



**United Way**  
Perth-Huron



Investing in  
**Impact**



## Our vision

To be a collaborate leader that improves lives and builds strong communities.



## Our mission

We are the catalyst that mobilizes community partners, individuals and resources to address identified community needs.

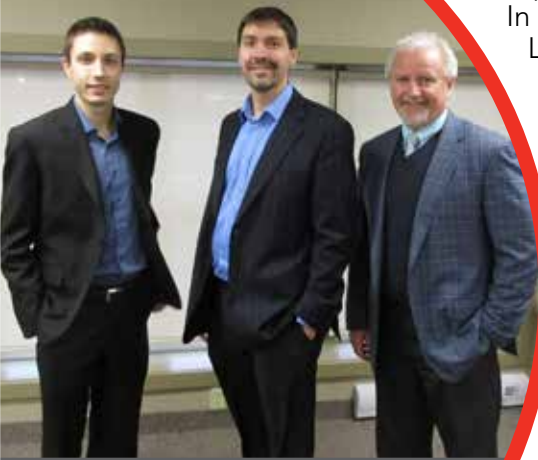
# TOGETHER WE:

- Move people from poverty to possibility
- Ensure that kids be all that they can be
- Build strong communities

## TOGETHER, WE ARE POSSIBILITY.



# Improving lives locally.



Matt Orchard, Board Chair  
Ryan Erb, Executive Director  
Andrew Williams, Campaign Chair

People are struggling to make ends meet each and every month. In a recent report from our *Social Research and Planning Council*, the Living Wage for Perth and Huron Counties was announced at \$16.47 or a combined annual household income of \$60,000 for a family of four. Approximately half of the households in Perth and Huron Counties live on less – meaning, nearly fifty percent of us are struggling to pay basic everyday expenses. It's no wonder demand for services and funding from United Way is increasing.

Yet, there is hope! The Living Wage report has generated vigorous discussion at local councils and among major employers. Furthermore, I'm pleased to tell you that our efforts to reshape how we raise and distribute funds are bringing strong early returns and our supported partners will be, for the first time, receiving funding on a three-year basis, resulting in many benefits.

You have responded too! Major gifts have been pledged over three years from individuals and corporations to fund specific programs – the result is clear – our community is committed to creating change.

While these are difficult days for many, all of us can play a significant part in helping those in need. Thank you for all you do to assist your friends and neighbours through the United Way.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Erb".

Ryan Erb,  
Executive Director

You make change possible.

By placing your trust and confidence in United Way you are helping to build a connected, strong community where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. Whether it's giving children a good start or ensuring those living in poverty can meet their basic needs, together we are changing lives today and for the long-term.

Many individuals and families in Perth and Huron face barriers to building and sustaining a better life. United Way is a catalyst to breaking down these barriers by uniting community efforts and increasing the efficiency of local fundraising. Our three-year goal of \$4 million reflects this need and when achieved will ensure people in our community are able to get the help they need when they need it. This investment in your community enables our Supported Partners to offer strategic services that are evidence-informed and proven to get results.

As the Campaign Chair, I have seen how unity creates wonderful opportunities for thousands of residents right across Huron and Perth. It is a great privilege therefore to carry on in this role through the 3-year campaign, to help United Way achieve its goals and to continue to work with the many volunteers who tirelessly dedicate their time and effort to strengthening your community.

Respectfully,

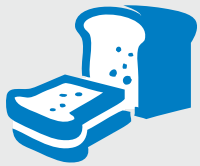
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Williams".

Andrew Williams  
Campaign Chair

# TOGETHER

**WE** help people move from **poverty to possibility**

## GOALS:



People have their basic needs met.



People are financially secure.

**97%**  
**OF PARTICIPANTS**  
**SUCCESSFULLY**  
**GAINED**  
**EMPLOYMENT**

For many parents, taking time off work to raise children is common. Beth had three kids and she wanted to be there as a full time mom. After a ten-year hiatus from the workforce Beth was now ready to return. She soon discovered that employers looked on her absence as a negative, and no one was willing to take a chance and hire her. "I was beginning to get very discouraged which was not helping me in interviews."

Beth was nervous, reserved and lacked confidence before she started at PF Solutions. After a few weeks, team members found her opening up and providing input into discussions and projects. Her intelligence, initiative and attention to detail started to shine through while she learned computer literacy.

After three months at PF Solutions, adding skills and tasks that she had completed to her resume, a local company was pleased to employ the now confident graduate.

United Way recognizes that a safe environment, an individual approach to learning and a strong support system are important pieces of the puzzle when transitioning from Ontario Works to the workforce. PF Solutions enables people to validate their skills, gain experience, enrich their resume and prove they are capable of working. Participants help the community and practice soft and hard skills at the same time. United Way is providing families and individuals the opportunity to move from poverty to possibility.

**"PF Solutions provided the opportunity for me to transition to the workplace, allowing my family the time to get used to having a working mom. I learned that with some organization and planning I could gain employment and support my family."**



## FROM POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

IN A COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE MATTERS, WE CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES TO NOT JUST SURVIVE IN OUR COMMUNITY, BUT TO THRIVE AND CONTRIBUTE.



# 29,329

individuals in poverty or crisis were able to access emergency supports like food, shelter and counselling.

# 1,141 INDIVIDUALS

## received financial assistance

to participate in YMCA programs through membership assistance.

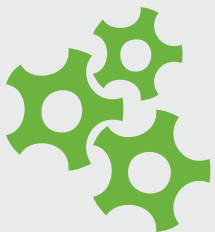


# TOGETHER

## WE build Strong Communities

### GOALS:

People are fully engaged in creating strong, inclusive communities.



People are connected to a strong network of community services, and to the social supports they need.



**94%  
OF CLIENTS  
STATED THAT SINCE  
GETTING HELP,  
THEY HAVE TAKEN  
ACTION TO  
SOLVE  
PROBLEMS**

"The help I received from Family Services Counselling gave me the skills I needed to manage my new reality," explains Ila, with a confident smile. "I was a 70-year-old woman, living alone and struggling to engage in the community."

Ila was new to Perth County and had retired here from a large city. Ila was feeling more and more isolated as she tried to settle in her new home. She became aware of the *A Time for Me* program at Family Services and signed up.

By attending, Ila got the help she needed to address her new circumstances. The program enhanced her listening skills, assertive communication and facilitated risk-taking to develop new relationships. Ila's emotional anxiety was progressively eased as she began to recognize her

strengths and set goals to seek out new experiences. Furthermore, Ila decided to engage in individual counselling as she became aware that she had personal issues that she needed to resolve in order to move forward.

Ila no longer felt alone in her struggles. The counselling program, funded by United Way, gives new hope to individuals like Ila by providing access to tools and professional advice they need to not just get by, but thrive. She has gone on to explore volunteer opportunities and now enjoys new friendships.

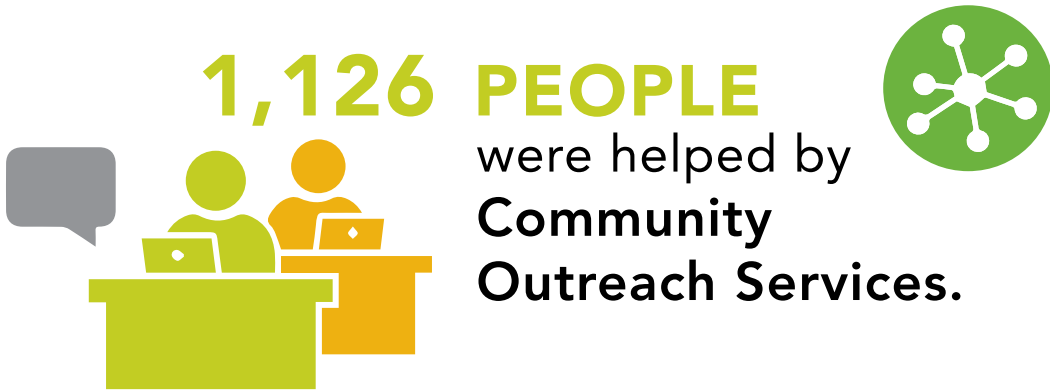
Through Family Service Programs supported by United Way, over 3704 people were helped in 2015. The true value comes in lives changed. The barriers faced by people on a fixed income can take a devastating toll on their spirit, determination and mental health. Family Services eliminates those barriers and empowers individuals like Ila to maintain their independence and continue to participate in their community.





# HEALTHY PEOPLE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

WE INVEST IN PROGRAMS THAT MAKE OUR COMMUNITY VIBRANT AND SAFE, WE FOCUS ON IMPROVING ACCESS TO SOCIAL AND HEALTH-RELATED SUPPORT SERVICE, AS WELL AS, SUPPORT COMMUNITY INTEGRATION AND ENGAGEMENT.



# TOGETHER

**WE** give kids the chance to **succeed**

## GOALS:

Children and youth experience positive mental health & well-being.



Children and youth are involved and feel they belong in their communities.



**170**  
**FAMILIES**  
WERE HELPED AT THE  
**EMILY MURPHY CENTRE**  
BY ACCESSING THE  
**CHILDREN'S**  
**PROGRAM**

Dylan and his mother are now sailing on smoother seas, though the journey to this point has been tumultuous. He carried deep anger, worsened by trauma in his youth, which led to an unsafe setting for his family. Today thanks to the help and support he has received at the *Emily Murphy Center*, the clouds are clearing, and his future is much brighter.

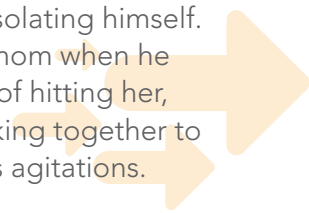
Stopping domestic abuse to keep families safe can require peer and police intervention, and involvement with the criminal justice and child welfare systems. These necessary steps are vital, but they can also fall short of stopping the familiar cycle of abuse.

The *Children's' Support and Counselling program* is designed to provide children who have witnessed and/or experienced

violence in the home, support and educational resources to cope with their experiences. Through this program, children are given alternatives to violent behaviour or abusive expressions of anger.

Before participating in the Child Witness program, Dylan had witnessed horrific violence against his mother. He had watched his father being taken to the hospital by ambulance because of an overdose. He and his mother had tried three times to escape the violence in their home, and, he had been apprehended and placed in foster care before being returned home. He was angry, hurt, and afraid.

By the time he came to the Emily Murphy Center and into the Children's program, Dylan had stopped talking and was regularly violent toward his mom. After a few months in the program, Dylan was talking again and was enrolled and loving school. He was making friends instead of isolating himself. He was telling his mom when he was angry, instead of hitting her, and they were working together to find solutions to his agitations.







## ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE

WE BELIEVE BY HELPING CHILDREN AND YOUTH GROW TO BE HEALTHY, RESILIENT, AND ENGAGED COMMUNITY MEMBERS, WE ARE INVESTING IN THE FUTURE AND THE OVERALL STRENGTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITIES.

## 372 CHILDREN

were connected with positive mentors to foster healthy relationships and encourage community engagement – building blocks to becoming successful adults.



## YOUTH IN ACTION GRANTS

*iMatter* at Stratford Northwestern Secondary School  
*Yoga & Mindfulness Training* at Goderich District Collegiate Institute and  
*Challenge Day* at Central Huron Secondary School.

# Living Wage: Creating Social Change

## LIVING WAGE:

the hourly wage a worker needs to earn to cover their family's basic everyday expenses, such as food, housing, utilities, childcare and transportation



**\$16.47**

per hour is the 2015 living wage rate for Perth and Huron

Nearly half of Huron and Perth households are earning less than what is needed to cover their basic expenses.



Social Research & Planning Council

For more information on a living wage, read the full community report online at [www.socialresearchandplanning.ca](http://www.socialresearchandplanning.ca)

*"The stress and powerlessness of living under such conditions [poverty] left me feeling hopeless, isolated, and overwhelmed."*

-person with lived experience

Recently the Social Research and Planning Council, in partnership with the Huron County Health Unit and Perth County Labour Market Strategy, investigated what it truly costs to make ends meet in Perth County and Huron County.

Poverty is a complex issue and it requires everyone in our community doing their part to help one another create a positive change. The United Way Perth-Huron is committed to raising awareness about what a living wage is, and being a voice for those who may feel as though their voice has been unheard.

Two local workplaces have already responded to the Living Wage report with a desire to create stronger communities, and a more positive workplace.

**Veterinary Purchasing reviewed their current payroll structure, did an analysis of implementing the living wage as a base salary and decided to take action to implement.**

"We take our role in the community very seriously" said Rick Culbert of *Veterinary Purchasing*. "We want to help attract people to our area, provide stability, and have a positive working environment." Rick sees having a reputation as a

responsible and fair employer to be a competitive advantage for recruiting new employees.

The owner of *Accumetal*, Bob Allen, testified that he gained a greater understanding of how wage levels affected his community upon reading the report. "Wages are often viewed as a business decision, it was helpful to gain an increased awareness and a change in perspective" said Allen.

**"People need to consider lower-wage earners and what it costs to make ends meet."**



It is through efforts like these that we can begin to mitigate the social costs of low-wage work such as physical and mental health treatments, homelessness, and high consumer debt-to-income ratios that government,

corporations and society take on as a whole.

We can all do our part to help lift our neighbours out of poverty. How might you be able to help? Consider being an advocate for a living wage, help get the word out about the reality of poverty and its affect by sharing the Living Wage report, or by sharing your own story of lived experience. Piece by piece, we can all make a difference in our community together!



Connect Youth Perth Huron is a website that offers access to valuable local resources, helping youth to make educated decisions about their lives. From small questions to complicated circumstances, *Connect Youth* can help provide answers.  
[connectyouthperthhuron.ca](http://connectyouthperthhuron.ca)

211 is a United Way funded help line providing information and referral to Ontario's community and social services. Dialing 2-1-1 or visiting [www.211ontario.ca](http://www.211ontario.ca) is a simple solution that offers confidential, free information and referral. 211 helps to navigate the complex network of human services quickly and easily 7 days a week in over 100 languages.

"An elderly woman called 211 regarding getting help contacting the Attorney General office. Her husband had been called for jury duty but he had been in a nursing home for several years and could not attend. The recorded message she heard at the Attorney General number had confused her. She was very frustrated. The caller gave 211 permission to call the Attorney General on her behalf and they promised her to make a warm transfer to a real person and not another voicemail. 211 explained the situation and the caller was transferred to the correct person who promised to fix the records to take her husband off the list."



**When you don't know where to turn.™**

## Forever Fund

Since 1959, our local United Way has been identifying the needs and working with the support of countless individuals who believe, like you do, that we can all create lasting change in our community. And today, 57 years and some three generations later, your support continues to improve the lives of those all around us... our neighbours, our friends, and our families.



As the needs continue to grow our most loyal supporters have come forward, creating Legacy Gifts, ensuring the impact they have already created, will continue for the coming generation. By supporting United Way through your estate planning, you are creating a future for those who will inherit our community.

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