

2025/2026 ANNUAL REPORT



United Way
Perth-Huron

OUR MISSION

Improve lives and build community by empowering and mobilizing collective action.

OUR VISION

Everyone in our community has the opportunity for a better life.

WE ACHIEVE THIS BY:



Generating and leveraging resources to drive change.



Leading and funding signature initiatives.



Investing in local agencies and partnerships.



Bringing partners together across sectors.



Building awareness and advocating for systems change.

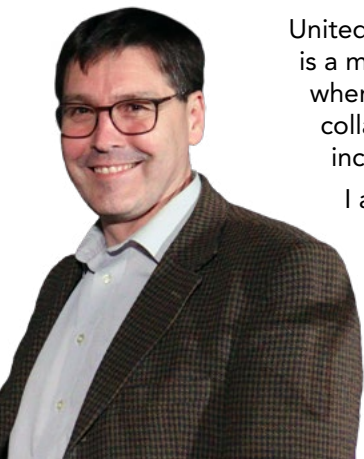


Using research and data to evaluate and report on issues and impact.

MESSAGE FROM YOUR CEO:

United for good. It's more than a slogan: it reflects who we are and how we work. United Way Perth-Huron is a movement of community partners, volunteers and donors who believe that lasting change happens when we work together. No single organization or individual can meet every need alone, but through collaboration, a shared vision and mutual trust, we are building a stronger, more resilient and more inclusive community.

I am deeply grateful to our supporters and partners who turn that shared commitment to our community into action every day. Your compassion, leadership and generosity make collective impact possible, ensuring support reaches people with dignity, respect and care. Inclusion is central to this work. When we listen to diverse voices, remove barriers and create space for belonging, our differences become our strength. Thank you for standing shoulder to shoulder with us and helping to build a community that is truly united for good.





\$2.5 MILLION

TOTAL FUNDS INVESTED IN COMMUNITY WORK

UNITED WAY LED — FUNDED — THAT MANAGED

4 SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

27 FUNDED AGENCIES

33 PROGRAMS



IMPACT NUMBERS



MENTAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

156

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

36

youth accessed counselling services to build resilience via Family Services Perth Huron

1,610

individuals and family members accessed counselling to build resilience via Family Services Perth Huron

42

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

1,076

crisis calls answered from women facing Intimate Partner Violence via Artemis Huron



HOUSING STABILITY

35

households accessed the Bridge Housing and Stability Program via Huron County

65

youth received shelter and housing stability support in Perth and Huron via Shelterlink Youth Services & Huron Safe Homes for Youth

13

clients received transitional housing and supports via Huron Turning Point

328

individuals connected to life stability supports via the North Perth Community Outreach Worker

400

counselling/mediation sessions provided via the St. Marys Community Outreach Worker



POVERTY MITIGATION

1,941

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

39,443

visits to foodbanks and mobile foodbanks in Perth-Huron via Huron County Food Bank Distribution Centre

240

participants learned essential kitchen skills via The Local Community Food Centre

1,173

tax returns filed through volunteer tax clinics via Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

148

children received financial help to participate in extracurriculars via YMCA SWO Recreation, Arts and Sports program



EQUITY SUPPORTS

473

newcomers received support accessing services via YMCA Three Rivers

2,673

participants in Indigenous-led events and meetings via Kasentha/Two Row Now

1,375

attendees at 2SLGBTQ+ events and programs via Stratford-Perth Pride

SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

CONNECTION CENTRES



United Way is proud to lead the *Connection Centre* initiative and help vulnerable people in our communities.

Currently located in Stratford and Wingham (both operated by *Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth*) and Exeter (operated by *The Community Table*), *Connection Centres* are region-specific and provide wraparound supports, including trauma-informed care, substance use and mental health counselling, as well as building community and providing basic needs, for people experiencing homelessness or who are otherwise vulnerable.



15,979

total visits to Connection Centres operated by CMHA Huron Perth in Stratford & Wingham and the Community Table in Exeter

ACCESS CENTRES

Access Centres offer people a central location where they can find information and assistance. The Centres are part of United Way's strategy to address transportation challenges and other barriers in our rural region. They provide space for organizations to bring services into communities that otherwise would not have them.



access centre



4

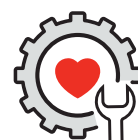
Access Centres open to serve clients in Exeter, Listowel, Stratford and Vanastra

885

visits to youth hubs run by *The Well*

URGENT NEEDS FUND

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



166

payments to households facing financial insecurity

211 ONTARIO

211 Ontario is a free, confidential, live-answer service available 24/7/365 in over 150 languages. 211 navigators are trained to refer anyone seeking assistance to local services that meet a caller's unique needs. There are more than 1,500 Perth-Huron service records maintained locally.



1,896

contacts made with 211 for support accessing services

ERICA'S JOURNEY

"A few years ago, my life was defined by fear, isolation and survival. The abuse began during my pregnancy and escalated over time, leading to stays in shelter, court processes and a constant fear for my life. As the situation grew more complex, I lost my son, Joe — one of the most devastating moments of my life — while I was also struggling with addiction and trying to protect myself from ongoing harassment.

"In August 2023, everything began to change. With support from a community advocate, I reached out for help and came to Artemis Huron, a United Way Perth-Huron supported partner. There, I found safety, compassion and support without judgment. With help accessing medical care, addiction and mental health supports and stable housing, I began rebuilding my life. Today, Joe is back with me, and while we are still healing, we are doing so safely and with hope. Because of this support, we now have the chance to build a future that truly belongs to us."





Local housing costs have risen dramatically. That means many people — your friends, family and neighbours — must spend more than 30% of their income on housing, putting additional stress on already strained household budgets. High housing costs also exacerbate homelessness. There are at least 148 households in Huron and 144 across Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County experiencing homelessness.

Moreover there is an existing housing shortage, with long waitlists in both counties: 567 in Huron and 544 in Perth.



See the full list of winners



PEOPLE IN ACTION

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE



United Housing is a long-term, practical and innovative solution created by United Way to address housing challenges across our region. United Housing aims to support and build on work being done by the City of Stratford and Huron County, helping increase the amount of affordable mixed-income rental housing. It's a local solution to the housing affordability crisis we face locally.

\$2.27 MILLION

TOTAL FUNDS SECURED TO ADVANCE HOUSING SOLUTIONS

- 6** ACTIVE PROJECTS
 - 1 in EXETER
 - 1 in WINGHAM
 - 2 in STRATFORD
 - 2 in LISTOWEL
- 1** COMPLETE
 - Perth Meadows in LISTOWEL

FIRST PROJECT

The Music Hall Apartments in North Perth is transforming a former music hall at 190–198 Main Street W in downtown Listowel into 10 rentable units, breathing life into an unused space while addressing local housing needs. Designed as a mixed-income development, the project balances sustainability with inclusivity, including market-rate, workforce, and subsidized housing. This approach helps ensure the building's long-term viability while creating safe, affordable housing for people at different income levels.

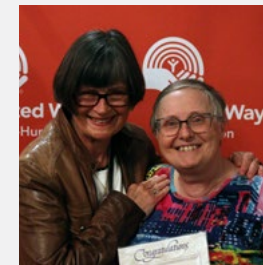
Market-rate apartments help support the financial sustainability of the project. Workforce housing provides more affordable options for people working full-time who are still struggling to find housing, helping local employers attract and retain workers. Subsidized units, supported through government funding and delivered by community partners, offer housing for those who need financial assistance. The Music Hall Apartments represent a model United Housing will apply across future projects, one that recognizes housing as both a social need and a shared community responsibility.

NORTH PERTH CAPITAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

- Allan Rothwell | *Chair*
- Dr. Rob Annis
- Dennis Nuhn
- Laurie Nuhn
- Tom Soltys
- June Williamson



SOME SPIRIT AWARD WINNERS



VOLUNTEER SPIRIT

Gwen Bradley has been a force in St. Marys and area for many years. A lifelong South Perth resident and retired teacher, Gwen brings thoughtfulness, organization and care to everything she does. Through her involvement with the St. Marys & Area Community Committee, her more recent role on our Community Impact and Allocations Committee and her leadership on the St. Marys Coldest Night of the Year subcommittee, Gwen has consistently brought people together with compassion, calm leadership and a strong commitment to her community. We are deeply grateful for her dedication.

LEADERSHIP: COMMUNITY HEART

For more than a decade, Beth Blowes has played a vital role in strengthening United Way Perth-Huron, contributing leadership and insight through committee work, board service and eight years as chair of the Mid-Huron (formerly Goderich & Area) Community Committee. Known for keeping conversations focused and community-driven, Beth helped ensure our work remained relevant and responsive. As she retires from her volunteer roles with us, we celebrate the lasting legacy she leaves behind — a community better served because of her dedication.



CORPORATE SPIRIT

Jayden's Mechanical has been a driving force behind our work in Huron County. As the lead sponsor of the Goderich Coldest Night of the Year event for the past two years, their team has shown up with energy, enthusiasm and a genuine commitment to supporting neighbours facing hardship. Their recent generous contribution to our United Housing South Huron land opportunity further reflects a forward-thinking vision for stronger, more inclusive communities. Jayden's team doesn't just invest in projects, they invest in people. We are grateful to walk alongside a company that leads with heart and purpose.

WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT

Ward & Uptigrove has been a cornerstone of the United Way campaign in North Perth for many years, consistently ranking among the top workforce contributors. Their commitment goes beyond financial support and includes staff fundraising activities, hosting the North Perth campaign kickoff, a dedicated workplace campaign and more. Recently, they also played a significant role in the Music Hall Apartments capital campaign, providing meeting space for the committee as well as many staff donations. Their passion, leadership and generosity help the campaign shine in North Perth.



RESEARCH & INFORMATION SHARING

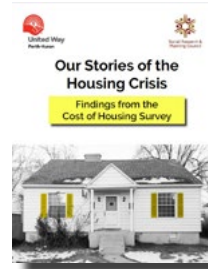
United Way works with our communities to research and identify pressing needs and design impactful responses. We engage with community partners to build and strengthen collaborations at the local level. These partnerships improve access to programs and services that enhance community well-being.

In the past year, we deepened our community impact through research and consultation led by the Social Research & Planning Council, including reports on the housing crisis and the experiences of 2SLGBTQ+ residents, as well as launching *United Insights*, a blog that shares research and community perspectives.



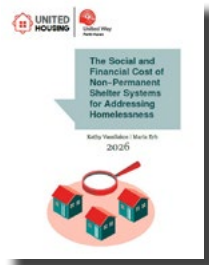
Read reports

Sign up to receive *United Insights* blog

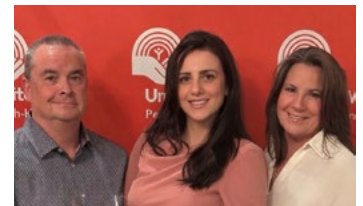


NEW RESEARCH PAPER: ANALYSIS OF NON-PERMANENT SHELTER SYSTEMS

The Social and Financial Cost of Non-Permanent Shelter Systems for Addressing Homelessness examines the growing use of temporary shelter models and their effectiveness. While temporary shelters provide short-term relief, they do not lead to housing stability. The paper advocates for permanent housing as the most effective way to address homelessness in our community.



Watch Sasha tell her story



COMMUNITY ADVOCACY: LIVING WAGE

The concept of a living wage is about quality of life. It ensures people can afford rent and nutritious food, stay healthy, pay for transportation, and children have enough social and educational opportunities to flourish. The current living wage in Perth-Huron is \$24.60/hr, the second-highest living wage in Ontario. Across the region, there are 44 certified Living Wage Employers. Visit ontariolivingwage.ca to find out how to certify your organization.



SASHA'S STORY

"I am a daughter, sister, wife, mother... and a person in recovery from alcohol and drug addiction. Although I grew up in a loving home, I spent years feeling like I didn't belong. I began drinking at 13 and quickly realized I couldn't stop at one or two. Over time, addiction quietly took hold of my life. I lost family connections, moved away and, by my late 20s, was using alcohol and cocaine almost every day.

"Everything shifted on my 30th birthday, when I no longer recognized myself. That moment opened the door to recovery. Today, I am 2,346 days sober and I have a new role as a Peer Support Worker at the Canadian Mental Health Association. Programs like Connection Centres, Access Centres and 211 matter, especially in rural communities. Addiction isolates, but recovery reconnects. When you invest in support systems, you're giving people dignity, hope and a chance to heal without struggling alone."

UNITED FOR GOOD



United Way
Perth-Huron

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