2024-25 IMPACT REPORT

United Way Centraide
Windsor-Essex
Chatham-Kent

ON TRACK TO SUCCESS (OTTS) provides academic, mental health, social and financial support as well as mentoring and career building opportunities to marginalized youth. Delivered in West Windsor, Downtown Windsor and Leamington, this program is designed to help students graduate from high school and attend post-secondary education.

98% of students in the program graduate high school on time

87% of 2025 graduates are planning to enroll in a post-secondary program

> **"This program has really help[ed] and give[n] my family HOPE. I am forever grateful for everything over this year."**
>
> – Caregiver of On Track to Success Participant

The UJIMA INITIATIVE supports Black youth enrolled in United Way's On Track to Success program. The goal is to make the program more culturally relevant for Black youth and provide specific support for racialized youth navigating high school. Students report that Black cultural activities motivated and inspired them.
Enrollment in the program increased by 7% this year.

POST-SECONDARY SUPPORT: On Track to Success has expanded programming to support the students as they move on after graduation.

On Track On Campus supports students during their transition from high school to post-secondary education, increasing the chance that students will stay enrolled and complete their education.

The Executive Mentorship Program (EMP) is designed to provide graduates of On Track to Success, who are currently enrolled in post-secondary, with a meaningful and gainful mentorship opportunity over the summer.

> **What is so unique to EMP is that in addition to providing real life experiences and applicable skills within a student's chosen field, we go even further by developing professional competency, confidence and practical skill development in order to foster long-term career readiness.**
>
> – Kaila, Program Facilitator

A PROSPERUS COMMUNITY SOLUTION

IGNITE ACADEMY

IGNITE ACADEMY provides academic, social, mental health, financial, and other family supports to students between Grades 2 and 7. The program focuses on math and literacy skills, improving school attendance and growing self-confidence to help students in West Windsor, Downtown Windsor and Leamington reach their full potential and succeed throughout their schooling.

87% of kids feel proud of themselves for learning from Ignite Academy

100% of caregivers reported their child benefits from Ignite Academy

93% of kids showed improvement in math by the end of the year

> **"It's an amazing program and we are so lucky to have it. The staff is absolutely phenomenal."**
>
> – Caregiver of Ignite Academy Participant

> **"I appreciate the improvement on academics"**
>
> – Caregiver of Ignite Academy Participant

BaCK to School Program

Providing kids with back-to-school supplies in Chatham-Kent is about more than just having the right tools.

When students have access to the supplies they need, they feel more prepared and confident, which helps them focus on learning and engaging with their peers. This leads to increased classroom participation and attendance!

> **"I cannot thank you enough for the gift cards to help with back to school items. This was a tremendous help during this time and helped get the kids happy and excited to show off their new stuff. I am forever grateful for the smiles this donation brought to my kids"**
>
> – Program Recipient from Tilbury

515 gift cards were distributed to families throughout Chatham-Kent

Pilot Program: Hot School Lunches

The pilot program is funded by the Gordie Howe International Bride Community Benefit Plan and is testing new ways to deliver free hot lunches in West Windsor schools.

Last year, over 45,000 lunches were served to 1,500 students across four schools.
Meals are prepared by the St. Clair College and distributed by United Way staff and volunteers.

Two new schools were added this year to explore innovative models: at Westview Freedom Academy, students prepare lunches for their peers, while at Assumption Middle School, The Welcome Centre provides meals through a social enterprise approach—a model with potential for other priority neighbourhoods.

> **The students and their families have been overwhelmingly positive about this program. I have had parents share how much relief it has provided that they don't need to provide a lunch on this day - a family of 4, with very little income, this program makes a noticeable difference to their finances and food availability in the home. We have students who have eaten foods that they never had before (mainly the vegetables! Broccoli was a new experience for many!).**
>
> – Teacher

FUNDING FOR THE INITIATIVE HAS BEEN PROVIDED BY THE
PONT INTERNATIONAL Gordie Howe INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE
COMMUNITY BENEFITS PLAN

PERIOD PROMISE

No one should have to miss school, work, or daily life because they can't afford menstrual products. Unfortunately, menstrual hygiene products remain one of the most requested—but least donated—items at food banks and shelters. Through Period Promise, our communities came together to change that.

In Windsor-Essex, more than 6,000 packages of products were collected as well as $15,000 in donations. For the first time, Chatham-Kent hosted a Period Promise Drive-Thru Drop Off, where residents donated 1,700 packages of products to support local individuals in need.

SUMMER PROGRAMS

Summer should be a carefree time for kids to play and have fun—but for many families in our community, it's also a season of food insecurity. When school food programs close over the summer, many families struggle to put healthy food on the table. For many families, essential school supplies are a luxury they can't afford.

Thanks to the generosity of our amazing donors, United Way's Summer Programs not only provided healthy and nutritious food but also supported learning over the summer by distributing free books, backpacks and school supplies – something many families see as a luxury they can't afford.

Summer Programs are delivered in West Windsor, Downtown Windsor and Leamington.

4,094
FOOD BAGS DISTRIBUTED

6,100
FREE BOOKS FOR KIDS

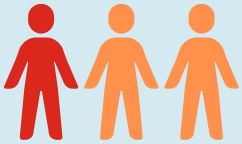
1,900
BACKPACKS DISTRIBUTED

5,540
LUNCHES PROVIDED TO CAMP WONDER

THE NEED IS INCREASING

Access to healthy, nutritious food is essential. United Way is proud to support important local food security organizations like the Unemployed Help Centre Food Bank, a key hub for the Windsor Essex Food Bank Association.

8% INCREASE IN FOOD BANK VISITS VS LAST YEAR



1 IN 3 FOOD BANK VISITORS ARE KIDS

A Guide for Community Resources & Services

We are a proud Founding Partner of 211 – a free, confidential service that connects people to essential social services, programs and community support with just one call.

Based on those who called 211, the top needs or requests for service included general information, health, government services, housing and safety. In Chatham Kent, the top needs or requests for service included housing, safety, general information, health and food.

Last year, 211 was accessed 13,219 times in Windsor-Essex and 936 times in Chatham-Kent.

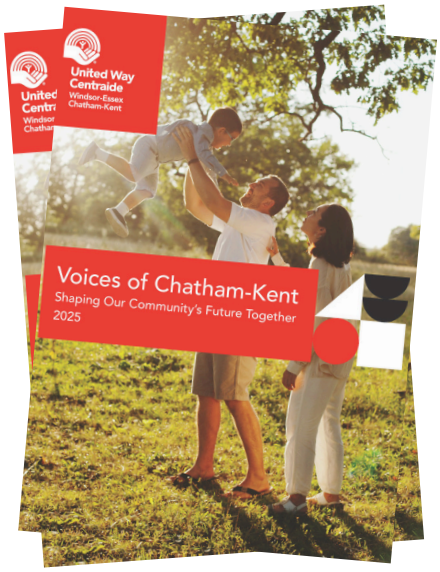
211

The Chatham-Kent community has spoken – and we listened

We officially released Voices of Chatham-Kent: Shaping Our Community's Future Together, a new report that highlights the priorities, concerns, and ideas shared by local residents.

The report marks a significant step forward in how United Way and its partners will invest in and support the Chatham-Kent community, with a renewed focus on equity, prevention, and long-term impact.

Between January and June 2025, we engaged residents through surveys, focus groups, and conversations across the region. Residents identified their top priorities, including affordable housing, mental health and addiction support, access to healthcare, food security, youth development, employment and transportation.



A clear message emerged: residents want services that are easy to access, better connected, and focused on preventing problems before they grow.

In response, we are exploring a collective impact approach that brings residents, service providers, funders, and decision-makers together around shared goals. One model being considered is Cradle to Career (C2C), a proven, community-driven strategy that supports children and youth at every stage of life. We are also developing a Neighbourhood Opportunity Index to guide future investments and track progress over time.

Read the full report at www.weareunited.com/voicesofchathamkent

Tilbury Information Help Centre

The Tilbury Information & H.E.L.P. Centre (TIHC) is dedicated to supporting the community by offering essential services to those in need. We provide emergency food assistance, help with social housing applications, and support with resume writing. Our community-use computers are available for job searches and online tasks, and we offer information and referral services to connect individuals with additional resources.

This year over 3,368 people visited the TIHC's food bank program.
In addition, more than 1,019 individuals received support services.

Neighbourhoods Program

The Neighbourhood Program, a Pathway to Potential initiative, is funded by the City of Windsor and County of Essex and strives to address poverty by investing in economically challenged areas of Windsor-Essex to enhance quality of life and empower residents.

United Way Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent was selected as the Neighbourhood Lead for three of the priority neighbourhoods: Downtown Windsor East, West Windsor and North Leamington. These neighbourhoods were chosen based on factors like income levels, population density, and overall quality of life, highlighting the need for a focused, neighbourhood-level approach to address their specific needs.

Community engagement is a cornerstone of the program. The United Way team will work directly with residents and local groups to organize activities, encourage involvement, and strengthen partnerships in each neighbourhood.

United Way, in collaboration with the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit and the Windsor-Essex Community Housing Corporation, hosted “Neighbourhood Celebrations” for the residents this summer to kick off the program.

FUNDING PROVIDED BY
PATHWAY TO POTENTIAL
County of Essex
The City of Windsor

We Moved – But We’re Still Here for Our Community

As part of our ongoing commitment to financial responsibility and operational flexibility, we have relocated from our larger facility to a more modest space. Our main office is now located at #510-4510 Rhodes Drive in Windsor.

We continue to maintain brick-and-mortar locations in other communities, including Chatham-Kent and Tilbury, where we offer essential services and programming. We also remain active with office space in Downtown Windsor, West Windsor & Leamington, delivering neighbourhood-based programming in our priority communities.

This thoughtful transition allows us to redirect more resources toward our mission while continuing to maintain a strong, physical presence in the community.

Looking Forward Chatham-Kent:

The Path Ahead

As we look ahead, we are focused on building a stronger future for Chatham-Kent through collaboration and shared vision. Over the coming months, we will be meeting with residents, donors, partners, unions, and community leaders to discuss the Cradle to Career (C2C) strategy as a potential investment and collective impact approach for our community.

This process will ensure that every voice is heard as we explore how the C2C model can connect existing programs, strengthen local supports, and create lasting change. By early 2026, once we've gathered community feedback, we will begin shaping our investment plan for the new fiscal year—grounded in equity, prevention, and long-term solutions.

Want to learn more about the report and see how local voices are guiding the path forward? Visit www.weareunited.com/voicesofchathamkent

Looking Forward Windsor-Essex:

United is the Way

As we look ahead, one message stands out clearly: partnership is the foundation of impact. United Way cannot drive change alone — it's the power of many working together that creates brighter futures for kids and families across Windsor-Essex.

Thanks to our dedicated partners like ProsperUs, the GECDSB, the WECDSB, the University of Windsor, St. Clair College, the Multicultural Council, South Essex Community Council, and Unemployed Help Centre, we are seeing real progress. These organizations, along with our committed investors, make it possible to deliver programs that help children succeed, strengthen families, and build a stronger community for all. Without them, the impact we are realizing today would not be possible.

Looking forward, our focus is on deepening our existing partnerships, welcoming new collaborators, and sharing our success stories with all levels of government. By building these relationships, we aim to establish even stronger partnerships that ensure lasting investment in our community's future.

United is the Way — and together, with our partners, investors, and supporters, we will create lasting change.

United Way Centraide Windsor-Essex Chatham-Kent
#510-4510 Rhodes Drive, Windsor, ON N8W 5K5
425 McNaughton Avenue West, Chatham, ON N7M 5K8

Tilbury Information & H.E.L.P. Centre
26 Queen Street West, Tilbury, ON N0P 2L0

Charitable Registration # 108160334RR0001

Our 2024-25 audited financial statements are available to the public at www.weareunited.com/FinancialStatements

If you have any questions about this report, please call 519-259-6164 or email info@weareunited.com

United Way Centraide
Windsor-Essex
Chatham-Kent