Without United Way we would see a lot more people falling through the cracks. Labour United works to empower the community and make it strong. We are all working together to help local people have a good life. Right now, people need us and it’s important we pay it forward to help others in need.

- Sue Fairweather, OPSEU Provincial Women’s Committee Region 1 & 2019 Labour Appreciation Award Winner

Local Labour activists and United Way Community leaders came together on January 23 for the 2020 Labour Appreciation Awards Night, hosted at Goodwill Industries. This annual event treats attendees and award recipients to a special night of celebration and reflection.

When I was young my family was impoverished. The community really supported us and I learned that when people need help it’s our duty to stand up. My Dad used to say, never look down on someone unless you are helping them up. I believe in helping as many people as possible, and United Way gives me the tools and resources to do that.

- Peter Koyounian, Unifor L 27, Cabinet, Labour United
Hector McLellan was awarded the 2019 Images of Hope Award for his lifetime achievement of fighting for the rights of his fellow workers. Hector began advocating for the safety of his fellow workers early in his career. He was a pivotal player in the 2012 Day of Action, a one-day strike that shut down the province to protest public service cuts. Hector is also passionate about the Tolpuddle Martyrs, six agricultural labourers from the village of Tolpuddle in England who were convicted and punished for the activism in support of workers in 1834. Hector has worked to ensure their memory and sacrifice lives on for all activists. Now, Hector is using his passion as President of the Unifor L 27 Retiree Committee where he leads 200+ Unifor retirees and continues his lifelong work of actively protecting the rights of workers and retirees.

LABOUR UNITED STANDS BEHIND NEW BEGINNINGS

Thanks to the support and active fundraising of Labour United, United Way’s New Beginnings Loan Fund (NBLF) has the dollars in place to help women and children leaving violent or dangerous situations.

How exactly does your support help women find their independence and a new start?

A mother was forced to flee her home with her children. Leaving quickly, she did not have time to find her children’s Birth Certificates while keeping them from harm’s way. NBLF provided her with the dollars she needed to overcome this barrier while keeping her children safe.

New this year, NBLF will be expanding its reach into Elgin County so more women in our community will be supported with the loan.

Labour participants have raised over $22,000 dollars for the New Beginning’s Loan Fund.

LABOUR GIVES BACK

Labour United’s strength is in building community. Through partnership with the St. Thomas & District Labour Council, London & District Labour Council and the London & Area Building Trades and Construction Council, local people are being given a fair shot at their best life. The campaign year started off strong with two Labour Day events celebrating activism and solidarity. In Elgin County the St. Thomas & District Labour Council worked with the Optimist Club and had a BBQ recognizing the achievements and dedication of workers across the community.