



Illustration by Dushan Milic

Charitable marketing

Creative juices were tested when credit union marketing teams competed at the annual MACU Conference to design a top campaign in 12 hours for two deserving Canadian charities.

By Diane Luckow

CREDIT UNION MARKETERS from across Canada may inadvertently have set a new bar for productivity after participating in a gruelling 12-hour competition last June at the Marketing Association for Credit Unions' (MACU) annual conference in Whistler, BC.

Four teams, each comprising seven marketers and one graphic designer, all raced to complete comprehensive media campaigns for two little-known Canadian charities: the All Women's Empowerment and Development Association (AWEDA) of Halifax and the Victoria Women's Transition House (VWTH) on Vancouver Island.

The competition results were remarkable. In just 12 hours, all four teams came up with stellar campaigns that had to include a completed brochure, poster, newspaper ad, radio script, communication plan and a campaign or event theme. Two of the teams competed for the VWTH campaign and the other two for the AWEDA campaign.

Terry Moore, a member-at-large with MACU, dreamed up the event as a way for conference delegates to have a more interesting conference experience while getting to know one another better.

"But we didn't want an exercise just for the sake of an exercise," says Moore, who is director of marketing communication with **Credit Union Atlantic** in Halifax. "With this competition, there was something tangible at the end that people could be proud of and there was giving back to the community."

MACU organizers, who had 30 charities to choose from, used a scoring system based on need. They also ensured that one charity was from the East and the other was from the West.

The graphic designers on each team were recruited from Vancouver, Chilliwack and Regina and all volunteered their

services for the day.

The event, says Moore, exceeded expectations, both in terms of the participants' enjoyment and the quality of the materials that were produced for the charities.

Jill Ahrens-Greutzner, manager of marketing for Saskatchewan's **Innovation Credit Union**, was on Team NEWAD, which won for its AWEDA campaign. "With different credit unions from all over Canada represented in our group, we heard ideas that you wouldn't normally think of," says Ahrens-Greutzner.

Ken Sauchuk, manager of advertising and communications with **Island Savings Credit Union** on Vancouver Island, enjoyed the team-building aspects of the event as much as contributing to the cause. "It was a very interesting day," says Sauchuk, who was on Team Weber Marketing Group, which won for its VWTH campaign. "A good part of the morning was spent just building the team. That in itself is a huge challenge."

"The judges certainly had a difficult time," says Susan Zwarych, chair of MACU and manager of advertising and community relations for **Conexus Credit Union**, headquartered in Regina. "For an activity with 12 hours dedicated, the results were amazing: great graphics, full communications plans, ideas on how to engage media at low cost — participants really put heart and soul into the activity and really produced fantastic results. The creative execution was phenomenal."

The two winning teams, Team NEWAD and Team Weber Marketing Group, received certificates and bragging rights to refer to themselves as MACU Masters.

But, says Zwarych, "The real winners are the charities. We're working with them to make sure that things are executable and we do plan to follow up with them to see where they are a few months down the road." **E**