

JUNE 2023

2022-2023 YEAR IN REVIEW

Helia found support
through a community
of caregivers like her.

**Look inside to discover
how you make
a difference.**



United Way
East Ontario

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO

"For our communities to truly recover from the pandemic and for social services to be sustained in the long-term, it's going to take an all-hands-on-deck approach."



As I marvel at the devotion of our employees, volunteers, and supporters to ensure the most vulnerable people in our communities have been given equal opportunities to thrive over the past year, I am struck by the collaborative efforts that I believe will serve as beacons for our charitable sector going forward.

While the COVID-19 pandemic no longer feels like an urgent crisis, there is no denying the incredible challenges that still exist because of it. Chronic issues that people in our communities have always faced, like poverty and mental health, are still much worse than before 2020. As a result, social service

providers across East Ontario are facing unprecedented levels of demand. Our sector is struggling to retain staff and volunteers, and donations to these vital services are down as people feel the pinch of inflation and the rising cost of living.

It is in these moments, however, that we have taken the lead to create the positive social change United Way East Ontario always aspires to, and we couldn't have done it without your support.

This report offers an opportunity to look at how you have made a difference to our work this year, and I hope it allows you to

connect more deeply with the impact United Way has had across our region.

In the past year, we have looked for innovative approaches to keep vulnerable people from falling through the cracks during the toughest times. We continued to work closely with frontline agencies, all levels of government, and other partners, to identify the greatest needs in our communities, and we collaborated to achieve the greatest impact.

Last fall, we brought together the Ottawa Board of Trade and Ottawa and District Labour Council to advocate for important issues at the intersection of social justice, labour rights, and economic prosperity, by hosting a mayoral debate ahead of a critical election in Ottawa—something that had never been done before.

After two years, the final COVID-19 Community Response Table was held in 2022, and it's been amazing to see the positive effects of that work: grassroots groups formed, and new services emerged because of collaboration across sectors. This work has had a real, measurable impact for people in need.

Heading into 2023, we were trusted by the federal government to help distribute the Community Services Recovery Fund, which aims to strengthen the charitable sector by helping organizations adapt and modernize in the wake of the pandemic. It is, of course, just one of the tools we are using to reimagine what it means to support our communities, holistically.

For our communities to truly recover from the pandemic and for social services to be sustained in the long-term, it's going to take an all-hands-on-deck approach. It's clear, through the work you will read about in this report, that we aren't sitting idly by, but pushing our sector forward.

We know that strong non-profit community and social services are key to maintaining the social safety net that supports us all, and a healthy future for our communities. In the year ahead, we are thrilled to be hosting discussions with local educators, healthcare, and labour leaders to highlight our sector's role in curbing important issues like overcrowding in hospitals and retaining skilled workers.

There will undoubtedly be more obstacles to overcome, but by breaking down communication barriers, working with our partners and leaders from across sectors and government, and with your continued support, we can continue to improve lives and create opportunities for those in our communities who need us most.

With gratitude,



Michael Allen

President and Chief Executive Officer
United Way East Ontario

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we work, live, and play is the traditional unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabeg people. We extend respect to all First Nations,

Inuit, and Métis peoples, their ancestors, their Elders, and their valuable past and present contributions to this land and our communities.

OUR ROLE

Every day, people in communities across Prescott-Russell, Ottawa, Lanark County and Renfrew County depend on United Way to break down barriers, improve lives, and create opportunities. Our organization exists to make a tangible difference in the lives of the people who need us most—to have an impact.

Our mission is to bring people and resources together to build strong, safe, healthy communities for all.

Our vision is that our communities are measurably better because of the work of United Way East Ontario and others.

Our promise is that we will invest resources where they are needed the most and where they will have the greatest impact.



HOW WE MAKE AN IMPACT

United Way mobilizes the power of caring communities to address the most serious social issues. But, we don't do it alone.

The challenges we tackle demand collaboration. By bringing people from different organizations together to solve problems—from businesses, non-profits, governments, and more—we can have an even bigger impact and make our communities measurably better.

United Way East Ontario creates lasting social change through three focus areas:

All That Kids Can Be:

By putting more kids on track to succeed, we can help all youth in our communities reach their full potential.

From Poverty to Possibility:

By helping people achieve financial independence and stability, we can break the cycle of poverty.

Healthy People, Strong Communities:

By improving equity, connections, and wellbeing for vulnerable groups, our communities can be great for everyone.

These areas serve as the foundation for every initiative and decision the organization undertakes. Opportunities to take action are strategically assessed against their ability to achieve the outcomes in these focus areas.

We then look at each opportunity and determine which of our tools to use in order to tackle the tough problems:



Advocacy: We develop relationships with key stakeholders and government officials to advocate for change and action on social issues impacting our communities.

Convening: We bring together diverse groups of stakeholders to coordinate our efforts in order to solve social problems.



Investment: We engage community experts and volunteers to evaluate and make recommendations to fund programs, services, collaborations, and initiatives that result in measurable, lasting change, aligned to our priorities.

Research and Evaluation: We conduct and support a breadth of research and data analysis that helps us understand and address the diverse challenges in our communities.



Resource Development: We raise money, recruit volunteers, secure resources, attain expertise, and build powerful partnerships with individual donors, businesses, and other organizations—all to support initiatives that will lead to the betterment of our communities.

WE ARE UNITED: STRENGTHENING THE COMMUNITY SERVICES SECTOR



1 in 5

Canadians expect to use charitable services to meet basic needs in the next six months.

CanadaHelps Giving Report 2023

As we emerge from what we hope will have been the worst of the pandemic, the demand for social services continues to grow across our region. Many are turning to an already strained community sector, which continues to face significant challenges such as labour shortages, rising inflation, and operational costs that are pushing staff and volunteers to their breaking points.

This past year, United Way East Ontario received an increase in requests for emergency financial and core funding support due to the continued crisis mode the sector has been operating in.

The United Way network is grateful to the Government of Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) to have been named, alongside the Canadian Red Cross and the Community Foundations of Canada, to administer the Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF).

This one-time, historic, national fund of \$400 million aims to strengthen the community services sector by helping charities and non-profits adapt and modernize as they help Canadian communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. United Way East Ontario looks forward to making announcements about our investment in coordination with the Government of Canada's announcement in the summer of 2023.

In addition to our role as a trusted administrator of the fund in East Ontario, we work alongside our local community as a:

Collaborator – building and transforming our sector during the pandemic and beyond.

Connector – bringing diverse groups together to discuss, research, analyze, and build plans.

Catalyst – acting and innovating during difficult times.

Conduit – bringing people and resources together to help make transformational change.

The Community Services Recovery Fund is an opportunity to take advantage of the innovation and transformation that took place during the pandemic to help build the resiliency of the community services sector for years to come. United Way is well positioned to lead this work.



“We invite the government and private sectors to continue working alongside us to strengthen the non-profit sector’s ongoing efforts of sustainability and resiliency. Together we can achieve a more equitable approach to economic recovery and social justice in the communities we serve.”

PREETI PRABHU,

Senior Director of Public Policy, Government and Stakeholder Relations



**STAY UP
TO DATE**

Get stories of local love straight to your inbox!

Stay up to date with United Way's impact and latest news
by [signing up](#) for our monthly newsletter.

OUR INVESTMENTS ACROSS THE REGION



In 2021-2022, we invested in:

104

collaborations
and initiatives

130

programs

119

community
agencies

As a result of these investments:

122,279

people were
supported

2,789

people volunteered
with our agency
partners

for a total of

139,765

hours

How much we invested in community work across our region in 2021-2022:

Total:

\$8,830,993

All That
Kids Can Be:
\$2,908,194

From Poverty
to Possibility:
\$2,709,044

Healthy
People, Strong
Communities
\$3,213,775

This excludes funds invested through *Local Love in a Global Crisis*—an initiative launched in 2020 to respond to additional pressing local needs caused by the pandemic. Please see the [Our COVID-19 Response section on page 46](#) for details on the impact of this targeted work.



18 OUTCOMES OF OUR WORK

**For a community to be great,
it must be great for everyone.**

We work with local agency partners, multiple levels of government, people with lived experiences, and thousands of donors to change lives across our region. Through research, consultation, and analysis, we



identify where our communities need help the most and where our investments will show the greatest results.

United Way is uniquely positioned to deliver on the following 18 outcomes through rigorous accountability processes and capacity building for agencies:

All That Kids Can Be:

01 Children are ready to learn

02 Children and youth are engaged and active

03 Children and youth are successful in school

04 Children and youth have access to mental health and addiction supports

05 Children and youth in crisis have access to immediate supports

06 Children and youth experiencing homelessness receive supports

07 Children and youth are resilient

08 Children and youth have improved mental health

From Poverty to Possibility:

09 Newcomers are engaged in the labour market

12 Youth are supported in their transition to employment

10 People with disabilities are engaged in the labour market

13 Rural residents seeking employment have access to literacy training and skills development

11 People in financial crisis receive supports

Healthy People, Strong Communities:

14 Agencies and coalitions have the capacity to meet community needs

17 Communities and neighbourhoods achieve positive change

15 Adults have access to mental health and addiction supports

18 Adults in crisis have access to immediate supports

16 Seniors have improved wellbeing and are less isolated



ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE

Kids like Kai are thriving with the return to in-person music programming.

Students attending school in low-income neighbourhoods may lack access to safe, affordable, positive after-school activities. Without support, kids may end up falling behind.

OrKidstra—a United Way partner—is an after-school social development program that empowers kids in Ottawa's under-served communities by teaching important life skills through music.



Kai, OrKidstra participant

After a long two years of virtual-only programming, Rebecca Russell, OrKidstra's Senior Development and Communications Officer, said "it's magical to have everyone back in the same room again."

But music education can be very expensive.

"That's a real barrier for kids from under-served communities, under-privileged backgrounds, or low-income neighbourhoods," Rebecca explained.

For youth like Kai, a 16-year-old trumpet player in his fifth year with OrKidstra, barriers are lifted.

"When I first got to OrKidstra I wasn't really great at talking with other people," he said. "But over time, being in this welcoming setting, being able to interact with all of these amazing people has helped me to be more confident about myself, and how I look and how I play."

Kai's public speaking abilities have also improved over the years, and he's even taken on more of a mentoring role with new kids coming into the program.

"Kai has really blossomed being here," said Rebecca.

Thanks to United Way donors, we're able to invest in homework clubs, after-school programs, and summer camps that help improve students' grades, self-esteem, leadership, and career skills, and relationships with both peers and adults—ultimately improving high school graduation rates.

All of the kids who have ever graduated from the OrKidstra program have completed high school and have also gone on to post-secondary education.

[Watch the Video](#)



THE ISSUE

For some local kids, growing up isn't easy. Challenges can begin before a child even steps into school for the first time.

Although COVID-19 doesn't affect our lives in the same way as it once did, local kids are still dealing with the fallout from the isolation and anxiety of the last few years. Reports show kids are experiencing greater mental health challenges than ever before.

Many kids are also having a hard time keeping up in school. Youth from

low-income or rural communities don't have the same access to after-school activities or summer programs that help them stay on track beyond the classroom. As the cost of living rises, so does the pressure on caregivers to provide for their children.

Data from the past three years shows:

44%

or nearly half of Ottawa students reported fair or poor mental health.

Grade 7-8 students

in Ottawa were just as likely to report non-medical opioid use as those in grades 9-12 (10%).

1.1-1.2%

is the potential decrease in a student's lifetime earnings for each month of learning loss. In Ontario, there were about 6.5 months (28 weeks) of in-person school closures during the first two years of the pandemic.

~1 in 5

Canadians aged 12 and older reported that they needed some help with their mental health, but of those, 45% felt that their needs were either unmet or only partially met.

OUR RESPONSE

United Way believes that every child has the right to a good life, and a safe place to grow up, learn, and make good friends—no matter where they live or their personal circumstances.

We continue to play a leadership and support role in initiatives critical to meeting the needs of vulnerable children and youth across our region. **Here are some examples:**

Partnering to prevent addiction

In February 2023, Ottawa Public Health (OPH) released a local analysis of the **2021 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS)**. Poor mental health and wellbeing, thoughts about attempting suicide, and self-harm behaviours were more prevalent among young people who are already marginalized: those with a lower socioeconomic status, and those who identify as 2SLGBTQ+.

While poor mental health on its own is troubling, the data also shows that some students are using drugs and alcohol to cope with their struggles, and many (42%) don't know where to turn for help. That's where [project step](#) comes in: a

community-wide initiative, convened and led by United Way, that ensures young people and their families have access to support, treatment, education, and prevention of harms related to substance and technology use. Last year, partners with [project step](#) [banded together to highlight this issue](#), and show what services and solutions are available to young people who are struggling.

In 2022, United Way also retained Vivic Research, an Ottawa-based economic consulting firm that specializes in data-driven research through a social justice lens, to conduct an environmental scan for project step. **This research will be used to support strategic planning for the initiative in the coming years.**



"We can't expect young people to be endlessly resilient when crisis after crisis affects their wellbeing. We're fortunate that here in Ottawa, [project step](#) is leading the way in building a brighter future for youth who are struggling, and their families."

Trisha Islam, Director, All That Kids Can Be

Supporting new parents, and their babies

Opportunities to connect with other expectant or new parents in a welcoming, safe, and supportive environment is essential for the health and wellbeing of parents, and their children. For military families who experience frequent moves and deployments, having a strong support system can provide a sense of connection and belonging when navigating the challenges of military life.

We're proud to support partners like the Petawawa Military Family Resource Centre, where **families with children up to 12 months of age have access to pre and postnatal support programs.** Parents and carers are connected to supports for various topics, including early pregnancy symptoms, exercise and nutrition programs, what to expect during pregnancy, postpartum experiences, and community events.

Keeping kids inspired, all year long

The pandemic widened the **academic achievement gap** for children in several ways. Students from low-income families who lack access to technology and reliable internet struggled to keep up with remote learning. School closures and disruptions resulted in significant learning loss. Stress and uncertainty negatively impacted kids' mental health and academic performance.

Addressing the long-term effects of learning loss will require a sustained effort from schools, families, and communities to ensure that all students have the support and resources they need to succeed. Thanks to our donors, we're able to invest in free [Summer Achievement Gap programs](#) that keep kids engaged over the summer so they're ready to pick up where they left off come September. In addition to affordable summer camps, United Way invests in after-school homework clubs and recreational activities throughout the school year to help kids improve their grades, self-esteem, leadership and career skills, and relationships with both peers and adults.



We're also grateful to partners like Accenture, who hosted an 'Hour of Code' to teach kids at Britannia Woods Community House's [after school program](#) skills to pursue careers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) by learning basic coding. And PCL Construction, who put together [283 backpacks with school](#)

[supplies](#) to ease the burden on families and help high school aged youth across our region feel confident and prepared to tackle the upcoming school year.

With opportunities like these, kids are less likely to drop out of high school—breaking the cycle of poverty.



GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2023-24, we will use our tools and resources to ...



- Address the academic achievement gap for vulnerable children and youth by:
 - Investing in school readiness and early years programming, participating in collaborative networks like the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative, and supporting research to improve outcomes for vulnerable infants and children.
 - Developing opportunities for **homework clubs** in our rural communities.
- Invest in mentoring and peer support programming for vulnerable children and youth.
- Invest in counselling, education, life, and work skills programs to support youth at-risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.
- Invest in parent, child, and youth mental health and problematic substance use counselling, information, and support.
- Convene and provide backbone support for **project step** across the region and engage in and support the Planet Youth network in Lanark County. **Finalize a region-wide environmental scan** on child and youth mental health and substance use.
- Convene and advocate for increased **affordable housing**, and comprehensive, integrated supports for children, youth, and families who are at risk of or currently experiencing homelessness.
- Convene and participate in networks and coalitions that work to improve outcomes for equity-deserving children and youth.



All That Kids Can Be

THE IMPACT OF OUR INVESTMENTS

All That Kids Can Be across our region:

17

collaborations
and initiatives

50

programs

47

community
agencies

As a result of these investments:

20,471

people were
supported

608

people volunteered
with our agency
partners

for a total of

15,022

hours

OUTCOMES

Outcomes	Results	
Children are ready to learn	99% of people reported increased confidence in their parenting ability that supported the achievement of developmental milestones.	611 families/caregivers were supported with information, resources, tools, trainings, and/or teaching skills.
Children and youth are engaged and active	84% of middle/high school aged youth developed soft skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and communication.	3,652 youth participated in school and/or community-based, out-of-school time programs and/or received supports to develop soft skills.
Children and youth are resilient	96% of children and youth reported improved emotional wellbeing.	3,652 children and youth reported improved emotional wellbeing.
Children and youth have improved mental health	80% of children and youth have improved mental health outcomes and developed positive coping skills.	2,261 children and youth have improved mental health outcomes and developed positive coping skills.
Children and youth are successful in school	13,507 children and youth worked towards achieving academic goals outside of school.	
Youth housing needs are met	82% of youth living in emergency shelters or transitional housing received supports to live independently.	226 youth living in emergency shelters or transitional housing received supports to live independently.
Youth reduced or stopped using drugs	48% of youth reported a reduction in the frequency of drug use (project step).	81 youth reported a reduction in the frequency of drug use (project step).

* Program reporting period: January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 (18-month investments).
 Program reports due to United Way: July 15, 2022. Outcome data analyzed and reported by United Way: November 2022.

Insights into the outcomes are available in the Appendix.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

I became a United Way donor 15 years ago through my firm's annual campaign. At that time, I had young children and was so impressed by United Way's many programs for children, youth, and families that I asked that my donation be directed to support those goals.

I have continued to offer my support, and I still direct that support towards children, youth, and families, because of the difference these programs make in a child's life. United Way's "All That Kids Can Be" provides support and resources for children and youth in need; these resources are even more crucial post-pandemic.

My donation and support allow me to help United Way make a difference. My law firm, Soloway Wright LLP, is proud of its many years of community involvement, and I am, in turn, proud to continue to participate in that tradition by supporting this organization.

Tara Sweeney

United Way Major Donor



"As a community we owe so much to those who step up and help those among us who are tackling some of life's hardest challenges. I am grateful every day to all those who support people all across our region through United Way."

Mark Taylor, Vice President, Resource Development

FROM POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

Social businesses are
breaking the cycle
of poverty

Landing and succeeding at your first
job can be difficult, even under the
best of circumstances.

But for youth experiencing homelessness,
the added barriers of things like not
having a stable home, lacking connections
to trusted adults, mental health challenges,
incomplete education, or other factors,
can make employment seem unattainable.



Christian, youth support
worker at BottleWorks

Christian started working as a support worker at BottleWorks, a social enterprise run by Operation Come Home and powered by United Way, to help at-risk young people gain financial independence and break the cycle of poverty.

“We take on youth who may be experiencing homelessness, or youth who just don’t have experience at another job,” said Christian. “We get them used to regular work hours, scheduling, having lunch breaks. A lot of youth just aren’t used to that.”

BottleWorks hires youth who face barriers to employment to collect empty alcohol bottles donated from businesses, residents, and bottle drives across Ottawa. While youth gain valuable employment skills, the revenue from the empties funds programs at Operation Come Home like mental health counselling, housing supports, and academic coaching.

In addition to the job, employees are also paired with youth support workers like Christian who mentor them while driving their routes each day. Having access to a peer keeps youth socially connected, and close to the resources they need to succeed in all aspects of their lives.

Thanks to our donors, we’re able to support social enterprises like BottleWorks as we work on building a more equitable economic recovery from the pandemic. Programs like this can be a major tool in empowering workers who have been traditionally overlooked in the labour market, like youth experiencing homelessness, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, and newcomers.

[Watch the Video](#)



THE ISSUE

Across our region, there continues to be major barriers to inclusion and success in the workforce.

Indigenous peoples, youth, newcomers, Black and racialized communities, vulnerable women, and people with disabilities often face stigma, misinformed perceptions, and biased or outdated assumptions—resulting in financially precarious situations.

In rural parts of our region, the digital divide and lack of or limited public transportation make access to services more challenging. Ensuring access to information for those who face language, literacy, or connectivity issues continues to be of great importance.

Data from the past three years shows:

9.2%

of racialized populations are unemployed in Canada, compared to 7.3% of non-racialized people.

\$5,200

is the difference in median income between rural (\$39,200) and urban centres (\$44,400) in Ontario.

~59%

of working age adults with disabilities are employed compared to 80% of those without disabilities.

1 in 5

single mothers live in low-income situations in Ontario, and almost half (44%) of single mothers with young children are living below the poverty line.

OUR RESPONSE

United Way believes that everyone deserves a job, a purpose, and a sense of belonging. Together, we can ensure more people in our communities achieve financial independence and stability.

Our role as a convener means we're able to leverage our network of partners and donors to help our communities create solutions that work locally and contribute to our region-wide strategies. We do this through initiatives that unite key stakeholders on a collective mission.

Here are some examples:

Sharing resources, learning together

During a visit to our partner Centre de services à l'emploi de Prescott-Russell (CSEPR), our **Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO)** team saw an opportunity to share recently developed **French-language training materials on fostering a workplace culture of inclusion and belonging**, extending this employer resource to Francophone communities in our region.

HIO's **Inclusion and Belonging Toolkit** complements the workshops CSEPR provides to local employers and businesses, which cover a variety of topics from leadership to skills development. Collaborations with local partners, including knowledge sharing, ensures we collectively advance our work in this sector and are a great way to support Francophone residents in Prescott-Russell and across our region.



"HIO's toolkit helps employers foster a sense of belonging among their employees. This isn't just a value add for workplaces, this can be crucial for the wellbeing of many newcomers who rely on building networks through their colleagues at work, but faced social isolation during the pandemic."

Henry Akanko, Director, Hire Immigrants Ottawa

Diversifying in the labour market

Led by United Way East Ontario, the **Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)** was founded in 2011 as a community-wide initiative to help reduce and remove barriers to labour market participation for people with disabilities.

To inform EARN's strategy, United Way completed a [scan of East Ontario](#) to better understand how the employment landscape may have changed during the pandemic. The goals were to identify the **employment barriers facing people with disabilities** in East Ontario, and recommend where to focus energy, resources, and policies to realize more a more inclusive and accessible labour market.



ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN: BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN EAST ONTARIO



Bringing the right people to the table

In January of 2021, Indigenous and non-Indigenous employers, employment service providers, post-secondary institutions, and other key stakeholders came together to form the **Indigenous Employment Leadership Advisory Table (IELAT)**. The goal of IELAT is to listen and learn from each other to address **labour market barriers facing Indigenous youth**.

Over this past year, the IELAT has grown to more than 35 organizations. Two of the key learnings have been to build trusting relationships between the membership, and to have honest, constructive conversations that will in turn support successful outcomes for Indigenous youth.

Based on conversations that took place in the fall of 2022, **12 organizations jointly developed a tool to help employers address their human resources needs** while creating more culturally safe and inclusive workplaces for Indigenous peoples. The Indigenous [Attraction, Retention, and Recruitment Strategy Tool](#) will benefit any organization looking to develop more culturally sensitive practices and policies, no matter where they are on their journey to inclusion. **When we create culturally safe workplaces, we contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty** for Indigenous peoples and other groups who face employment barriers.

Showcasing new career opportunities

In March 2023, the Unionized Building and Construction Trades Council hosted a tour of four of their Trades Training Centres in Ottawa for nine representatives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous employment service providers from the IELAT Table. The goal of this tour was to **introduce members to the trades, and to highlight the various career opportunities available to Indigenous youth**. Plans are underway for additional tours and the opportunity to bring the Trades Centre representatives and youth together who may be interested in this career path.



GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2023-24, we will use our tools and resources to ...



- Work for an equitable economic recovery and address the widening opportunity gap by:
 - Investing in employment programs and supports that improve outcomes for underrepresented youth, people with disabilities, and newcomers.
 - Investing in research and convening leadership tables that address employment barriers and increase labour market participation for Indigenous peoples, underrepresented and vulnerable youth, people with disabilities, and newcomers.
 - Working alongside the Indigenous community on the Indigenous Employment Leadership Advisory Table (IELAT) to bring together employers, stakeholders, and Indigenous youth to better understand the labour market issues and create culturally safer workplaces.
- Grow Community Wealth Building (CWB) capacity and engagement by:
 - Advocating for, investing in, and convening the community to **adopt CWB principles** and best practices, including investing in social enterprises, and adopting social procurement policies, community benefit agreements, and buy/shop local practices.
 - **Convening CWB leadership tables** and engaging our network.
 - Investing in, planning, and delivering **education seminars, events, or summits** to strengthen understanding of CWB in our communities.
- Reduce the impact of poverty by convening, advocating for, and investing in financial literacy programs, food security, transportation (especially in rural communities), basic needs, and utilities relief.



THE IMPACT OF OUR INVESTMENTS

From Poverty to Possibility across our region:

44

collaborations
and initiatives

23

programs

22

community
agencies

As a result of these investments:

8,044

people were
supported

192

people volunteered
with our agency
partners

for a total of

11,246

hours

OUTCOMES

Outcomes	Results	
People are engaged in the labour market	84% of participants found or maintained employment.	2,751 participants found or maintained employment.
	7,271 individuals were supported in their search for employment.	
Newcomers are engaged in the labour market	59% of newcomers found employment.	840 newcomers found employment.
People with disabilities are engaged in the labour market	94% of job seekers with disabilities found employment.	2,518 job seekers with disabilities found employment.
Equity deserving groups are engaged in the labour market	2,565 employer participants increased their knowledge of barriers to employment faced by priority populations.	
Youth are supported in their transition to employment	84% of homeless or at-risk rural youth enrolled in an education program, secondary school, or job training program.	53 homeless or at-risk rural youth enrolled in an education program, secondary school, or job training program.
People in financial crisis receive supports	2,485 people in financial crisis received financial services and supports.	

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Insights into the outcomes are available in the Appendix.



WE LOVE WHERE WE LIVE.

It's this local love that fuels
our efforts to tackle even
the toughest social issues.

HEALTHY PEOPLE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Caregivers need care too

After 12 years of caring for her husband who was diagnosed with Parkinson's, Helia was exhausted and overwhelmed.

She realized her daily routine of being a caregiver had become too much to handle emotionally and physically. As luck would have it, Helia noticed an advertisement in the local paper highlighting the Nurturing the Caregiver program at Hospice Renfrew.



Helia, caregiver and client at Hospice Renfrew

Informal caregivers like Helia are at risk of burnout, isolation, and poor health outcomes. With support from United Way, Hospice Renfrew delivers programming that provides a safe space where people can find rare and much needed respite from the demands of being a caregiver, and find reassurance and comfort while supporting their loved ones.

“It’s not selfish to put yourself first sometimes because if you don’t look after yourself, you won’t be able to look after your loved one,” said Helia.

In 2019, United Way—along with the Champlain Dementia Network and the Champlain Community Support Network—completed a road map to help guide local organizations that serve seniors and caregivers. The recommendations in the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy are built on extensive consultations with local caregivers.

Our donors make it possible for our team to do the work of untangling and confronting the systemic issues facing caregivers. Their support also means we’re able to invest in programs like

Nurturing the Caregiver, that offer respite, connection, education, and peer support to reduce the isolation caregivers like Helia experience on a daily basis.

[Watch the Video](#)



THE ISSUE

In every community, there are individuals and families who need support, people who face barriers to services or resources, and those who are socially excluded based on their identity, gender, race, age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, ability, or economic status.

We know that institutional oppression, systemic and overt racism, and chronic exposure to discrimination are often the root causes of why socially disadvantaged communities experience poor health outcomes at higher rates. These disparities continue to have ripple effects across our region.

Our networks continue to raise concerns about the high rates of stress families feel, increased crisis situations like violence in homes, as well as the digital divide and technology disparities.

Data from the past three years shows:

96%

of individuals receiving long-term home care in Canada have an unpaid caregiver. More than 1 in 3 of these caregivers reported being distressed, which can include feelings of anger or depression, or the inability to continue with caring activities.

24%

more people in Ontario accessed food banks in the first 6 months of 2022, compared to the year before. 1 in 3 were first time visitors.

30%

of Ottawa's Black community who tried to access mental health services felt prejudice or negative attitudes from their service providers.

~3 in 10

older adults reported living alone, and more than 1 in 3 reported feelings of loneliness due to the pandemic.

OUR RESPONSE

United Way East Ontario believes in building a region that is great for everyone—made up of healthy, equitable, and vibrant communities.

Our goal is to create neighbourhood equity by building a set of social, economic, cultural, healthy living, and civic engagement opportunities for all residents. We do this through initiatives that unite key stakeholders on a collective mission.

Here are some examples:

Building bridges for wellbeing

The **Prescott-Russell LGBTQ + Allies Group** is made up of volunteers and agencies, including United Way East Ontario, with a goal to promote the wellbeing, respect, and integration of the 2SLGBTQ+ community in the United Counties of Prescott and Russell. Since its creation in 2017, the group, led mainly by two volunteers, has organized several training, discussion, and advocacy activities.

However, the pandemic greatly affected the LGBTQ + Allies Group's activities, and post-pandemic changes have pushed the group towards restructuring. It's in this context that **United Way took on a leadership role by becoming a co-chair of the group**—alongside the Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie—to ensure its sustainability, review its internal structure, and increase its capacity to carry out its mission.

Creating a safer future for women

Our communities are experiencing [historic levels of femicide](#), highlighting the urgent need for a targeted, strategic, and well-resourced community-wide response to violence against women.

As a member of End Violence Against Women (EVA) Renfrew County, **United Way East Ontario took part in a provincial inquest** that aimed to understand the conditions and challenges unique to rural communities that contribute to intimate partner violence and femicide.

The list of 86 recommendations from the inquest provides a roadmap to increasing safety for women across our region, particularly in rural communities. [United Way has identified six issues](#) within the recommendations that we are working to resolve.

Responding to crises and disruptions

From natural disasters to public health crises, and now, rising costs affecting our day-to-day lives, United Way knows that when we stand up for one another, we can make a difference. We continue to be ready to respond to crises and disruptions, working closely with our communities in these moments to uncover urgent needs, design and coordinate solutions, and advocate on behalf of partners and residents. **Together, we reach people who are struggling to get them the support they need in times of uncertainty.**

The **Derecho storm** in May 2022 resulted in extensive property damage and power outages throughout our region, leaving thousands of people vulnerable and isolated for over a week. We worked with our

community partners to help ensure people had access to food and basic needs, including ramping up deliveries and sharing resources to ensure food could be cooked, stored, and transported safely.

The **Gifts in Kind program**—established by United Way in 2001 and managed by the Rideau Rockcliffe Community Resource Centre since 2011—acts as a central hub that gathers donations of surplus goods and services from individuals, corporations, government, and non-profit organizations. Over the past seven years, Gifts in Kind has distributed more than \$5 million to more than 200 Ottawa non-profit agencies, with items ranging from clothing to office equipment.



"Every time a crisis hits our region, people's access to basic needs is disrupted. This is especially true for seniors who live alone, for people with disabilities who can become trapped inside, and for already struggling families. United Way and our partners always work closely to make sure support arrives quickly—through food deliveries, wellness checks, and mental health supports—helping people through emergencies while contributing to the long-term health of our communities."

Cameron Ketchum, Director, Community Initiatives, Mental Health, Crisis, and Seniors



Reducing risks to communities

Since 2019, municipalities in East Ontario have been [mandated](#) to prepare **Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans (CSWB)**. The purpose of these plans is to identify risk factors to the safety and wellbeing of communities across the province, make recommendations, and develop implementation plans to mitigate those risks. The overall goal is to have safer and healthier communities.

Each municipality is progressing at their own pace, and we collaborate in this space with communities across our region. This collaboration provides all of us the **opportunity to align our priorities with the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans**, and to work more effectively with agencies on the ground and decision makers—avoiding duplication and supporting solutions to challenges in our communities.

Putting recommendations in action

United Way participated as a member in the **Champlain Mental Health and Addictions Network sub-committee on Human Resources**. We echoed province-wide calls to action and recommendations for eight per cent base funding increases for the mental health and addictions sector. **The Ontario government responded with a five per cent increase, which was historic.** United Way continues to advocate for mental health and addictions supports, strengthening of sector capacity, and ultimately improved and equitable access to those services for people in need.

United Way invested \$20,000 in **Community Connections**, a multi-partner initiative that aimed to strengthen volunteer-driven systems of care supports for seniors and caregivers navigating the transition from health facilities to home. The pilot also tested self-directed funding models, which was a key recommendation of the [Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy](#).

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2023-24, we will use our tools and resources to ...



- **Support vulnerable seniors and caregivers by:**
 - **Convening the community and/or participating in networks,** such as the Successful Aging Advisory Councils.
 - **Advocating for improved policies and increased support** for caregivers, in alignment with recommendations of the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy.
 - **Investing in programming and activities** for seniors and caregivers.
- **Support access to comprehensive, integrated, community-based, culturally relevant counselling and supports** for people experiencing crisis, mental health challenges, and substance use disorder issues by:
 - **Investing in in-person, web-based, and telephone-based counselling** and supports, particularly for underserved populations such as Indigenous peoples, Black and racialized communities, 2SLGBTQ+, and rural residents.
- **Investing in and supporting coalitions and partnerships** that increase access to community-based mental health, substance use disorder, and crisis counselling, including gender-based and intimate partner violence supports.
- **Investing in counselling and supports** for people in crisis and survivors of sexualized violence.
- **Leveraging community services expertise** in pursuit of key City of Ottawa Auditor General recommendations, made in response to the Convoy Protest and Derecho storm.
- **Improve equity, connectedness, and wellbeing** by investing in community development programs, including Women United Community Action Grants.

- **Lead, participate in, and support networks and coalitions** that work to improve conditions and wellbeing in vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities (such as: [United For All](#), [Community Development Framework](#), [The Ottawa Neighbourhood Social Capital Forum](#), [Ontario Health Teams](#), [Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell's](#) consultation table on gender equality, municipal Community Safety and Wellbeing Plans, food security tables, etc.).
- **Support sustainability and build capacity for networks, coalitions, and agencies by:**
 - Investing in and supporting **volunteerism and volunteer programs** that build and grow community sector capacity.
- **Investing in activities, projects, and programs** that improve outcomes for the community sector and agencies working together to improve outcomes for vulnerable people.
- **Convening the community on the non-profit sector's** sustainability, resilience, and transformation.
- **Advocating for people experiencing mental health and/or addictions challenges** by working with the Champlain Mental Health and Addictions Network.



THE IMPACT OF OUR INVESTMENTS



Healthy People, Strong Communities across our region:



As a result of these investments:



OUTCOMES

Outcomes	Results	
People in crisis have access to immediate supports	91% of individuals felt supported and had their stress levels reduced.	39,756 individuals received crisis supports.
Seniors have improved wellbeing and are less isolated	85% of seniors reported decreased isolation.	2,580 seniors reported decreased isolation.
Neighbourhoods achieve positive change	5,647 residents came together to engage on issues of shared importance.	
Adults in crisis have access to supports	54% of clients experienced a reduction in stress and anxiety.	20,221 clients experienced a reduction in stress and anxiety.
Adults have access to mental health and addiction supports	91% of clients saw an improvement to their mental health.	23,777 clients had access to mental health and addiction supports.
Individuals have access to healthy foods and physical activity	95% of children ate healthier, increased their physical activity, and/or moved towards a healthy weight.	6,359 children and youth participated in physical activity and/or healthy food access/nutrition program.

* Program reporting period: January 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 (18-month investments).
 Program reports due to United Way: July 15, 2022. Outcome data analyzed and reported by United Way: November 2022.

Insights into the outcomes are available in the Appendix.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Local Love in a Global Crisis

When the pandemic began, United Way East Ontario quickly mobilized to see how we could support those most in need.

Since March 2020, we've focused on seeking out new, innovative approaches to keep the most vulnerable people from falling through the cracks during the toughest times. Grassroots groups formed and new services emerged because of collaboration across sectors at the COVID-19 Community Response Table—a group of more than 100 partners representing public health authorities, municipalities, frontline social service agencies, and corporate partners, that came together through the first two years of the pandemic under United Way's leadership with the common goal of supporting local people as they coped with the effects of COVID-19.



- ✓ We worked with our communities to implement a **next-day virtual mental health counselling service** when we were all locked down at home.
- ✓ Our community response table was instrumental in starting a **text-based crisis outreach service for women experiencing violence at home**, so they could reach out more discreetly for help.
- ✓ We rallied our partners working in the most marginalized neighbourhoods to deliver **at-home interactive learning and nutrition kits** for kids.
- ✓ We helped to scale up a **province-wide, telephone-based social program for seniors** who relied on community day programs for social interaction before the pandemic.
- ✓ **And so much more.**

From March 2020 to February 2023,
here's how we put your dollars to work:

\$3,663,613 invested

123
programs

90
community
partners

36,635
people
supported

383,584
interactions

*Interactions mean any type of contact with an individual.
Learn more about examples of interactions in the Appendix.*

The pandemic no longer feels like an urgent crisis. But that doesn't mean the work is over.

We continue to see a historic need for social services, the cost of living keeps rising, frontline workers are burnt out and leaving the sector, charitable giving is down, and what the end of the pandemic looks like is uncertain.

Our path forward is about taking "what's worked" during the pandemic and turning that into long-lasting change. It's about treating chronic issues with the urgency they require to build more resilient communities.

Did you know?

United Way East Ontario led the national movement of United Ways in responding to the social pressures of the pandemic?

Together, United Ways powered **3,400 projects across the country** that helped isolated seniors, supported people struggling with their mental health, and reached those who had difficulty meeting their basic needs.

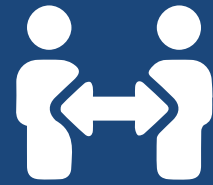
We continue to respond to the most pressing needs in our communities, because the effects of COVID-19 will last for generations. When you give to United Way, you help:



Ensure easy access to basic needs.



Address the housing and homelessness crisis.



Close the widening opportunity gap.



Increase access to mental health and substance use supports.



Support equitable economic recovery and inclusive growth.



WOMEN UNITED

Why I give

At the start of the pandemic three years ago, I was seeking ways to get more involved and to provide support in the community. I had been living in Ottawa for four years at the time and was ready to find new ways to connect following the end of another commitment as the past president of a Board. When I researched ways to give back to my new(ish) community, I intentionally focused on the lives of women, family and children. This brought me to Women United.

Raised by an inspiring single parent, I have always been drawn to the work of United Way and initiatives that involve supporting women, girls, and gender-diverse people. Women United combines opportunities for volunteers to give back in multiple ways, recognizing that each person has access to different resources, skills, and abilities; and then through the funding and programs, Women United works in the community with real people to make a difference to the lives of women and families.



I know that strong women and families help to build strong communities that thrive. Ottawa is home to so many communities that can benefit from the work of Women United. It is with great appreciation for all the good in my own life and community that compels me to want to contribute.

Krista Pearson

Women United Member

Global Movement. Local Impact.

With more than 70,000+ members across six countries and 165 communities, Women United donors and members are making a difference, advocating for change, and creating a brighter future for women and girls.

Locally, United Way East Ontario's [Women United](#) is a network of 845 donors, including 114 members, who are dedicated to leveraging their time, talents, and funds to empower women in our communities to build strong, independent lives.

In our region, Women United makes a difference in these four areas:



Addressing
gender-based
violence



Empowering
women in
leadership



Supporting young
mothers and
their children



Building an
equitable
economic recovery

Making a Difference

As a collective, Women United invests in two distinct areas:

Community Action Grants supporting small, grassroots initiatives in our region's most vulnerable areas. These grants support women living in these areas to become leaders and changemakers, identifying and executing on small initiatives for the betterment of their communities.

United Way's Community Fund to bolster the organization's impact agenda, helping to improve the lives of women across our region.

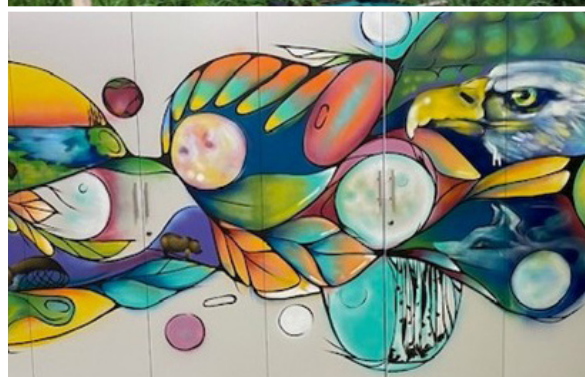
WOMEN UNITEDTM

In 2022, Women United invested \$178,804 into: Community Action Grants



Activities include:

- Free summer sports opportunities that promote mental wellbeing and break cultural stereotypes for newcomer and racialized young women.
- A gardening project that increases food security for residents of a racialized, low-income community, while supporting participants' mental health and increasing their networks.
- An art therapy program for Indigenous women fleeing violence centred on the creation of a community art project.
- A planning committee for International Girls Day activities, which provide rural, young women with a platform, a voice, and a place to engage and build their futures.
- A community based social group for women living in a "recreation desert" to provide a safe space where participants can gather and attend various lessons and workshops.



United Way Community Fund



Activities include:

- Programs that support young mothers and their children in at-risk neighbourhoods and rural communities.
- Skills training that help marginalized populations, particularly newcomer women, break down barriers and enter the Canadian labour market.
- A training series to help residents in low-income communities feel empowered to take on leadership roles and address community issues.
- Court support and counselling to women who have or may encounter criminalization, which includes crisis and trauma supports.
- Holistic mental health and addictions counselling to support the mental wellbeing of Indigenous women and youth.



"If they don't have access to these sessions, the women will be alone. They will be in their own bubble and won't be aware of anything that happens around them. Just like me in the beginning, when I had just arrived in Ottawa. I didn't know anything about life here."

Ola, Creating the Change We Want graduate

[Read her story](#)



THE TOMORROW FUND™

We call our planned giving program the Tomorrow Fund™ because these generous gifts help us plan for a better future. When donors include a gift to United Way in their will, they lift up some of the most vulnerable people where they live as part of their legacy.

People have more power to make an impact than they realize. Leaving a bequest to United Way East Ontario, either a set dollar amount or a percentage of an estate, is an investment that can make a difference for generations to come.



"A planned gift—no matter the size—is one of the most selfless acts for the future of our communities."

Jessica Deut, Manager, Donor Relations

The Tomorrow Fund™ in action

Thanks to donors who choose to leave a gift in their will, our team can make strategic investments to address issues facing our communities.

These investments include research, crisis response, and supporting new, creative ways of making an impact.

Over the past three years, youth have navigated deep disruptions to their lives. The recent results from the Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey confirmed our concerns about their wellbeing: as we emerge from the pandemic, we're seeing spikes in poor mental health, students are finding it difficult to cope with unexpected problems, and many are turning to substances to relax, feel better, or fit in.

In 2021, nearly half, or

44%

of students in Ottawa reported fair or poor mental health, more than twice as many students compared to 2019, before the pandemic started.

Thanks to the Tomorrow Fund™, United Way supported research to help us better understand the mental health needs of local youth. The findings will help better support kids and families in a post-pandemic reality.

This research informs initiatives like project step, which ensures young people and their families have access to support, treatment, education, and prevention of harm related to substance and technology use.



GENNEXT EAST ONTARIO: CONNECT, LEARN, SUPPORT

GenNext is a social impact movement bringing together young leaders, aspiring philanthropists, entrepreneurs, and local creatives to make meaningful, lasting change.

Through events, newsletters, volunteer opportunities, and more, we connect people who want to learn about our causes and support our communities.

Our [GenNext Advocate Program](#) is a great opportunity for supporters to get involved with flexible volunteer hours that help them to develop their professional skills and stand up for issues that matter most to them.



"GenNext targets local issues that represent all the topics I am passionate about: mental health, youth homelessness, equitable employment, diversity and inclusion. For me, the topic of mental health is of particular importance as I firmly believe that to build a prosperous society, there needs to be a focus on building up the individuals within it by prioritizing their mental health. For this reason, GenNext allows me to work amongst other advocates to tackle these issues head-on and give back to my community."

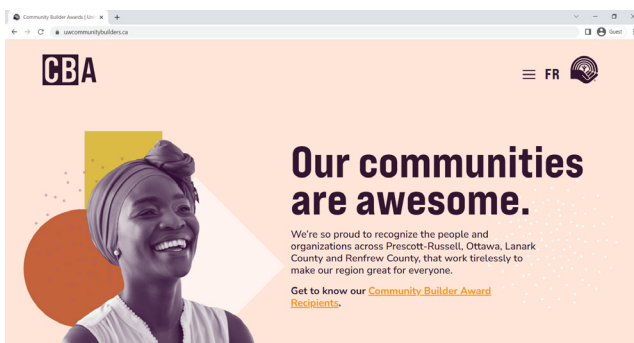
Bassant Mohamed, GenNext Advocate

WHAT'S NEW

Community Builder Awards: A celebration and new website

In October 2022, we hosted our **Community Builder Celebration**, our first in-person event since the start of the pandemic. With more than 120 people in attendance and others watching online, we were thrilled to celebrate and showcase 2022's Community Builder Award recipients.

The Community Builder Award program recognizes the people, groups, and organizations across our region that work tirelessly to make our communities great for everyone. Each year, we recognize a Community Builder of the Year—our most prestigious award—but in 2022, we recognized three: **Prescott-Russell Food Access Collaborative, Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition, and the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy Working Group.**



During the event, we also launched our [new community builder website](#) that will be the new home for our award recipients and their inspiring stories. For more than 20 years, we've been honoured to meet more than 900 local changemakers and learn about the incredible spirit of generosity and caring that exists all around us.

Introducing virtual tours

United Way reimagined many of the in-person activities we offered after the pandemic began. What were once “Seeing is Believing” tours where we would take supporters on a day trip to a local partner—where they could experience, up close, their donations at work—became a series of “virtual tours.” These videos feature partners across our region who are making an impact in the lives of newcomers, kids, seniors, and youth experiencing homelessness.

United Way’s Community Impact directors were co-hosts of each virtual tour, giving context along the way about how the value of United Way’s partnership goes beyond the investments we make.

This [video series](#) allows anyone—no matter where they are in our region or what time of year it is—to gain a deeper understanding of the work United Way and our partners do in our communities to create measurable, lasting change.



“I’m lucky that in my role, I get to hear first-hand from people about how their lives were improved thanks to United Way. Bringing donors closer to what impact can look like—through the interviews we film, blogs we write, and photos we take—that’s what it’s all about. Just like how an annual report isn’t just about numbers, our virtual tours aren’t just about seeing spaces, they’re about the stories of people we help.”

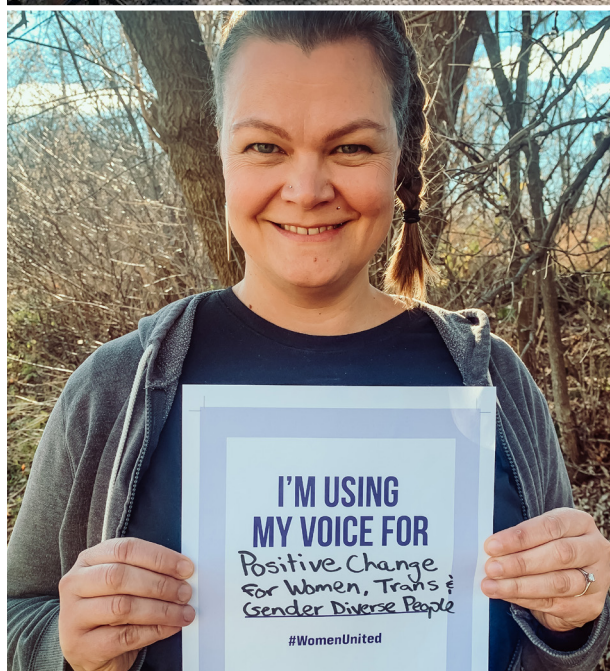
Carol Boeira, Senior Manager, Communications

Exploring the power of using your voice

Since 2020, Women United has offered a series of virtual events called **Disruptive Dialogues**, which brings women together to discuss the most pressing social issues affecting our communities. In November 2022, our panel—hosted by United Way’s Melissa Somers—included Sawsan Al-Refaei from the City of Ottawa, Erin Leigh from Counselling and Family Services Ottawa, and Anna MacDonald of the Survivor and Advocacy Support Initiative.

These diverse voices led an inspiring discussion on **gender-based violence, advocacy, intersectionality, and how individuals can use their voices to create real change**. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with these extraordinary leaders and to inspire and empower our communities toward a better future.

This past year, **we went hybrid**: allowing supporters to participate online from the comfort of their own homes and in-person viewing parties hosted by their workplaces. We were thrilled to welcome more than 150 virtual attendees and had five viewing parties hosted by Accenture, Borden Ladner Gervais LLP, Algonquin College, and Bank of Montreal.



Taking a stand, shaping policy, and driving transformation

Common Ground Ottawa mayoral candidates debate

On October 20, 2022, United Way East Ontario, Ottawa Board of Trade, Ottawa and District Labour Council, in partnership with Carleton University, hosted the **Common Ground Ottawa mayoral candidates debate**. Our organizations put the most pressing social issues on the candidates' agenda ahead of the municipal election on October 24.

At the event, mayoral candidates Catherine McKenney and Mark Sutcliffe debated topics at the intersection of social justice, labour, and economic development, including affordable housing, landmark infrastructure, community trust and resilience. United Way continues to partner



with Ottawa Board of Trade and the Ottawa and District Labour Council to find solutions to the most pressing needs of our communities at the municipal level.



"Politics is a hard job, the pressure on elected officials continues to grow, and this campaign has been hostile at times. But just as we three seemingly different organizations have found common ground to advocate for the toughest issues our community faces, so too must our new city government."

Michael Allen, President and CEO of United Way East Ontario;
Sean McKenny, President of the Ottawa and District Labour Council;
Sueling Ching, President and CEO of the Ottawa Board of Trade,

Ottawa Citizen editorial published on October 18, 2022.

Convoy occupation and our engagement with the Auditor General

For nearly a month between January and February 2022, the so called “Freedom Convoy” occupied downtown Ottawa streets. The disruption prevented frontline agencies from providing essential services to our community’s most vulnerable people, and [had disastrous effects on residents’ health and wellbeing](#).

We spoke up on behalf of the more than 37 social and community services affected by the protestors, and worked closely with the City of Ottawa and other partners to ensure basic needs were not interrupted.

Over the summer of 2022, we submitted feedback to the City of Ottawa Office of the Auditor General about the impact the convoy occupation had on social and community services during the crisis phase and in the months that followed. They consulted us for additional details through the fall.

We were pleased to see [our recommendation](#) to better involve the community services sector in emergency responses included in the final report, so residents are not left isolated and disconnected from vital, lifesaving social services.



Office of the
Auditor General
City of Ottawa

Audit of the City of Ottawa’s Response to the Convoy Protest



February 2023

Audit of the City of Ottawa’s Response to the Convoy Protest



During the convoy protest, whenever 3-1-1, 2-1-1, or the HNTF received a service request, the resident would be connected to a community partner and/or a City service. Approximately 30 community partners were involved in supporting residents during the convoy protest. The community partner would find a way to get to the resident, with the help of the HNTF and the NCRCC to navigate the best routes to take. Community partners did their best given the situation but faced similar challenges to City staff related to employee safety and difficulty accessing certain areas. Community partners also experienced some challenges in getting responses to their specific questions / concerns from the City, as there was no protocol in place to get clear information outside of the regular meetings held. Further, the City was unable to determine the number of residents assisted during the emergency because service delivery completed by community partners was not tracked and reported back to the HNTF.

There is a need to use the experience of the convoy protest to produce a preparedness plan that clarifies the role of community partners in municipal emergency responses. Preparation is required on topics such as protection of staff and property, maintaining access to critical services, ensuring the surge capacity of basic needs services (such as food delivery, wellness checks and crisis supports), consideration for additional funding to reimburse direct costs incurred as a result of the emergency, and expanding mental health and trauma supports as part of a community recovery plan.

RECOMMENDATION 8 – INCLUDE THE HNTF AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN THE CITY’S EMP AND MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY PLAN

The Director of Public Safety Service should work with the GM of CSSD or designate to formalize the roles and responsibilities of community support partners during an emergency in the relevant EMP document(s). Considerations should be given to the following:

- maintaining a current list of all community partners and the services they provide;
- formalizing the channels of communication during an emergency to ensure that questions or concerns can be addressed in a timely and effective manner;
- ensuring the ability to obtain adequate staff, supplies and equipment to meet the basic needs of residents during an emergency;
- seeking approval from Council and/or other levels of government, for additional funding, when necessary; and
- ways to track and monitor service delivery to aid the City in determining if services are being effectively deployed and to identify where additional resources may be required.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

As my two-year term as Board Chair of United Way East Ontario comes to a close, I wanted to take a moment to express my heartfelt gratitude, reflect on our collective achievements, and share my optimism for the future.

I'm proud to have served an organization that takes their commitment to their volunteers seriously—ensuring those who bring invaluable perspectives and diverse skillsets are equipped with the information they need to enhance decision making and drive lasting change.

Volunteers have played a significant role in our governance over the past several years. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the instrumental role that my predecessor, Danya Vered, had in this. Under her visionary leadership, our organization underwent a transformative journey that has shaped our current success.

Danya's recalibration of our volunteer cohort and dedication to ensuring a healthy and modernized governance structure laid a solid foundation for us to live into our



mission of being an impact United Way. It's been wonderful to witness the tangible results of our efforts in recruiting board members who deeply understand and embody this mission. While she may be leaving the board, I have no doubt that Danya's mark on the organization will continue to resonate, and we'll surely be hearing more about her contributions to the community.


It's been a privilege to serve alongside such a passionate group of individuals. I'd like to thank our President and CEO Michael Allen for his guidance and strategic vision that are instrumental in propelling us forward. My gratitude extends to my fellow board members, committee members, community partners, donors, and every member of United Way's staff, whose dedication and

collective efforts are the driving force behind our impact.

Since our amalgamation in 2017, we have truly become one United Way. The complex challenges facing our communities transcend geographic borders, and we've been working together to put in place solutions that are mindful of the distinct rural and urban contexts they encompass. We've learned so much from our relationships across Prescott-Russell, Ottawa, Lanark and Renfrew counties, and this spirit of collective learning and growth will continue to guide us in the years to come.

Beyond our local boundaries, United Way East Ontario is proud to be a leader for United Ways across Canada. We spearheaded our network's response to the social pressures of the pandemic, and most recently, we were integral in sharpening our focus across the country on the unique challenges we face as we emerge from the pandemic. Having the chance to volunteer at a senior level in this organization has been the highlight of my career.

I've been lucky that during my time as Chair, my personal commitment to community wealth building has been brought to the forefront of United Way's work. We as a Board firmly believe building community wealth is an integral part of achieving our pursuit of an equitable economic recovery. I've been grateful to contribute, and I will undoubtedly continue to champion these efforts.



"It's been a privilege to serve alongside such a passionate group of individuals."

The World Health Organization may have declared that COVID-19 is no longer a global health emergency, but the effects of what we've been through are still present. This brings to mind Winston Churchill's famous quote from 1942: "Now this is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning." Recovering will take years. However, the priorities United Way has identified are a lens which we will continue to look through as we work with partners to ensure our communities flourish in the face of ongoing challenges.

Sincerely,



George Brown,
Board Chair, United Way East Ontario

APPENDIX

Investment Breakdowns

Terminology

Focus Area: Through research, consultation, and analysis we're able to identify where our community needs help the most and where our investments will show the greatest results. The three focus areas (All That Kids Can Be; From Poverty to Possibility; and Healthy People, Strong Communities) each concentrate on specific needs, and connect with programs and services to make the greatest impact possible.

Strategic Priorities: United Way's strategic priorities are designed to: Address root causes or systemic issues, offer rich opportunities to align the work with multiple community partners, enable evidence-based approaches, and capitalize on community energy. All investments made through the Call for Proposals are in projects or programs that will advance our strategic priorities. Strategic priority partners identify indicators with targets that align to our priorities and report against those targets in an annual program report for each year of their funding.

Community Wide Initiatives: Based on research, Community Wide Initiatives operate to enhance existing community impact and investment strategies in one or more priority goals. Community Wide Initiatives mobilize multiple stakeholders

in order to address local challenges and create a collective response to affect systemic change.

Donor Designed Investment(s) and Affinity Programs: An investment in a focus area, priority goal, program or project, achieved through highly customized cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship of a donor and in consultation with priority goal partners.

The Tomorrow Fund™: When you include a gift to United Way East Ontario in your will, your gift is part of the Tomorrow Fund™. This fund enables us to make strategic and innovative investments where they are needed most and will have the greatest impact—today, tomorrow, and during times of crisis. If a bequest is made without specific donor instructions of how the funds should be used, United Way's Board policy creates internally restricted funds for these planned gifts. The first \$100,000 received in a year will be internally restricted for Community Impact for allocation as one-time funding for programs and community initiatives. The remainder is internally restricted for operations. The funds are to be used for activities that advance one or more of United Way's focus areas and strategic priorities.

All That Kids Can Be – 18-month funding period

Focus Area Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
All That Kids Can Be (Renfrew County and Prescott-Russell)	9	Homework clubs, social recreation, leadership development, mentorship	\$162,760

Strategic Priority Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Critical Hours	15	Homework clubs, social recreation, leadership development, mentorship	\$1,221,936
School Readiness	4	Parenting support, parent-child activities, skill development	\$333,575
Youth Homelessness	4	Homelessness prevention, social enterprises, transitional housing services	\$312,559
Mental Health and Addictions (Children and Youth)	2	Parent supports, refugee supports, counselling and addiction support programs	\$102,102
Crisis Supports (Children and Youth)	1	Crisis support services	\$52,155

All That Kids Can Be – 18-month funding period

Community Wide Initiative(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Critical Hours/School Readiness	1	Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative (OCYI), community collaboration	\$112,500
Mental Health/Addictions	5	<i>project step</i> (non-mainstream school and out of school support programs, counselling, parent programs, research, school counselling programs), Planet Youth Lanark County	\$291,596

Donor Designed Investment(s) and Affinity Programs

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Critical Hours	4	Enhanced Homework Clubs + Summer Achievement Gap (6 program sites), art programming	\$219,012
Youth Homelessness	1	Fill a Backpack (In-Kind)	\$0
Mental Health/Addictions	1	Rapid opioid response, school counselling	\$100,000

Local Love in a Global Crisis

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Mental Health for Youth	4	School and community mental health programs, supports for people with autism, virtual mental health supports	\$206,516
Learning Loss of Youth	7	Virtual mentoring, hybrid homework clubs, educational supports to prevent learning loss	\$325,800

From Poverty to Possibility – 18-month funding cycle

Focus Area Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
From Poverty to Possibility (Renfrew County and Prescott-Russell)	1	Supportive employment programs, employment readiness programs, financial literacy, skills development	\$38,250

Strategic Priority Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Employment for Newcomers	4	Supportive employment programs, employment readiness programs	\$328,500
Employment for People with Disabilities	5	Social enterprises, supportive employment programs, employment readiness program	\$256,236
Financial Crisis	1	Financial literacy/crisis	\$77,448
Youth Employment	2	Employment supports	\$75,000
Rural residents seeking employment have access to literacy training and skills development	1	Skills development and literacy training (Lanark County)	\$16,238

From Poverty to Possibility – 18-month funding cycle

Community Wide Initiative(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Employment for Immigrants and New Canadians	1	Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO)	\$292,799
Employment for People with Disabilities	1	Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)	\$97,592

Donor Designed Investment(s) and Affinity Programs

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Critical Hours	1	Financial literacy	\$31,800

Grants Based Initiatives

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Employment for Immigrants and New Canadians	N/A	Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO), workplace culture and inclusion	\$432,051
Employment for People with Disabilities	N/A	Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)	\$197,471
Indigenous Employment Leadership Table	1	Collective Impact	\$149,052
Employment for Vulnerable Populations	1	Research	\$333,782
Community Wealth Building	1	Seminar	\$3,258
Energy Poverty	4	Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), Hydro-Relief, Affordability Trust Fund	\$379,569

From Poverty to Possibility – 18-month funding cycle

Local Love in a Global Crisis

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Basic Needs	18	Pay-as-you-go mobile cards, food hampers and baskets, food cupboards, essential items, grocery cards, winter kits, summer gardens	\$555,137
Economic Recovery	3	Employment supports for women, community benefit agreements, Indigenous youth employment program	\$136,032

Healthy People, Strong Communities – 18-month funding cycle

Focus Area Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Healthy People, Strong Communities (Renfrew County and Prescott-Russell)	7	Mental health/addictions, crisis supports, strong neighbourhoods, successful aging	\$89,635

Strategic Priority Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Agency Capacity Building	4	Collective impact initiatives, capacity building agency supports	\$280,613
Mental Health/Addictions	8	Counselling/peer supports	\$821,582

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Crisis Supports	4	Distress lines, crisis counselling, intervention	\$429,275
Successful Aging	9	Programs that help seniors remain in their home, recreational programs, day programs	\$462,557
Strong Neighbourhoods	6	Resident engagement, supporting community initiatives, asset mapping	\$406,602

Strategic Investment(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Crisis Supports	4	211 (referral service)	\$214,296
Strong Neighbourhoods	1	Ottawa Neighbourhood Study	\$172,500
Mental Health	1	Labour Community Services	\$169,043

Donor Designed Investment(s) & Affinity Program(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Strong Neighbourhoods	6	Community Action Grants; Hard Hat Heroes	\$145,175

Healthy People, Strong Communities – 18-month funding cycle

Tomorrow Fund Initiative(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Strong Neighbourhoods		Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous Peoples	\$15,000
Crisis Supports		Research on COVID-19 impact on women in Prescott-Russell	\$7,500

Local Love in a Global Crisis

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Community Crisis Supports	33	Data plans, convoy crisis supports, community safety project, intimate partner and/or gender-based violence crisis supports, equipment and technology updates, digital equity	\$596,345
Agency Capacity Building	1	Homelessness systems coordination	\$25,000
Help for Seniors	16	In-person and virtual senior programs, caregiver support programs, engagement sessions, Indigenous Elders luncheon	\$491,605
Mental Health	16	Virtual and hybrid mental health supports, mental health supports for racialized communities, harm reduction programs, Counselling Connect	\$881,745

Examples of Interactions – Local Love in a Global Crisis

Agency capacity building	Systems coordination for the homelessness sector.
Mental Health	Phone based communication and support; prevention-focused brief intervention counselling; individual and group counselling; food delivery; wellness checks; virtual mental health check-ins; virtual workshops and care sessions; Chromebooks, laptops, and cellphones for virtual care; referrals; outreach and educational sessions; community presentations and meetings; clinical supervision; mentorship workshops.
Learning Loss	Homework help nights and homework clubs; meals provided during programming; mentoring and youth development; workshops; virtual engagements and meetings; check-ins.
Basic needs	Client support and assistance; basic essential needs; wellness checks; housing resources; transportation; food assistance and meal delivery; systems navigation.
Help for Seniors	Check in calls; grocery card deliveries; social hour programming; wellness and physical exercise programming; cooking classes; virtual musical hour; mental health supports for isolated seniors; virtual recreation and fitness programming; remote visiting and virtual engagement; volunteers engaging with people living with dementia; multilingual supports (including language-specific workshops and sessions).
Economic recovery	Essential supplies and clothing for interviews and employment; one-on-one mentoring; monthly meetings; mentor training; small group engagements; mentee and mentor engagements; training and development; support and guidance.
Crisis supports	Online support, chats, and workshops; meals prepared and served; text messages; crisis calls.

Outputs

Outputs measure the quantity and quality of services provided by partner agencies (e.g. clients served, hours of service, activities that took place, sessions held, pamphlets produced, etc.).

In other words, outputs measure how much we made possible and how well it was executed.

Outputs by Focus Area Comparison – Across our Region

Focus Area	2021-22	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18*
All That Kids Can Be	20,471	31,194	33,250	11,775
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People supported • Programs 	50	47	62	68
From Poverty to Possibility	8,044	6,151	10,339	5,986
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People supported • Programs 	24	17	27	21
Healthy People, Strong Communities	93,764	53,710	64,058	68,317
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People supported • Programs 	57	36	69	70

*2017-18 represents Ottawa only.

Note: The number of programs we invest in changes year to year based on updated priorities and activities, and by prioritizing collective impact initiatives where many partners work toward a common goal. Our outputs are also influenced by moving from a three-year funding cycle to a one-year funding cycle and fluctuations in the dollars we have available to invest.

Outcomes

Outcomes measure the broader results achieved through the delivery of services, in this case at the program or project level. Outcomes quantify the actual effect the agency's efforts have on its objectives. For agencies who work on the front line to support people in need, outcomes could be changes in (or maintenance of) skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, or circumstance. For agencies who work at a system level, outcomes could be changes in (or the maintenance of) system-level stats, conditions, policies, etc.

In other words, outcomes measure if people are better off, or in the case of system-level programs, whether or not the desired goal has been achieved. United Way East Ontario sees outcomes as the best measure of impact when reporting on our investments.

Insights Into the Outcomes: All That Kids Can Be

- Recent studies on the impact of the pandemic on children and youth indicates they are struggling with their emotional and mental wellbeing, and we need to make sure children and youth are in a good position to be resilient and can thrive in life. As a result, we re-evaluated the measurement for 'resilient children and youth' to take into account the impact of programming to improve emotional wellbeing of their participants.

- Heavy substance use and poly-substance use amongst youth is on the rise in our community since 2020. It has become a region-wide issue and many of our partners have found youth participants are not attending their meetings and sessions as regularly. As a result, substance use reduction is lower than in previous years.

Insights Into the Outcomes: From Poverty to Possibility

- Overall, there was an increase in the number of beneficiaries of community programs that address financial instability, employment, and support for a more diverse and equitable labour market. In addition to the extended reporting period (additional six months), there were additional government grants and funding opportunities for organizations to improve or expand on employment and labour market programs.
- There was a general decrease in obtained and maintained employment. Please note that as a result of the extended reporting period, this may have influenced the ability of organizations to report on final outcomes before programming has ended.

- Youth employment rates have declined in rural communities across Ontario. This is the first year we have been able to report on high-risk youth from rural communities that have been engaged in job training and educational programs in order to improve job outcomes.

Insights Into the Outcomes:

Healthy People, Strong Communities

- Results may be higher for two reasons: the reporting period (18 months) is six months more than previous years, and this is the second year we have been able to roll up program results from across our region.
- The majority of participants asked about reductions to their stress were reported by the 24-hour distress line, a service that is often the first point of contact for individuals experiencing immediate distress and non-emergency crisis. It should be noted that 54% is a significant impact that was made on the lives of more than 20,000 individuals across all of our crisis support programs.
- The measurement of the 'People in crisis have access to immediate supports' was re-evaluated and adjusted to represent the positive impact our community partners had on clients achieving their goals.
- There was a significant increase in children and youth making healthy choices. The OSDHUS data found youth reported a decrease in physical activity and healthy choices during 2021 as a result of isolation. It is possible that children and youth had better opportunities to make healthy choices as we moved out of isolation and programs went back to in person activities in 2022. It is also likely the change in seasons influenced children and youth's physical activity and healthy choices.

Measurement and Collection Methods

Indicator Assessment Definitions for Agency Partners

This is how we ask our partners to report back on the front-line work United Way donors have helped make possible.

Type: Output or Outcome

Indicator description: Provide the actual indicator. The description should be succinct and without ambiguity. An outcome indicator normally implies directional change using words such as increase, decrease, strengthening, reduce, improved etc. An output indicator typically reports on short-term results or actions that are needed in order to achieve an outcome and uses action words such as trained, completed, identified, held, disseminated, evaluated, launched etc.

Target: Targets should be specific, realistic and ambitious. With few exceptions, targets should be numeric. They cannot be a range (e.g. 45-55 is not acceptable, 50 is acceptable). There is no need to qualify a target (e.g. 50 children) because who or what the agency is measuring should be very clear in the indicator description (e.g. increase in children attending homework clubs).

Indicate target increase percentage:

If a partner is eligible and is requesting a multi-year agreement, they may wish to increase some or all of their targets for indicators past year one. If they wish to

do this, they can indicate the percentage they would like their target to increase by. For example, if their target is 50 and in year two they want it to be 60, and in year three 72, then their increase is 20 per cent. This is optional.

Unit of measure: The most common units of measure will be number or percentage. For activities such as getting a policy approved or holding a major event, a unit of measure such as complete/incomplete may be more appropriate.

Definition: Agencies have the opportunity to outline what the different terms/words used in the indicator mean to them, since often, terms used are open to interpretation. For instance, in the indicator “decrease in the number of people using drugs”, it would be helpful to further define that ‘people’ are program clients and to be counted as someone no longer using drugs, they must have been off drugs for at least six weeks by the end of the one year program.

Frequency and timing of data collection:

How often and when data is collected. Daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, each January and July, annually, etc. Is there a specific time period when data is collected (e.g. only during the school year, during tax season)?

Method to data collection or calculation:

A description of the approach or plan to collect the data, including where data will be kept and how results will be calculated.

Data source: Where the data needed to calculate or track the indicator will be coming from. It should be clear whether the source is internal to the organization or external. If an agency is asked to provide evidence of the figures it calculated or provided for an indicator, they are expected to provide documentation or a source.

Person(s) responsible for data collection: When designing an indicator, it is important to think about who will be responsible for collecting and maintaining the data, to ensure that it will be feasible to collect. Is this a staff member? A consultant? A volunteer? The title of the person responsible should be identified.



**United Way
Centraide**

East Ontario
Est de l'Ontario

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF
LES ÉTATS FINANCIERS DE

**United Way East Ontario
Centraide de l'Est de l'Ontario**

FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2023
POUR L'EXERCICE TERMINÉ LE 31 MARS 2023

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN PRESCOTT-RUSSELL, OTTAWA,
LANARK AND RENFREW COUNTIES

À L'ŒUVRE DANS LES COMMUNAUTÉS DE PRESCOTT ET RUSSELL,
D'OTTAWA ET DES COMTÉS DE LANARK ET DE RENFREW

**Read our full 2022-23 audited
financial statements.**

**View our 2022-23 Honour Roll for
a list of United Way East Ontario's
most notable philanthropists.**



United Way
East Ontario

2022-2023 HONOUR ROLL

**Celebrating United Way East Ontario's
most notable philanthropists.**

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN PRESCOTT-RUSSELL,
OTTAWA, LANARK AND RENFREW COUNTIES

ABOUT UNITED WAY EAST ONTARIO

Working with communities in Prescott-Russell, Ottawa, Lanark and Renfrew Counties, United Way East Ontario invests resources where they are needed most and will have the greatest impact.

Through research, evaluation, and partnerships with community experts, we identify the root causes of the biggest social challenges facing our communities and help find solutions that change tens of thousands of lives for the better. 100% of donations to United Way are put to work in the community where it is raised to help those most in need.



United Way
East Ontario