Hack-a-thon challenge to help charities
Online experts will compete in hack-a-thon to create app for Christmas Fund charities

BY MICHELE JARVIE, CALGARY HERALD  DECEMBER 17, 2012

The Calgary Herald will host a Charity App Challenge in February to help the Christmas Fund recipients.

Photograph by: Daniel Acker, Bloomberg

Scroll, click, code.

In the computer world that’s akin to ready, set, go. And that’s exactly what a group of software
developers will be doing over a two-day stretch in February. And instead of creating the next big mobile
game or business widget, the computer experts will create online apps to benefit charities.

Entering the final stretch of the annual Calgary Herald Christmas Fund campaign, the Herald is eager
to continue helping the local agencies that do such valuable work as housing the homeless, feeding the
poor and counselling those with issues such as addiction and mental illness.

To that end, the Herald has partnered with advocacy group Digital Alberta and Place2Give.com, a
donor-centred charity search engine, for an upcoming Charity App Challenge. The three organizations
came together to leverage technology for social good with a hack-a-thon.

“Mobile is the fastest growing communications and engagement medium and digital philanthropy is an
evolving sector,” said Michelle Sklar, president of Digital Alberta.

“We asked ourselves ‘What could mobile technology do for the 12 Calgary Herald Christmas Fund
charities to help solve a problem or help them reach their goals and objectives with getting into the
mobile space?’ ”

“There are tons of things that could come out of this,” said Gena Rotstein, who runs the non-profit
management firm Dexterity Consulting that developed Place2Give.com.

“It could be focused on basic revenue generation like a giving site, through to tapping into social
networks like Amber Alerts and possibly saving a child’s life, to educating about issues such as
homelessness.”

The charities, and the public, will be able to vote on a number of app ideas and the top two or three will
be presented to developers at the Hack-a-thon, Feb. 2-3, 2013, at the Herald. Local web developers
will create apps and tech solutions that launch the charities into the mobile technology. The app will be
developed over 48 hours and then a panel of judges will choose the best one.

Two days isn’t enough time to fully develop a computer app, so it will need refining before being
released. The winning team will work with the 12 charities to finish the project.

“The Herald is thrilled to partner with the development community in Calgary for what we hope will be
the First Annual Hack-a-Thon in support of the Calgary Herald Christmas Fund,” said Herald publisher
Guy Huntingford.

This group will come together to develop digital applications for web and mobile, which the 12 charities
that are part of this year’s Christmas Fund can utilize all year round.”

Some of the tech and non-profit groups involved in the challenge include the top players in their fields:
The Agency, AcceleratorYYC, BixNets, A100, Innovate Calgary and ICT Council.

Up to the challenge? There’s still time and room to get involved, whether as an app developer,
volunteer or as a sponsor.

For more information, go to www.calgaryherald.com/life/christmasfund/cac.html

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