

Our **UNITED** Impact

2024 Impact Report



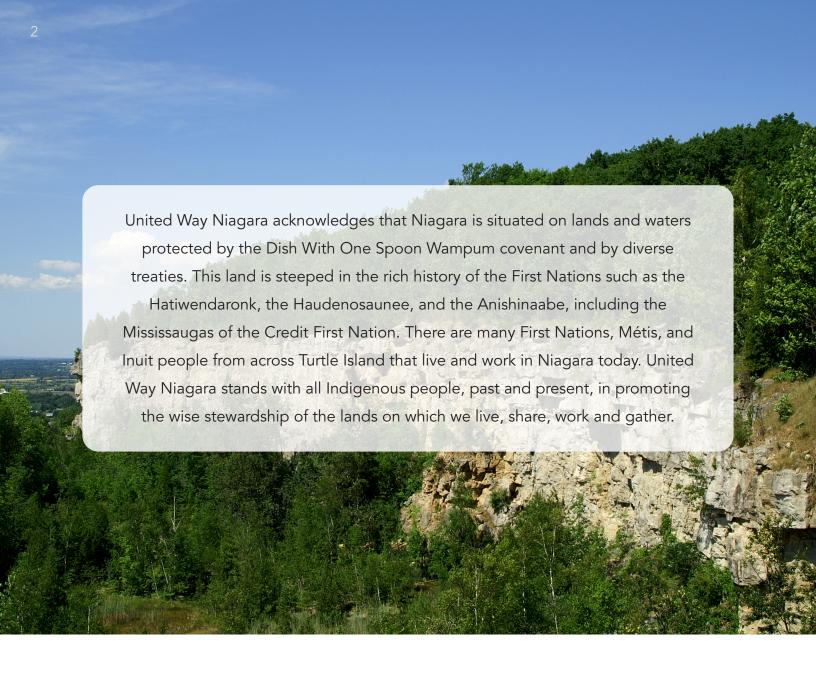


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UNITED, we can make a change

Our goal has always been a Niagara where no one goes hungry, and everyone has a safe place to call home. Achieving this vision will take a united approach. With the help of our agency partner network and a strong supportive community, we have made a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout the region. Your gifts have made a widespread impact and given individuals and families in Niagara a chance to thrive.

Achieving our ambitious vision for the community won't happen in just a single year, and each year, new challenges arise. Not everyone is afforded the same opportunities to become a contributor in their neighbourhood. By investing in local solutions to social problems, we can strengthen the safety net of social services that ensure no one is left behind.

The funds raised in 2024 will provide food, safe housing, income support, critical mental health services and more. Thanks to your united support – we have raised over \$5,000,000 for our campaign.

These funds support a network of 92 programs and impact over 100,000 people in Niagara.

We take great pride in our duty to invest these dollars into the areas of greatest need in our community, supported by a community investment process that is evidence-based and carried out by people that live right here in Niagara.

Our 2024 story has been one of changes and challenges, but nevertheless, it is still a year of success throughout our community. Local agencies are doing more impactful work than ever before, and when people are at their lowest, United Way is proud to support the people who help lift them up.

We look forward to continuing to make an impact with you - our network of supporters. Our UNITED impact will make a difference for thousands of people right here in Niagara.



Pam Lilley Board Chair



Frances Hallworth



Our Volunteers

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Campaign Results

"I am thrilled to announce that we raised over

\$5,000,000

during our 2024 fundraising campaign!
Having the privilege to serve as the Campaign Chair over
the last two years, I was able to witness first hand the
hard work that has gone into raising these much needed
funds for the region. While I am immensely proud of
our team, I also want to thank our community for going
above and beyond for individuals in need right here in our
community. **Thank you Niagara!**"

Brad Steeves

2024 Campaign Chair President, Beatties Business Products



Employee campaigns are critical to the success of the annual campaign. We thank all of the employee campaign donors for their support through one-time, payroll, retiree, corporate and event contributions.

Brock University
General Motors St. Catharines Propulsion Plant
Algoma Central Corporation
Niagara Regional Police Service
Niagara Region
LCBO
Niagara College Canada
Niagara Health
Niagara Casinos

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Special Awards

ANITA ROBERTSON LEGACY AWARD
Brad Steeves

NEW CAMPAIGN OF THE YEARTown of Grimsby

COMMUNITY IMPACT AWARD Empire Communities

COMMUNITY PARTNER AWARD
Niagara Parks

John Deere Canada ULC

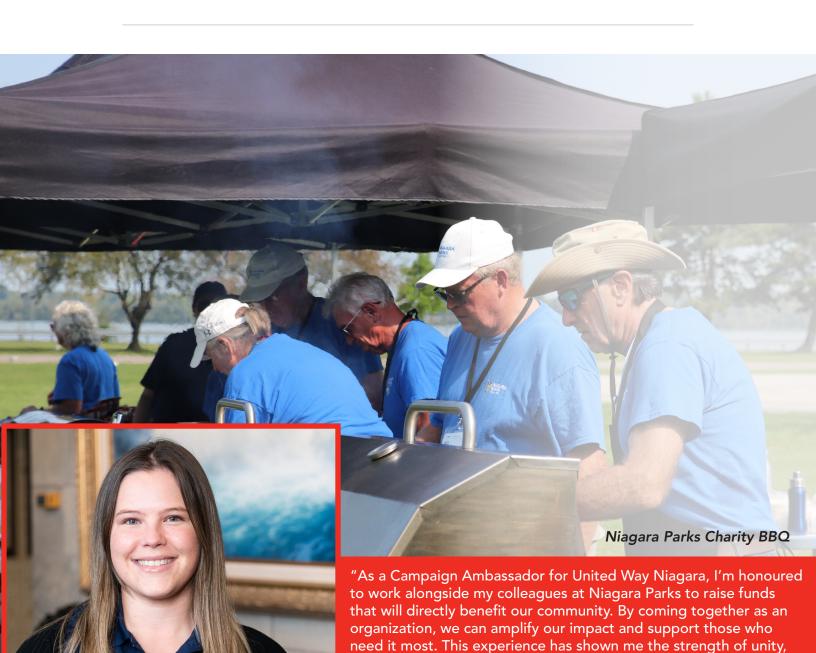
LONGSTANDING VOLUNTEER AWARD

Jeff Klassen

MUNICIPAL CHALLENGE City of Port Colborne

UNSUNG HERO AWARD Ridley College

and how, when we all contribute, we can truly make a difference in the lives of our neighbours." - Emily DeGaust, Niagara Parks



Campaign Ambassador





Our Impact at a Glance

United, we are addressing basic, urgent needs...

12,055 emergency shelter nights provided, ensuring the safety of youth, adults and families experiencing homelessness.

24,747 crisis calls connecting people to local supports by phone help-line, providing the support and hope to people when and where it was needed most.

60,000+ hours of caseworker support provided to individuals in crisis or in need of preventative outreach.

nutritious meals provided through meal programs and emergency food supports serving people in all walks of life from children and families to seniors.

...and investing in long-term solutions to Niagara's toughest issues.

families and individuals at imminent risk of losing their housing, for various reasons, were given the necessary supports to remain housed.

2,269 youth accessed after-school programs that gave them opportunities to learn, grow and share memorable experiences with their peers.

9,411 individuals received emotional support and crisis assistance, helping them mitigate issues that could have otherwise led towards hardship.

10,000+ hours of preventative counselling and training provided to individuals, helping youth and adults remain housed, independent and mentally strong.

Thanks to you!

Our Investments

Community Fund Grantees



From Poverty to Possibility



In 2024, United Way provided funding to 44 community partners to help bring 92 programs and initiatives to life right here in Niagara. The Community Fund grants three-year funding to local programs, allowing partner agencies to plan and implement impactful programs for long-term sustainable solutions to Niagara's biggest social issues. Our partners rely on this sustainable funding to plan and execute the programs that change thousands of lives.

211 Ontario

Autism Ontario - Niagara Region Chapter Bethlehem Housing and Support Services

BGC Niagara

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara

Birchway Niagara

Bridges Community Health Centre

Bridges Niagara (Formerly Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre)

Canadian Mental Health Association, Niagara Branch

Community Care of St. Catharines & Thorold

Community Care of West Niagara

Community Living Grimsby, Lincoln and West Lincoln

Community Living Port Colborne - Wainfleet

Distress Centre Niagara

Epilepsy Niagara

Family Counselling Centre

Family Mental Health Support Network of Niagara

Fort Erie Multicultural Centre

Foundation of Resources for Teens (FORT)

Gillian's Place

Learning Disabilities Association of Niagara Region

Links for Greener Learning

Mainstream

Meals on Wheels Niagara Falls

Meals on Wheels Port Colborne

Niagara Centre for Independent Living

Niagara Sexual Assault Centre (CARSA Inc.)

Niagara Regional Learning Centre

Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre (Upskill Niagara)

Port Cares

Positive Living Niagara

Quest Community Health Centre

Southridge Church

St. Vincent de Paul - St. Alfred's Conference

Start Me Up Niagara

Strive Niagara

The Bridge

The Hope Centre

The RAFT (Niagara Resource Service for Youth)

Victim Services Niagara

West Niagara Palliative Care Services (Rose Cottage)

Westview Centre4Women

YMCA of Niagara

YWCA Niagara Region



"United Way funding ensures we have the dollars needed to implement our services and allows us to focus 100 per cent on what we need to do - delivering services to those in need within our community"

-Carolyn Askeland, Happy in my Home Community Support Services Niagara

Community Initiatives

In addition to our investments through the Community Fund and other grants to programs in Niagara, United Way Niagara funds and facilitates a number of community initiatives to address existing needs and fill current gaps in service for a multifaceted approach to community support.









After School Matters

Engage. Enrich. Empower

After School Matters is a network of free after-school programs delivering quality educational, recreational, and leisure activities. Available programs in neighbourhoods in St. Catharines and Niagara Falls, make an ongoing positive impact on youth and teens. These programs mitigate the negative effects of low income for hundreds of families every year.







Community Initiatives and Other Investments

Community Initiatives

After School Matters
Backpacks for Kids
Growing Communities
Hygiene Kits
Living Wage Niagara
Niagara Community Garden
Network

Niagara Food Security Network Period Promise Welcome Home Kits

Other Investments

Rent Assistance Program Seniors Fund



"One of the misconceptions we hear a lot in the community is that all of our littles must come from single-family households," says Erin Graybiel, Executive Director of Big Brothers Big Sisters Niagara. "The reality is there is a multitude of reasons why a young person would benefit from an extra adult mentor." Big Brothers Big Sisters Niagara (BBBSN) serves individuals from all different backgrounds, age groups and lifestyles. The goal is to represent all kinds of youth in Niagara and ensure everyone who might benefit from a consistent adult relationship in their life can have access to a big brother or sister.

BBBSN responds to a variety of issues in the community from a children and youth perspective. We know that for youth to have success at home and in the classroom, children need stable and consistent adult relationships in their lives. Familial issues, parents working multiple jobs to make ends meet or mental health issues stemming from extra stress at home are all symptoms that could lead to a child needing an additional stable and consistent relationship.

Programs offered by BBBSN give youth the chance to reach their full potential. One such program is the In-School Mentorship program. Working alongside local schools, this program can help bridge learning gaps for students who are less engaged or are struggling with attendance. Results have shown that students who may have been dealing with poor attendance do start to show up and become more engaged when they know their mentor will be present. If youth can be supported throughout their early school-aged years, it can help better prepare them for post-secondary and employment.

Last year, close to a thousand young lives were impacted through mentorship with BBBSN and those relationships have helped them thrive and be all they can be. The youth support network of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Niagara is made possible by multi-year United Way funding, which wouldn't be possible without our dedicated community of local donors.

Creating Community Connections

"We have seen people's lives become transformed just because they were able to sit down with us and receive immediate, vital support," says Theresa Murphy of Strong Fort Erie Neighbourhoods. "Many of the people coming in for our meal programs or personal care products are working – sometimes multiple jobs – but with the current reality of the cost of living, people need our help." Strong Fort Erie Neighbourhoods (SFEN) serves hundreds of individuals in south Niagara with hot nutritious meals, access to personal care products and community connections.

One of the most common symptoms of poverty is food insecurity, and local agencies like Strong Fort Erie Neighbourhoods that help provide basic needs to so many are a vital part of the social safety net in our community. It's abundantly clear that improving one's standard of living while deciding whether to buy food or pay an important bill is not possible. Knowing that while a person is struggling, there are community connections that can provide them with the essentials until they get back on their feet is an important comfort to many.

With the help of United Way funding, SFEN was able to expand their personal care product program to support over 120 households in need with personal care products. While helping someone who is trying to make ends meet with essential items like laundry soap, hygiene products or toilet paper might seem like only a minor impact – it can create a small ripple effect towards greater change in their lives. When people are able to live healthy and with dignity, they can contribute to their community and work towards reaching their potential.





"The heart of The Bridge is our everyday breakfast program, where people can have a warm, nutritious, no-cost breakfast," says Executive Director and Mission Pastor of The Bridge, Steve deBoer. For many, this meal is the first step toward stability. It ensures that no one has to start their day hungry.

Established in 2014 on Queen Street, The Bridge has become a vital resource in Niagara Falls, providing meals and support for people experiencing food insecurity and homelessness. The need has grown, and The Bridge has grown with it. Volunteers and staff work every day to make sure anyone who walks through the doors is met with food, kindness, and respect.

In 2023, The Bridge expanded its impact with the launch of the Food Recovery Program. This initiative, the first of its kind in the Niagara Region, works with local businesses to collect surplus prepared food and redistribute it to people in need. It reduces food waste and increases access to nutritious meals for those facing hardship.

Support from United Way Niagara has been critical in keeping these programs running. "United Way provided us with resources for our breakfast program, and the relationship we depend on to help continue on with the program," says deBoer. With this support, The Bridge has served more than 17,000 breakfasts, ensuring that people in the community have reliable access to food.

The Bridge continues to serve Niagara Falls with a commitment to dignity and inclusion. Every meal served is an effort to build a stronger, more supportive community where no one is forgotten.

Happy, Healthy and Independent

Happy in My Home Community Support Services Niagara (CSSN) is a nonclinical community support agency helping to support older aged individuals stay in the home of their choice through a "basket" of services like meals, transportation or homemaking.

"We are a critical part of our overall healthcare system in Niagara," says Carolyn Askeland, Executive Director with Community Support Services Niagara. "We work collaboratively and cooperatively with our healthcare system to ensure that other parts of the system have capacity. We want to help people avoid unnecessary trips to the emergency department and prevent longer admissions to hospital."

The support and services of CSSN help foster a strong Niagara. There's a fear among the elderly community that by receiving community services or extra help comes with a loss of independence. What clients of CSSN quickly realize is that these services allow them to remain in control of their life and most importantly stay in the home where they choose to be.

Client caregivers also feel the impact of CSSN services as they get a chance to enjoy the company of their parents or loved ones when they aren't always the sole person their elderly loved one is depending on. Their relationship with their loved ones can remain strong and rewarding until the very end.

We know that the healthcare sector has been struggling to keep up with demand, and the support of United Way Niagara allows agencies like Community Support Services Niagara to ensure they have the dollars to implement their services and focus less on raising funds and more on the most important aspect of their agency – their clients. Just last year alone, Community Support Services Niagara was able to deliver over 50,000 meals to seniors right here in our community.



A Safe and Stable Place to Call Home



"At Bethlehem Housing and Support Services, we believe that everyone deserves a safe and stable place to call home," says Executive Director Lori Beech. "We are committed to doing everything we can to help individuals and families in Niagara build brighter futures."

Bethlehem Housing was founded to address the deep connection between poverty and housing insecurity. Today, it provides safe, affordable housing and essential support services for individuals and families facing hardships such as homelessness, domestic violence, and financial instability. The organization not only offers a roof over people's heads but also walks beside them on their journey to stability, independence, and hope.

For children, a stable home is life-changing. Bethlehem's after-school program, funded by United Way, offers a safe and welcoming space for students from early learning to grade eight. Here, they enjoy healthy snacks, crafts, and outdoor fun while developing vital life skills like teamwork, conflict resolution, and creativity.

"I like to come to the after-school program because of the great people," says Christopher, a young participant. "Coming helps me be around other kids, and I love talking to them. I feel safe here."

With United Way's support, Bethlehem Housing is able to host the after-school program, and also host 40 fresh food markets annually, ensuring families have access to nutritious food. Their housing and support programs continue to transform lives, creating a Niagara where everyone has the opportunity to live with dignity, security, and hope.

Thanking our 2024 **Donor Match Sponsors**

ROOT BISSONNETTE WALKER LLP 2024 NEW DONOR MATCH



Thanks to the supporters of the RBW New Donor Match, new donations had twice the community impact in 2024.

We are grateful for RBW's continued support!

1015 new donors \$208,052 raised in new donor giving!

THE JASMINE AND KEVIN PATTERSON FAMILY FOUNDATION **MAJOR GIFT MATCH SPONSORS**



\$477,620 additional funds raised to support the critical work of Niagara's social safety net through the help of 1 0 9 major donors!

CORPORATE SUPPORT & FOUNDATION GIFTS

\$100,000 +

Niagara Region through the Niagara Prosperity Initiative



The Jasmine & Kevin Patterson Family Foundation

\$50,000 - \$99,999

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Discover the many ways you can help build a great community and change lives locally on our website at unitedwayniagara.org

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YourTV Niagara

Sponsored Employees

The Sponsored Employee Program is one of the reasons we are able to raise funds efficiently and effectively. These organizations make a significant contribution to United Way each year, to our community and to the professional development of their employees. Interested in participating? Contact us!

We would like to thank the following organizations and individuals for their invaluable contributions:



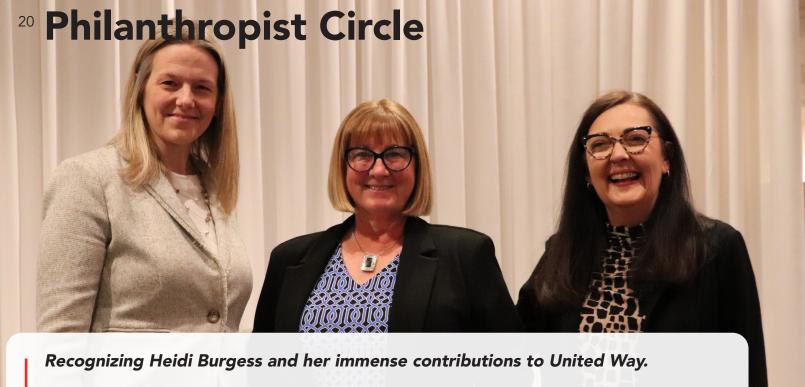


Pahuldeep Singh Canada Revenue Agency





Constable Joanne Carter Niagara Regional Police Servce



Among her many volunteer efforts, Heidi Burgess leads the United Way Niagara golf committee, raising vital funds for essential programs. She is integral to the Anita Project, organizing donations and volunteers to provide hygiene items and basic household supplies to those in need. As an active member of the Community Investment panel and Women United, Heidi contributes to grant decisions and community initiatives.

Her dedication and leadership have a significant impact on Niagara. We were proud to recognize her as the receipient of the King Charles III Coronation Medal at our annual Campaign Celebration.

United Way Niagara's Philanthropist Circle acknowledges individuals who have made cumulative gifts of \$25,000 or more to United Way over the last five years.

Jacob Hildebrand

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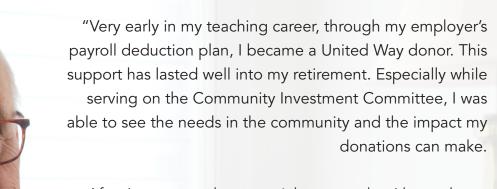
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After I am gone, the essential support that I have always provided through United Way, can, through legacy giving, have the same positive impact for generations to come. Leaving a legacy for the future with the help of United Way gives me a sense of personal satisfaction that my impact will live on."

George Thomas Retired Educator

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"After observing the good work of United Way Niagara from afar for years, and now seeing the ever growing need for these services, the time was right for me to do my part and contribute.

As a member of this year's Campaign Cabinet, and a personal donor, I have seen first hand that by endorsing innovation, partnerships and collective action, United Way Niagara can uniquely address the interconnected issues that poverty can cause.

As demand for the programs that United Way funds continues to increase, I hope that more local people are inspired to join the mission to improve lives and build community."

- John Belford

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"Two of my very first jobs were at agencies that received United Way funding. I got to see first-hand how important the programs were for people needing them and how important United Way is in funding those programs. Over the years I volunteered, organized campaign events, chaired campaign committees, bought raffle tickets, ate lots of yummy baked goods and made my donation through payroll deduction.

When I retired, I was as passionate as ever about United Way and just because I was retiring didn't mean I cared less about my community. No longer able to rely on payroll deduction, I contacted United Way and set it up so that I could continue to make regular donations, it was simple."

-Sheila Bristo

Retired, Women United Member + Community Investment Review Panel member



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We extend our sincere thanks to all of our donors. Every effort is made to ensure our donor list is accurate and complete. If you discover an error or omission, or would like to update your recognition, please contact us.

Contact: Manager of Individual Giving, 905-688-5050 ext. 2113.

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