

## Media Release

**United Way Simcoe Muskoka**  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**October 25, 2023**

### **United Way Encourages Community Leaders to “Rethink Poverty”**

*Local charity collaborating with Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and Simcoe Muskoka Skillforce to host event on November 8 in Orillia*

**Orillia, ON, October 25, 2023** – On November 8<sup>th</sup>, the Poverty Reduction Task Group for Simcoe County will hold its second annual “Rethink Poverty” event at The Common Roof in Orillia. United Way Simcoe Muskoka will be co-hosting the event in partnership with the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Simcoe Muskoka Skillforce, and District of Muskoka and Town of The Blue Mountains agencies and organizations.

“More than 49,000 people are living in poverty in Simcoe Muskoka and it is rising,” says United Way Chief Administrative Officer Sharon McCormick, “We need to have these collaborative discussions for the community services sector to engage with government in developing a poverty reduction strategy to help those in our communities.”

The goal of the day is for attendees to better understand how poverty is impacting individuals across the region, learn about current strategies being taken to address the issue, and have a collaborative conversation to move from a state of “talk” to one of “action” in partnership with all orders of government when it comes to poverty reduction in Simcoe, Muskoka, and the Town of the Blue Mountains.

“Your United Way is committed to bringing together local experts to collectively find solutions to complex community issues,” added United Way Chief Philanthropy and Executive Officer Brian Shelley. “It is our hope that through this event on November 8<sup>th</sup>, we can land on some collective commitments to help our most vulnerable friends and neighbours.”

Consider the following:

- Over 49,000 individuals are living in poverty across Simcoe Muskoka
- It is estimated that 21% of residents in Simcoe Muskoka experienced food insecurity in 2022
- The most recent homelessness enumerations estimated that on any given day over 160 individuals in Muskoka and 722 individuals in Simcoe County are experiencing homelessness
- Poverty in rural communities is deepened by the high costs of food, housing materials, energy, and travel for medical care.

Individuals or organizations interested in participating in the event on the 8<sup>th</sup> are to register at [rethinkingpoverty2023.brownpapertickets.com/](https://rethinkingpoverty2023.brownpapertickets.com/).

**When:** November 8, 2023 – 9:30am-12:00pm

**Where:** Orillia Common Roof, 169 Front St South, Orillia, ON L3V 4S8

**Who:** This event is open to anyone wanting to join the discussion about poverty reduction

**To register:** <https://rethinkpoverty2023.brownpapertickets.com/>

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## **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.

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## **Media Inquiries**

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