



UNITED WAY SASKATOON & AREA

2024 Community Impact Report





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Message from Sheri

The 2024-25 fiscal year included a lot of challenges and opportunities in our local communities.

Every day, we are reminded of the ongoing affordability and housing crises, and along with these immediate issues, the longer-term impacts that poverty can bring with it. Childhood literacy, youth and family services, mental health and crisis support, housing and homelessness, cultural and community inclusion, and aging with dignity have never been more important.

And that's why United Way has never been more important. United Way is the largest funder other than government for community service organizations. The funding and resources United Way as a collective effort by community leaders can harness makes the organization both unique and an invaluable community asset.

Together, we can achieve anything.

This past fiscal year brought thousands of donors and volunteers together to raise \$3.7 million for meeting these immediate needs and addressing root causes of ongoing complex social issues in our local communities.

Over \$1.5 million went directly to local community partners, delivering vital services to families, youth, and seniors throughout



Saskatoon and area. Thousands of local people benefit from this support every day, including some who may be your friends and family.

More than \$500,000 was invested in strategic initiatives, like 211 Saskatchewan and Summer Success literacy camps.

Just as importantly, numerous volunteer projects were organized, and dozens of generous community leaders lent their time to reading to kids, building decks, planting gardens, and painting hallways.

This report provides a small glimpse into all the amazing things you have helped make happen in our community. Thank you for being a part of United Way.

Sheri Benson
CEO, United Way Saskatoon and Area

Year in Review



BIKE DONATION SPARKS JOY AND INDEPENDENCE FOR LOCAL YOUTH

Cummins Saskatoon rolled up their sleeves to build and donate 15 BMX bikes to EGADZ Youth Centre. These bikes offered youth a chance to enjoy summer, build independence, and embrace their childhood. This act of generosity was part of Cummins' ongoing commitment to community, highlighted by many volunteer projects with United Way. "It was a great way to develop our team and give back," said Tiffany Wall. EGADZ's Don Meikle said the bikes were awarded to youth working to improve their lives, turning wheels into opportunities.

DAY OF CARING: HANDS-ON HELP IN ACTION

United Way's 2024 Day of Caring took place over multiple days, bringing together volunteers from across Saskatoon and area to support community organizations through hands-on projects.

From planting traditional gardens and repainting family spaces to donating professional clothing and hosting client celebrations, each effort added up to something bigger. These projects showed how generosity, teamwork and time can make a meaningful impact.

Sponsored by Saskatchewan Blue Cross, Day of Caring helped build stronger connections across our community—one project at a time.



Scan the QR code to watch the video and see the full list of 2024 Day of Caring projects.



10 YEARS OF JOURNEY HOME

In 2024, we proudly celebrated 10 years of Journey Home – a partnership with Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service that helps individuals move from homelessness into stable housing. To mark the milestone, we renewed our shared commitment by signing a new Memorandum of Understanding. Journey Home continues to offer barrier-free support and compassionate guidance to those who need it most.



W.A. MILNE AWARD RECIPIENT: CATHERINE SHORE

At our 65th Annual General Meeting in 2024, we proudly recognized Catherine Shore as this year's recipient of the W.A. Milne Award. Established in 1973, this award honours individuals who demonstrate outstanding volunteer achievement – just as W.A. Milne did during his time with United Way. Catherine first joined us as a Campaign Representative in 2022 and has since become a dedicated and inspiring ambassador, leading with passion and purpose at every opportunity.



A SAFE PLACE TO LAND

Last year, we granted \$20,000 to the Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan to help bring their new transitional housing program to life – a 10-bedroom home for women navigating some of life's hardest moments. These are women who've been criminalized or are at risk, often simply because they didn't have a safe place to go.

With this support, EFry was able to provide weekend staffing and ensure the doors stayed open every day. But more than that, this home became a place of hope – offering not just shelter, but healing, connection, and a fresh start.



SUMMER SUCCESS LITERACY CAMPS

In July 2024, we partnered with Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools to run six Summer Success literacy camps, supporting 109 students in grades one to three. The camps helped prevent the "summer slide" by providing daily reading support, hands-on learning, and opportunities for exploration and fun.

Students participated in small group reading, crafts, cultural presentations, and field trips to places like Nutrien Wonderhub, splash parks, and bowling alleys. Each child received a new book every day and a backpack of school supplies to start the school year off strong. Meals were provided through our ongoing partnership with the Saskatoon District Labour Council's Summer Snack Program.

We proudly deepened the integration of Métis and Indigenous culture this year, with support from Métis Nation-Saskatchewan. Every child received bilingual books in English and Michif, and took part in storytelling, drumming, and traditional crafts.

Among students who attended at least eight sessions and completed pre- and post-assessments, 75% improved their reading level.



RECOGNIZING OUTSTANDING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

At the 2024 National Philanthropy Day Luncheon, PCL Construction received the Honoured Supporter Award for their incredible generosity and dedication to community. Their volunteerism and long-standing commitment to building a stronger community set a powerful example of what's possible when businesses invest in the places they call home.



TAMPON TUESDAY

In 2024, United Way Saskatoon and our labour partners hosted our 8th annual Tampon Tuesday initiative – continuing the work to end period poverty in our community. This year, 1,419 packages of menstrual products were collected and over \$9,300 was raised to support access to these essential supplies. Our friends at Shoppers Drug Mart ran a two-week drive across 16 store locations, collecting 707 product packages and raising an additional \$1,750 through customer donations.

Throughout the year, 3,450 packages of product – valued at nearly \$19,000 – were distributed to 27 schools, agencies, and organizations. A Tampon Tuesday “road trip” helped reach even further, delivering over 1,000 packages of product to surrounding communities including Watrous, Allan, Dalmeny, Colonsay, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, and Bethlehem High School.

Every donation helped reduce stigma, raise awareness, and remove barriers—ensuring that no one in our community is held back by their period.



A 40-YEAR TRADITION OF VOLUNTEERISM

For over four decades, members of IBEW 319 and their managers have volunteered their time to hang United Way street banners each fall – rising early and using equipment generously lent by Saskatoon Light and Power. This annual act of support continues without a formal agreement, driven solely by care for community and a commitment passed down through generations. We’re deeply grateful for this incredible tradition and the volunteers who make it happen year after year.



"The Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan's New Transitional Housing Program is a critical resource for women at risk of criminalization, offering them a safe and supportive environment as they navigate their recovery and reintegration into the community. Thanks to the generous support of United Way Saskatoon & Area, we are able to provide essential staff who offer guidance, resources, and personalized care to support women on their journey to wellness and empowerment. This funding ensures that our participants receive the help they need to overcome barriers, foster resilience, and achieve long-term stability."

NICOLE OBRIGAVITCH

Executive Director
Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan

Focus Areas and Community Agencies and Programs

POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

Foundations Learning & Skills Saskatchewan
John Howard Society of Saskatchewan
Journey Home
OUTSaskatoon
Saskatoon & District Labour Council
Summer Snack Program
Saskatoon Poverty Reduction Partnership

ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Saskatoon
BGC Saskatoon
Chokecherry Studios
Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC)
Saskatoon Downtown Youth Centre (EGADZ)
Saskatoon Interval House
Saskatoon Tribal Council
Summer Success Literacy Camps

BUILDING STRONG COMMUNITIES

211 Saskatchewan
Community Legal Assistance Service
for Saskatoon Inner City (CLASSIC)
Crocus Co-op
Elizabeth Fry Society of Saskatchewan
Family Service Saskatoon Inc (FSS)
FASD Network of Saskatchewan
Global Gathering Place
Hope Restored Canada
Navera Community Connections
Prairie Harm Reduction
Reconciliation Saskatoon
Saskatoon Crisis Intervention Service (SCIS)
Saskatoon Sexual Assault and
Information Centre (SSAIC)
Saskatoon Sexual Health
Student Wellness Initiative Toward
Community Health (SWITCH)
STR8UP | 10,000 Little Steps to Healing Inc.
YWCA Saskatoon



Stretching a Dollar

Your United Way investment into our communities impacts thousands of our most vulnerable people, such as seniors, children, women, and people living with disabilities. A single United Way donation supports 40 local initiatives each year, including dozens of community-based organizations. The impact an individual can make through United Way is scaled and powered by donors and volunteers like you working together to improve lives and build community. Here are a few examples:



\$3=

a pre-paid bus pass for a senior



\$5=

a meal for a person in need



\$125=

a week of programming for individuals living with mental illness



\$1,000=

a two-week literacy camp for a child at risk of falling behind at school



\$4,000=

a chance for someone unhoused and with complex needs to have a home

Moving People From Poverty To Possibility

Reducing the impact of poverty and improving access to food, shelter, and the means to lift people out of poverty is United Way's ambition in this community investment focus area.

OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

- Increasing housing stability
- Strengthening food security
- Growing financial security

"The biggest thing for me was that it's okay to spend money on little things, as long as I budgeted for them. I'm more aware of the difference between my needs and my impulse buys."

FOUNDATIONS WORKSHOP PARTICIPANT

Here are some of the challenges individuals and families face every day in Saskatoon and area communities.

POVERTY & FOOD INSECURITY

11.1% of Saskatchewan residents live below the poverty line (Market Basket Measure), and **28%** experience food insecurity. Nearly **38.9%** of people spend more than **30%** of their income on housing, making affordability a major issue. Child poverty remains high at **26%**, the second highest rate in Canada, with Indigenous children disproportionately affected.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Saskatchewan reports a **15.5%** prevalence of mood and anxiety disorders and **27.5%** lifetime prevalence of substance use disorders, both above national averages. Only **48%** of youth with early mental health and addictions needs can or do access community mental health services.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

Hundreds of people experience chronic or repeated homelessness, with **90%** of those affected being Indigenous. Affordable housing options are scarce, and visible encampments have grown in recent years.



The Impact

\$6 Million

\$6 million invested over 10 years into Journey Home, a housing first initiative for hard to house individuals. Between 75 and 100 participants are housed and provided with support each year.

11 Youth

Pride Home housed 11 youth ages 16-21 who are a part of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. On average most youth successfully stay at the home for over a year. The home provides food, peer support, life skill lessons, crisis intervention, and education and employment opportunities and resources. Their grocery bill is \$1500 per month and rising.

518 People

518 individuals attended financial literacy workshops designed to increase their financial knowledge and learn new ways to manage money. \$150 provides financial literacy workbooks for budgeting, banking and credit management workshops that participants use to take notes during the workshops and for future reference.

13,000 Meals

13,000 meals provided during the Summer Snack program, a 130% increase in demand since 2015.

Helping Kids Be All They Can Be

Ensuring children and kids are valued and supported, with opportunities and resources to help them be their best, is United Way's ambition in this community investment focus area.

OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

- More opportunities for parenting skills training and counseling,
- Better literacy in grade school kids,
- Increased employability of at-risk youth,
- Improved mental and physical health for children and youth.

"[The BBBS mentee] struggles a lot with many things. Socialization and self-worth were always hard for her. Since being with her mentor, she has become more confident, self-esteem is higher, and she has a place that has no judgement. It's significant because it helps her build lasting relationships and give her a sense of belonging which helps her stabilize in everyday life."

ANONYMOUS GUARDIAN OR TEACHER

Here are some of the challenges children and youth face each day in Saskatoon and area communities.

CHILD POVERTY

27% of children in Saskatchewan live below the poverty line, one of the highest rates in Canada.

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Reports of mental health and addiction issues among youth have **increased fivefold** in Saskatchewan since 2020.

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORTS

Saskatchewan has seen a **15%** drop in inflation-adjusted per-student funding over the past decade, despite enrolment growing by nearly **10%**.

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

In Saskatoon's 2024 Point-in-Time Count, **1,499** people were experiencing homelessness, including **315** children and **175** youth aged 13–24. Indigenous people are disproportionately affected, making up **80%** of the homeless population.



The Impact

193 Kids & Mentors

193 kids and 193 volunteer mentors met over 7700 times (roughly 40 one on one sessions each). \$75.00 provides critical training to a mentor on how to build a developmental relationship with a young person.

428 Children & Youth

428 children and youth participated in Mini Club programs. 91% came from low-income families. \$1250 provides a safe place for 15 children and youth every day after school for a month.

100 Students

100 grade 2 & 3 students at risk of falling behind in reading attended literacy camps. \$1000 sends a kid to a 2-week camp with certified teachers, busing, food, and field trips.

Building Strong Communities

Helping people connect with the support they need, improving mental and physical health, and increasing personal safety is United Way's ambition in this community investment focus area.

OBJECTIVES INCLUDE:

- Increasing opportunities for social connections
- Improving physical and mental wellbeing
- Providing safe spaces to learn and grow

"Your support for me gave me legs when I could not stand."

SEXUAL ASSAULT SURVIVOR

Here are some of the challenges individuals and families face every day in Saskatoon and area communities.

CHILDCARE ACCESSIBILITY

Despite the \$10-a-day childcare program, demand far exceeds supply. Some centres report waitlists of over **2,000** children, and families often wait 2-3 years for a spot.

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

Saskatchewan consistently has one of the highest rates of domestic violence in Canada. Saskatchewan's IPV rates are more than double the national average and calls for service have increased **13%** over the past five years.

SEXUAL ASSAULT

Saskatchewan has one of the highest sexual assault victimization rates in Canada. Women represent **88%** of sexual offence victims, and youth aged 16-17 have the highest rates of sexual assault.



The Impact

800 Survivors

Over 800 survivors of sexual violence were supported, including through individual, group, and crisis counseling sessions.

**110,000
Helped**

Nearly 3,500 individuals and over 110,000 online users helped through SK211, over 50% of which were related to mental health or basic needs, such as housing or food.

**12,237
Minutes**

12,237 minutes of family support through brief counselling sessions and 2021 referrals to external programs. 92% of callers reported feeling better after calling.

**600
Individuals**

600 individuals accessed nutritious meals complimented by a variety of medical services, craft making, facilitated group discussions, and learning sessions. \$375 provides one week of food for the SWITCH nutrition program, providing cooked-from-scratch meals for community members visiting the clinic.

Community Service Response Fund

In response to the lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Canada launched the Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF) – a \$400 million investment to help Community Service Organizations (CSOs) adapt and strengthen for the future. Administered locally by United Way Saskatoon and Area, over \$1.7 million in CSRF funding was invested into 33 organizations across northern Saskatchewan and Saskatoon and Area. These one-time grants supported projects focused on building internal capacity, improving systems and processes, and reimagining programs and services. With nearly \$2.5 million in requests received, it was clear that the demand for strategic investment far exceeded available funds. To showcase the lasting impact of this work, we highlighted four funded organizations through video stories – each one a powerful example of resilience, innovation, and forward thinking.

CROCUS CO-OPERATIVE: CREATING PATHWAYS TO EMPLOYMENT

Based in Saskatoon, Crocus Co-operative is a community-driven organization that supports individuals living with mental illness through inclusive programming, free and subsidized meals, and meaningful work opportunities. With support from the Community Services Recovery Fund, Crocus Co-operative expanded its Transitional Employment Program – an initiative that provides paid work, training, transportation, and meals for members. The project focused on meeting the evolving employment needs of people with disabilities in a post-pandemic world, while also exploring new partnerships and alternative business models. These changes are helping to build more sustainable employment pathways and long-term stability for Crocus members.



Scan the QR code to hear directly from Crocus members and see how meaningful work is making a lasting difference.



Scan the QR code to explore how this project is inspiring youth and strengthening community ties through nature and culture.

REDBERRY LAKE BIOSPHERE REGION: FOSTERING RECONCILIATION THROUGH LAND-BASED LEARNING

The Redberry Lake Biosphere Region is a unique collaboration between Mistawasis Nêhiyawak, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation, local schools, and community partners, all united by shared values of wellbeing, respect for nature, and cultural heritage. Their mission is to nurture balance between people and the environment through conservation, education, and sustainable practices. With support from the Community Services Recovery Fund, the project focused on healing pandemic disruptions by introducing a land-based curriculum for school groups aged 4 to 21. This innovative approach supports the transfer of traditional knowledge between generations, while promoting reconciliation and deeper connection to the land.



TURNOR LAKE & BIRCH NARROWS COMMUNITY FOOD CENTRE: NOURISHING BODY, MIND & SPIRIT

In the remote northern communities of Turnor Lake and Birch Narrows, the Community Food Centre plays a vital role in teaching people of all ages how to grow, gather, and prepare healthy, traditional foods. Rooted in Dene, Cree, and Métis cultural practices, the Food Centre supports the passing of knowledge from Elders to younger generations – strengthening not just nutrition, but community and identity. The pandemic deepened existing challenges around food security, with limited access to fresh, affordable groceries. With Community Services Recovery Fund support, the Food Centre expanded its capacity to provide nutritious food hampers, gardening kits, and traditional meats sourced from local hunters. These efforts brought comfort and hope during a difficult time and laid the foundation for lasting food security.



Scan the QR code to witness the powerful stories of resilience, culture, and community that are nourishing this northern region's future.



DALMENY SENIORS ASSOCIATION: RECONNECTING AND REBUILDING

The Dalmeny Seniors Association is dedicated to enhancing the health and wellbeing of older adults in Dalmeny and surrounding areas through inclusive, community-based programming. Like many organizations, the pandemic took a toll – membership dropped by more than half, and many seniors became disconnected from regular activities and supports. With funding from the Community Services Recovery Fund, the association focused on rebuilding that sense of connection. The project introduced new technology, including a Smart TV, internet access, and a computer, to support virtual and in-person programming and improve communication with members. These upgrades are helping to re-engage seniors, expand access to programs, and bring the community back together.



Scan the QR code to see how the Dalmeny Seniors Association is using technology to reconnect and revitalize its community.

2025-2027 Investment Strategy

United Way Saskatoon & Area has unveiled a bold and community-informed roadmap designed to address the region's most pressing social challenges. Rooted in deep consultation and guided by data, this strategy reflects United Way's commitment to equity, inclusion, and sustainable impact.

A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN APPROACH

The strategy was shaped through three targeted consultations, engaging a wide range of voices — from agency partners and corporate stakeholders to Indigenous leaders and members of the 2SLGBTQ+ community. These sessions focused on identifying emerging trends, assessing past efforts, and ensuring that future investments align with real community needs.

KEY INVESTMENT PRIORITIES

The consultations revealed several urgent areas of focus:

- **Youth and School Supports:** With rising concerns around food insecurity, mental health, and housing instability among youth, United Way will prioritize school-based services, mentorship programs, and youth nutrition initiatives.





- **Sexual Health and Mental Wellness:** Addressing the intersecting crises of sexual violence, STIs, and mental health – especially among marginalized groups – will be central. Prevention, education, and access to counseling are key pillars.
- **Housing and Homelessness:** Recognizing the deep ties between poverty, colonialism, and housing insecurity, United Way will support wraparound services, safe housing for vulnerable populations, and innovative solutions like tiny homes.
- **2SLGBTQ+ Inclusion:** The strategy acknowledges ongoing disparities in safety, access, and health outcomes for Queer and Trans individuals. United Way aims to support inclusive spaces and services that affirm identity and dignity.



- **Indigenous-Led Solutions:** With Indigenous communities facing disproportionate challenges, United Way will invest in culturally grounded, prevention-focused programs that support families, youth, and language revitalization.
- **Seniors' Wellbeing:** As the population ages, United Way will back programs that combat isolation, improve accessibility, and support the mental health of seniors – especially those who are racialized, Queer, or low-income.

EVOLVING THE FUNDING PROCESS

In response to agency feedback, United Way is also revamping its application and reporting systems to be more user-friendly and efficient. A new digital platform and simplified evaluation rubric will reduce administrative burdens and enhance transparency.

LOOKING AHEAD

With over \$1.6 million invested in community agencies in 2023/24, United Way is poised to build on its legacy of impact. The 2025–2027 strategy is not just a funding plan – it's a call to action for a more inclusive, resilient, and compassionate Saskatoon.

Every United Way donation provides opportunities for people struggling to realize their full potential in our community. Give the gift of opportunity and help make Saskatoon and area a stronger, safer community.

**Donate
today.**



United Way
Saskatoon & Area

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