



United Way  
Elgin Middlesex

# United



2022-23 Impact Report





After-school ukelele group at the Optimist Park youth program

# United for a brighter future

For the past few years, we've craved a return to the way things were, only to realize that neither the old normal nor the new one are quite as bright as we'd thought.

Food prices have escalated, housing availability and affordability are too often out of reach, and we worry about the well-being of family members and neighbours living ever-nearer to the margins.

United Way supporters care about changing the story. They care about investing time, money and expertise in making this a better community for all.

In this report, you'll find a few examples of how United Way is working with the community to strengthen its role as the region's leading non-government funder of social services. You'll also read how we're prioritizing the voices and needs of equity-deserving groups.

The future, like all of us, is a work in progress.

United Way remains fiercely committed to:

- **investing** in 100% local programs and services that work to reduce poverty and promote belonging
- **advocating** for inclusion and the issues that matter most to our community
- **connecting** and **cultivating** community partnerships in every sector

United Way generates lasting impact where it's needed most. And we don't ever do it alone.

**Read on to discover how we're  
United for our community.**



# Investing in healthy neighbourhoods

## United Way funding grows local partnerships in food sustainability



Lisa Synott leads cooking lessons for Glen Cairn neighbours.

Lisa Synott's friends and colleagues at Glen Cairn Community Resource Centre call her the Soup Whisperer.

"My goal is to teach the community how to cook nutritious, homemade food," says Synott, a chef who has been on both sides of the counter at Glen Cairn.

"I started coming here when my son was little, about 14 years ago. My kids got after-school homework help and attended day camps here every summer. Then we had an opportunity to develop kitchen space for the community and I said, 'I know how to garden and prepare food. I can help.'

"So, now I teach people how to can pickles, peaches, jams and salsa. We share recipes and together we also make soups and sauces that they take home with them."

Any extras immediately go into a large freezer for distribution to seniors and families in need.

United Way is a core funder of the Garden Market and Good Food Project at Glen Cairn, which includes weekly pop-up markets that provide access to fresh fruits and vegetables to families in low-income neighbourhoods.

United Way program allocations also support similar services – with investments totalling more than \$700,000 – at Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre, LUSO Community Services, Northwest London Resource Centre, and South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre.

"It's not just about food, it's about sustainability," says Margaret Wills, chair of Glen Cairn's board of directors.



“It’s also about finding out what people’s needs are and including them at all stages of decisions to meet those needs.”

United Way’s support has enabled the centre to forge a partnership with London Food Coalition Inc. in a partnership of 22 London and Middlesex County agencies that source bulk donations of fresh food and then distribute customized food boxes.

Almost daily, truckloads of produce – donated by big-box and grocery stores, farmers and pharmacies – arrive at the loading dock. Just as quickly, they are divvied up for individuals, agencies, schools, other community resource centres and institutions across the city and county.

Two 20-kilogram bags of onions and a dozen boxes of tomatoes will make their way to a family chili cook-off at a neighbouring school. There are bushels of sweet peppers and cucumbers, boxes of pears and cantaloupes, bags of carrots and several dozen loaves of bread.

Food then becomes an entryway into a suite of other supports, says Jazz Walmsley, team lead for the London Good Food Project. Someone coming in for food also gets connected to newcomer services, homework help and mentoring for kids, government-assistance programs, mental health services and more.

“With United Way support, we’re building strong partnerships across the city and county and building relationships between and within neighbourhoods,” says Glen Cairn’s executive director Stanislav Rajic. “We’re developing leadership among community members and providing people with the opportunity to become more than who they are now.

“It becomes a model of how to invest in healthier, holistic communities.”



Jazz Walmsley, Stanislav Rajic and Margaret Wills at Glen Cairn’s Centre Market.

# 'More than a pillow'

At The Inn in St. Thomas last year, staff served 29,000 meals to 217 people who also received everything from a bed for a night to long-term counselling.

More than numbers, transformation tells the tale, says executive director Brian Elliot.

"We help people rewrite the story of their lives. We want the chapter of homelessness to be the shortest chapter in their story."

Among more than 50 people who went from homelessness to housing last year is a woman who spent years bouncing between shelter and the street because of traumas that had triggered addiction and mental illness.

For the first time in her adult life, she is in stable housing and working to build a good life.

Supported in part with \$75,000 in United Way funding, The Inn provides basic needs such as food, showers and laundry. Clients are connected to trained staff who guide people towards the next step in their lives.

"We're more than a pillow. We're seeing people be successful and that's something that gives us hope."



Brian Elliot,  
executive  
director of  
The Inn in  
St. Thomas.

# Investing in local solutions to rural challenges

A mother and her young child had just fled a home marred by violence. They knew no one here, had no other family in Canada and had nowhere to live.

Tanya Dale, rural homelessness systems navigator with the West Elgin Community Health Centre, stepped in to help.

Using flex funding intended to fill urgent gaps in service, Dale helped the mother and child find a place to live, covered first month's rent until other income kicked in and sourced used furniture through volunteers. Today, the mom is safe and on her way to getting a job, and her child is thriving in school.

United Way supports two programs in rural West Elgin: a \$15,000 flex fund that provides one-time financial assistance to people who are unhoused or at risk of homelessness; and \$9,000 for a Gift-a-Ride program that provides no-cost transportation to residents for urgent trips such as medical appointments in the city.

"Transportation, housing and employment are interconnected issues, especially in a rural community where there's no public transit and the housing supply is limited," says community health services director Barry Fellingner.

"People on a fixed income sometimes have to make choices between groceries, rent or taking a cab to their doctor's office, so it's a health issue too," Fellingner adds.



Driver Dave Peskar helps with Gift-a-Ride.



**See United Way's full list of investments**

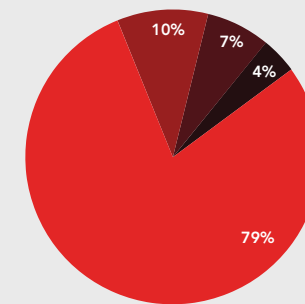


# Reducing and preventing poverty across the region

United Way's investments prioritize reducing poverty and serving equity-deserving people most affected by social challenges in our region. This year, we've invested \$6 million in the community, including \$4.661 million in five key areas that address urgent needs now.



## Total investments 2023-24



**\$6 million**

- 79% UWEM Annual Community Fund
- 10% Community Services
- 7% Donor Designations
- 4% Strategic Investments

Visit [unitedwayem.ca](http://unitedwayem.ca) for our full list of investments

**100% Local. Always.**

### 1. Basic needs

**\$1,065,040** | 23%

Neighbourhood and youth drop-in centers across our region are an open door to a network of support for individuals, newcomers and families. These programs are often the first point of contact when people need food, emergency supplies and referral to other community services.

### 2. Mental health

**\$947,500** | 20%

Mental health challenges intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to drive demand for timely programs and services. United Way subsidizes counselling, internship training, and support and social connection for individuals, family members and caregivers.

### 3. Well-being for kids

**\$1,033,838** | 22%

The impact of three years of virtual learning and limited in-person activities has been especially hard on children and youth. United Way provides opportunities to develop positive social relationships, contribute to communities, and participate in a wide range of recreational, cultural and social activities.

### 4. Housing stability

**\$541,410** | 12%

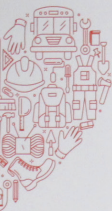
As costs rise, it's getting more difficult for people in our community to find and keep a safe place to call home. Using a Housing First approach, United Way funds programs that provide one-to-one support to help singles, youth and families experiencing complex challenges get housing and stay housed.

### 5. A good life for all

**\$1,073,212** | 23%

United Way gives local people a fair shot at a good life and challenges the ongoing legacy of deeply embedded inequities. We fund programs and services that provide opportunities to participate in community so that everyone – including Indigenous people, seniors, newcomers and people with disabilities – can reach their full potential.

**Our funded partners:** Across Languages | Anova | ATN Access for Persons with Disabilities | BGC London | Big Brothers Big Sisters of St. Thomas-Elgin | Changing Ways | CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services | Community Living London | Crouch Neighbourhood Resource Centre | Daya Counselling Centre | Family Service Thames Valley | Glen Cairn Neighbourhood Resource Centre | Ignite Youth Centre | John Howard Society | Learning Disabilities Association of London Region | London Abused Women's Centre | London Cares | London InterCommunity Health Centre | LUSO Community Services | March of Dimes | Meals on Wheels London | Mennonite Community Services | Merrymount Children's Centre | Muslim Resource Centre | N'Amerind Friendship Centre | Next Wave Youth Centre Strathroy | Northwest London Resource Centre | Pathways Employment Help Centre | South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre | Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre | St. Thomas-Elgin Second Stage Housing | Stevenson Children's Camp | The Inn | Unity Project | Vanier Children's Services | West Elgin Community Health Centre | WILL Employment Solutions | Women's Rural Resource Centre of Strathroy and Area | Youth Action Centre London | YWCA of St. Thomas-Elgin.



## LABOUR OF LOVE



Steve and Denyse Holmes tirelessly promote inclusivity and equity.

# Advocacy: neighbours helping neighbours

## Labour partners step up in solidarity

United Way works because of partnerships.

And Labour members have shown themselves among the community's most dedicated allies as they bring zeal, and often levity, in championing good life for everyone.

"At a time when United Way partner agencies are telling us their needs have grown exponentially, Labour has consistently and enthusiastically ramped up its commitment to meeting that need," says Kelly Ziegner, president & CEO, United Way Elgin Middlesex.

Together, United Way and Labour advocate for living wage for workers, sick pay, safe and affordable housing, and well-supported social services.

Collectively, Labour makes a super-sized impact on the annual community Campaign.

Labour United, volunteer mobilizers for United Way, has especially embraced Best First Day, Stevenson Children's Camp, and the New Beginnings Loan Fund that helps women and children who are fleeing violence in the home.

The LiUNA Local 1059 golf tournament (see inset photo at right) has brought \$1.7 million, so far, to support United Way's mission.

And individually, members work quietly behind the scenes to get stuff done. Winners of this year's Labour Awards, co-presented by United Way and Labour United, were inspirational examples of community-building through advocacy.

This year's Labour Lifetime Achievement Award-winner Steve Holmes epitomizes that spirit as he spends his "retirement" preparing hospitality meals for neighbours in need and building on the drive for equity that characterized his working life. "If you can help, help," he says.

Patti Dalton, president of the London and District Labour Council, says, "We all want – and need – the same things: a safe place to call home, food on the table, the joy of friends and family, confidence we'll have support when we need it most. Our common cause is building a community where everyone gets a shot at their best life."

Social justice includes every-day effort, Labour United chair Sue Fairweather adds.

"Labour folks advocate and volunteer with no fanfare and no expectation of any reward, beyond the satisfaction of knowing their efforts make a positive difference. They, and everyone who makes our community a better place, are boots-on-the-ground local heroes."

## Advocacy in Action

United Way continues to advocate for a community transformed for good. This year we led and lent our voice to conversations helping shift public policy on:

- Housing security, affordability and availability
- Income security, inclusive employment and food security
- Collaborations that repair the social services network all Canadians need

"As the region's largest non-government funder of social services, we've earned the community's trust as a credible voice at the policy table," says Kelly Ziegner, president and CEO of United Way Elgin Middlesex. "We know working together makes change happen, because we're doing it every day."



Kelly Ziegner, president and CEO of United Way, with Brandon MacKinnon, business manager for LiUNA Local 1059.



See our  
advocacy  
in action





## Connecting schoolkids, backpacks and hope

If you recall preparing for the start of school every September, you know the smell of new pencils, the crisp feel of binder paper, the satisfying symmetry of fresh markers.

Somehow, the backpack hung lightly from your shoulders when it was so chock-full of possibilities.

Last year, 3,500 kids across the region felt that optimism too, as they enjoyed a Best First Day with new backpacks filled with donated school supplies.

In 2001, London moms Natalie Trimble and Chantal McLaughlin started Supplies for Schools in their basement so that more kids could start school ready to learn.

As the project captured the hearts of the community, United Way shared its resources – including GenNext, Labour United and corporate volunteers – to help the initiative grow.

Best First Day has now transitioned to the Thames Valley Education Foundation, whose mission is to build community partnerships that enhance area students' opportunities.

The program is an important one because it helps give students a solid footing to learn, says Melissa Derbyshire, chief philanthropy officer with TVEF. “It helps bridge the gap and ensures that all students have an opportunity to thrive academically.”



Roxanne Riddell, United Way’s community impact director, said United Way is proud to connect all the willing pieces: donors, volunteers, agencies, corporations and recipients alike.

“We love to see initiatives like Best First Day gain momentum and outgrow United Way.”

Best First Day backpacks go to kids in all the region’s public and Catholic schools, to pupils at area First Nations schools and to children in foster care.

TVEF recently received a thank-you note after providing 100 backpacks to local Ukrainian newcomers: “I got to witness the excitement on the faces of the students as they picked out a cool bag and saw all the supplies inside, and I got to hear so many words of thanks and appreciation from the parents.”

Derbyshire says some kids will arrive at school in September with their belongings in grocery bags. “Now they have something new, something all their own. They can take pride in their first day at school and parents can take pride in knowing that their kids are ready to learn, regardless of economic circumstance.”

## Connection made: 2-1-1 calls soar

Canada’s 2-1-1 information hotline is busier than ever, with more callers looking for multiple community services.

2-1-1 connects callers to non-emergency government and community programs and services, including housing, health, meal programs and settlement services.

It is co-funded by United Way Centraide Canada and its members, including United Way Elgin Middlesex.

Locally, the top reasons for connecting are to seek resources about mental health and housing.

2-1-1 is available by text, phone or online at [211ontario.ca](https://211ontario.ca).

# Looking back, moving forward

**In 2022, all of us re-learned how to be together as a community. We reacquainted ourselves with family and neighbours, and redoubled our efforts to listen well and make meaningful change.**

We rallied. We ReUnited, and we did it with verve and energy.

Today, United Way is investing in more than 50 local programs and services to reduce and prevent poverty, provide basic needs and improve housing security.

“We have gained new insights into how, together, we can make this a community where everyone has a fair shot at a good life,” says 2022 Campaign chair Alyson Paisley, VP, Direct Distribution, Intact Financial Corporation.

And because the work continues, the 2023 Community Campaign is already in motion.

“United Way is an active investor, advocate and partner in the community. We don’t sit on the

sidelines,” says incoming Campaign chair Mark Egbedeyi-Emmanuel. Based in Aylmer, Egbedeyi-Emmanuel is EPCOR’s regional general manager in charge of natural gas.

He is a long-time community advocate who often challenges himself, and a wider network of people and corporations, to make our region a better place for everyone.

“These things don’t happen by themselves. They happen when people get involved,” he notes. “And when we all do even a little, it goes a long way in transforming a community.”

In the coming year, expect United Way to strengthen existing community partnerships and forge new ones.

Says Egbedeyi-Emmanuel, “I’m confident that with all of us United and working together with hundreds of volunteers and agencies and donors, we can achieve great things.”





# United for good.

[unitedwayem.ca](https://unitedwayem.ca)

2022 Community Campaign chair Alyson Paisley and  
incoming 2023 Campaign chair Mark Egbedeyi-Emmanuel



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Elgin Middlesex

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Charitable Registration Number: 11926 0503 RR0001

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Donate today.



**100% Local. Always.**





**United Way  
Elgin Middlesex**

Statement of fund revenue and expenses  
years ended March 31, 2019 to March 31, 2023.

	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
	Total \$	Total \$	Total \$	Total \$	Total \$
<b>Revenue</b>					
Net donations, grants and special events	7,371,908	7,491,241	8,309,768	7,936,477	8,553,264
One-Time Government and Local Love program funding	39,627	900,000	4,207,565	-	-
Investment income	189,836	212,239	150,615	123,827	122,957
Unrealized gain on investments	(109,609)	(40,191)	265,362	(102,584)	6,060
Other income	106,751	4,604	284,737	8,290	24,116
<b>Gross revenue</b>	<b>7,598,513</b>	<b>8,567,893</b>	<b>13,218,047</b>	<b>7,966,010</b>	<b>8,706,397</b>
<b>Community investments</b>					
Community Fund	4,661,000	4,655,255	5,169,893	4,607,940	5,375,758
One-Time Government and Local Love program funding	1,600	850,000	3,912,618	-	-
Donor Directed Funds	411,768	399,027	514,020	599,849	504,619
Strategic Investments	244,552	231,364	286,020	367,668	338,610
United Way Community Services	597,927	514,829	516,541	553,097	643,138
<b>Total Investment</b>	<b>5,916,847</b>	<b>6,650,475</b>	<b>10,399,092</b>	<b>6,128,554</b>	<b>6,912,125</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over community investments</b>	<b>1,681,666</b>	<b>1,917,418</b>	<b>2,818,955</b>	<b>1,837,456</b>	<b>1,794,272</b>
<b>Less: fundraising and administrative expenses</b>	<b>1,635,129</b>	<b>1,614,052</b>	<b>1,649,385</b>	<b>1,661,839</b>	<b>1,651,335</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>46,537</b>	<b>303,366</b>	<b>1,169,570</b>	<b>175,617</b>	<b>142,937</b>
Transfer from (to) Future Projects Fund	-	-	134,448	-	-
Transfer from (to) St. Thomas Reserve Fund	-	-	3,828	1,000	1,000
Transfer to Strategic, Contingency & Stability Fund	11,607	(290,012)	(813,542)	(87,808)	(71,468)
Transfer to Property/Equipment Fund	33,169	(49,416)	(15,509)	(28,502)	(34,964)
<b>Excess (Deficit) of revenue over (under) expenses after transfer</b>	<b>91,313</b>	<b>(36,054)</b>	<b>478,795</b>	<b>60,307</b>	<b>37,505</b>

This is a summary of the details in the March 31, 2023 Financial Statements Audited by KPMG LLP.



## A leader in organizational effectiveness

United Way Elgin Middlesex is proud to be the first social service organization in our community granted accreditation through the Imagine Canada Standards Program.

Designed to strengthen public confidence in the charitable and nonprofit sector, the Standards Program offers an independently assessed stamp of approval for organizations that demonstrate excellence and transparency in four key areas:

- Board governance
- Financial accountability and transparency
- Staff management
- Volunteer involvement

Our donors are the foundation of United Way. Your generosity supports a vital network of programs and services that enable United Way to address the root causes of social issues and create lasting change in our community. Our commitment to you is that we will continue to ensure that your donation has maximum impact in people's lives right here in Elgin and Middlesex Counties.



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## Thank you for showing your #LocalLove for our community



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Jordan Millward  
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