

MARCH IS THE MONTH OF HOPE

Since October, United Way Simcoe Muskoka (UWSM) has been running our new Urgent Needs Fund to help meet the most pressing, everyday obstacles related to poverty faced by more than 60,000 people across Simcoe Muskoka.

This month, we are celebrating the hope that the Urgent Needs Fund has given the most vulnerable in Simcoe Muskoka. This hope would not have been possible without the continued support of people like you.

“YOU PREVENTED ME FROM BEING HOMELESS.”

What is the Urgent Needs Fund?

There’s a gap in social services, and the Urgent Needs Fund helps to fill it

In 2019, United Way Simcoe Muskoka hosted community consultations across our sub-regions. These consultations brought together other local charities, frontline service providers and municipal partners to help determine the biggest challenges people face caused by poverty in our communities.

What we found across Simcoe Muskoka was a gap in flexible financial assistance for people experiencing or at-risk of poverty, creating hurdles that poverty and social exclusion make almost impossible to overcome.

These struggles included food insecurity, access to resources, education, employment, addiction, transportation and more. To fill this gap, the Urgent Needs Fund was created.

By issuing modest, one-time grants to eligible residents living in or on the verge of living in poverty, UWSM is not just helping people when they need it most - we are giving people hope for a better future.

The testimonials in this issue of Community Matters are from actual Urgent Needs Fund recipients that show how hope has changed lives right here at home.



➔ [Learn more about the Urgent Needs Fund: UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/urgent-needs](https://UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/urgent-needs)

“[THE URGENT NEEDS FUND] HELPED ME GET SOME FOOD FOR DAUGHTER AND MYSELF THAT LASTED FOR QUITE A WHILE, AS WELL AS A GAS CARD SO I COULD GO OUT AND LOOK FOR JOB.”



Poverty Impacts Every Community

Poverty doesn’t look the same across Simcoe Muskoka. That’s why UWSM has partnered with Regional Agency Leads and 211 Community Connection to deliver the greatest impact we can with the Urgent Needs Fund.

For example, almost half of those accessing the fund from North Simcoe are experiencing homelessness.

By approaching poverty reduction from a regional model, we are able to better understand the unique needs of our communities.

 [Read firsthand accounts of the impact of hope UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/urgent-needs-impact](https://UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/urgent-needs-impact)

“I WAS ABLE TO GET A TEST FOR MY LUNGS THAT I COULD NOT AFFORD. I THEN WAS ABLE TO GET FURTHER TESTS REQUIRED...TO FIND OUT MORE OF WHAT WAS WRONG.”

95% OF URGENT NEEDS FUND RECIPIENTS SAY THEY ARE BETTER PREPARED TO HANDLE THE OBSTACLES LIFE THROWS AT THEM.

**MORE THAN
1 IN 3** RECIPIENTS ARE SINGLE PARENTS

“IT WAS SUCH A RESPECTFUL PROCESS - DIDN'T MAKE ME FEEL DEMORALIZED. MADE ME FEEL SAFE AND LET ME KEEP MY PRIDE.”

AFTER RECEIVING ASSISTANCE FROM THE URGENT NEEDS FUND, RECIPIENTS REPORTED A DECREASE IN OVERALL LIFE STRESS BY UP TO 50%

“I AM TEARY-EYED THINKING OF THE HELP YOU GAVE ME. THANK YOU THANK YOU THANK YOU. YOU HAVE NO IDEA HOW GRATEFUL I AM. I GOT HIT BY A DRUNK DRIVER AND (HAVE) SO MANY HEALTH ISSUES NOW. ANY HELP IS WONDERFUL.”

DONOR PROFILE

The Orsi Group

The Orsi Group has shown their #LocalLove by providing a matching gift for the Month of Hope. That means that any individual donations during the Month of March, up to \$10,000, will be matched by this amazing company.

This doubles the impact of every donation, doubles the number of people each gift will help and extends the work of the Urgent Needs Fund and other critical UWSM poverty-reduction initiatives.



Give a gift with double the impact:
UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/hope

Small Grants Can Have a Big Impact

Sometimes, a helping hand is all you need

The Urgent Needs Fund provides modest grants, usually between \$100 and \$250, which might not seem like enough to help someone out of poverty.

What we've found, though, is that the grants from the Urgent Needs Fund can make a substantial difference in the lives of those who access it.

Whether it be for transportation or a cell phone to look for jobs, clothing for an interview, medical tests to get the help they need or food to keep their children fueled for school, the Urgent Needs Fund is there to start that process, all while empowering and maintaining the dignity of the recipients.

That's the power of hope.

 What is the gap filled by the UNF?
UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/gap

150+ THE NUMBER OF UNIQUE NEEDS THAT THE URGENT NEEDS FUND HAS HELPED MEET THAT COULDN'T BE HELPED ELSEWHERE

“I NEED YOU TO KNOW, THOUGH, HOW GRATEFUL I WAS TO RECEIVE THIS HELP.”

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#MonthOfHope**

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