

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
1110 Highway 26, Midhurst, Ontario L9X 1N6
UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 2, 2022

March is the Month of Hope for United Way Simcoe Muskoka

Midhurst, ON, March 2, 2022 – During the month of March, United Way Simcoe Muskoka is running a campaign in support of their Urgent Needs Fund (UNF). “The Month of Hope” reflects on the lives impacted through the fund and works to bring awareness to the needs of the most vulnerable in our region. Every day in Simcoe Muskoka, more than 60,000 people are living under the strain of poverty and isolation and sometimes the immediate, most pressing needs go unaddressed.

The Urgent Needs Fund was created to fill a gap in existing services, providing timely, modest grants to those who cannot find help elsewhere. Recipients have a variety of unique needs however the most common requests are for food, medical tests and devices, transportation, clothing, and cell phones.

Even though the average UNF grant is just \$250, the grants go beyond meeting these immediate needs. The short-term relief overcomes seemingly small but overwhelming barriers; it provides dignity and hope for a brighter future. More than 95% of recipients say they are better prepared to handle the obstacles that life throws at them.

After a successful pilot program in 2019, the Urgent Needs Fund was relaunched in January 2022. Since its inception, the fund has assisted more than 1,500 Simcoe Muskoka residents by providing \$221,000 in direct relief. The fund is implemented by 211 Ontario and the District of Muskoka.

“The pandemic and uneven economic recovery have put more people at risk, leading to an increase in requests,” says Dale Biddell, CEPO of United Way Simcoe Muskoka. “The Month of Hope is an opportunity share stories of hope the fund has provided to local residents, but also to raise awareness and encourage community support, so that we can continue to meet that need.”

For the month of March, United Way Simcoe Muskoka’s Board of Directors has offered a matching gift of \$10,000, doubling the impact of each donation to the Urgent Needs Fund.

To learn more about the Urgent Needs Fund or to donate, visit www.uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/hope/.

-30-

About United Way Simcoe Muskoka

Poverty touches most aspects of a person’s life from food, shelter, and employment, to mental and physical well-being. United Way Simcoe Muskoka seeks to improve lives and build communities by leveraging collective resources and mobilizing collective action to achieve the greatest impact. Through services such as the Urgent Needs Fund and by funding critical services throughout our communities, United Way Simcoe Muskoka is ensuring that residents have the resources and assistance they need to unlock their full potential.

Media Inquiries

Leah Wells
Marketing & Communications Specialist
705.817.2100
lwells@uwsimcoemuskoka.ca