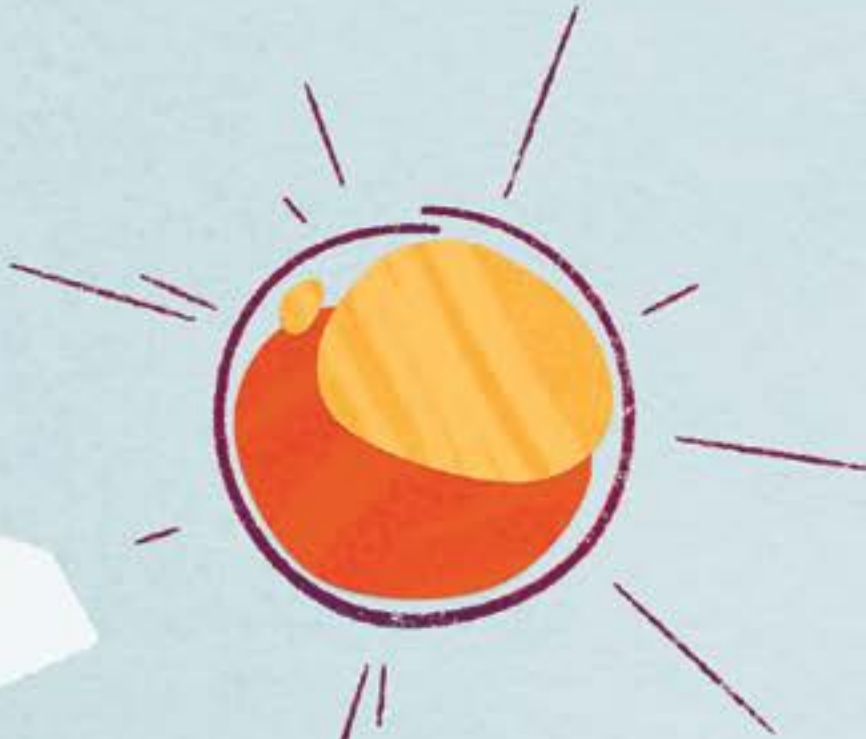




United Way
Perth-Huron



United Way
Perth-Huron



**Social Research &
Planning Council**

The mission of the Social Research and Planning Council is to inspire social progress through research and planning with accurate, local, and relevant evidence that promotes actions by supporting the implementation of inclusive and holistic community change. As part of this transformation, we researched and developed a Land Acknowledgement Statement for United Way Perth-Huron to reconfirm our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

United Way Perth-Huron expresses gratitude and respect to the Indigenous people who have been stewards of this land for thousands of years. We are located on the traditional territory of the Haudenosaunee Nations, Anishinaabe Nations and Neutral People. The territory is covered by the Huron Tract, registered as Treaty 29 and by the Saugeen Tract, registered as Treaty 45 ½.

United Way is committed to the path of ongoing reconciliation, recognition of rights, respect, cooperation, collaboration and partnership.



Visit our Land Acknowledgement website page to discover the traditional territory and treaties in your municipality.

VISION

A better life for everyone in our communities

EQUITY DIVERSITY & INCLUSION commitment

At its core, Diversity Equity Inclusion (DEI) work is about creating the environment so that our vision can be achieved — within the communities in which we work and within our own organization.

DEI Vision:

United Way strives to engage community members, especially those whose voices have traditionally been marginalized. We work with community members and public and private partners to co-create solutions to ensure everyone has the resources, support, opportunities and networks they need to thrive.

Commitment

We commit to leveraging all our assets (convening, strategic investments, awareness building, advocacy) to create more equitable and just communities. We will do this by:

- Ensuring that the UWPH team, the work we do and how we do it reflect the diversity of our communities.
- Continuously learning and unlearning as individuals and as an organization.
- Amplifying the voices of equity-deserving people and co-creating equitable solutions.
- Working to dismantle discriminatory structures and systems within our movement and advocate for systemic change to build an inclusive community.
- Listening to and learning from Indigenous members of our communities about Indigenous strengths and ways of knowing and being.

Message from the Executive Director

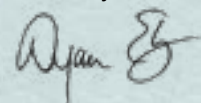
It was 'the year after.' The worst was supposed to be over, and in some ways that was true. The world felt a bit more normal as we started to gather again, albeit cautiously, with friends, family, and neighbours, but the damage remains. People are further behind. With high inflation, increased pressure on social and healthcare systems, declining volunteerism and burn-out among frontline staff, it hardly feels like we are beyond anything.

So here we are. Our community, and the world, has changed. Now, 45% of people are living on less than a living wage; the average monthly rental for a one-bedroom apartment stands at \$1,200; and numbers from Statistics Canada tell us that in 2021, 14.6% of Perth-Huron residents were experiencing food insecurity — that's up from 11% in 2017! **Simply put, there are more people living on the very edge, one small step from not being able to pay their rents and making sacrifices — including skipping meals — to manage their household finances.**

And yet there is hope. Thanks to the incredible efforts of our volunteers, staff and partners we are making lives better every day. We are there for people in their time of crisis, but we don't stop there. United Way is focused on improving the social safety net in our communities by introducing innovative programs and services, and on advocacy to ensure that better policy is in place at the provincial and federal levels. We want to see change and with your help it is happening. Solutions are in the works. Whether it is increasing the number of employers paying a living wage or our efforts to launch Perth-Huron's own entrepreneurial not-for-profit housing corporation, I can tell you we are working incredibly hard to create a better future for our community.

My thanks to you. Without you and your support none of this is possible.

Sincerely,



Ryan Erb,
Executive Director

"When we harness collective knowledge, expertise and compassion we are unstoppable."

WHY does United Way invest where we do?

United Way Perth-Huron is leading the way in creating a resilient and caring community where everyone thrives. **Our strategic goals are:**



Everyone has a sufficient income and lives in a home that is affordable, adequate, reliable and safe.



Diversity is celebrated and marginalized people are empowered.



Everyone has access to the social services they need.

In order to make the community we envision a reality, we need to shift the organization. **The shift explained:**

From	To
Community Development Leader	Community Development Expert & Leader
Social Expert	Social Expert & Social Forecaster
Singular Outcome-oriented Funder	Strategic Funder
Friend of Government	Government Partner of Choice
Supporter of Community Benefit Capital Projects	Leader of Community Benefit Capital Projects

2022/23 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Mike Ash



Beth Blowes



Henry Boot



Ann Cook



Morgan Dykstra



Cyrille Fopoussi



Tracy Allan-Koester



Keith Masterman



Howard Minett



Randy Schwartzentruber



Nick Skinner



Donna Taylor



When asked about United Way the word that comes to mind is **impact**.

We see deep impact throughout our community in the work of our supported partners, the Social Research and Planning Council and new initiatives that make our region such an amazing place to live and thrive. Thank you for supporting United Way. Together, we're making a difference in Perth-Huron.

- Susan Moffat,
Board Chair

HOW we work

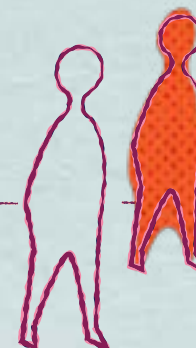
United Way Perth-Huron helps here in the community you care about, tackling local issues including homelessness, mental health and access to services. We work on short- and long-term solutions to pressing challenges through innovative initiatives and partnerships including Connection Centres, our Urgent Needs Fund and mental health supports, as well as research and advocacy on social justice issues including poverty reduction, income security, community safety and well-being, housing and homelessness, mental health and addictions, and equity, diversity and inclusion. When you show your #LocalLove by donating or volunteering, you're helping people in our community improve their lives.

We create impact by:

- **LEVERAGING** partnerships and resources to respond compassionately to community needs.
- **LEADING** and funding initiatives addressing the root causes of local issues and establishing long-lasting community supports.
- **ADVOCATING** systems change by speaking about social issues, fostering constructive relationships with policy makers and championing solutions.
- **RESEARCHING**, generating, and sharing knowledge about social issues and the vital role of innovation in improving programs, partnerships and systems.

We **LEVERAGE** partnerships and resources

- Social service agencies
- Volunteers
- Corporate donors
- Individual donors
- Employees
- Labour unions
- University research departments
- Federal and provincial governments
- Municipal leaders



UNDERSTANDING the issues

Watch



A message from Ryan about our multipronged approach.

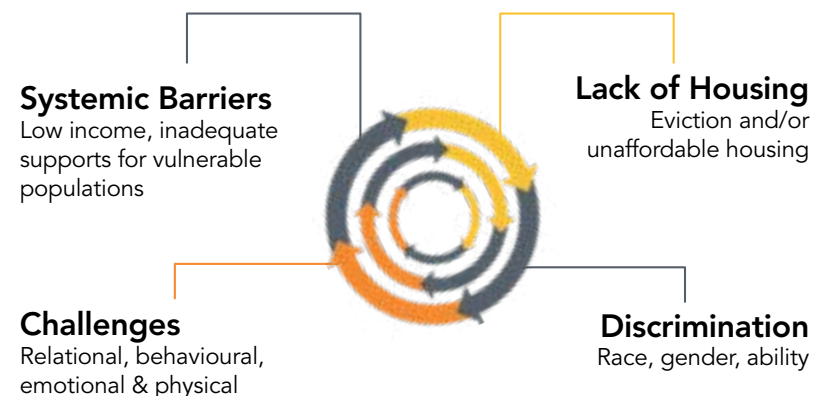
United Way Perth-Huron is proud to support partners across our region to deliver needed programs and services to vulnerable people. But we are so much more. United Way researches, advocates, innovates and incubates solutions to pressing local issues. Take a moment to learn more about the importance of our multipronged approach.



Housing & Homelessness

Homelessness isn't just about sleeping on the streets. People may also be in a temporary shelter, incarcerated without a place to go after release or couch surfing. Homelessness affects every aspect of life including family 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 at least once a week. The odds can often feel stacked against those dealing with homelessness due to a mix of complex, interrelated issues like mental illness, addiction and abuse. Homelessness also disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, including individuals with physical disabilities, chronic health issues and mental health challenges.



Source: Homeless Hub
Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

About
1/2
of Perth-Huron
residents* earn less
than a living wage

*Residents above 15 yrs. of age

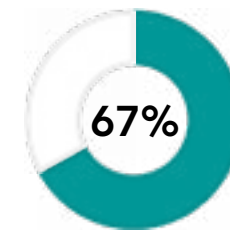
Source: Statistics Canada. T1 Individual File,
Table IB-05C. Reference 22057 - 1004794

298
people are
experiencing
homelessness
in Perth-Huron

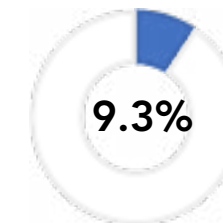
Source: Huron County and City of
Stratford Social Services Depts.

Homes VS Income

From 2016 to 2021
Ontario average
home prices have
increased by 67%



Whereas in the same
period average
household income in
Ontario is up only 9.3%



Source: StatsCanada
2021 Income Survey.
11-10-0239-0

Income Source	Monthly Income	Avg. one bedroom rental	Per Cent spent on rent
Ontario Works	\$863	\$1,258	145%
ODSP	\$1,309	\$1,258	104%
Minimum Wage	\$2,351	\$1,258	53%
Living Wage	\$3,136	\$1,258	40%

Poverty & Food Security

Financial stability means not worrying about your next meal, how you are going to pay your bills or whether you can afford to buy a warm winter coat for your child. For those struggling with a limited income, these worries are always present.

Household food insecurity — the inadequate or insecure access to food due to financial constraints — is a serious public health problem. It negatively affects physical, mental, and social health and costs our healthcare system greatly. By the time someone reports they are struggling to put food on the table, they are also struggling to afford other basic needs.

Household food insecurity is closely linked to income. As a household's income declines, the risk of food insecurity increases. In 2022, the average family of four in Perth-Huron paid \$1,076 per month for groceries, that's \$12,912 per year (*the Real Cost of Eating in Huron and Perth*, HPPH Nov 2022).

The daily struggle to make ends meet is a source of tremendous stress and anxiety, making it difficult for individuals and families to focus on anything else and leaving them in a perpetual cycle of poverty.



United Way
Perth-Huron



Social Research &
Planning Council

The issues facing our region aren't always obvious and it's important to understand root causes. The *Social Research & Planning Council* has a long history of digging deep into local challenges and presenting concrete recommendations United Way Perth-Huron can use to create practical and innovative solutions that work best for individual communities.



Gabrielle's Story

Connecting vulnerable youth with supports to build a brighter future.

Sixteen-year-old Gabrielle and her family were living in poverty for a long time and there was no heat or water in the old trailer they called home.

All Gabrielle wanted was a secure and stable home so she could return to high school and work toward her diploma. A concerned member of the community reached out to a local United Way funded youth support organization on Gabrielle's behalf.

Now, Gabrielle's life is much better. Staff at the support organization helped her find a safe, stable place to live and she continues working toward her goal of becoming the first person in her family to graduate from high school.



Parker's Story

Welcoming local people, addressing food insecurity.

"I never thought this would happen to me. I've always worked hard and paid my way. Lately though, it's been getting harder to make ends meet. Our rent has gone up. I have to drive out of town to work every day and it costs so much to fill up my car. My kids seem to need more the older they get. My wife started working outside the home and that helps, but we're still just scraping by. It keeps getting harder and harder to pay all the bills and buy groceries every week. I started feeling a little desperate, but then a friend of mine told me about the equal access market in our town.

"At first, I wasn't sure I wanted to go. I'd never asked for help before and didn't know what to expect. But everyone was so welcoming! You never feel judged, there's always so much food to choose from and it doesn't cost much, which really helps with money so tight. This market has made our lives a little easier."

HOW we're making a difference

HURON HOMELESSNESS INITIATIVE

Shelter in winter and support from Housing Stability Worker

56

people accessed winter shelter and/or were supported by the Housing Stability Worker in Huron

Support for youth to be sheltered

22

youth (aged 16-18) experiencing homelessness received extended support

8

men benefited from transitional housing support in Exeter, increasing their stability and well-being

627

women and children fleeing violence stayed at emergency shelter in Huron

Emergency shelter and safety for women & children

Transitional home for men

EQUAL ACCESS TO FOOD



The St. Marys NOURISH Equal Access Food Market helps mitigate the effects of poverty by offering local vegetables, fruit, and meat at cost to residents facing food insecurity; offering a dignified, judgment-free shopping experience where everyone feels welcome.

154

people were served meals in North Perth

616

individuals benefited from food skills programming in Stratford

162

people visited the equal access market in St. Marys

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION STRATEGIES



The *Urgent Needs Fund* supports Perth-Huron residents with an infusion of funds for essentials in a time of crisis. It is estimated that half of Canadians are only \$200 away from insolvency. The *Urgent Needs Fund* is a part of a broader strategy to prevent homelessness and unemployment and reduce the effects of poverty on individuals and families. It can cover expenses such as winter clothing, car repairs, rent arrears and more.



774

individuals and families received financial assistance last year

United Way fundraises and accepts donations

Funds are transferred to our partner, 211 Ontario

People in crisis dial 2-1-1

A 211 Navigator learns details of circumstance and determines the best way to help

211

211 is free, confidential and available 24/7/365

REINTEGRATION SUPPORT

90

HOPE Kits given to those without essentials

Many individuals lose everything while incarcerated. HOPE Kits are the first step to help with reintegration. Simple items like snacks, socks, gloves, and hygiene products, as well as bus passes, community resource sheets and gift cards for warm clothes during the winter months or food make things a little easier for men upon their release.

"Thanks to the vouchers I received in the HOPE Kit, I was able to take a bus to the store and get a winter jacket, and I didn't have to struggle to feed myself on my first day out! This gave me hope that I could start a new chapter in my life." - Lance

109

men accessed institutional visiting and reintegration support

The *Institutional Visiting and Reintegration Support* program offers regular visits at the Stratford Jail to provide information, counselling, advocacy and support to assist individuals with reintegration planning upon release. Individuals are connected to other local resources to access additional supports. Follow-up is offered to help the individual's successful reintegration into the community.



Where would you turn if something like this happened to you?

Nari was busy with her two young daughters, juggling two part-time jobs and the challenges that come with being a working mom. Grandma Elisa was the glue of the household, always ready to pick up a sick child from school, do a grocery run, drop off kids at a play date with friends or start dinner when Nari worked late.

Money was tight, but the family of four made it work.

During a visit to her doctor, Elisa received a diagnosis that changed everything: macular degenerative disease. Elisa needed to get to important doctor's appointments, so Nari had to cancel some shifts to support her mom. Consequently, she didn't have enough to cover the bills that month. Where could Nari turn?

We LEAD innovative solutions

Recent environmental shifts, including rising inflation and a three-year pandemic, have placed added stress on society and increased the need for support and housing. The value and far-reaching benefits of collaboration and collective impact are clear and will help to remedy the causes, rather than simply alleviating symptoms. United Way's *Community Renewal Company* and four *Connection Centres* across the region are examples of innovative solutions.



Community Renewal Company

United Way Perth-Huron's Community Renewal Company is the region's first entrepreneurial not-for-profit affordable housing provider. The Community Renewal Company will build and operate housing for people experiencing homelessness, people of low income and people able to pay market rates, creating sustainable mixed developments where residents of all backgrounds live together.

The Community Renewal Company is supported by an ad hoc committee of local advisors. We are incredibly thankful for their support:

Keith Masterman, *Co-chair*
 Dan Mathieson, *Co-chair*
 Caroline Baker
 Dennis DesRosiers
 Cyrille Fopoussi
 John Marshall
 Susan Moffat
 Nancy Orr
 Marty Rops



HEAR
ALEX'S
STORY IN
HER OWN
VOICE

Alex was assaulted by an intimate partner and left a 15-year relationship...

Scan the QR code to hear more of Alex's story and learn how a United Way Connection Centre helped on her journey out of homelessness.

230
unique attendees
visited the **Southern
Huron** Connection
Centre last year

84
unique attendees
visited the **North Perth**
Connection Centre
last year

287
unique attendees visited
the **Stratford** Connection
Centre last year

CONNECTION CENTRES

United Way Connection Centres are uniquely rural solutions to the pressing issue of chronic homelessness. The centres help those already experiencing homelessness, those precariously housed as well as other vulnerable local people. Connection Centres are region-specific and offer both short- and long-term solutions that best serve the needs of the local community.

Currently, there are four Connection Centres across Perth-Huron including Stratford, Listowel (serving North Perth), Exeter (serving Southern Huron) and Wingham (serving Northern Huron).

Connection Centres are a housing-based service staffed by caring, highly qualified staff and supported by well-trained volunteers.

Staff collaborate with community partners to provide wrap-around supports including trauma-informed care, substance use and mental health counselling and basic needs. Building trust between participants, service providers, staff and volunteers can lead to opportunities for attendees to engage with more formal supports and continue their journey out of homelessness.



Client-Centred:
Focuses on access to basic needs, prioritizes building trust with participants and bridging gaps toward more formal supports.



Voluntary:
Allows participants the autonomy to determine service goals, empowering them with dignity and choice.



Housing-Focused:
Unrelenting in efforts to make the experience of homelessness as brief as possible and return people to permanent accommodation.

Facilitates meeting basic needs:

- Tarps and tents
- Warm and take-away meals
- Clothing and footwear
- Shower and laundry facilities
- Warming/Cooling spaces
- Social connections
- Emotional support

Workers provide support to:

- Conduct housing searches
- Complete applications
- Communicate with landlords
- Advance move-in readiness
- Complete documentation for entrance into the coordinated access system

"Housing individuals will always be our priority. But our success is also measured by having a space our clients know they can come, a place to build trust. A space they can take ownership of. Tyler isn't housed yet, but he has a place where he can shower, or sit on a couch and watch television. A place where he can coordinate appointments with his support workers. It might not look like what we consider a home, but Tyler does."

- Andrea Loohuizen
Coordinator, Southern Huron Connection Centre



Alan's Story

Beginning a journey out of homelessness...

After suffering for years with chronic mental health issues, Alan found himself without a home.

As life became more desperate, and his frustrations grew with trying to navigate the service system himself to find a place to stay, Alan reached out for help. Once he found his way to a local United Way Connection Centre, the compassionate staff were able to advocate for him and work to connect Alan with the right programs so he could finally get off the streets and into a home to call his own.

Now, Alan is doing better. Thanks to a United Way Perth-Huron Connection Centre, he has a stable home and can focus on building a brighter future.



READ



All reports listed here when published

Quality of Life Report coming soon...

The report will share how the interconnected areas of governance, social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being give us a picture of the quality of life in Perth and Huron. Exploring the different factors that reflect our quality of life will allow us to understand what measures we can take to further improve our community.



"We're committed to prioritizing our people and culture. A big part of that commitment is ensuring a sense of security for everyone; clients and employees alike. Certifying as a living wage employer speaks to our desire as an organization to lead by example."

- Amanda Ropp
South West Vets,
Listowel & Stratford

We ADVOCATE for policy changes and deeper understanding



The Social Research and Planning Council (SRPC) is dedicated to collecting, analyzing and distributing information that inspires social progress.

The SRPC is made up of community partners and volunteers who work to build awareness of social issues and advocate for collective solutions. The United Way shares the information within the community and to all levels of government as policy recommendations and suggested actions, supported by the evidence-based research the SRPC conducts.



Paying a living wage provides workers and their families with a better way of life, benefits employers, and helps build more vibrant and healthy communities.

Currently, the living wage for Perth-Huron is \$20.70 per hour.

Worker Benefits

- Reduces the need to work multiple jobs
• Improves nutrition and reduces stress, resulting in better physical and mental health
• Raises standard of living and quality of life
• Provides opportunities for skills training to improve credentials and career advancement

Employer Benefits

- Enhances marketing strategy for recruitment
• Increases employee retention, decreasing retraining costs
• Increases staff morale and loyalty
• Improves productivity and service delivery
• Elevates employer profile in the community
• Adds to positive digital footprint
• Offers consumers socially responsible purchasing options

Community Benefits

- Increases civic participation
• Lowers childhood poverty rates
• Increases consumer spending in local economy
• Promotes the benefits of social programs



55 local certified employers

ADDRESSING MENTAL HEALTH

Individuals struggling with their mental health can experience fear, rejection and stigma, severely impacting quality of life. Many have even been denied adequate housing and jobs.

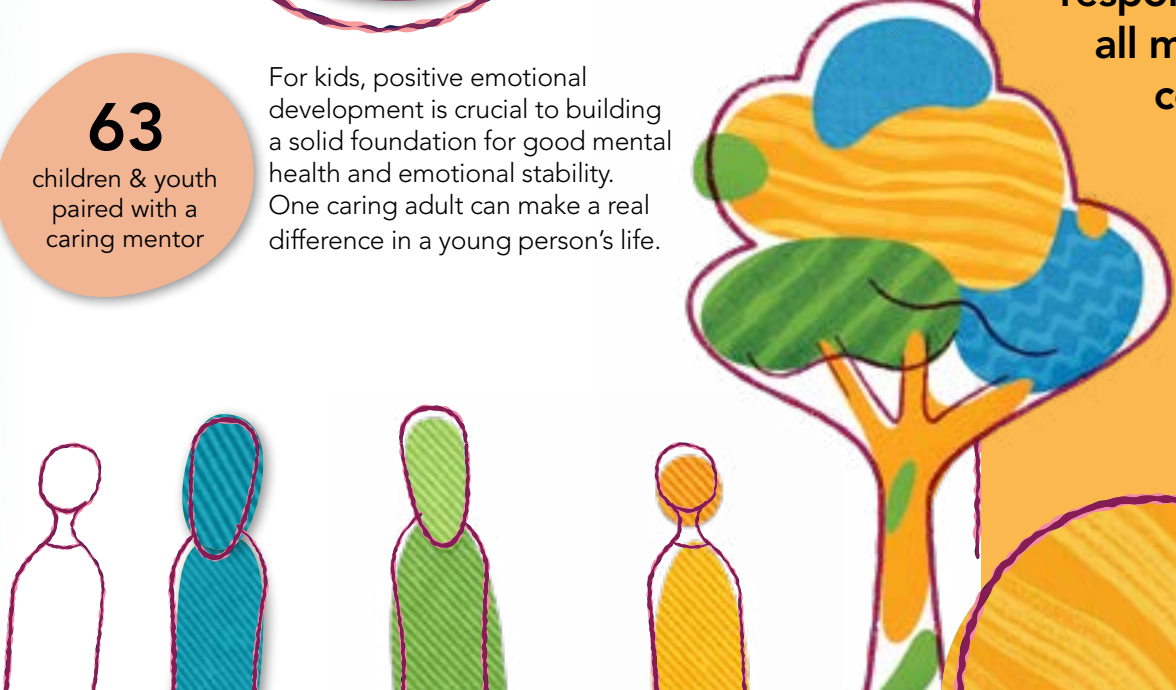
When young children are exposed to the trauma of domestic violence, it affects brain development and negatively impacts their ability to learn. They are also much more likely to become abusers themselves or believe that threats and violence are a normal part of relationships. This can affect the rest of their lives and create a cycle of violence and poverty.

Together, we're ensuring those impacted by mental health issues, and who otherwise could not afford help, can easily access the supports they need.



"All communities are experiencing an increase in mental health and addiction issues and Perth-Huron is no different. The issues are becoming more complex and require a collaborative response that includes all members of the community."

- Catherine Hardman, Executive Director CMHA Huron Perth



We Link people to services

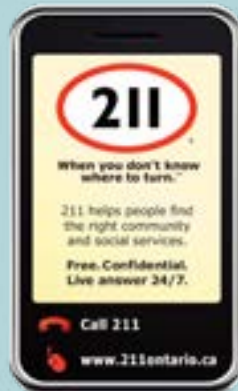


6,109

211 calls & visits to 211ontario.ca combined

A hotline and website database of all available social services. Using your postal code, 211 Navigators can find specific local programs and services to address a caller's life challenges. Records of social services are updated annually.

Life can be hard, but finding help is easy thanks to highly trained 211 staff!



free | confidential | 24/7/365 | 150+ languages

A woman with aging parents phoned 211 looking for in-home supports for her stepfather, who was diagnosed with stage four cancer. The family had a support worker coming into the home but needed additional support. During the conversation, the Community Navigator discovered the woman's mother was struggling with the burden of caregiving and needed mental health support. By the end of the call, the Navigator was able to connect them to resources for both in-home supports and caregiver support for the woman's parents. "I love when I can uncover additional problems people might not realize are there," says Lisanne, the Navigator who answered the call. "Sometimes it's a much bigger issue, and addressing that can help resolve other concerns."



An online resource for young people, helping them navigate local service information and empowering youth to make informed decisions about life's challenges.

4,518
visits to website



Owned by United Way Perth-Huron, the United Centre is located in downtown Stratford and serves as our head office. We have five non-profit tenants serving the community and our reception is open M-F, from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.



703

people walked in or called & were offered assistance

WAYS TO DONATE

Over the phone with credit card or e-transfer. Our phone is answered by Cairenn, M-F from 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.

By mail, or stop by our office with a cheque.



Online:



Printing sponsored by:

McCUTCHEN & PEARCE
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS

Famme & Co.
Professional Corporation
CHARTERED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTANTS



United Way
Perth-Huron

United Way Perth-Huron · 32 Erie St. Stratford, ON N5A 2M4
@UnitedWayPH · www.perthhuron.unitedway.ca · 519-271-7730