



United Way
East Ontario

2021-22 YEAR IN REVIEW

JUNE 2022

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO

The dedication of those serving our communities' most vulnerable residents has been nothing short of inspirational over this last year.



New waves of community-wide infections and local crises, like the weeks-long occupation of downtown Ottawa, have further compounded issues in recent months. Labour shortages and rising operational costs are pushing exhausted staff and volunteers in the community sector to their breaking points. All the while, demand for services continues to grow across our region.

Yet, our focus has been steady. Our work to ensure vital services are accessible to anyone, from anywhere in our region, has made a significant impact thanks to new, innovative solutions, as well as our ongoing partner, donor, and government stakeholder relationships.

We continue our work with a renewed sense of purpose through strenuous times because we know how important our voice and actions are—especially when our communities' needs are so great.

As you read the pages of this report, I hope you will connect more deeply with the impact United Way East Ontario has had across the region. It is an opportunity to look at how you—our supporters—have made a difference to our work this year.

The seemingly never-ending crisis state that we found ourselves operating in over the last couple of years has forced us to discover a nimbleness that we perhaps didn't even realize we had. The courage, resiliency, and dedication of our volunteers and community partners, and our collective innovation, has, and will continue to, help those who need us most.

Our annual report is a look back on a year that compelled us to find ways to galvanize, as a sector, to respond to local needs. It is a year where we focused on equity and improving access to services for those in rural communities; where we stood up against racism and hate in our region; where we responded to the needs of those isolated, facing violence in their homes or dealing with mental health issues; and where we provided immediate, on-the-ground support to those impacted by the pandemic and the Ottawa occupation.

We also recognized the rise in social sector service demands and capacity challenges by extending crisis support investments for our affected partners.

The challenges were extraordinary through 2021, but we came through focused on many of the same values as before the pandemic, such as

inclusiveness and equitable living for all. We did what was necessary to ensure those we serve continued to be the reason we pulled together and committed ourselves.

We now have a unique opportunity to build our existing relationships, form new ones, continue to collaborate, and look for more opportunities to innovate.

As we look to the year ahead, support is still greatly needed surrounding issues like affordable housing, equitable economic recovery, support for informal caregivers and addressing learning loss for youth. To do this, we must also advocate for sector stability to ensure those in need receive the support they deserve.

I am grateful for those who continue to play an integral part in helping us overcome whatever obstacles lie in our path. Together we forge ahead, and I know we can continue to count on you through this challenging journey.

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 complex social issues, 365 days per year. 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 move them from poverty to possibility.

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.

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.

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.

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.

STABILIZING LOCAL CHARITIES IN THE FACE OF COVID-19

Early in the pandemic, we knew there would be people who could not weather the effects of COVID-19 as well as others. Issues we tackle year-round like poverty, homelessness, social isolation, and mental health are not new, but COVID-19 made them much worse.



Frontline agencies working to address these issues were experiencing never-before-seen levels of demand for their services, with complicated barriers to reaching the people most in need.

In response to this reality, in July 2020, we extended funding by six months (resulting in an 18-month funding cycle, from July 2019 to December 2020) to provide stability to our currently funded partners, as they saw an increase and shift in demand for support and services.

During our 2021 funding cycle, community partners were still experiencing financial instability. As part of our ongoing response to the pandemic, our team decided to extend funding for existing partners for another six months, from January 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022, resulting in another 18-month funding cycle.

[Last year's Year in Review](#) included the results and outcomes for the entire 18 months of investments to help sync the funding cycles again. However, this year's report includes results and outcomes for 12 months, collected and analyzed from interim reports on the impact of our investments from January 1, 2021, to December 3, 2021.

The additional six months of the currently funded programs, from January 1, 2022, to June 30, 2022, will be reported in next year's *Year in Review*.

In many cases, thanks to the generosity of our donors and the Government of Canada who heeded our call for support, our partners also received funding through United Way's *Local Love in a Global Crisis* initiative, the federal government's *Emergency Community Support Fund*, and the Ontario Government's *Social Services Relief Fund*.

This combination of financial support—bolstered by our COVID-19 Community Response Table's advocacy and convening work—has presented our partners with new opportunities for innovation and allowed them to continue providing life-changing support for the most vulnerable populations.

Many of the projects implemented over the past two years are not short-term solutions: they are the keys to making social services more integrated, accessible, and inclusive.

Our challenge moving forward is to sustain them to be part of the systemic transformation that our sector has been working towards for a long time.

OUR INVESTMENTS ACROSS THE REGION

In 2021, we invested in:

101

collaborations
and initiatives

115

programs

104

community
agencies

As a result of these investments:

78,471

unique individuals
were supported

3,035

people volunteered
with our agency
partners

For a total of
195,907
hours



How much we invested in community work in 2021:

Total: \$6,345,465

All That Kids Can Be: \$1,986,013

From Poverty to Possibility: \$2,239,492

Healthy People, Strong Communities: \$2,119,960

This excludes funds raised and invested through our COVID-19 Response. Please see the [COVID-19 Response section](#) 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:

- Children are ready to learn
- Children and youth are engaged and active
- Children and youth are successful in school
- Children and youth have access to mental health and addiction supports
- Children and youth in crisis have access to immediate supports
- Youth housing needs are met
- Children and youth are resilient
- Children and youth have improved mental health

From Poverty to Possibility:

- Newcomers are engaged in the labour market
- People with disabilities are engaged in the labour market

- People in financial crisis receive supports
- Youth are supported in their transition to employment
- Rural residents seeking employment have access to literacy training and skills development (Lanark County only – new this year)

Healthy People, Strong Communities:

- Agencies have the capacity to meet community needs
- Adults have access to mental health and addiction supports
- Seniors have improved wellbeing and are less isolated
- Neighbourhoods achieve positive change
- Adults in crisis have access to immediate supports



ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE

Community hubs pivotal to student success

When community services and after school programs were instructed to shut down to prevent the spread of COVID-19, community houses like Banff Avenue and Confederation Court quickly pivoted to ensure essential services were still there for kids and their families.



Noor and Margartu,
Community House
Participants

Banff Avenue, for example, partnered with other community groups to ensure residents had food, as well as access to internet and devices. They also completed regular check-ins with children and youth.

With the MAKE iT Club, Ottawa's Coalition of Community Houses delivered Learn from Home Kits: educational activity kits that provided STEAM learning (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) when kids couldn't participate in in-person programming.

"It's really nice to see how kids are happiest after helping them with homework or with anything they need. Creating new activities in a safe environment for them, it's really important and that makes me happy every day."

– Noor, Banff Avenue Youth Council member

Thanks to the Stephen and Jocelyne Greenberg Foundation, United Way has provided stability in the Banff Avenue and Confederation Court community houses as they transitioned their programs and services throughout the pandemic—specifically when it comes to addressing the academic achievement gap often faced by low-income students.

[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.

The issues facing children and youth were amplified when the pandemic began affecting our communities. Remote learning has not worked for all kids. Youth who have barriers to internet access, are without adult supports, or need hands-on learning approaches, have seen a widening academic achievement gap.

Some youth experiencing homelessness are without access to their support networks because they don't have a smartphone, computer, or reliable internet. Additionally, more children and youth are reporting challenges with mental health, and the issues reported are more serious, including more problematic substance use and suicidal ideation.

47%

of grade 7-12 students in Ontario indicate a moderate-to-serious level of psychological distress (depression and anxiety).

28,000

children and youth in Ontario have to wait up to two and a half years for mental health treatment.

32%

of Ontario high-school students used alcohol in the past year.

91%

of front-line providers serving homeless youth in Canada during the pandemic reported youth had experienced a significant increase in feelings of isolation and loneliness.

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 region.

Partnering for Success:

- COVID-19 dramatically changed how organizations offered critical hours (summer and before/after school) programs. As a result, there was a need for coordinated support to identify how to open programs while keeping kids and staff safe. The **Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative** developed the 'Make a Plan for Safe Return' project, which provides best practices, training, and resources so that organizations and groups can feel comfortable providing vibrant and safe programming to children, youth, and their families.
- With key partners serving rural Ottawa South, the **Rural Youth Mental Health Program** delivered free, effective counselling services for youth ages 12 to 15, as well as supports for parents and caregivers. One-on-one counselling sessions were offered at the Osgoode Youth Association in a youth-friendly, safe, and accessible space. Parents and caregivers also benefitted from services and resources to better support youth through their mental health challenges.
- United Way is a partner and principal funder of **A Way Home Ottawa (AWHO)**, a youth-driven coalition working to prevent and end youth homelessness in the city through strategic community planning. In June 2020, AWHO contributed youth-specific strategies that would advance the goal to prevent, reduce, and eliminate youth homelessness in Ottawa as part of the City's [10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan refresh](#).

Stepping Up for Youth:

- Students in Ottawa’s Britannia Woods community have a new opportunity to expand their learning after school. In partnership with TechInsights, United Way launched the **After School STEM Learning Club** for high school students in the Britannia neighbourhood.



In October 2021, Britannia Woods Community House—the program lead—began offering 15 to 20 students year-round homework support, one-on-one math and science tutoring, nutrition support, and social engagement, with the goal of levelling the playing field for local youth who may not have supports like these readily accessible to them. The program introduced youth to the foundations of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), preparing them with the knowledge and skills needed to pursue careers in the STEM field or any other field they choose.

- The **My voice, my future!** initiative in Prescott-Russell was made possible thanks to a partnership between Leadership féminin of Prescott-Russell and Centre Novas-CALACS francophone de Prescott-Russell. Supported by United Way and Women United donors, as well as the Government of Canada’s

Emergency Community Support Fund, the organizations have been able to identify issues affecting rural girls and young women, find ways to support them, and begin a roadmap that will help them fully exercise their leadership and boost their presence in public spaces.

As part of the initiative’s work, they met virtually with local girls and women to discuss and identify the challenges they were facing. These conversations helped to break down barriers and identify required tools, training, and resources to improve wellbeing, accessibility, and self-confidence. The participants were French-speaking, lived across the region, presented diverse backgrounds and interests, and demonstrated a clear interest in their desire to use their voices in furthering this work and influencing their future.

- CRC Killaloe is a multi-service agency serving the remote and rural communities in West Renfrew County. They use a **unique rural program model** that includes taking programs and services into surrounding small towns, providing vital community connections and opportunities for rural children and youth.

United Way is proud to support the ‘RISE’ Empowerment for girls, trans, and non-binary youth program, the GAME ON! Mobile Youth Activity program, and the Impact Youth Mentoring program. In 2021, 310 kids were supported through these rural community programs to help them be active, build connections, access healthy food, find supports for mental health and wellness, and grow as local leaders.

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2022 and beyond, United Way East Ontario will use our tools and resources to ...

1) Address the academic achievement gap for vulnerable children and youth by:

- **Increasing programming** to support school readiness and early learning for vulnerable children.
- **Increasing enhanced after school programming** and resources with a focus on STEAM learning.
- **Convening and engaging with partners** like the Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative and other regional collaborative initiatives that address child wellbeing.
- **Supporting research** to improve outcomes for vulnerable children.
- **Supporting mentoring and peer support programming** for vulnerable children and youth.

2) Improve infant, child, and youth mental health, and reduce problematic substance use by:

- **Ensuring ongoing investment in substance use prevention and supports** for youth by engaging in and supporting the Planet Youth network in Lanark County, and well as managing and providing administrative support for collective impact initiatives like *project step*.
- **Ensuring ongoing support for parent, child, and youth mental health and problematic substance use** counselling, information, and support.
- **Conducting a region-wide environmental scan** on child and youth mental health and substance use.
- **Supporting research, counselling, education, life and work skills programs** for youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Convening and advocating for increased affordable housing, and comprehensive supports** for children, youth, and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
- **Convening and participating in networks and coalitions** that work to improve outcomes for equity seeking and equity deserving children and youth.



THE IMPACT OF OUR INVESTMENTS

All That Kids Can Be investments across our region:

10
collaborations
and initiatives

47
programs

44
community
agencies

As a result of these investments:

12,708
people were
supported

1,019
people volunteered with
our agency partners

For a total of
92,671
hours

The Outcomes

Outcomes	Results	
Children are ready to learn	92% of people reported increased confidence in their parenting ability that supported the achievement of developmental milestones.	721 families/caregivers were supported with information, resources, tools, trainings, and/or teaching skills.
Children and youth are engaged and active	89% of middle/high school aged youth developed soft skills like teamwork, problem-solving, and communication.	2,021 youth participated in school and/or community-based, out-of-school time programs and/or received individualized supports.
Children and youth are resilient	79% of children and youth reported decreased levels of stress.	33 children and youth reported decreased levels of stress.
Children and youth have improved mental health	98% of children and youth have improved mental health outcomes.	2,526 children and youth have improved mental health outcomes.
Children and youth are successful in school	5,936 children and youth worked towards achieving academic goals outside of school.	
Youth housing needs are met	92% of youth living in emergency shelters or transitional housing received supports to live independently.	215 youth living in emergency shelters or transitional housing received supports to live independently.
Youth reduced or stopped using drugs	77% of youth reported a reduction in the frequency of drug use (project step).	273 youth reported a reduction in the frequency of drug use (project step).

As we continue to align our work across Ottawa, Prescott-Russell, Lanark County and Renfrew County, our reporting on outcomes will grow and strengthen each year. This year, for the first time, our outcomes reflect results from across the region.

** Program reporting period: Jan 1, 2021 to December 30, 2021 (12-month report of 18-month investments). Interim program reports due to United Way January 22, 2022. Outcome data analyzed and reported by United Way: February-March 2022.*

Insights into the outcomes are available in the Appendix.

FROM POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

Creating career opportunities for newcomer women

What first began as a support group for newcomer women who faced barriers to employment, quickly became a safe haven to gather and create.



**Vanessa,
EcoEquitable
Volunteer**

EcoEquitable’s Sewing for Jobs program, an innovative training series created to be a bridge to financial autonomy for newcomers and vulnerable people, teaches tangible sewing skills while instilling confidence and creating community. On top of this, participants can talk about real issues directly affecting their day-to-day lives—sharing resources and finding solutions together.

Many people across our region face barriers that don’t allow them to participate in the economic, social, cultural, and political spheres of their communities. When people are not met with acceptance and recognition, it can result in a lack of access to resources that are essential to their wellbeing.

In partnership with United Way, Sewing for Jobs helps to build communities that are accessible, inclusive and financially equitable. This means that every person has access to employment, a solid understanding of how to be financially secure, and an opportunity to become financially independent.

“Eco-equitable is a place for creatives to develop their craft and find inspiration while connecting within their community,” says Vanessa, EcoEquitable Volunteer.

[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.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted the financial wellbeing of these equity-seeking groups. This shows up as an urgent need for food, financial assistance, and in some cases,

emergency shelter. Long-term financial support, access to basic needs, and internet and utility assistance continue to be an ongoing concern.

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.

9.2%

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

59%

of Ontario high-school students used of working age adults with disabilities are employed, compared to **80%** of those without disabilities.

70%

of Canada's job losses from February-April 2020 were jobs held by women—many of which were working part-time in low-paid service and care work.

Youth Unemployment

Young people ages 15-24 face higher unemployment rates than people ages 25-64 in every area of our region. Across Ontario, youth unemployment rates are even higher for Indigenous youth, youth with disabilities, newcomer youth, and racial minorities.

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 will work across our region. We do this through initiatives that unite key stakeholders on a collective mission.

Building Community Wealth:

United Way's networks are vast and include connections to many sectors, industries, businesses, governments, elected officials, social services, and community leaders. This puts us in a unique position to create opportunities for people who are left behind by existing economic systems and to break down barriers. By convening community champions and experts, we are building connections across East Ontario and linking organizations with the tools they need to reimagine business ecosystems in ways that benefit everyone—including the most marginalized people in our communities.

In October 2021, United Way gathered more than 120 key organizations, community leaders, government officials, businesses, and others at the East Ontario **Economic**

Recovery and Inclusive Growth Summit.

At this event, powered by RBC, participants discussed the tools of community wealth building that we can use to make our aspirations for more equitable communities a reality.

When organizations buy local, build inclusive workplaces, hire from underrepresented groups in the labour market, and work together with a social justice lens, we can reduce inequities for marginalized groups, repair relationships, and rebuild systems in a way that creates prosperity.



Equity in Employment:

- The **Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)** leaned on its members, Accenture, and the John Howard Society of Ottawa, to deliver virtual workshops on **recognizing and managing stress in the workplace**—an important topic for both employers and job seekers. The sessions also included panel discussions with employers to hear about how mental health is supported in the workplace to understand what has worked and what could work better.

Thirteen job seekers with disabilities and 66 employers, represented by 130 participants, benefitted from these workshops. As the community managed through increased levels of stress as a result of COVID-19, these open and frank conversations provided direct support to many and equipped others to bring broader support to their workplaces.

- In addition to the continued work of targeted recruitment activities to help employers meet top talent, best practice sharing in the community, and the coordination of resources, EARN has worked with its partners to develop a workshop series titled **Shaping Accessible Employment Practices**.

This four-part learning series enhances skills and builds confidence in shaping accessible recruitment and job retention practices. Given that people with disabilities are disproportionately underrepresented in the labour market, these workshops help employers understand the key elements to

accessing this untapped talent pool, while ensuring an equitable economic recovery from COVID-19 that includes people with disabilities.

- A key ingredient for any organization to succeed and rebuild will be a diverse workforce—one where everyone feels they belong, including newcomers. The pandemic has highlighted the contribution of immigrants to the wellbeing of our communities and across all sectors of the economy. From 2021 to 2023, Canada aims to welcome 1,233,000 permanent residents. This has implications for both the Canadian workforce, of which immigrants already make up more than 25 per cent, and the Canadian population.

Hire Immigrants Ottawa (HIO) enhances employers' ability to access the talents of skilled immigrants in the Ottawa area by bringing together employers, immigrant agencies and stakeholders. In 2021, HIO developed and launched a [three-part workshop series](#) on fostering a workplace culture of inclusion and belonging. Additionally, leveraging the expertise and best practices developed by members of the #ImmigrantsWork coalition launched in 2020, HIO worked with partners across the county to develop the [Employer Playbook: Strategies for Immigrant Inclusion in Canadian Workplaces](#), which is helping employers, immigrant-serving organization and others leverage easy-to-implement strategies that support recruitment.

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2022 and beyond, United Way East Ontario will use our tools and resources to ...

1) Work for an equitable economic recovery by:

- **Increasing access to employment programs and supports** that improve outcomes for Indigenous Peoples, under-represented youth, people with disabilities, and newcomers.
- **Investing in research** to better understand the barriers to employment for equity seeking groups.
- **Convening leadership tables** which include employers and other community stakeholders to increase labour market participation for under-represented communities.
- **Increasing adoption of community wealth building principles** by raising awareness, advocating, educating, investing, and championing the adoption of community wealth building principles.
- **Investing in social enterprises, adopting social procurement policies, community benefit agreements, and buy/shop local practices** that build community wealth.
- **Mitigating 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
investments across our region:

38
collaborations
and initiatives

24
programs

20
community
agencies

As a result of these investments:

3,522
people were
supported

157
people volunteered with our
agency partners

For a total of

7,378
hours

The Outcomes

Outcomes	Results	
People are engaged in the labour market	91% of participants found or maintained employment.	1,419 participants found or maintained employment.
	2,334 individuals were supported in their search for employment.	
Newcomers are engaged in the labour market	85% of newcomers found employment.	463 newcomers found employment.
People with disabilities are engaged in the labour market	95% of job seekers with disabilities found employment.	895 job seekers with disabilities found employment.
Equity deserving groups are engaged in the labour market	374 employers increased their knowledge of barriers to employment faced by priority populations.	
Youth are supported in their transition to employment	72% of youth found or maintained employment.	40 youth (ages 15-24) found employment.
People in financial crisis receive supports	1,477 people in financial crisis received financial services and supports.	

As we continue to align our work across Ottawa, Prescott-Russell, Lanark County and Renfrew County, our reporting on outcomes will grow and strengthen each year. This year, for the first time, our outcomes reflect results from across the region.

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HEALTHY PEOPLE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

Jennifer's family got immediate mental health counselling

Before the pandemic, when Jennifer went looking for mental health services for her son, she felt like she was hitting a wall.



Jennifer,
Counselling
Connect
Client

Living in a rural community, she had limited options close to home for support. Most mental health services required at least a half-hour drive to meet in person—an endeavour that would require missing school and work to make it happen. The process left her feeling frustrated and alone.

Near the end of the virtual school year, Jennifer saw new language and behaviours in her son that alarmed her, and she didn't know what to do about it. The process of seeking out support again was daunting.

But this time, thanks to United Way and Counselling Connect, it took only 12 hours from the time she reached out for support to the moment she was chatting with a mental health counsellor from the comfort of her home.

“I was able to feel reassured right away. I didn't have a panic attack feeling like I had in the past, feeling like there was no one out there to help me and my son. It helped my mental health as a parent trying to support their kids because I wasn't hitting that level of anxiety.”

[Watch the video](#)



THE ISSUE

In every community, there are individuals and families that 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 equity disparities continue to have ripple effects across our region.

In addition, seniors and their informal caregivers were among the most impacted

by the pandemic and its associated public health measures. Our networks continue to raise concerns about the high rates of stress being felt by families, increased crisis situations like violence in homes, and concerns about access to recreation and community-based services. The digital divide and technology disparities continue to be a priority for our work.

1 in 3

caregivers in Canada are distressed, which can include feelings of anger or depression, or the inability to continue with caring activities.

30%

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

7x

Canadians in severely food-insecure households are seven times more likely to report moderate or severe anxiety symptoms than those in food-secure households.

>25%

of seniors in Canada live alone, making them more vulnerable to social isolation.

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.

Equity in Communities:

- United Way leads and serves as the backbone for **United for All**: a coalition of more than 150 partners committed to overcoming hate-based violence, racism, and extremism in East Ontario. Guiding dozens of organizations on a journey of deep collaboration in order to end hate in our communities requires strong communication and transparency around progress and setbacks.

In early 2022, United for All launched a quarterly bulletin to keep members of the coalition—and our communities—apprised of activities and to share stories of impact, opportunities for action, and resources for learning and development. By sharing information, we hope to create opportunities for alignment, strengthen the capacity of our sector, and make our communities more resilient.

- **The Ottawa Neighbourhood Equity Index (NEI)** is a tool developed by United Way, the City of Ottawa, and the Social Planning Council of Ottawa in 2018 to assess how neighbourhoods compare when it comes to factors that impact wellbeing. [A rural atlas](#) of Eastern Ontario has been prepared as a first step towards developing a regional equity index.

The most exciting development is the use of NEI data to develop a [Summary Portrait of Ottawa's Black Community](#) in comparison with the general population. The information highlights the significant inequity experienced by Ottawa's Black and racialized community that helps inform policy discussions on addressing systemic discrimination. Building on this first step towards developing a detailed report card on racial equity will equip leaders and policy makers with actionable data that will inform strategies.

Dismantling systemic racism, reversing inequality, and ensuring that all people can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential are key to our impact agenda, the success of our economy, and our democracy.

Prioritizing Community Safety and Wellbeing:

- **Creating the Change We Want (CCWW)** is an initiative supported by United Way and Women United donors that helps residents build skills and confidence to make positive changes together. In June 2021, 20 CCWW trainees—adult and youth—graduated the program. They hosted 75 neighbourhood activities and engaged 115 volunteers for a total of 555 volunteer hours throughout the year. The work of CCWW graduates has been essential during the pandemic, as some used their skills to increase access to COVID-19 information and vaccines, leading to higher vaccination rates.

Trainees increased mental wellbeing in their communities by helping meet neighbours' basic needs with initiatives like food distribution. They built community through virtual and in-person activities, which kept people connected to neighbours and supports, reduced isolation, and fostered belonging. Despite the pandemic, 94 per cent of trainees reported increased ability to support residents, thanks to training and capacity building. The activities allowed community members to share how they were coping, and created spaces of inclusion through connections across race, culture, language, and faith.

- In late 2021, United Way partnered with the Circle of Turtle Lodge, Robbie Dean Family Counselling Centre, and other partners, to support a Community Needs Analysis to better understand the **mental**

health and addictions needs of urban Indigenous peoples in Renfrew County and the City of Pembroke. As a result, 144 Indigenous people participated, with 97 per cent responding that there is a lack of meaningful Indigenous-based services for the about 8,000 urban Indigenous people living in Renfrew County. They noted a vital need for services developed and delivered by Indigenous peoples.

Following the Community Needs Analysis, United Way supported individual and group counselling programs to ensure that urban Indigenous, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis teens, adults, and seniors receive free and timely access to mental health, addictions, and trauma supports through the **Mashkawizzi Manido Project**. This initiative is the only program in Renfrew County that provides a holistic approach to care. It leverages Indigenous beliefs and healing techniques—combined with current clinical models—focusing on culture, language, and land. As a result, 202 people received timely, culturally appropriate, culturally sensitive supports since the creation of this program.

- **The Seniors Vulnerability Index (SVI)** is a key [data tool](#) that maps how seniors throughout the East Ontario region are doing, based on key indicators such as age, income and education levels, location, and access to in-home support. The index was a key recommendation of the 2017 Profile of Vulnerable Seniors

Report produced by United Way, and can be used by community partners, government, and other funders to inform their planning and decision making.


The Seniors Vulnerability Index has two immediate goals: 1) To understand where seniors across all our communities are most vulnerable and visualize the trends that contribute to this vulnerability. 2) To create a method by which we can enhance efficiency and decision-making to provide seniors with better care, where it's needed most. Together with tools like the Neighbourhood Equity Index and the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study, the Seniors Vulnerability Index provides a critical lens on how seniors are doing throughout our region and how we can collectively respond.



- Crisis is not unfamiliar to our region. We've been there for each other through floods, ice storms, even tornadoes. Responding to crises in our communities has become a role and responsibility of United Way East Ontario. Partnerships drive our work in this space and open up new channels for outreach, care, and support, and building resources that have become foundational to our collective work.

During the four-week long **convoy occupation in Ottawa**, United Way worked closely with more than 35 social service partners to support staff and clients who experienced intense levels of trauma, fear, and anxiety. In that time United Way made a one-time immediate investment to help cover unplanned costs for our partners. In addition, we maintained an ongoing dialog with City of Ottawa officials to keep them apprised of the impact this had on the sector and those most vulnerable. We also ensured we amplified the voice of the sector calling attention to the effect the occupation was having to those most vulnerable.

The ripple effects of the convoy occupation continue today, and we are proud to be able to stand alongside partners who never stopped serving the community, even when challenged on multiple fronts. The [road ahead](#) will see us working with social service partners to ensure we support residents who continue to feel the long-term effects of the occupation.



We believe in
building a region
that is great for
everyone—made
up of healthy,
equitable, and
vibrant communities.

GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2022 and beyond, United Way East Ontario will use our tools and resources to ...

1) Improve equity, wellbeing and connectedness by:

- **Increasing community-based counselling and supports** for people experiencing crisis, mental health challenges, substance use disorders, and people facing domestic violence by working with communities who can inform best practices.
- **Participating and investing in coalitions and partnerships** that increase access to crisis, mental health, and substance use disorder supports.
- **Supporting 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.
- **Support community development programs** to improve equity, connectedness, and wellbeing for vulnerable communities.
- **Participating in and supporting networks and coalitions** that work to improve conditions and wellbeing in vulnerable neighbourhoods and communities (such as: United For All, the Community Development Framework, Leadership féminin Prescott-Russell, etc.).

2) Addressing issues faced by vulnerable seniors and caregivers by:

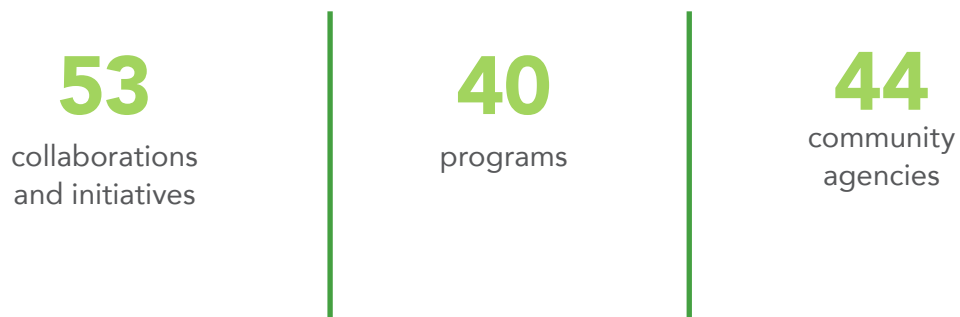
- **Advocating for improved policies and increased support for caregivers**, in alignment with recommendations of the Eastern Ontario Caregiver Strategy.
- **Convening the community and participating in networks**, such as the Successful Aging Advisory Councils.

3) Support sustainability and build capacity for networks, coalitions, and agencies by:

- **Supporting volunteerism and volunteer programs** that help to build and grow community sector capacity.
- **Collaborate to improve outcomes** for the community sector by investing in activities, projects, and programs.

THE IMPACT OF OUR INVESTMENTS

Healthy People, Strong Communities investments across our region:



As a result of these investments:



The Outcomes

Outcomes	Results	
People in crisis have access to immediate supports	98% of individuals felt supported and had their stress levels reduced.	26,466 individuals received crisis supports.
Seniors have improved wellbeing and are less isolated	80% of seniors reported decreased isolation.	2,542 seniors reported decreased isolation.
Neighbourhoods achieve positive change	2,610 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.	13,911 clients experienced a reduction in stress and anxiety.
Adults have access to mental health and addiction supports	98% of clients saw an improvement to their mental health.	14,089 clients had access to mental health and addiction supports.
Individuals have access to healthy foods and physical activity	84% of children ate healthier, increased their physical activity, and/or moved towards a healthy weight.	4,211 children and youth participated in physical activity and/or healthy food access/nutrition programs.

As we continue to align our work across Ottawa, Prescott-Russell, Lanark County and Renfrew County, our reporting on outcomes will grow and strengthen each year. This year, for the first time, our outcomes reflect results from across the region.

** Program reporting period: Jan 1, 2021 to December 30, 2021 (12-month report of 18-month investments). Interim program reports due to United Way January 22, 2022. Outcome data analyzed and reported by United Way: February-March 2022.*

Insights into the outcomes are available in the Appendix.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Helping our communities press on through COVID-19

Since February 2020, United Way East Ontario's COVID-19 Community Response Table has taken on many roles. This group of more than 100 public health authorities, municipalities, frontline social service agencies, corporate partners, and others has kept a common goal of supporting local people through the effects of COVID-19.

In 2021, we recognized members of the COVID-19 Community Response Table with Community Builder Awards for their contributions to our region.



This has required constant collaboration between organizations and across sector boundaries to quickly find innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our communities.

What started as weekly emergency meetings in early 2020 evolved into monthly meetings that took [deep dives](#) into social challenges and the new approaches we needed to take to set more positive path forward. In the spring of 2021, we looked at principles for a more equitable [economic recovery](#) from the pandemic.

What's clear to us is that we must focus on sustainability and transformation of the charitable and social services sectors in order to continue supporting the people who need us. Emergency funding is running out and organizations are having difficulty attracting and retaining staff and volunteers, all while the need in our communities is greater than it has ever been.

Our path forward is about more than one organization taking on a renewed focus, or one sector changing its approach to supporting clients. This moment is about taking “what’s worked” during the pandemic and turning that into long-term systemic change. It’s about looking at the chronic issues and treating them with the urgency they require to build more resilient communities over the long term. It’s about using all the tools in our box—investment, research, advocacy, convening, fundraising—to reimagine what it means to support our communities holistically.

Our goal is to use what we learn to inform our recommendations for policy change and resources that will empower our sector to be stronger, more cohesive, and nimble.

In a year that will see both municipal and federal elections, we look forward to working with all levels of government across political lines to invest in and support the charitable sector, the people and infrastructure that power it, and the communities we serve.



Local Love in a Global Crisis

Bolstered by the expertise of participants at the COVID-19 Community Response Table, we launched [Local Love in a Global Crisis](#) on March 17, 2020. This initiative aimed to help with coordination efforts and raise funds and in-kind donations to support the most vulnerable people who were sidelined by the pandemic.

While some early investments have served their purpose in helping our communities, many others are ongoing and will be in place for months to come. Here's how we put your dollars to work over the past year. For information on previous investments, please see our [2020-2021 COVID-19 Response Impact Report](#).

From January 1, 2021, to December 31, 2021, we invested \$2,098,453 into:

86
programs

67
community
agencies

35 of these programs ended on December 31, 2021. As a result of these investments:

17,214
people were
supported

123,291
interactions

51 of these programs will finish in July 2022. As a result of our investments, we have already supported:

14,915
people

153,720
interactions

Interactions mean any type of contact with an individual.

Examples include delivery of food hampers; food systems coordination; after school activities; access to technical devices and digital literacy to improve connectivity; social activities and transportation for seniors; mentorship opportunities; crisis services and systems navigation; virtual and hybrid counselling sessions for those struggling with mental health or addictions; and skills development for people seeking employment.



Emergency Community Support Fund

On May 16, 2020, the Government of Canada joined United Ways, the Canadian Red Cross, and community foundations across Canada in our pandemic response. *The Emergency Community Support Fund (ECSF)* provided financial support to charities adapting their frontline services to respond to the unique needs created and exacerbated by COVID-19.

United Way East Ontario was pleased to receive more than \$5.9 million through the ECSF to support our partners in adapting and expanding their services for the COVID-19 world. This funding bolsters the work we were already doing to ensure no one falls through the cracks. The breakdown of our investments appeared in our [COVID-19 Response Impact Report](#), released in April 2021. We are now reporting on the consolidated program results of both ECSF investment rounds.

As a result of the investments made in 2020-21, we supported:

118,995
people

645,412
interactions

Interactions included delivery of food hampers; youth programming; social activities for seniors; virtual mentorship workshops; crisis services; counselling sessions for those struggling with mental health or addictions; and volunteer training sessions.



Social Services Relief Fund

As COVID-19's disrupting force revealed the challenges and strengths of the food security ecosystem in Prescott-Russell, United Way set out to convene partners to co-design a more resilient, effective, and responsive food security system.

As a result of a community-wide consultation in fall 2020 which included businesses, service clubs and organizations, United Way and the United Counties of Prescott and Russell kickstarted this collaborative approach. Thanks to funding from the United Counties through the Government of Ontario's *Social Services Relief Fund*, our partnership implemented four innovative projects with a goal to share nourishing, comforting, and convenient meals with those experiencing high levels of financial stress or isolation. Read more about this work in our [COVID-19 Response Impact Report](#).

In 2021, we invested a total of \$517,454 through the *Social Services Relief Fund*.

As a result of these investments, we supported more than:

2,176
people

30,086
interactions

Interactions included community meal programs to alleviate stress, grief, physical and mental health challenges and/or financial strain; innovation grants that mobilized grassroots organizations to tackle food security issues through community gardens, cooking classes, awareness events, transportation, existing service expansions, and more; food system coordination; wellness checks; and mental health supports and awareness.



Jennifer Glenn, Owner
of Pick, Plant, and Prune

Local partnerships tackle food insecurity

Chantal Mercier, Vice President of Good Neighbours Food Bank, understands how inconsistent access to healthy food can impact individuals and families.

Children who live without regular access to food have lower attention spans during class, hindering their ability to concentrate and succeed. Canadians in severely food-insecure households are [seven times more likely](#) to have moderate to severe anxiety, and are [more vulnerable to a variety of physical and chronic health conditions](#) like diabetes, heart disease, and hypertension.

Chantal partnered with Jennifer Glenn, owner of Pick, Plant, and Prune, to enhance the food bank's ability to offer fresh food during the pandemic, when many more families have struggled to meet their basic needs.

With support from United Way East Ontario and the Social Services Relief Fund in Prescott-Russell, Jennifer launched a community garden in Russell that provides fresh produce to the 250 families—more than 1,000 hungry mouths—who rely on the local food bank.

[See the full story](#)

Convoy Occupation

The four-week long occupation of Ottawa in February 2022 wreaked havoc on the social service sector, which was already exhausted and strained by the pressures of COVID-19.

United Way has an important role to play in making sure the most vulnerable people across our region, and the service providers that support them, are safe and can continue their vital work. We brought together more than 35 social service partners who operate in the city's downtown core to understand how the occupation was affecting staff and clients.

Our partners [spoke passionately](#) about the compounded trauma of exhaustion and fear that they felt for their staff's safety, all while caring for thousands of people who continue to need support.

As part of an immediate effort, thanks to our donors, United Way provided stability funding for our downtown Ottawa partners to help cover unplanned costs so they could continue to deliver the vital services that residents depend on.

We invested a total of \$38,965 to respond to this crisis.

As a result of these investments, we supported more than:

528

staff, volunteers,
agency clients, and
shelter residents

630

interactions

Interactions included 340 food hampers and 228 frozen meals delivered to people in need; 40 transportation requests; community health events, wellness sessions, and workshops for staff and residents; hotel costs, food deliveries, mental health supports for staff and shelter residents.

A Long Road to Recovery

The work does not end here. United Way and our partners are planning for [long-term mental health effects](#) of the occupation by ensuring there are adequate mental health and wellness resources available to address traumatic experiences of hate and violence.

WOMEN UNITED

Success Story: Cathy Hamilton

The following is an excerpt from a [Capital Current](#) article, published March 7, 2022.

At Clementine Towers in Billings Bridge-Alta Vista, a stone’s throw from Bank Street and around the corner from the Billings Bridge Shopping Centre, food security is a problem. The nearest community food program is the Heron Emergency Food Centre, a two-kilometre walk or an 11-minute bus ride.

That’s why building resident Cathy Hamilton started the Clementine Towers food pantry in September 2021. Hamilton, a volunteer tenant leader in her 60s, participated in the Ottawa-based [Creating the Change We Want](#) program and launched the food pantry to help address food insecurity in her building.

“I thought it would be a good idea if I could get some food and bring it right here for [other residents]. It’s work for me—a lot of work—but I want to do it because I see it’s making a difference in the lives of some of the seniors.” – Cathy Hamilton



“Women United Community Action Grants are really a powerful asset for our communities. It may seem like very little money, but it’s not little at all because it makes a difference. Because the people that we serve in our communities, it’s a population that’s really, really vulnerable.

Especially in this time of COVID, the Women United grants helped to access fresh food. In the beginning, thanks to United Way, we started with one community garden plot, then we went to two. Then the Women United grant we received in 2021 brought in two more.

It was very satisfactory for our women especially, because most of them are the ones who worked in the gardens. There was capacity building, skills building, knowing how to interact with the soil, touching the earth ... it was so beautiful. There were seniors and children working together, laughing, talking, and even having meetings at the gardens.”

– Euphrasie Emedi, Community Developer at South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre



Global Movement. Local Impact.

With more than 70,000+ members across six countries and 165 communities, Women United 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 **943 donors and 138 members** who are dedicated to leveraging their time, talents, and funds to empower women in our communities to build strong, independent lives. Members, depending on their giving level, have opportunities to review proposals, participate in the investment process, consult on major governance decision-making, act as a steering member of programs, and more.

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 neighbourhoods. 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.

In 2021, Women United invested \$99,716 into:

Community Action Grants

6
programs

6
community
agencies

897
people
supported

Activities included two community gardens to support food security and promote community engagement; an ‘Honour our Superhero’ breakfast for parents, specifically mothers, who have taken on more stressful roles during the pandemic; virtual gatherings and resident-led workshops to empower residents—many of which are newcomer women—to engage in their community, form relationships, share resources, and learn new skills; programming to reduce feelings of isolation and address the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health for racialized communities; and one-on-one peer support, workshops, and social meet-ups to support the mental wellbeing of racialized youth.





United Way Community Fund

6
programs

6
community
agencies

1,479
people
supported

Activities included 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; workshops on women empowerment that boosts confidence and inspires leadership among young Francophone girls in Prescott-Russell; a training series to help residents in low-income communities feel empowered to take on leadership roles and address community issues; holistic mental health and addictions counselling to support the mental wellbeing of Indigenous women who are victims of gender-based violence or other social issues.

Accenture has been a long-time supporter of United Way through various programs, initiatives, sponsorship and engagement opportunities. In 2021, **Accenture joined Women United as a title program sponsor for the next three years**—demonstrating their commitment to making a difference for women in our region.

Women United powered by
>
accenture

DONOR TESTIMONIAL



I have supported United Way East Ontario for more than 30 years now and have been fortunate to have worked closely with the United Way team from time to time.

This is a team who cares about the people in Ottawa and Eastern Ontario more broadly, and about the volunteers across the region who give so much of themselves and who make a difference.

It is this veritable army of caring people that has inspired me to donate year after year. But to top it off, their vast knowledge of the community is impressive, as is their insight into its myriad of needs and where impacts can be made.

Every year that I give, I do so with confidence that the United Way team is guiding my contribution to measurably improving the lives of people right here in my home town.

Dan Danagher,
Retired Assistant Deputy Minister
and United Way Donor



WHAT'S NEW

GenNext East Ontario marks one year milestone

GenNext East Ontario marked its first birthday in 2022 with a lot to celebrate. Since expanding across the region, GenNext has hosted virtual community events, led important conversations about local issues, and jumpstarted an Advocate program to connect with new volunteers.

The GenNext Advocate program engages young change-makers and aspiring philanthropists in raising awareness about United Way's impact. GenNext Advocates are volunteers who get to deepen their connection to their --community and make meaningful change while gaining leadership skills.



Move for Youth

In a new partnership with National Bank of Canada, 232 people got workout-ready to walk, bike, dance, jog, and more, for our first-ever **Move for Youth** challenge on May 16, 2021. National Bank recognized the pressures the pandemic puts on vulnerable kids and approached United Way East Ontario and Centraide Outaouais about how they could make a difference.

Move for Youth was created as a way for the community to come together and show up for kids when they needed us most. This virtual event encouraged participants to get moving with us while raising awareness and funds to help create opportunities for local youth to learn and grow.

Thanks to the support of all our incredible participants, donors, and sponsors, we raised \$57,226 to help ensure more kids are on the path to success in school, and in life.



Hygiene Kits for youth facing homelessness

Youth who experience homelessness have hurdles to cross when accessing hygiene items that we may take for granted. In 2021, United Way offered a unique opportunity for individuals and groups to volunteer and actively contribute to their communities.

Over the fall and winter, 38 individuals, nine workplaces and three groups put together 542 hygiene kits, which provided youth in need with essential items that supported their wellbeing and contributed resources that help front-line service providers carry out their vital work.

Each kit contained a one-month supply of hygiene and personal care items for one person: shampoo, conditioner, deodorant, body wash or soap, a hairbrush or comb, toothbrush, toothpaste, body lotion, shaving and menstrual supplies. During the winter months, many of the kits were delivered thanks to a generous donation of a truck and driver from National Tire Distributors.



Audrey put up flyers in her school and neighbourhood and asked friends and family to donate items.



Grade 5 and 6 students at Naismith Memorial Public School in the Upper Canada District School Board decided to help, after learning about youth homelessness in Lanark County and how simple things can make a difference.



Sarah Vlasblom and her family saw our call to the community and put together four kits.



National Tire Distributors was a huge help with deliveries.



Follow us on social media!
Stay up to date with United Way's
impact and latest news.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Following my first year in this role, it's amazing to step back and recognize how far we have come as a United Way.

Another year in a pandemic has only further accelerated United Way's evolution into an impact organization. The work of our staff and volunteers—whether fighting social injustices or amplifying the voices of partners—is not only unsurprising but has come to be expected by the members of the communities we serve.

I've seen first-hand how the organization has leveraged its resources, including its ability to convene stakeholders, agencies, and local government representatives, to best serve the region's most vulnerable populations during times of crisis.

Of course, to say this kind of work is done overnight would shortchange the dedication of our staff and volunteers who work tirelessly to support those in need. Our team knows that mental health, food insecurity, social isolation and poverty challenges existed before COVID-19, but levels of demand are escalating higher than we've ever seen.

Our volunteers are also living and working in diverse settings across our region and have not been immune to the challenges brought

on by the pandemic, the occupation of downtown Ottawa, or the economy. They have shown great resolve and a willingness to fight for the prosperity of their neighbours because they know that they have a chance to make a difference through the work of United Way and its partners. They continue to put the work in because they know our society is better off when everyone thrives.

Mental and physical fatigue have set in across our community sector, but the devotion of those involved with United Way is unwavering.

The contributions made by our staff and volunteers through the COVID-19 Community Response Table are shining examples of United Way's unique ability to collaborate with organizations, across sectors, and has allowed us to quickly find innovative solutions to the most pressing challenges facing our region.

Over the last year in particular, our team has come together with our partners to examine issues, including the capacity of the nonprofit sector, long-term mental

“Mental and physical fatigue have set in across our community sector, but the devotion of those involved with United Way is unwavering”



health effects created by the pandemic and ensuring equitable economic recovery for marginalized communities. This helped bring solutions forward to various stakeholder groups, including leaders at all levels of government and social service providers.

This kind of impact work has made us a leader within the United Way movement, globally. It has connected us more significantly to the issues across our region, and through that, new relationships have been formed with community leaders, all pulling toward the same goal of equitable living for everyone.

Our work is far from over, but at a time when helping hands are needed more than ever, I am confident that our volunteers, staff members, stakeholders, and partners have sharpened their collective focus.

In the year ahead, we remain committed to our advocacy efforts, as well as supporting research and investments that will ensure

basic needs are met and vital social services are available to vulnerable residents across East Ontario.

I encourage those who have worked so incredibly hard to support those most in need in our region to keep going. I am extremely proud to stand alongside all of you as we endeavor through yet another year under unique circumstances.

A blue ink handwritten signature, appearing to be 'G. Brown', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sincerely,

George Brown
Board Chair,
United Way East Ontario

FINANCIALS

A Message from the Chief Operating Officer and Chair of the Corporate Oversight Committee

After more than two years of sustained uncertainty, it's truly astounding to witness the commitment and generosity of the individuals, businesses, and organizations who support United Way East Ontario.

A rising inflation rate and record high food, fuel and housing costs have taken a toll on people in the communities we serve. Together, we have endured multiple surges of COVID-19 infections, along with other unforeseen crises in our communities which compounded the social challenges facing our region's most vulnerable people.

And yet, as life has gotten harder and more expensive, our donors remained steadfast in their partnership with United Way, knowing that together, we have the power to solve the most pressing local issues.

Recent reports on charitable giving suggest overall donations to non-profits have dropped drastically across Canada. More people are turning to social services for help than ever before, at a time when fewer philanthropic dollars are available to help provide the assistance they need.

It makes the fact that we saw our smallest pledge loss decline in years that much more incredible. Our donors stood by United Way East Ontario over this last year, helping us raise more than \$22 million in support of the people who depend on us.

In 2020-2021, donor generosity and new government funding sources meant that our United Way was well-positioned to strengthen the capacity of the local charitable sector and make substantial impact in our communities in 2021-2022. Despite this, we planned to see a deficit of about \$2 million this past year, but we came out on the other side with a shortfall less than half that size, thanks to strong revenues and prudent expense management.

As turbulent economic and societal times persisted, our aim was to ensure stability and resiliency for vital social service providers and the programs they offered for those most in need.

United Way East Ontario was able to commit an additional \$2 million in emergency funding through our *Local Love in a Global Crisis* initiative, to help keep



critical programming and services viable.

Furthermore, we added \$500,000 to our community stability fund, which in time will provide long-term stability to program funding by making it more predictable. This means, that when speaking with our partners about community needs, we won't have to project what resources will be available in the future—giving them the peace of mind to know the funds will be there, so that they can continue to focus on providing life-changing and often life-saving services.

Our economic future is still unpredictable, but our strong financial position means United Way East Ontario can continue to be a reliable source of stability for the people who need us, now and over the long term.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Wolkowycki".

Ed Wolkowycki, CMA, CPA
Vice President, Corporate Services and
Chief Operating Officer,
United Way East Ontario

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Thom Donnelly".

Thom Donnelly, CFP
Treasurer and Chair, Corporate
Oversight Committee,
United Way East Ontario

To read our full 2021-22 audited financial statements, visit:
[**UnitedWayEO.ca/Financial-Statements**](https://UnitedWayEO.ca/Financial-Statements)

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, Poverty to Possibility and Healthy People, Strong Communities) each concentrate on specific needs, and connects with programs and services to make the greatest impact possible.

Strategic Priorities: United Way's strategic priorities for investment focus on specific issues that cut across disadvantaged populations to achieve community impact. These 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 community-wide 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 through the Donor Designed Investment program.

Tomorrow Fund: Internally restricted funds are established through United Way's Board policy for any testamentary gift received without express direction from a donor/testator and for which the intent cannot be reasonably determined to be of an endowed nature. 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 – 12-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	\$108,507

Strategic Priority Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Critical Hours	15	Homework clubs, social recreation, leadership development, mentorship	\$814,624
School Readiness	4	Parenting support, parent-child activities, skills development	\$222,383
Youth Homelessness	4	Homelessness prevention, social enterprises, transitional housing services	\$208,373
Mental Health and Addictions (Children and Youth)	2	Parent supports, refugee supports, counselling and addiction support programs	\$68,068
Crisis Supports (Children and Youth)	1	Crisis support services	\$34,770

All That Kids Can Be – 12-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	\$75,000
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	\$185,277

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	\$50,000

From Poverty to Possibility – 12-month funding cycle

Focus Area Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
From Poverty to Possibility (Renfrew County & Prescott-Russell)	1	Supportive employment programs, employment readiness programs, financial literacy, skills development	\$25,500

Strategic Priority Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Employment for Newcomers	4	Supportive employment programs, employment readiness programs	\$219,000
Employment for People with Disabilities	5	Social enterprises, supportive employment programs, employment readiness program	\$170,824
Financial Crisis	1	Financial literacy/crisis supports	\$51,632
Youth Employment	2	Employment supports	\$50,000
Rural residents seeking employment have access to literacy training and skills development	1	Skills development and literacy training (Lanark County)	\$10,825

From Poverty to Possibility – 12-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)	\$195,199
Employment for People with Disabilities	1	Employment Accessibility Resource Network (EARN)	\$65,061

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	\$99,052
Employment for Vulnerable Populations	1	Research	\$333,782

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Community Wealth Building	1	Seminar	\$3,258
Energy Poverty	4	Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP), Hydro-Relief, Affordability Trust Fund,	\$354,037

Healthy People, Strong Communities – 12-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	\$59,575

Strategic Priority Partner Funding

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Agency Capacity Building	4	Collective impact initiatives capacity building, agency supports	\$187,075
Mental Health/ Addictions	8	Counselling/Peer supports	\$547,721

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Crisis Supports	4	Distress lines, crisis counselling, intervention	\$286,183
Successful Aging	9	Programs that help seniors remain in their home, recreational programs, day programs	\$308,371
Strong Neighbourhoods	6	Resident engagement, supporting community initiatives, asset mapping	\$271,068

Strategic Investment(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Crisis Supports	4	211 (Referral service)	\$142,616
Strong Neighbourhoods	1	Ottawa Neighbourhood Study	\$115,000
Mental Health	1	Labour Community Services	\$112,695

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

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Strong Neighbourhoods	6	Community Action Grants, Hard Hat Heroes	\$74,475

Tomorrow Fund Initiative(s)

Investment Area	Programs	Types of Programs	Total Investment
Strong Neighbourhoods	1	Impact of COVID-19 on Indigenous peoples	\$15,000

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	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18*
All That Kids Can Be	12,708	31,194	33,250	11,775
	49	47	62	68
From Poverty to Possibility	3,522	6,151	10,339	5,986
	24	17	27	21
Healthy People, Strong Communities	62,241	53,710	64,058	68,317
	44	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 deal with clients, 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

- School closures due to COVID-19 caused a significant decline in the total number of children served, especially in the Upper Canada Leger Centre for Education and Training, which had previously served 10,000 students but was not able to run their program for this reporting period (the first 12 months of this 18-month funding cycle). The number of children served in [last year's report](#) is based on 18 months of activities.
- Anxiety and stress has drastically increased for children and youth since the onset of the pandemic. That's why we adjusted our outcome around 'Children and youth are resilient' to capture programs that work to remove stress from children's lives.
- This is the biggest impact we have ever made on improving mental health outcomes for children and youth, which is mainly a result of our rural programming—99.8% of children and youth saw improvements to their mental health. This is the first year where our partners outside of Ottawa are measuring and reporting on this outcome.

Insights Into the Outcomes: From Poverty to Possibility

- Financial literacy can make a difference. 100% of those surveyed reported feeling decreased levels of stress after participating in financial literacy programming in Ottawa.
- In Lanark County, 100% of participants found employment as a result of a skills | development and financial literacy program.

Insights Into the Outcomes: Healthy People, Strong Communities

- When lockdowns were in place in our communities, 76% of seniors reported having an improved ability to live independently. While not one of the outcomes we report, this is an important indication that the work we do to improve seniors' wellbeing had a positive effect during one of the most difficult times to be a senior living alone, or living in rural or remote communities.
- More than 463 residents reported an increase in meaningful connections and having a sense of belonging.
- This year, the number of individuals who received crisis supports is captured for 12 months, whereas last year this number was captured for a period of 18 months, resulting in a lower total when compared year over year. Additionally, there was an upsurge in crisis calls made at the beginning of the pandemic but there were fewer mental health and crisis call lines available at that time. United Way East Ontario supports other mental health and crisis lines through our COVID-19 investments to help ease the demand.

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.

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 communities where they are raised to help those most in need.

**VIEW OUR 2021-22 HONOUR ROLL
FOR A LIST OF UNITED WAY EAST ONTARIO'S
MOST NOTABLE PHILANTHROPISTS.**



United Way
East Ontario