



News Release

United Way Waterloo Region Communities (WRC)

For Immediate Release

SPIRIT AWARDS ANNOUNCE \$5 MILLION IN FUNDS RAISED FOR LOCAL CHARITIES AND NON-PROFITS in 2023, DELIVERED TO 90 LOCAL CHARITIES HELPING 250,000 WATERLOO RESIDENTS IN NEED

The announcement, which came at the 6th Annual Spirit Awards hosted by United Way Waterloo Region Communities (WRC), featured seven award categories recognizing local leaders for their philanthropic service. Award winners included John Neufeld, Executive Director of the House of Friendship, who received the evening's final award: the prestigious Ken Seiling Community Leader Award

WATERLOO REGION, ON (April 26, 2024): United Way Waterloo Region Communities (WRC) celebrated with a full house of community champions at their 6th annual Spirit Awards, hosted at Tapestry Hall, Thursday April 25th. The event served to honour all those who work in support of Waterloo Region's most vulnerable and marginalized residents. Community, collaboration, and progress were emphasized, and a focus on uniting across charities and non-profits to confront widespread challenges and crises together, was expressed by all speakers and award winners.

"In the spirit of community, despite all of the difficult circumstances facing us in 2023, we rose up - and together we raised \$5,000,000 that is being delivered back to over 90 local charities and non-profits, helping nearly 250,000 persons and families in need across Waterloo Region", shared United Way WRC CEO Joan Fisk, in her opening remarks.

Seven categories of awards honoured an impressive group of nominees and recipients (see below for award recipients).

"Let's go forth with a community spirit that is united with the knowledge that we can accomplish whatever we set our minds to - from ending poverty, to transforming



community, to embracing the future with excitement, innovation, and compassion," said Fisk.

Upon accepting the Ken Seiling Community Leader Award, John Neufeld, Executive Director of House of Friendship, said "These are difficult times. The only way forward is united. Communities that can figure out a way to unite and move forward together are the ones that will economically prosper. Communities that will be able to pass on something great for future generations."

Award Category Winners

John Neufeld - KEN SEILING COMMUNITY LEADERS AWARD

Sandi Young - VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nutrition for Learning - COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

Reliance Home Comfort - SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARD

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario - LABOUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

EY - OUTSTANDING WORKPLACE AWARD (SMALL-MIDSIZED)

TMMC Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada - OUTSTANDING WORKPLACE AWARD (LARGE)



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Quotes:

Joan Fisk, CEO United Way WRC

“United Way began in Galt in 1940, and in Kitchener in 1941. The reason these organizations were formed during the second world war, was to raise funds for what they described as, “one drive” serving “all purposes” to help families, and local residents, by working together for the common good of their growing cities, during a very difficult time. Today, our cause and our mission remain the same at its core: to address the changing needs of our growing community, by showing how small contributions made by all of us add up to huge differences that can be made to help others. Together, we can stand up to a crisis, and solve it.”

Neena Gupta, Untied Way WRC Board Chair

“Never doubt your support makes a huge difference. Never doubt, we can build a healthier, safer, more inclusive, and equitable community. I ask each of you to become evangelists - evangelists of hope, not despair, of possibility, of changing the world, of what we can accomplish together United.”

John Neufeld, Ken Seiling Community Leader Award Recipient

“These are difficult times. The only way forward is united. Communities that can figure out a way to unite and move forward together are the ones that will economically prosper. Communities that will be able to pass on something great for future generations. This is why I am so incredibly grateful for United Way because that is what United Way does. It doesn’t matter what business or background you come from. It doesn’t matter your political views. We are all in here together tonight and what unites us is the needs of our community.”

Award Category Descriptions and Details

John Neufeld

KEN SEILING COMMUNITY LEADERS AWARD

The Community Leaders Award recognizes exemplary public leaders who, through extraordinary contributions and outstanding commitment, has driven the spirit of community through personal involvement in community and with United Way Waterloo Region Communities.



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Sandi Young

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Volunteer of the Year Award honours an individual our group for outstanding volunteer service, celebrating selfless spirit and a commitment to community.

Sandi was celebrated for her five years of volunteer work with United Way and two years of serving as the Campaign Cabinet Chair.

Nutrition for Learning

COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD

The Community Impact Award is presented to a non-profit partner, whom, through their collaborative effort with United Way, shows outstanding leadership and dedication while continuing to drive change and impact in the community.

Erin Moraghan received the award and was celebrated for the impact of N4L under her leadership at getting food to students at schools across the region.

Reliance Home Comfort

SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY AWARD

The Spirit of the Community Award honours an individual, group, organization, or agency that personifies exceptional community spirit, team spirit and spirit of generosity through their significant overall partnership with United Way.

Reliance Home Comfort was celebrated for their engagement, enthusiasm, and impact. With numerous workplace events they surpassed their campaign goals and have been growing participation levels every year.

Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (EFTO)

LABOUR COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

The Labour Community Partnership Award honors a labour partner whose members have shown dedication to the community through exceptional financial and volunteer support, exemplifying the sustained and rewarding relationship between the labour movement and United Way. The EFTO was celebrated as a long time United Way partner and collaborator. Local Union President, Jeff Pelich, with a group of members, received the award.



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EY

OUTSTANDING WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN AWARD (SMALL-MIDSIZED)

The Outstanding Workplace Campaign Award (small - mid size organization) acknowledges organizations of fewer than two hundred employees, the Employee Campaign Manager and workplace that have shown outstanding efforts in informing and engaging employees while increasing donations in a smaller workplace.

EY was celebrated for both their national and local campaigns. At a national level, EY has pledged \$2 million annually for the next 5 years, in support of community work through United Way. Locally, EY is an enthusiastic supporter and nearly doubled their giving year over year!

TMMC Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada

OUTSTANDING WORKPLACE CAMPAIGN AWARD (LARGE)

The Outstanding Workplace Campaign Award (large organization) recognizes an organization that has shown outstanding efforts in informing and engaging employees ultimately leading to increased donations, participation, and overall support of United Way.

TMMC was applauded as the goal standard in philanthropy and community support. From employee giving to corporate match and donations, a sponsored employee program, and Seeing is Believing Tour and Video. TMMC exceeded their own campaign goal again this year, raising an incredible \$706,000. Derek Kidnie, VP Administration and member of the United Way WRC Campaign Cabinet received the award along with members of the TMMC United Way committee.

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Digital Assets:

Please visit www.uwaywrc.ca/about-us/communications/ to download our digital assets and further information, including photos, CEO bio and photo, and other United Way materials.

About United Way Waterloo Region Communities (WRC)

United Way WRC is dedicated to helping people live better lives in every one of the seven communities we serve, and we focus on understanding issues and solutions unique to our community. Thanks to generous donors and partners, we are privileged to collaborate with people, non-profits, and businesses to empower multiple innovative, impactful, and measurable solutions. We are fundraisers and local community builders that support a network of agencies whose programs and services are locally focused, informed, connected, and deeply invested in helping people reach their full potential. To ensure critical agencies, programs and services get the funding they need, and to ensure donors have a clear line of site to the work we do, we have focused on cause-based giving which allows for donations to be directed in a way that aligns with selected priorities and goals. To learn more, connect with us at www.uwaywrc.ca

Digital Assets:

Please visit www.uwaywrc.ca/about-us/communications/ to download our digital assets and further information, including photos, CEO bio and photo, and other United Way materials.

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