



**United Way**  
Waterloo Region  
Communities

# Community Impact Report

2024-2025



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 an investment of

**\$2,584,245**

into **79** local non-profit  
programs & initiatives, we  
helped **299,807**  
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





# 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

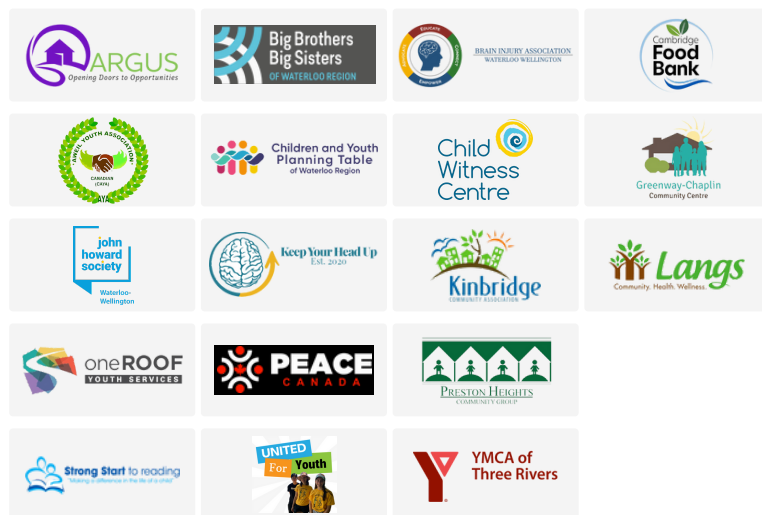
was invested into children & youth supports.



## United Way focuses on:

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

## Funded Partners



“

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. 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.



## 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

“

“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

”

## Funded Partners



# Food Insecurity

Everyone deserves access to healthy, fresh, and culturally appropriate food, yet food insecurity affects individuals and families in our community every day. 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.



## 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

“

*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**

”

## Funded Partners





# 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.

## 87,316\*

Individuals received assistance through community & social support programs.



## 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

## Funded Partners



“

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

”

# 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.



## 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

“

*United Way 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**

”

## Funded Partners



# 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 and family violence.



## Funded Partners



## United Way focuses on:

- Supports and services related to abuse/violence
- Services for women and other diverse gender identities
- Services to address discrimination and 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, 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

## 75,408\*

individuals accessed support for leadership, volunteerism & capacity building.

“We rely on the United Way not only for funding but also for profile as a supported organization. Small charities, like ours, do not have the capacity nor connections to raise the funds for operations on our own

- Volunteer Waterloo Region

## Funded Partners



Highland Stirling  
Community Group



# Local Funded Partners

- 211 Ontario
- 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
- The Working Centre
- 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)
- THRIVE HIV Prevention + Support (Formerly ACCKWA)
- The Healing of the Seven Generations
- The Literacy Group of Waterloo Region
- United for Literacy
- Volunteer 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)
- Youth Impact Project (Formerly United for Youth)
- YW Kitchener-Waterloo
- YWCA Cambridge

# 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 the Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region.



## Corporate Trivia Challenge

May 9, 2024 & February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

With a shift from Spring to Winter, this event happened twice in our fiscal year, and both events brought out enthusiastic groups dedicated to our community. The two events combined raised **\$55,000** proving that trivia can make a real impact, and United is the Answer.







## 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.



# Community Engagement & Initiatives

## All Star Partnership - KW Titans

The United Way and KW Titans All-Star Partnership kicked off an exciting and impactful first year of collaboration, united by a shared commitment to strengthening our community. Together, we energized Waterloo Region through courtside booths, showcasing local non-profits, donated game tickets to community members, and joined forces at key events like Novemburger, Corporate Trivia, and Golf for a Cause.





## 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 **\$11,500** 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**

Mel's  
DINER

GATORS  
TAIL

BROWNS  
SOCIALHOUSE

SWISH!

STATE OF  
MAINE

STATE OF  
MAINE

Tony's  
FAMILY DINER

4

Fresh  
Burger

IMPERIAL

Bruce  
CRAFT HOUSE

THATNS

91.5  
beat

107.5  
DAVE  
ROCKS

”

## 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 Waterloo Region 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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# Corporate 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.

