

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way Simcoe Muskoka Unveils ‘Living in My Shoes’ Experiential Simulator Built by Rocket Innovation Studio

Innovative, tech-driven immersion gives those in the Simcoe Muskoka area the ability to understand what life is like for their neighbours experiencing poverty

Midhurst, ON January 19, 2024 – United Way Simcoe Muskoka today announced the launch of its first fully-virtual ‘Living in My Shoes’ simulation. The online program was developed by Rocket Innovation Studio, a Windsor-based tech provider that designs and builds customized digital solutions for Rocket Companies. ‘Living in My Shoes’ is intended to enhance public awareness of systemic barriers to poverty – like lack of access to healthy foods, technology, reliable transportation and mental health support – illuminating the struggles faced by some individuals living in the Simcoe Muskoka area.

“When we better understand the challenges people are facing day in and day out, we can be more empathetic in our actions,” said Brian Shelley, Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer, United Way Simcoe Muskoka. “This can help both at a macro level for elected officials or at a micro level in our day-to-day interactions with folks.”

The newly unveiled ‘Living in My Shoes’ simulator is a thought experiment designed to foster a profound understanding of local issues. It highlights three personas that reflect Simcoe Muskoka’s demographics including single mothers, elderly individuals living on fixed incomes and young families new to Canada. Users navigate real-life scenarios to gain insights into systemic barriers within the area such as rural transportation issues, career advancement struggles for low-income earners and cost of living challenges for vulnerable populations. The first innovative ‘Living in My Shoes’ workshop was introduced by the United Way Windsor Essex in 2021.

“When we unveiled the first simulator alongside the United Way Windsor Essex, we were honoured to use our skills and talents to bring such a powerful storytelling tool to life,” said Jasen Sams, Vice President of Rocket Innovation Studio. “Now, with the expansion of this entirely virtual program, we are hopeful even more community members can be educated and encouraged to take action to reduce poverty right here in the Simcoe Muskoka area.”

United Way Simcoe Muskoka encourages individuals, workplaces, schools, councils or boards of directors – and everyone throughout the community – to utilize the tool to enhance their understanding of the realities faced by some area residents.

For further details about the ‘Living in My Shoes’ simulator and to access this interactive experience, please visit [Living in My Shoes](#).

About United Way Simcoe Muskoka

United Way Simcoe Muskoka is a local charity dedicated to bringing together people and organizations to meet community needs by tackling complex social issues. To learn more, go to <https://uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/>

About Rocket Innovation Studio

Headquartered in downtown Windsor, Ontario, Rocket Innovation Studio builds customized IT solutions to drive some of North America's most innovative companies by using and developing the most advanced technology on the market today. Rocket Innovation Studio is a part of Rocket Companies (NYSE: RKT) and its clients include other Rocket portfolio companies including Rocket Mortgage, Rocket Homes and Rocket Money. For more information and company news visit RocketInnovationStudio.ca

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