



# Community Impact Report

## 2024-2025



**United Way**  
Waterloo Region  
Communities







2024/2025

# Your Impact in Waterloo Region



## Affordable Housing & Homelessness

**\$420,000**

10,094 People served



## Children & Youth

**\$419,000**

12,568 People served



## Community & Social Supports

**\$705,985**

87,316 People served



## Mental Health & Addictions

**\$349,576**

18,418 People served



## Food Insecurity

**\$298,234**

92,710 People served



## Hate, Gender-Based & Family Violence

**\$213,000**

1,498 People served



## Leadership, Volunteerism & Capacity Building

**\$108,450**

75,408 People served



## Literacy, Employment Skills & Assistive Devices

**\$70,000**

1,795 People served

Through investment of

**\$2,584,245**

into **79** local non-profit  
organizations, we helped  
**299,806** individuals  
& families in our region.

\*service numbers are based on estimates provided by our funded partners



# Affordable Housing & Homelessness

A safe, stable home is the foundation for a healthy, fulfilling life. United is the Way we can invest in emergency shelters, eviction prevention, and long-term and transitional housing solutions that break the cycle of homelessness.

## \$420,000

was invested into housing & homelessness supports.



“During fiscal 2024/25, you supported 36 individuals to achieve independent, safe housing and transition out of ShelterCare. These 36 men have dedicated time and energy into their personal development and healing as they work towards their housing goals. ShelterCare relies on the stability of United Way’s continued support to deliver client-centered, interdisciplinary programming that reinvents the traditional shelter model.

- House of Friendship

”

## United Way focuses on:

- **Prevention**
  - Shelter diversion, housing retention, eviction prevention, research/advocacy.
- **Crisis Support**
  - Emergency shelter, addressing social determinants of health-related to homelessness.
- **Systemic Change/Supportive Housing**
  - Transitional housing
  - Finding & securing housing

## Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region funded **7 community partners**, through **19 grants**.





# Children & Youth

Empowering children & youth with the support they need to break the cycle of poverty is essential for their long-term success. This includes opportunities for healthy social, emotional, and physical development, to reduce the risk of challenges later in life.

## \$419,000

was invested into children & youth supports.

### United Way focuses on:

- Social & emotional development
- Mentorship
- Counselling & mental health support
- Child and youth homelessness
- Recreation programs
- School and weekend food programs
- Education programs
- Youth empowerment
- Leadership and Volunteer Opportunities
- Tutoring or academic support



### Funded Partners

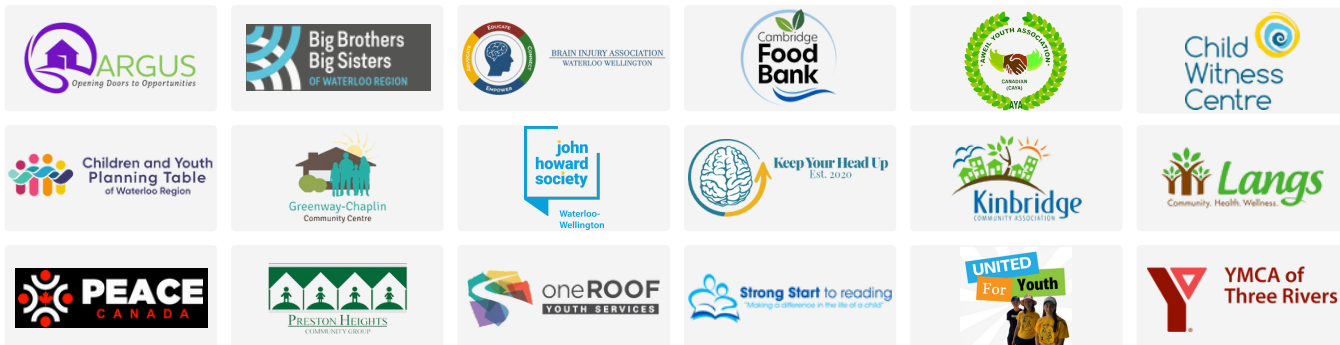
United Way Waterloo Region funded **18 community partners**, through **53 grants**.

“

With the support of the United Way, we were able to use a part time staff to book just under 96 classrooms reaching 2368 students for the fall. Without this funding, we would have relied on volunteers and would have reached far fewer classes.

- Brain Injury Association  
Waterloo Wellington

”



## Mental Health & Addictions

Asking for help can be daunting, but accessing mental health and addiction support should be simple, stigma-free, and tailored to individual needs. Your support helps us to break down barriers, expand access, and provide personalized support, helping to build a system where mental health care is a right, not a privilege.

# \$349,576

was invested into mental health & addiction supports.

# 18,418\*

individuals accessed supports for mental health and/or addiction.



“

“A second example of what United Way’s support allows us to do, related to our responsiveness, is our opening of an Overnight Warming Centre in Cambridge early in 2025. Porchlight offered to run this facility and were able to find a space, hire staff, organize equipment and supplies, and open in just three weeks. It was the fact that we had pre-existing internal capacity, which United Way’s funding allows us to sustain, that we were able to get this service into place as quickly as we did.”

- Porchlight Counselling & Addictions Services

”

## United Way focuses on:

- Crisis support
- Prevention
- Peer support
- One to one or group counselling
- Trauma counselling
  - Culturally relevant or related to disability
- Public education efforts to reduce stigma.

## Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region funded **10 community partners**, through **22 grants**.



# Food Insecurity

Everyone deserves access to healthy, fresh, and culturally appropriate food, yet food insecurity affects individuals and families in our community everyday. Expanding access to nutritious food and building food-related skills are essential steps in breaking the cycle of poverty and creating a stronger, healthier community

## \$298,234

was invested into programs and support for food insecurity.



## 92,710\*

Individuals received assistance to address food insecurity.



“

Without UW funding, we would not have had the resources to pay for staff to recruit, train and support community volunteers to cook and to engage in other skill and community building activities with and for ABTC residents. This funding ensures that we have staff to work alongside residents and volunteers to ensure that healthy fresh food is prepared and shared daily for ABTC.

- A Better Tent City Waterloo Region

”

## United Way focuses on:

- Distribution of food products/hampers
- Access to fresh, culturally appropriate food
  - Including farming/growing food
- Programs that teach food related skills such as cooking

## Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region funded **10 community partners**, through **25 grants**.





## Community & Social Supports

A sense of belonging and connection is essential to our well-being. Services or activities that unite people through shared goals or interests, provide systems navigation, and offer wrap-around support help ensure that everyone can fully participate and feel valued in their community.

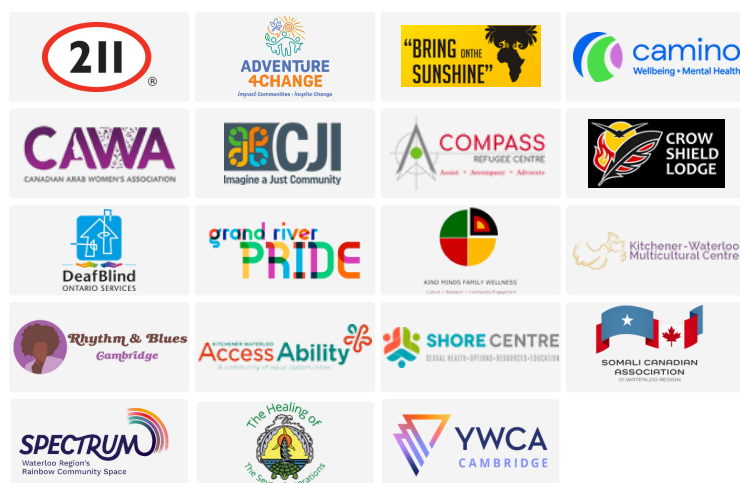
# \$705,985

was invested into community & social supports.



## Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region funded **19 community partners**, through **61 grants**.



## United Way focuses on:

- Systems navigation
- Culturally informed services/support
- Settlement services
- Formal/ informal wrap-around services
- Cultural festivals/community gatherings
- Restorative justice
- Community centres
  - Providing space for individuals to connect
- Land based healing/education
- Social enterprise projects
- Provision of social opportunities

“

Funding from the United Way has been crucial in sustaining two of Camino's most underfunded, but needed, programs: counselling and community neighbourhood work. These services have become increasingly important as many individuals and families continue to face challenges related to stress, housing, and food security, which have a significant impact on mental health and wellbeing.

**- Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health**

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## Literacy, Employment Skills & Assistive Devices

Support for literacy, life skills, tutoring, and assistive devices empowers individuals to thrive. By developing core skills such as numeracy, digital literacy, and academic confidence, these resources foster independence and enable people to fully engage in daily life, pursue education and employment, and reach their full potential.

# \$70,000

was invested into supports related to literacy, numeracy, and computer use.



# 1,795 \*

individuals received support with literacy, job skills, and assistive technology.



“

UW funding helped us to exceed our goal of 200 learners. As a result, we served 249 learners with the help of 103 volunteers.

- United for Literacy

”

### United Way focuses on

- Education on literacy, numeracy, and computer use to upgrade skills to attain higher employment
- Academic support
- Tutoring, long term or short term workshops or programs
- Education or practice of employment related skills
- Education or practice of essential life skills such as literacy and financial literacy.

### Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region funded **3 community partners**, through **7 grants**.



THE LITERACY GROUP



ROHINGYA CENTRE  
OF CANADA



United for Literacy  
Littératie Ensemble

# Hate, Gender-Based & Family Violence

With rising incidents of hate, gender-based, and family violence across Waterloo Region, support for victims of violence, crime, and discrimination is more critical than ever. Through community education, awareness building, and access to essential resources, individuals are empowered to escape dangerous situations and rebuild their lives in safety.

## \$213,000

was invested into supports related to hate, gender-based & family violence.



## Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region  
Funded **3 community partners**, through **7 grants**.

Women's Crisis Services  
OF WATERLOO REGION



SHELTER  
MOVERS



SEXUAL ASSAULT  
SUPPORT CENTRE  
OF WATERLOO REGION

## United Way focuses on:

- Supports & services related to abuse/violence
- Services for women and other diverse gender identities
- Services to address discrimination or hate crimes
- Domestic violence shelter
- Current/historical trauma for people experiencing oppression, including people who identify as Black, Indigenous, Racialized, 2SLGBTQ+, people with disabilities, newcomers and refugees, etc. and intersectional identities

“

Without this funding, racialized and 2SLGBTQ+ survivors would have faced significantly longer wait times to access trauma-informed counselling. This delay in support would have further compounded the impacts of sexual trauma, particularly for individuals already navigating intersecting forms of oppression. The funding made it possible for our agency to reduce barriers, provide timely and affirming care, and uphold our commitment to equitable access for those most impacted by systemic oppression.

- Sexual Assault Support Centre  
of Waterloo Region

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## Leadership, Volunteerism & Capacity Building

A healthy, vibrant community depends on building strong leaders. United Way invests in developing inclusive leaders, especially youth and those from marginalized communities, while supporting volunteerism and strengthening the non-profit sector. By equipping people and organizations with the skills, tools, and partnerships they need, we build a more resilient and effective network of community support.

# \$108,450

was invested into Leadership, volunteerism and capacity building supports.

### United Way focuses on:

- Leadership skill development
- Support for volunteerism
- Organization capacity development
- Collaboration between service providers

“

Your investment made it possible for us to empower over 30 youth from diverse and underrepresented communities across the Region of Waterloo through mentorship, skill-building workshops, and community engagement activities. Thank you for believing in our vision and walking alongside us in building stronger, more inclusive communities. Your support has truly made a lasting impact.

”

- Rohingya Centre

# 75,408\*

individuals accessed support for leadership, volunteerism & capacity building.

### Funded Partners

United Way Waterloo Region funded **3 community partners**, through **9 grants**.



# Local Funded Partners

- 211
- A Better Tent City
- Adventure4Change
- All Saints Anglican Church
- Argus Residence for Young People
- Bereaved Families of Ontario
  - Midwestern Region
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Waterloo Region
- Brain Injury Association Waterloo-Wellington
- Bring on the Sunshine
- Cambridge Food Bank
- Cambridge Shelter Corporation
- Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health
- Canadian Arab Women's Association
- Canadian Aweil Youth Association
- Child Witness Centre of Waterloo Region
- Children & Youth Planning Table of Waterloo Region
- Community Care Concepts of Woolwich, Wellesley and Wilmot Townships
- Community Justice Initiatives of Waterloo Region
- Community Support Connections
- COMPASS Refugee Centre
- COPE Kids
- Crow Shield Lodge
- DeafBlind Ontario Foundation
- Epilepsy South Central Ontario
- Food4Kids Waterloo Region
- Grand River Pride
- Greenway-Chaplin Community Centre
- Heartwood Place
- Highland Stirling Community Group
- House of Friendship
- Interfaith Community Counselling Centre
- John Howard Society of Waterloo-Wellington
- Keep Your Head Up Foundation
- Kinbridge Community Association
- Kind Minds Family Wellness
- Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre
- Kitchener Waterloo AccessAbility
- KW Working Centre for the Unemployed
- Langs
- Marillac Place
- Martin Luther University College
- Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region
- Nutrition for Learning
- oneROOF Youth Services
- Peace For All Canada
- Porchlight Counselling & Addictions Services
- Preston Heights Community Group
- Rare Charitable Research Reserve
- Rhythm & Blues Cambridge
- Rohingya Centre
- Sanguen Health Centre
- Sexual Assault Support Centre of Waterloo Region
- Shalom Counselling Services
- Shelter Movers Southwestern Ontario
- SHORE Centre
- Social Development Centre Waterloo Region
- Somali Canadian Association of Waterloo Region
- SPECTRUM: Waterloo Region's Rainbow Community Space
- Strong Start Charitable Organization
- Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW)
- The AIDS Committee of Cambridge, Kitchener, Waterloo and Area (ACCKWA)
- The Healing of the Seven Generations
- The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
- United for Literacy
- United for Youth
- Volunteer Action Centre Waterloo Region
- Waterloo Region immigration Partnership
- Wilmot Family Resource Centre Inc.
- Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region
- Woolwich Counselling Centre
- YMCA of Three Rivers (Midwestern Ontario)
- YW Kitchener-Waterloo
- YWCA Cambridge



# Initiatives

United Way Waterloo Region works continuously with community to advance more impactful, innovative, and equitable solutions to poverty's pressing issues. Through our funding for Special Initiatives, we support a diverse range of projects that are responsive to evolving needs of our community.



## Giving Tuesday Campaign

December 3, 2024

Thanks to the incredible generosity of an anonymous group of donors, all Giving Tuesday donations were matched up to \$50,000.

In total, we raised **\$123,305** which helped to provide critical resources to those in need, including access to food, housing, mental health services, and education.

## Holiday Giving Campaign

December 2024


This year, our December Holiday Giving donations were used to directly address our community's crisis of housing and homelessness.

Through this initiative, **\$56,050** was raised and strategically allocated to local charities and non-profits working directly in the fields of homelessness and housing.



### Frances make the MONTH

Frances lives in the modest home she shared with her husband for decades until he passed away a few years ago. She has a routine, and she sticks to it—she doesn't like change. Her daughter and two grandchildren moved to another province because of her daughter's job. She feels isolated and lonely a lot of the time. Her cat, Cupcake, is her primary companion. She's on a fixed income and the rising cost of living is affecting her daily decisions. See how Frances spends her month as a senior living independently, managing her finances and mental well-being.



## Make the Month

Make the Month is an interactive digital experience that simulates the difficult choices individuals living in poverty must make. This tool helps participants experience the complex realities faced by many in our community. Last year, our team facilitated the simulation for dozens of organizations, using it as a powerful way to illustrate the importance of community support and the real-world impact of donations.







## Novemburger

Throughout the month of November, 13 local restaurants and hundreds of local food lovers united to celebrate burgers for a cause, with \$2 from each burger sold being invested into our community through the United Way Waterloo Region network.

The first annual Novemburger campaign sold **2,643** burgers across Waterloo Region raising a total of **\$11,300** for local charities.

“

*When I first heard about the idea from our counterparts in Thunder Bay, I knew our community would love it, but the scale of engagement has blown me away! Having the support of the KW Titans, 91.5 The Beat, and 107.5 Dave FM really helped us amplify the message and impact.*

**Jillian Lawrie,**  
Senior Manager, Communications & Advocacy



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## Captain Canuck

United Way Waterloo Region partnered with Lev Gleason Publications and COMIC HOUSE to produce a limited-edition Captain Canuck t-shirt that celebrated the power of heroes to unite us, with all net proceeds going to local charities.



“

*United Way WRC and Captain Canuck both celebrate and represent the power that Canadians from all backgrounds and walks of life have, when we come together and collaborate to address social challenges and overcome adversity. This t-shirt sends a message that, in challenging times, heroes unite us. We can all be heroes when we work together to help others.*

**Scott Hamilton**  
Senior Director, Philanthropy

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# Events

Bringing people together to raise awareness and funds has always been at the heart of United Way. Our annual events inspire volunteerism, spark community investment, and support a network of local non-profits helping people across Waterloo Region.



## March of 1,000 Umbrellas

September 19, 2024

The March of 1,000 Umbrellas is United Way Waterloo Region's signature campaign launch, bringing together residents, businesses, and non-profits for a symbolic walk from Waterloo to Kitchener City Hall. This vibrant event highlights the vital role umbrella organizations play in supporting networks that serve our community's most vulnerable.

## Women United Launch

October 29, 2024

United Way Waterloo Region hosted its sold-out inaugural Women United event, uniting over 100 community members to champion female leadership and advocacy. The event featured three local female leaders who shared powerful stories of resilience, support, and community impact. Event proceeds raised a total of **\$20,000** which was donated to Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region.



## Corporate Trivia Challenge

November 27, 2024

The spirit of community was alive and thriving at United Way Waterloo Region's 3rd Annual Corporate Trivia Challenge! With 25 teams and 130 participants, local businesses, dignitaries, and community leaders put their knowledge to the test, not just for bragging rights, but for a greater cause.

The event raised over **\$25,000** proving that trivia can make a real impact.







## Spirit Awards

April 25, 2024

United Way Waterloo Region hosted their 6th Annual Spirit Awards on April 25, 2024, at Tapestry Hall in Cambridge. The event gathered over 350 community leaders, supporters, and change-makers to celebrate the individuals, organizations, and workplaces making an extraordinary impact in Waterloo Region.

## Golf for a Cause

June 25, 2024

The 2nd annual United Way Golf for a Cause brought together 140 golfers, local businesses, community leaders, and non-profits at Whistle Bear Golf Club for a day of golf, networking, and giving back. With support from sponsors, contests, and activities, the event raised nearly **\$85,000** to support local charities across Waterloo Region.



## Sponsors

Thank you to all of our sponsors. Your generosity and collaboration have allowed us to continue with the important work that helps make a difference in so many lives, in so many ways.

