

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local United Way Empowers Youth with Funding for New Innovative Projects

United Way Simcoe Muskoka's "Youth United" projects focus on addressing poverty and social inclusion across the region

Midhurst, ON February 14, 2024 – United Way Simcoe Muskoka announces funding to a series of dynamic youth-led initiatives as part of its ongoing commitment to inspire the next generation of leaders across the region. These projects, spearheaded by youth aged 15-30, aim to drive positive change across Simcoe, Muskoka, and Town of The Blue Mountains.

Through its Youth United program, United Way Simcoe Muskoka has awarded funding to the following projects:

- Lunchtime 'Brawta' organized by the Nantyr Black Students & Allyship Association will offer workshops conducted by knowledge sharing mentors to students covering topics such as financial literacy, overcoming adversity, and cultural appropriation versus appreciation
- "MYVoice" will establish a youth mental health advisory committee to provide a platform where youth can grow, heal, and have a safe place where they feel that their voice is being heard
- The Presenter Series in partnership with the Barrie Public Library will cover a range of topics including environmentalism, confidence, diversity, and belonging
- "Youth Essentials" will provide supply bags containing essentials such as bus passes and travel-sized hand sanitizers for youth who are currently utilizing the shelter system
- In partnership with the Creemore Food Bank a fully insulated and heated storage shed will be built to significantly increase the amount of storage available to the organization
- "Club Alliance," working with the Gilbert Centre, will create information toolkits for francophone LGBTQIA youth peers

- “Bridging the Path to a Brighter Future” will communicate with local partners on Christian Island to establish the needs and to reach out to local businesses to source discounted items for three categories: medical supplies, school supplies and healthy living items while ensuring designated items reach their intended destination
- “Forget Me Not” will engage bereaved youth in Muskoka to develop coping skills, improve their grief literacy, and access peer support utilizing mediums including writing, conversation, art, and music
- “Special Olympics: Fueling Success through Nutritional Programming’ will offer healthy lifestyle and nutritional education to athletes through offering workshops, supplying gift bags with healthy snacks, and helping athletes access competitions
- The Barrie Food Pantry will place wooden food pantries stocked with donations in public locations where they can be accessed 24/7
- “After School Art Program” will encourage youth to build resiliency and learn visual art skills while offering the opportunity to discuss topics such as healthy relationships, managing stress, body image, feminism, colonialism, gender stereotypes, and the Indigenous perspective on the importance of land
- “Indoor Ice Jam” will host an indoor skating event that will provide youth with physical activity while also learning about the benefits of competitive kayak and canoe activities
- The Youth March Break project will offer Indigenous (First Nation, Metis, Inuit), LGBTQ+, and disabled youth engaging land-based activities and day trips while providing a culturally enriching experience
- Free Workshops For Youth in Low-Income Communities will offer a series of training and professional development courses including, First Aid CPR, High Five, and Food Handlers
- “Furnish Futures” will divert furniture from landfills while allowing youth participation in furniture upcycling workshops. The refinished furniture will be available to students and vulnerable families.
- Mental Health & Afghan Community will develop culturally tailored educational materials and resources for mental health workshops, ensuring they are accessible and relatable to the Afghan community
- The Youth Advisory Council supporting YouthCALL will host a community event to support the launch of an outreach van program
- “Peaceful Pages Mental Health Day” will host a mental health awareness day to support youth who are struggling

- “We Are The Villagers,” a charity that creates opportunity and inclusion for disadvantaged children and youth to participate in extracurricular activities, will upgrade their float used for parades. Youth will have the opportunity to express their creativity while giving back to the community.
- “CCI Pickle Bowl Invitational” will serve as a comprehensive platform for high school students, providing avenues for competitive engagement, collaborative teamwork, structured training, social interaction, and physical activity

These projects represent a diverse range of interests and priorities identified by youth across Simcoe Muskoka. By investing in these initiatives, United Way Simcoe Muskoka aims to amplify young voices, cultivate leadership skills, and address pressing social challenges in its communities.

All projects were vetted and selected by the United Way’s Youth Advisory Council.

“We are thrilled to support these passionate young leaders and their proposed projects,” said Brian Shelley, Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer, United Way Simcoe Muskoka.

United Way Simcoe Muskoka’s Youth United projects are funded in part by the Government of Canada under the Canada Service Corps program along with funding and support from United Way donors.

“Through collaboration and partnership, your United Way is committed to building a stronger, more equitable community for all,” added Shelley.

To learn more about Youth United or to make a donation in support of this initiative, go to www.uwsimcoemuskoka.ca

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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/>

Media Inquiries

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