



2022 YEAR END REPORT



United Way
Centraide
Windsor-Essex County

YEAR IN REVIEW

United Way's all in on the Cradle to Career strategy -- a new approach to support children and youth from the time they're born until they find a career. Thanks to the support of donors, volunteers and partners, we've achieved some great success.

The On Track to Success program wraps support around a young person and their family to help them graduate high school and go on to college, university or a trade.

Students enrolled in the On Track to Success program have the opportunity to earn up to \$4,000 for post-secondary education. They also have access to services including tutoring, individualized support, social and recreational activities, and volunteer, career and social mentoring opportunities.

The students in the On Track to Success (OTTS) program achieved some incredible results over the past year. We're incredibly proud of their achievements. Over the past several years, OTTS had to pivot its programming to offer virtual support to students. In 2022, a large portion of programming resumed in-person once again, which was very well received by many of the OTTS students. The students were excited to reconnect with each other, and participation in tutoring and other programming.

Launch of On Track to Success in Downtown Windsor

For many years, OTTS has been offered at sites in West Windsor and Leamington. This past year, thanks to the generosity of donors, United Way launched the newest site for OTTS in Downtown Windsor.

The program was very successful with high rates of participation and commitment from the new Grade 9 cohorts at Catholic Central and Kennedy Collegiate high schools. Of the 18 social mentoring sessions held for the Grade 9 students enrolled in the OTTS program, the average attendance was 85%. These students also attended in-person tutoring once a week at the United Way office. We look forward to adding more students to the program from our downtown schools in years to come.

YEAR IN REVIEW

On Track On Campus

Embarking on a post-secondary journey can be an exciting for many of the On Track to Success graduates, but it can also be a challenging time – a time filled with new experiences, different schedules, and unique stressors.

In the spirit of continuous improvement, On Track On Campus was formed to continue to support On Track to Success Program Alumni as they begin their new chapter in College or University. The program was launched to support first-year secondary students to better adjust to the changes and transitions that accompany any College or University program.

In partnership with the University of Windsor and St. Clair College, this specialized transition program for On Track to Success graduates begins in the summer before their first year of College or University and follows them through their first year of post-secondary education and beyond.

On Track On Campus pairs each student with a Success Coach to support the multitude of challenges that may come a student's way. The coach is regularly available on campus to help students navigate the supports which are unique to them. Bi-weekly workshops are also offered on a range of topics including organizational skills, scholarship applications, academic standing and success, navigation of health benefits, and self-advocacy. Last year, over 150 program alumni were supported by this initiative.

Summer Programming

Over the summer months, OTTS students from all three sites were offered the opportunity to participate in two amazing field trips. Students travelled to Boler Mountain in London to participate in a treetop ropes course – an excellent learning opportunity for students where they learned to challenge themselves, face their fears, and work together to achieve their goals. In addition, some of the OTTS students travelled to the Stratford Festival to see the musical, Chicago, and visit the beautiful town of Stratford.





Other summer activities for the incoming Grade 9 cohorts included back-to-school shopping, participating in an Amazing Race activity, going to Adventure Bay, and volunteering at Southwestern Ontario Gleaners. Through this, students were able to build relationships with each other, and meet other OTTS students from different sites. These activities are incredibly important to build confidence and motivation for the students as they embark on their journey through high school.

Post-Secondary Participation

OTTS Grade 12 students had an exciting year as they participated in the OTTS Post-Secondary Transition program. Local mentors were welcomed into programming sessions from a host of professions to expose the students to different sectors and potential career paths. Students were also offered support for resumé building and mock interviews to build some of the skills that are required for the job market that awaits them.

In the summer, tours of both St. Clair College and University of Windsor campuses were offered to the students, and they also received new laptops and school gift cards to prepare them for the years ahead.

Last year, post-secondary participation increased to 89% (from 76% in previous years). This was one of our highest and most successful outcomes to date.



NEW INITIATIVE SPOTLIGHT

The Looking Forward Project

Earlier this year, OTTS received a \$3000 grant from the Desjardins Foundation to pilot the Looking Forward Project (LFP) as part of the Summer Art Program.

Research has shown that the COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced access to education and disproportionately impacted racialized, marginalized, and underrepresented youth and impacted the mental health, education and social skills of students. The LFP implemented a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) framework, adapted from the School Mental Health Ontario [1], to create space for students to develop the inter- and intra-personal skills necessary to take on the challenges of school, work, and life.

A semi-structured program for the Looking Forward Project was created over four weeks in August. The goal was to provide students with the opportunity to discover the art in our communities and to use art as a tool to express themselves in all parts of their lives. The project also encouraged students to develop healthy identities through learning, coping and problem-solving strategies, as well as a sense of empathy in an inclusive learning environment.

The project kicked off by providing the students with different tools and skills to start creating art. Students were introduced to different art modalities as they learned from guest artists who represented racialized, marginalized and underrepresented communities in Windsor-Essex.

Focus was placed on three art modalities – traditional art with watercolour and oil painting, mixed media art with video animation, graphic design and photography, and expressive art with dance, drama, and writing. The students were both inspired and fascinated by the stories, struggles, passion and works that the artists presented. Following the meetings with the guest speakers, the Looking Forward Project started each day with intentional lessons that included activities to support their SEL through critical thinking, debate, and meaningful conversations. The lessons were centered around three different themes for each week which consisted of cultural awareness, social justice, and self-expression. After the students completed their activities each day, they had the opportunity to work on their final art project where they were free to choose any art modality.



Berbarah, Gr. 11, Aug 2022 - Oil Painting

[1] <https://smho-smsso.ca/educators/learn-more/explore-by-topic/social-emotional-learning/>

We partnered with Art Windsor-Essex for this project, and the final session was held at their facility where students were offered a personalized tour of the new exhibits. The students also received a one-year membership for Art Windsor-Essex.



Katelynn, Gr. 11, Aug 2022 -
Mixed Media Painting



Brandy, Gr. 10, Aug 2022 - Oil Painting



PROGRAM STATS

95.8%

Percentage of OTTS students who graduated high school on time in 4 years (11.6% higher than the provincial average).

\$178 K

The dollar amount of bursaries and scholarships awarded to On Track to Success program graduates this year.

89%

Percentage of program graduates currently enrolled in a post-secondary program. (National Average – 47% for similar household income).

87%

Percentage of students still enrolled in the program. This retention rate is much higher than similar youth programs.

OTTS SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT



Volunteers are essential to the success of On Track to Success. They are ambassadors of the work and provide exceptional mentorship to the students who are developing life skills that will help them reach their full potential.

Meet Krishali Kumar. Krishali joined United Way as a volunteer mentor for the Post-Secondary Transition program in the 2021-2022 school year. In her role as a mentor, she supported Grade 12 students through one-to-one support with resumé building, interview preparation, soft skill development, and post-secondary school applications. She attended all sessions and offered advice to students who felt overwhelmed and anxious about the new academic adventure ahead.

Krishali connected with the Grade 12 students by sharing her experiences, challenges, and accomplishments as a post-secondary student. We are grateful to Krishali for her continued dedication and support of On Track to Success and the Post-Secondary Transition Program.

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to work alongside a team of highly motivated and passionate staff members within On Track to Success. As a first-time volunteer with On Track to Success, I felt incredibly supported through my development as a mentor. As a mentor, I felt equally inspired and challenged when working with a group of eager and hopeful Grade 12 students. They challenged me to meaningfully reflect and offer stories of both my successes and failures throughout the post-secondary application and transition process. Ultimately, my main goal was to create a safe environment for students to grow within; I hope to be able to do that for another group of students this year!"

PARENT SPOTLIGHT



All through Elementary School my daughter struggled with her grades, completing her school work, and staying organized. When I questioned her Grade 8 teacher about how to help my child be more successful, he told me about the On Track to Success program.

My daughter is now in her second year of the program and since the very beginning her demeanor, academic skills and organizational skills changed for the better. The changes I saw within a year were amazing. My child went from struggling with grades to having amazing grades.

She was more outgoing and took on challenges with the mindset that she was capable of succeeding. Her teachers would make comments about how great of a student and role model she was for her classmates. On Track really helped put my child on the path to success.

The On Track to Success Program offered numerous programs that we're so grateful for. They helped her understand her classwork and assignments so that she could excel; they checked in with my daughter during tutoring to make sure her assignments were completed to the best of her ability. The staff are always willing to help and offer resources whenever possible.

When things were financially tight for me and my family, On Track helped any way they could. They provided me with gift cards for groceries and were even generous enough to set us up with a sponsor during the holidays so that my children could have a great Christmas. The staff has always been there whether it's been to help provide resources that benefit my family, help relieve some financial strain, or just to lend an ear. They have always called, texted, or emailed me to see how my situation is and if things are better for me and my family.

The program also has parent engagement workshops that feature guest speakers who are specialists on the topic being discussed. These workshops have always been informative and relatable to the everyday struggles as a parent. Some of the topics discussed included the good and bad of social media, how to communicate and strengthen your relationship with your teen, and the challenges of parenting a teen.

The On Track to Success program really goes above and beyond for the people involved. This program has helped me through some of my most difficult times, and I can't thank them enough.



The amount of support offered to families is amazing.



This program has really changed not only my daughter's life but our family life as well. Any donations would be greatly appreciated so that they can continue changing families' lives for the better.

- Danielle, Parent of an On Track to Success Student

PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT



From a young age, Peter's parents spoke to him and his siblings about community and the responsibility of doing their part to make it better. After growing up in the West end of Toronto, Peter founded Mattamy homes in 1978, which grew to become the largest privately-owned homebuilder in North America.

From the very beginning, Peter knew his business was not just about houses, it was about building communities that foster connection. Peter and his family have always given back generously to causes, which inspired the creation of the Peter Gilgan Foundation in 2006.

In 2021 alone, the Peter Gilgan Foundation donated \$28.5 million to support important health, education, employment, climate change and international development projects across the province and around the world. As part of the foundation's children, youth, and families grant stream, the Peter Gilgan Foundation awarded United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County with \$100,000 to help expand the On Track to Success program into Downtown Windsor.

For years, our school board partners have expressed the need for the On Track to Success program to expand into Downtown Windsor. Thanks to this generous transformative gift from the Peter Gilgan Foundation, we were able to expand the program to the downtown community and add twenty new students and their families to the program this past school year.

Without the generosity and leadership of the Peter Gilgan Foundation, this expansion would not have been possible. We are so grateful for their partnership and commitment to support some of the most vulnerable children, youth, and families in our community.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



Hi, my name is Nathan Wiebe, and my On Track to Success journey started early in my Grade 12 year at Leamington District Secondary School. At the time I was feeling pretty lost and confused about what my next chapter could really look like. I wasn't sure what steps to take next or how to actually get where I wanted to be. I joined the On Track Program and right away had access to tutoring, workshops, and a Success Coach that helped outline exactly how I could get to university. These resources gave me confidence and helped me to feel prepared and ready to apply to the University of Windsor.

Over the summer, I did have to take an additional course to upgrade one of my classes to keep my University of Windsor offer. This was a stressful time for me, as I was also juggling two jobs and working over 60 hours a week. I ended up receiving a 92% in the class and was offered acceptance! During those months, I kept in touch with my Success Coach, and we did a lot of problem solving around what my September may look like. My Success Coach was able to meet with me one-on-one and figure out a class schedule that worked best for my program and my availability.

The other really great thing that On Track did was offer transition programming in the summer for new Undergrads. Because of On Track, I was able to actually visit the campus, find out where my classes would be, and talk to current students ahead of September.



It was also really cool to meet more On Track Students from the other sites during these sessions; I made some new friendships that have followed me into first year through this program. These activities gave me a sense of clarity and really helped me to literally VISUALIZE myself as a student at the University of Windsor. It made it feel real for the first time and it took away a lot of the stress and anxiety I was previously feeling.

To be able to continue to be a part of the On Track program while I take this next big step is truly special. I love that I can talk to my Success Coach about things that are going on and have conversations that lead to getting advice or tips I didn't know I needed. Post-Secondary education hasn't exactly been easy so far, but it feels doable and On Track has been a big part of that. I'm really grateful to the donors and everyone who has helped make this incredible program possible!



ON TRACK TO SUCCESS DONORS

The On Track to Success program would not be possible without the generosity of donors. We are grateful to all those who are creating opportunities for local youth, and supporting children from Cradle to Career.

\$1200 - \$4999

- Laval International
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- Mike Clark
- Retiree Volunteer Council
- Kathy Renaud
- Dave Cooke
- Enwin Utilities
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\$5000 - \$9999

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\$100,000+

- The Peter Gilgan Foundation
- Ministry of Colleges and Universities

*The donors on this list supported On Track to Success from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.



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