



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAKING CHANGES EMPLOYMENT ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA AND DRESS FOR SUCCESS CALGARY CENTRE ANNOUNCE APPROVAL OF MERGER

Parallel female-focused registered charities join forces to improve efficiencies and increase capacity to meet growing needs of Calgarians

CALGARY (November 19, 2020) – Making Changes Employment Association of Alberta (“Making Changes”) and Dress for Success Calgary Centre (“DFSC” or “Dress for Success Calgary”) are pleased to announce the approval of the highly anticipated merger of operations between Making Changes and DFSC at a special meeting of the members of DFSC on November 18, 2020. The two charities have co-existed in Calgary for many years with the shared vision of a world where women are economically empowered and inspired to create change and make meaningful contributions to the community. The combination of Making Changes’ broad, established infrastructure and Dress for Success Calgary’s worldwide brand and network, will poise the new organizational structure to better advance futures for women – together.

“We believe that the coming together of our two organizations will enhance our ability to impact more women in Calgary and the surrounding areas with personalized image consulting and the provision of work appropriate attire,” says Cathy Coutts, Executive Director, Making Changes Employment Association of Alberta. “Now more than ever, this collaboration will allow us to best serve our community, both with the increased need brought on by the current pandemic and local economic climate, and beyond.”

The merger is expected to take effect by the end of the year, and the Making Changes’ Walk-In Closet program will be combined with the Dress for Success Calgary suiting program. The combined suiting program, will continue under the name ‘Dress for Success Calgary’ as an affiliate of Dress for Success Worldwide, and will operate as part of the broader Making Changes organization, alongside its other pre-existing programs: My Best Friend’s Closet, Employment and Life Skills, and Women in Technology. Through the shared vision and values of both organizations, the merger will improve efficiencies in program delivery, maximizing the quality and range of services offered and increasing the number of women served.

Making Changes and Dress for Success Calgary will move ahead as a community of women helping women through life transitions by providing them with the skills and resources to effectively pursue meaningful work, educational, and volunteer opportunities. Many program clients are low-income or new-to- Canada residents in need of support as they face cultural, professional and personal adjustments for themselves and their families. The combined “Dress for Success Calgary” program will continue to provide individual consultations on quality attire to women facing financial barriers who want to join the work force, return to school or engage in volunteer opportunities. In addition to information on business culture and appropriate dress, participants will also continue to receive gently used fashionable clothing and accessories at no cost to help them look and feel their best so they can enter the workforce with confidence.

While the merger is intended to reduce administrative and operational overlap, there will be no impact on the employment of staff at either organization. Dress for Success Calgary’s staff will be absorbed into



the Making Changes team and will take up residency at the Making Changes offices. Volunteers from both organizations have given positive feedback and will continue to support the new program at Making Changes.

“This merger is about like-minded women coming together and realizing what we have to gain by working collectively as a cohesive unit,” says Ayden Athwal, Board Chair, Dress for Success Calgary. “Our combined programs will now be able to more effectively identify and meet the needs of even more women in the community, while making the best use of our available resources.”

Clients of the combined program will be served at Making Changes’ current location at 6516 1A Street SW in Calgary. Further information about each organization can be found at www.makingchangesassociation.ca and www.calgary.dressforsuccess.org.

About Making Changes Employment Association of Alberta

As a local registered charity, Making Changes Association has been integral to Calgary’s “women-helping-women” network for more than 30 years. With the support of 250+ volunteers, Making Changes works with 100+ referral partners representing immigrant and human services agencies, community groups, education, health and business. We’re passionate about helping women and teen girls going through life transitions to overcome barriers, open doors and create their own paths. Our cornerstone programs include Employment & Life Skills, Women in Technology, My Best Friend's Closet and the Walk in Closet which will continue as part of the combined “Dress for Success Calgary” program. Over the years, Making Changes has supported thousands of clients – some as they prepare to re-enter the workforce, some as new-to-Canada residents, and still others whose lives have taken an unexpected turn. Our mission is to inspire and empower all women at any age or stage of life to belong and make meaningful contributions to our communities.

About Dress for Success Calgary

Established in 2011, Dress for Success Calgary is the local affiliate of Dress for Success Worldwide; a registered charity that empowers women to achieve economic independence by providing a network of support, professional attire and the development tools to help women thrive in work and in life. With offices in 145 cities in 25 countries, Dress for Success affiliates have served over 1,200,000 women globally, with the support and devotion of 12,000 volunteers, and counting.

Dress for Success Calgary is part of a global movement for change, empowering women to obtain safer and better futures in our community. Besides physically equipping the client with apparel and accessories, our programs furnish her with a confidence that she carries forever, and the knowledge that she can actively define her life, the direction she takes and what success means to her.

Media Contact:

Erica Morgan, WILD PR
(403) 478-1357
emorgan@wildpr.ca