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United Way
Perth-Huron

**UNITED
FOR GOOD**

**2024-2025
IMPACT REPORT**



100%
LOCAL
ALWAYS

United Way works toward a better tomorrow locally by helping reduce poverty, house people, and supporting mental health and well-being. Thanks to our 600+ volunteers, and a commitment to a hyper-local approach to solving issues, we're helping ensure vulnerable people have a brighter future.

UNITED
IN ACTION

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for your unwavering belief in our 100% local work.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we raised \$2.8 million during our last campaign — the largest amount ever raised by United Way for critical programs and initiatives across Perth-Huron. This achievement reflects our collective commitment to supporting local people in need.

Thank you for your dedication to our shared mission. Together, we are making a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable people and building a stronger, more resilient community for everyone.

- Ryan Erb, Executive Director -

Pictured with Campaign Co-Chairs
John Wolfe & Kristin Sainsbury



DONATIONS
IN ACTION

When our friends and neighbours are in need, they often require support from multiple service providers because social challenges rarely have one solution. We support a diverse network of partner agencies, each specializing in different areas of need. Through strategic investments, we help maximize the support provided to our most vulnerable residents and work address the root causes of social challenges.

PERTH-HURON
CHALLENGES

-  HOUSING
-  POVERTY & FOOD SECURITY
-  MENTAL HEALTH
-  ACCESS TO SERVICES
-  INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE
-  DISCRIMINATION



UNITED IS THE WAY

COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING
DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION

Our region will only realize its full potential by making sure everyone feels a sense of belonging. We are committed to supporting understanding and reconciliation with local Indigenous peoples, as well as advocating for equity-denied populations including the local 2SLGBTQ+ community.

KASWENTHA/TWO ROW NOW

Kaswentha/Two Row Now develops and hosts cultural programs across Perth-Huron promoting social connectedness and belonging for Indigenous students and families. Awareness events and teaching circles are held for all who have interest in learning about Indigenous cultural ways. This collaborative organization includes Indigenous and non-Indigenous individuals, guided by Indigenous teachers, speakers, and knowledge holders who follow the values of the *Kaswentha/Two Row Now* wampum.

1,552
people participated in
Indigenous-led learning events
via Kasentha/Two Row Now



PRIDE CENTRE

Back in 2022, we helped fund the opening of the *Stratford Pride Community Centre*. Now, Stratford-Perth Pride has joined us as one of our tenants at the United Centre. The Pride Centre was created as a safe space for the 2SLGBTQ+ community to share social, educational and health-related issues. We can never assume there aren't people struggling to be heard, understood and welcomed by the larger community. That's why it's critical for us to ensure everyone can access the resources they need so the places we call home continue to become more welcoming to all.

MATT’S STORY

“I was brought up to believe that if I worked hard, there was nothing I couldn’t accomplish. And that’s exactly what I did. I excelled at school, sports, and the arts, earning two degrees along the way and launching a career I was passionate about: reaching out to youth experiencing homelessness through the arts.

“But life has a way of surprising you. Things happen and send you down different paths and there are unexpected challenges.



13 men received temporary housing and supports
via Huron Turning Point

794 people received housing stability support
in St. Marys, North Perth, & Huron County

118 individuals accessed the bridge and housing stability program
via CMHA and the County of Huron

“My life took a turn when my wife fell ill after our daughter’s birth. Unable to sustain a career and care for my family, I took a sabbatical to look after my wife and daughter, which turned into a 19-year journey filled with challenges. After my wife’s death and my daughter moved to a group home, I faced complete emotional collapse and ended up losing my home.

“With the help of several community services, including one supported by United Way, I began rebuilding my life. I am blessed to have found some of the most creative, intelligent and sensitive people as friends who support me as I continue my healing journey.”

ISSUE: HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness can affect every aspect of life including relationships, well-being, employment and physical and mental health.

People experiencing homelessness have shorter life expectancies, are more likely to be victims of violence and go hungry. The odds can feel stacked against those dealing with homelessness because of a mix of complex, interrelated issues like mental illness, addiction and abuse. Homelessness also disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, for example those with physical disabilities, chronic health issues and mental health challenges.

311 unique clients visited local Connection Centres
operated by CMHA Huron Perth in Stratford & Wingham and the Community Table in Exeter

96 youth received shelter support in Perth & Huron
via Shelterlink Youth Services & Huron Safe Homes For Youth

ISSUE: INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV)

In Huron and Perth last year, there were 5,743 IPV calls to local women’s shelters.

IPV can take many forms, including physical, psychological, or financial abuse, and often goes unreported due to stigma or fear.

The impacts of IPV contribute to long-term physical and mental health issues. Children exposed to IPV are at greater risk of emotional and behavioural challenges, making early intervention and support critical to break the cycle of violence and foster safer communities.

*women+ includes diverse female identities

72 children who witnessed violence received trauma-informed counselling
via the Emily Murphy Centre

964 crisis calls from women facing IPV were answered
via the Huron Women’s Shelter. Remaining calls handled by another dedicated service provider in Perth County.

TATIANA’S STORY

“As a girl in Ukraine I dreamed of Canada and it’s beautiful lakes. I lived through so much to get here; a controlling partner, loneliness, war and sacrifice — but in that moment, sitting alone at the airport in Toronto, I didn’t know how it all would turn out.

“For five long days I called everywhere I could think of, searching for a place to stay before finally being connected with housing supports in Stratford.

“After I arrived, I took a walk among the trees and I remember thinking to myself that for the first time in a long time, I could finally take a breath and feel free!



234 Newcomers supported with service access navigation
Via YMCA Three Rivers

Watch Tatiana tell her story

“I’m still working through my trauma, but because I now have a home to call my own and an amazing network of support thanks to services in Stratford, including ones funded by United Way, I can honestly say I am hopeful again.

“Ukraine will always be my homeland, but Canada has become my home, like a grandmother, gently wrapping me in a warm, supportive and caring embrace. Every Canada Day, I feel that comfort and security and I know I’m exactly where I’m meant to be.”

DONATIONS IN ACTION



IMPACT

41 food agencies supplied with bulk orders across Perth-Huron
via Huron Food Bank Distribution Centre

280 people participated in healthy food skills classes
via The Local Community Food Centre

2,040 visits to the Nourish Equal Access Market in St. Marys
via The Local Community Food Centre

187 youth assisted financially with extracurriculars
via YMCAs of SWO (Goderich)

ISSUE: MENTAL HEALTH

The use of an emergency department for psychiatric reasons is 2x higher in rural Ontario than in urban areas.³

More than 40% of Canadians feel lonely some or all of the time, with the problem worse among those living alone.⁴

The economic burden of mental illness in Canada is an estimated \$51 billion per year including healthcare costs, lost productivity and reductions in health-related quality of life.

Additionally, a positive state of mental health and well-being in youth sets the stage for a healthy transition to adulthood and is associated with a greater likelihood of healthier relationships and higher levels of self-confidence.

³Rural Ontario Municipal Association Report, 2024
⁴Statistics Canada, Canadian Social Survey, 2021



IMPACT

53 youth accessed early intervention counselling
via Family Services Perth Huron

1,663 individuals and families counselled to improve mental well-being
via Family Services Perth Huron

56 youth mentored by a caring adult
via Big Brothers Big Sisters

192 men accessed counselling and reintegration support post-incarceration
via John Howard Society

ISSUE: POVERTY & FOOD SECURITY

The average cost of groceries for a family of four in Perth-Huron (2024) is \$1,388/month. For a family receiving *Ontario Works*, that equals 46% of their income spent on food.¹

Between 2021and 2023, an estimated 17% of households in Perth-Huron experienced food insecurity.²

Exposure to food insecurity negatively impacts children’s well-being, manifesting in greater risks of physical and mental health challenges.

¹The Real Cost of Eating: Food Insecurity in Huron and Perth, 2024
²PHO, Snapshots Data File for Household Food Insecurity 2019–2023, Canadian Income Survey, Ontario, 2024

COLLABORATION IN ACTION



WE COLLABORATE WITH ORGANIZATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO SHARE OUR MISSION TO ADDRESS CRITICAL ISSUES AND IMPROVE LIVES.

MOBILIZATION IN ACTION

WAYS TO GIVE

- GIVE ONLINE: perthhuron.unitedway.ca
- BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR
- Your donation will help local people every day!
- BECOME A LEADER DONOR
- With a donation of \$1,200 (\$100/month) or more, our Leader donors are driving change.
- SUPPORT YOUR WORKPLACE GIVING CAMPAIGN
- Check with your workplace to learn about options to support the community you care about.
- GIVE A GIFT OF SECURITIES
- Through the gift of shares, you limit the tax paid on capital gains and receive a charitable tax receipt for the market value of your publicly traded shares.
- LEAVE A LEGACY
- By leaving a gift in your will you can create a powerful legacy of hope, reflecting your vision for the future.

RESEARCH

United Way works with our communities to identify pressing needs and design impactful programs. By engaging with local partners, we gain valuable insights into specific opportunities. Together, we forge meaningful collaborations that empower individuals and organizations to thrive, fostering a stronger, more resilient community for all.



Learn More

211 ONTARIO

211 Ontario is a free and confidential service, available 24/7/365, connecting people to the social and community supports they need. 211 navigators can refer anyone looking for assistance to local services that meet their unique needs including providing a warm transfer during a call. Did you know? There are over 1,500 Perth-Huron service records maintained locally!



1,527 people dialed 2-1-1 to connect with services

URGENT NEEDS FUND

Supports residents in a time of crisis with financial assistance for essentials including rent, groceries and car repairs. To access the fund, dial 2-1-1. A trained navigator will assess a caller's challenges and determine if the fund is the best option and help begin the application process.

440 people received financial support

ACCESS CENTRES

Rural communities face challenges accessing social services. United Way Access Centres increase the availability, anonymity and effectiveness of agencies, housing multiple services in one convenient location. There are currently centres in Vanastra and Exeter, with another opening soon in Listowel.

TAX CLINICS

If people don't file their taxes, they can't claim the refunds and benefits they're entitled to. By dialing 2-1-1, seniors, newcomers, students, and those receiving social assistance can find the nearest volunteer-led free clinic and get help filing their taxes. United Way proudly supports the expansion of this important poverty reduction program.



FREE TAX CLINICS

922 tax returns filed, resulting in \$1.8M+ to modest income households



EVENT SPONSOR

Kerry Prober, the owner of McDonald's restaurants in Stratford and St. Marys, is a leader level sponsor. For six consecutive years, Kerry said 'Yes.' After opening her St. Marys location in 2022, Kerry doubled her gift to \$10,000 by also becoming a lead sponsor for the Coldest Night walk in St. Marys. Kerry has a passion for the wellness of youth. As an employer, she's eager to give back to the community and make sure teens and their families can get the help they need when they need it. Her gifts come from the heart and we're grateful for her leadership.



WORKPLACE GIVING

Under Katie and Laura's leadership, the Avon Maitland District School Board declared the United Way campaign as a priority this year. With their enthusiasm, marketing, and coordination efforts, dollars pledged by employees more than doubled!

As two entities dedicated to the wellness of families and the betterment of the entire community, we're proud to partner with the AMDSB to put these sentiments into action in a 'united way.'

LEADERSHIP GIVING

Since 1992 Famme & Co. has been one of our most loyal supporters.

- 1) They set a personal best of \$37,985 in 2024, increasing employee giving by 41% over 2023!
- 2) They've sponsored our Spirit of Community gala for 10 years.
- 3) They've volunteered for 45+ years at Stratford tax clinics.
- 4) They certified as a Living Wage Employer to demonstrate their commitment to their employees.
- 5) They host an annual United Way presentation and staff always attend our campaign kickoff. Thank you, Franklin Famme, and the whole Famme & Co. team!



WORKPLACE EVENT PARTICIPATION

As first-time participants in the Coldest Night of the Year in Exeter, the McCann Group went above and beyond, fundraising while the corporate office also stepped up with a \$10,000 matching donation, raising \$28,119 altogether!

The McCann Group's commitment to supporting vulnerable individuals reflects the true spirit of Coldest Night and we are grateful they have a passion for making a difference in their community.

