



To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Debra Swan and I am the Executive Director of The Local Community Food Centre, a Supported Partner of United Way Perth-Huron.

Sometimes people aren't sure if United Way is needed, or being held accountable to do a good job anymore. I'm here to tell you because of the United Way, our community gardens and greenhouse are thriving with fresh produce for participants to take home. Families, seniors and people who might otherwise have no one to enjoy a meal with are coming together in our dining room for our community meals. Our healthy cooking programs are changing people's lives every day as they learn to cook healthy meals even on a tight budget. The Storehouse and Community Access Market are connecting community members and not-for-profit organizations with thousands of pounds of fresh, healthy local food. Our social justice and advocacy programs are giving a voice to those who are seeking progressive change towards an equitable community.

It's also important to know, despite what sometimes is shared on social media, United Way is very responsible with the donations received. They are accountable to United Way of Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, a Finance and Audit Committee of committed local volunteer private citizens, and are annually audited by an outside auditor. Each year, approximately 15% is spent on fundraising/admin costs (less than it would cost our organization to fundraise on our own). Without that 15% the 85% that is invested into our community annually would be almost impossible to do.

Apart from the funding we receive, there are also added benefits of being a United Way partner:

- United Way is a proven, effective and economical method of raising funds. Doing our own fundraising takes workers away from the front-line where we are needed most.
- Agencies benefit from the increased awareness United Way brings. They have the capacity to communicate on a much greater scale with national businesses, as well as partnering with over 200 workplaces in Perth and Huron County. United Way speaks on behalf of its supported partners in multiple ways including Facebook, website, Twitter, newsletters, media releases, speaking engagements, printed material, etc.
- United Way invests and enables local social research that sheds light on root causes

A Place for Food.

and unique issues in Perth and Huron; data that as partners we can use to advocate for our cause and use while applying for other funding sources.

- As United Way Supported Partners, we work together in a hub of collective efforts sharing needed items and resources, participate in training and refer clients to other partner services.

Their Executive Director is a normal person, drives a 2006 minivan and takes his kids to the beach and the movies once in a while. In other words, while United Way believes strongly in paying its employees at least a living wage and reasonably competitive salaries, you can count on your donations getting to where they are supposed to – *to us!* United Way is 100% locally focussed and unless you designate your gift otherwise, it stays in our community to help those in need.

So, please help spread the good news! United Way is a great organization and our charity depends on their help every year. For more information, visit <http://perthhuron.unitedway.ca/about/faq/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debra Swan".

Executive Director

The Local Community Food Centre