

# JOURNEY HOME



## MOVING PEOPLE FROM POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

Journey Home is the result of United Way's vision - that everyone in our community deserves a safe place to call home.



### ISSUE

Homelessness is a serious issue in our community which is often accompanied by additional challenges such as food security and mental health.

The Point-In-Time Homelessness Count conducted in Saskatoon in April 2022 found 550 adults and children experiencing homelessness, 270 (49%) of these individuals were chronically homeless, meaning they have experienced homelessness for more than six months in the past year. This is an increase of 15% compared to the last Count in 2018.

The challenges for individuals who are struggling with chronic homelessness are often complex including serious mental health and addictions issues as well as poor physical health.

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced a variety of new issues for community members experiencing homelessness. Many who are older adults with underlying medical conditions and are at increased risk for severe illness.

The systems in our communities are not designed to adequately support these individuals. Jail cells and emergency rooms are used as temporary housing and the perpetual use of shelters is increasing. These are not solutions to homelessness.

### ACTION

In April 2014, United Way partnered with Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service (SCIS) to deliver a Housing First program in Saskatoon. SCIS was a natural partner given their extensive experience working with our highly vulnerable population. The program focuses on our most vulnerable community members who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

### WHAT IS HOUSING FIRST?

The Housing First model moves people from homelessness directly into housing without any barriers.

*"With Journey Home there is no barrier to housing, which allows us to meet people where they are at in life. This allows our clients to start looking at some of the matters that have been barriers to their wellness. If you're just trying to be safe and survive, you can't explore those things."*

**Tammy MacFarlane**, Team Leader, Journey Home Intensive Community Support Team, Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service

### RESULTS

As of March 31, 2021, 112 clients were housed through Journey Home.

Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service has since introduced the housing-first model for all their clients and between April 2021 and March 2022, 74 community members had a safe and reliable place to call home.

Without a place to call home, these individuals were living on the streets, staying in emergency shelters, motels, or in hospitals receiving acute psychiatric care.

On average, community members are supported by Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service for 18 months. With the safety of shelter and support provided by trained and highly skilled social workers, participants have been able to better their lives and more appropriately use public services.

Journey Home has helped reduce publicly funded service usage that are often overused due to the conditions related to homelessness.

Donor support helps Journey Home tackle homelessness, poverty, food security every day.