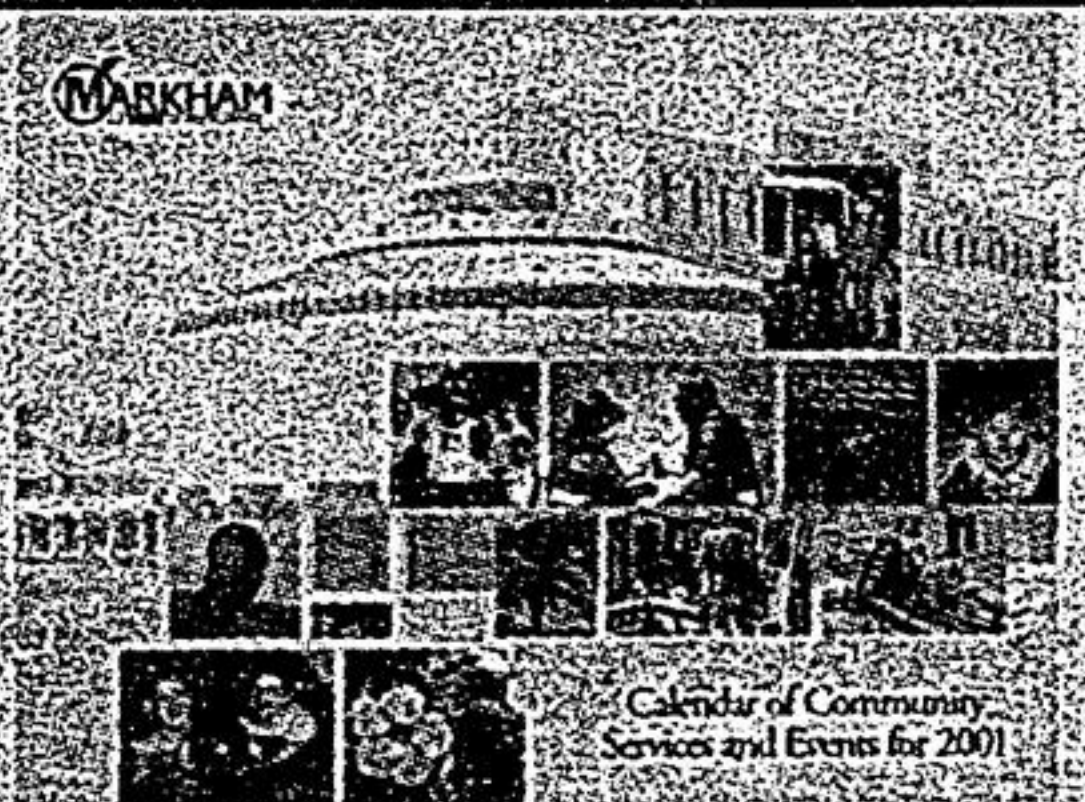
"The situation was very serious and wasn't going to be resolved either in the near future or the long term," she said.

FACCS lawyer Harvin Pitch said Friday the agency's board is evaluating recent events and will meet soon in an attempt to rectify the situation.

"We are working energetically to convince the funders that the organization is committed to the delivery of all of its services," said Pitch. But Chivers said it is highly unlikely the FACCS board will get back in United Way's good graces.

Among the governance problems was the fact two separate groups claimed to be the FACCS's legitimate board of directors. One was led by chair Bram Lecker; the other, which claimed to have been elected after Lecker led his board in a walkout at the FACCS's annual general meeting last September, was chaired by Gisela Neitzert.

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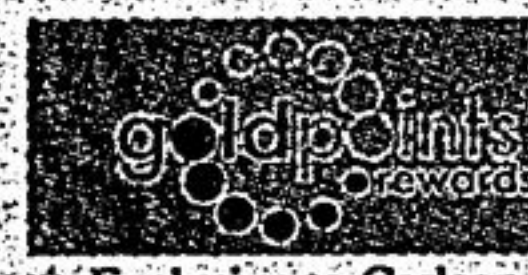
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