

COMMUNITY MATTERS

United Way Simcoe Muskoka's Newsletter



IN THIS ISSUE

CEPO MESSAGE

COMMUNITY IMPACT

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

WHO WE ARE

Connecting people and programs

As the leaves change signaling the change in season we’re reminded of all the challenges we’ve had to face over the last few years.

This summer to assist the sector we offered four capacity building sessions. All were welcome to attend the Grant Writing, Social Media, Storytelling and People with Lived and Living Experience sessions. In this issue we’ll highlight information from the Storytelling webinar.

Also in this issue we highlight our Stories of Collaboration, our Real2Reel Film Festival and Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer, Brian Shelley’s message.

CEPO Message

Earlier this year, your United Way launched "[YOUR Community, YOUR United Way](#)". Our new strategic plan set out the following priorities for us as a charity:

- Build capacity to meet the needs of the community
- Increase awareness of United Way Simcoe Muskoka's impact on the communities we serve
- Strengthen communities through strategic funding and partnership opportunities
- Affect long-term systemic change through advocacy and education



Over the past six months, our team has put this plan into action! Here are some highlights of our efforts:

- To increase our capacity, we entered into two exciting fundraising partnerships to maximize our fundraising efforts:
 - We partnered with the Intercounty Baseball League's [Barrie Baycats](#) to raise funds through 50/50 draws throughout the season at the ballpark
 - We partnered with Maple (Re)Leaf and came on board as one of two charities of choice for the 2023 [Everest Challenge](#) at Blue Mountain
- To raise awareness of our work in the community, we launched a [TikTok](#) channel to compliment our existing social media presence on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Linkedin](#), and [X](#)
- So far this year we have connected charities and not for profits to almost \$6 million through our own "[Community Collaborative Projects](#)" and the Federal Government's "[Community Services Recovery Fund](#)" and "[Reaching Home](#)" programs
- To support our advocacy and education efforts, we launched the #Real2Reel Film Festival sponsored by the RBC Foundation, screening the following documentaries:

[Connecting the Dots](#) in Collingwood

[Traffick on the 401](#) in Barrie

[Birth of a Family](#) in Midland

[Four Feet Up](#) in Orillia

Thanks to our staff, volunteers, donors, and community partners - because of you, your **United Way** is a unifying force for our local community!

As we approach the Holiday Season, I urge you to consider [making a gift](#) to strengthen your community by way of a charitable donation to **United Way Simcoe Muskoka** so that we can increase our support to communities across Simcoe, Muskoka, and the Town of the Blue Mountains.

Thank you for your support,

Brian Shelley, Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer



/UWSimcoeMuskoka



@UWSimcoeMuskoka



@UWSimcoeMuskoka



@UWSimcoeMuskoka



United Way
Centraide
Simcoe Muskoka

Community Impact

Your United Way offered capacity building sessions through the months of July and August. The capacity building sessions were focused on themes erupting throughout the community, and the future ahead.

The future of United Way’s reporting will be Storytelling.

Heather McIntyre (She/Her/ Kwe), the Working Together - Wiijinokiiwag Cultural Education Coordinator and Project Lead Facilitator at Mamaway Wiidokdaadwin spoke about the

importance of storytelling, what it can look like and why it is a historical and useful tool when showcasing the impact of our work in the communities we serve.

Heather offered the invitation for storytelling to be done in parallel with quantitative data collection. “Such profound wisdom you’ve offered us in this space.”, and “This has been so powerful! I am so grateful to be able to be here today and be part of this opportunity!”, were some of the comments left by folks attending the session.

Examples of stories that Heather offered the agencies: to experiment with for their data, and the impact its made, to be showcased through songs, music, video, and pictures.

Your United Way will be looking forward to implementing storytelling in a variety of ways throughout the reporting for projects moving forward.



Stories of Collaboration

Our first group of Community Collaborative Projects is coming to end. Your United Way wanted to celebrate the collaborative successes reached through a Stories of Collaboration celebration. Staff and participants from Wiijinokiiwag, Furniture Bank, Youth Call, Circles Muskoka and Poverty Interventions Equal Health Interventions came together to share their experiences, successes and challenges . Sitting around the fire we listened, we learned, we cried, and we laughed about the three-year journey completed. We may no longer partner on these projects but we will always be community partners.



RBC FOUNDATION SPONSORS UNITED WAY'S REAL2REEL FILM FESTIVAL

Engaging individuals in difficult community conversations is perhaps more important now than ever. Sponsored by the RBC Foundation, **United Way Simcoe Muskoka's** Real2Reel Film Festival showcased documentaries focused on youth mental health, human trafficking, the impact of the Sixties Scoop, and childhood poverty. Each screening was followed by a panel discussion of the film and its subject matter. Almost five hundred people attended this year's screenings. Be sure to follow your **United Way** on social media for upcoming announcements about the 2024 Real2Reel documentary series, and thanks again to the RBC Foundation and all other sponsors who made these educational events possible.



Call for Volunteers

We are looking for people to join a new Fundraising Committee to help us increase our impact on the communities we serve!

- 🗨️ Are you interested in building a stronger community for all?
- 🗨️ Do you love fundraising?
- 🗨️ Do you want to have some fun?

Then **your United Way** needs YOU!

If you are interested, please contact ahughes@uwsimcoemuskoka.ca

When we work together on important community issues, the results are game-changing!

Who we are

We believe in investing in people and forming meaningful connections. We see ourselves as more than just a funder. We listen, we collaborate and we bring communities together. Here we're pleased to introduce you to some of the amazing humans doing this work and we'll continue to showcase others in future newsletters.



Rosi Martin

Relationship Manager

I love coordinating events that create opportunities for our communities to get involved in the work that we do. Whether it's being part of a difficult dialogue around a complex social issue, hiking Blue Mountain, creating memorable holiday experiences for the children in our community or walking in Coldest Night of the Year, I encourage everyone to get involved and have some fun along the way.

Fun fact - I grew up in Kitchener/Waterloo but moved to Simcoe County in 2005 and love being involved in my community.



Alex Hughes

Executive Assistant and Board Liaison

I love working at United Way Simcoe Muskoka because I'm surrounded by passionate and caring humans.

UWSM employees and volunteers inspire me every day!

Fun fact - Milking a cow is at the top of my bucket list (I missed that field trip as a child).

[UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca](https://www.UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca)

1110 Highway 26
Midhurst, ON L9X 1N6
T. 705.726.2301
info@UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca

Show your #LocalLove

Donate at

[UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/give/](https://www.UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca/give/)

-  /UWSimcoeMuskoka
-  @UWSimcoeMuskoka
-  @UWSimcoeMuskoka
-  @UWSimcoeMuskoka