

October 2006

Dear Colleague:

It is my pleasure to introduce you to *Fighting Words: The Social Crusades of Joseph E. Atkinson*. This documentary, produced by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, examines the life and times of the Star's legendary publisher, tells the story of a great newspaper in the making, and charts the City of Toronto's progress towards a more civil society.

Fighting Words is, in essence, a story about a social justice crusader committed to achieving a fairer society. I invite you to draw on this resource as an opportunity to foster dialogue in your organization and among your constituencies about where we have come from in our history, and what kind of Canada we want to build.

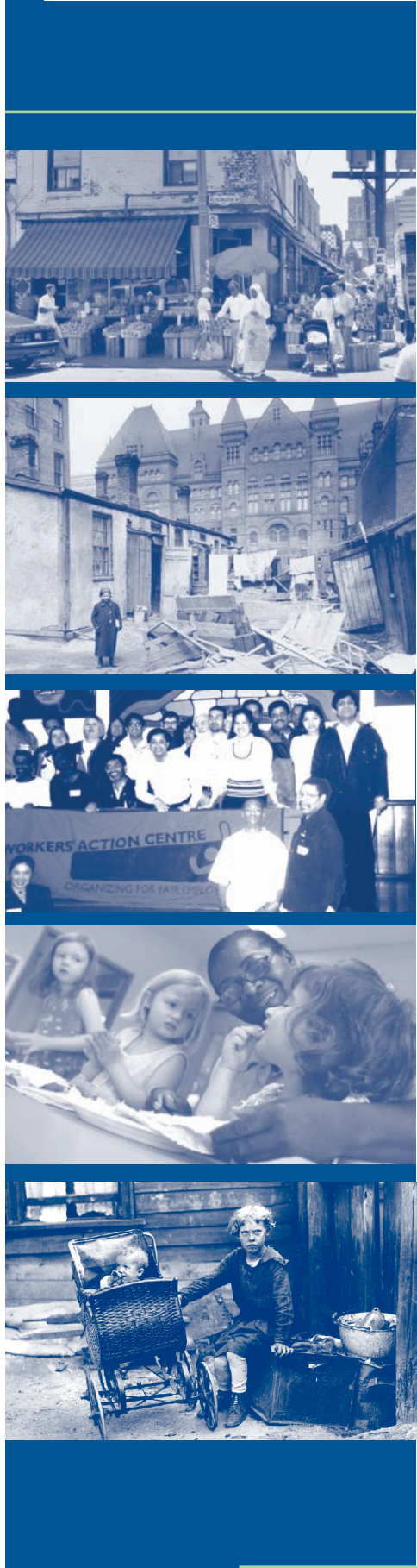
This film will strike a chord with those who are passionate about building a more just society. It will captivate those who have an interest in Toronto's historical journey since the turn of the twentieth century, from a harsh place of slums and sweatshops to the achievement of a fairer city.

And it will further expose viewers to the story of one of the most influential unelected Canadians of the twentieth century. By the time of J.E. Atkinson's death in 1948, the publisher had successfully championed a host of radically new life-improving measures: unemployment insurance, old age pensions, family allowances and worker's compensation, labour standards and minimum wages.

Who will be inspired by *Fighting Words*?

- Conferences, workshops and meetings addressing social justice, social policy, urban planning, Toronto's history, and journalism
- Community groups working on civic issues
- Settlement organizations wanting to connect with Toronto's past
- Young people studying history and social studies
- Resource libraries wanting to make available new resources
- Faith congregations who feel an affinity with J.E. Atkinson's legacy

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Despite this progress there is still much work to be done. Nearly a century after J.E. Atkinson began his social justice crusades at The Star, many of the things that he fought for and achieved, are in jeopardy. Universal health care is threatened. Child poverty remains a blight on any score card of human progress. And the gap between rich and poor is growing.

This film has already elicited such a positive response from so many who share Atkinson's values. Since the premier of *Fighting Words* on Vision TV earlier this year, the film has been put to good use by a wide range of audiences, including community groups working for social change, educators and schools, faith groups, and many others.

We hope that *Fighting Words* can become a useful resource for your organization as well.

If you wish to screen *Fighting Words* during a convention, association meeting, or any other large gathering, we would be pleased to link you with a resource person connected to the film and/or the Atkinson legacy to assist in discussions about the universal applications of Atkinson's ideas in today's world.

More information and resources about this documentary are available on our website (<http://www.atkinsonfoundation.ca>). There you will find links to the video trailer, reviews, facts about J.E. Atkinson's life, as well as links to organizations that today carry on the spirit of Atkinson's Crusade.

You can also contact us at fightingwords@atkinsonfoundation.ca or 416-869-4584.

In closing, I hope that this film can inspire transformative conversations among your friends and colleagues.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Pascal,
Executive Director
The Atkinson Charitable Foundation

We want to hear from you...

We are always interested in your ideas and feedback, and would appreciate hearing about how "*Fighting Words*" is being used in your community or organization.

Please write to us at fightingwords@atkinsonfoundation.ca