



Dear United Way Friend,

Have you ever thought, **“What if United Way Perth-Huron didn’t exist?”** ...*I have.*

Thousands of people in distress or danger would be without hope. Imagine those in need without access to youth homelessness organizations like *Shelterlink* and *Huron Safe Homes for Youth* or food programs like *The Local Community Food Centre* and *the Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre* to name a few. People would suffer greatly.

But thanks to Perth and Huron community residents’ previous donations, your neighbours, friends, co-workers, family and perhaps even you, found hope in the partner services United Way Perth-Huron supports.

People like, Sonya:

*“I had sunken into a dark place. I was struggling to find work upon post secondary graduation; part of the boomerang cohort; returning to my parent’s residence, **educated but broke and lacking experience entering a competitive employment landscape.** After more than a year of applying, a career councillor saw my potential and gave me a chance to validate my skills. I was **given the opportunity to be a trainer at PF Solutions, a supported partner of United Way Perth-Huron** that helps people overcome employment barriers. Because of PF I was able to experience comradery, practice what I had learned at school, and **given a glimpse of light in my darkness.** I put this acquired experience on my resume, and after four months **I landed a full time permanent job** at a local non-profit organization. **I continue to enjoy my job, give back to my community, using my skills to make positive change.**”*

People like Josh:

*Josh, **recently widowed and grieving the loss of his wife, was struggling to financially support his two children, aged 8 and 12, on his own. His son, with special needs, requires trained people to support him daily. This was creating problems at work for Josh,** as he needed a lot of time off transitioning his son’s care and was becoming more socially isolated.*

*Through his son’s teacher, he became aware of **the services offered at Family Services Perth-Huron.** Some of the benefits this family experienced through this referral were **counselling services to brainstorm and problem-solve the most***

difficult issues and come up with a **solid plan of action to move forward, respite care for his son, and becoming involved in activities they could do as a family.**

With the counselor's support, he now understood **how his grief had also affected his children's behaviours. Josh gained new skills to listen and resolve conflicts with his daughter** and realized ways to improve their relationship. The school noticed **both children were more open to learn and Josh experienced improved mental health and personal wellbeing, and is hopeful for their future.**

This year I invite you to invest in new programs as well:

Crossing Bridges (North Perth) is a drop in centre for high risk youth that provides a safe, substance free environment where youth can receive support with their mental health and/or substance use, be connected to community resources, access food and computers for housing and job searches, become involved in substance free, healthy activities and to set and work towards personal goals.

Poverty to Prosperity (Huron County)'s "*Destination – Prosperity: Working Together to Support Communities*" program empowers young women with children who are living in poverty to access tools and services for areas such as: food security; education; volunteerism; peer support; arts / culture / recreation activities; financial literacy; household management and community improvement. Leading to a healthy, equitable, just and inclusive community.

PF Solutions (Stratford) *Skills Series* is a structured and fun environment for individuals with developmental and acquired disabilities to develop individual life skills in health and fitness, money management, cooking, and stress management, and to build social integration.

Your investment in United Way really does work and I want to celebrate with you in the successes we have achieved! Our **community is increasing in strength ... people are moving from poverty to possibility** and **kids are reaching their potential!**

However, there remains urgent community needs that must be met. In our commitment to community and addressing identified needs, by providing a path for people to improve their lives, it's necessary to increase our campaign goal by *eight percent* this year. It's as simple as a gift of \$100 last year becoming a gift of \$108 this year and donating through your workplace campaign.

Every dollar counts and you can help!

I welcome you to call me at 519-271-7730 | 1-877-818-8867 or visit our website perthhuron.unitedway.ca to discover more.



In Community Partnership,
Ryan Erb, Executive Director