

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way Simcoe Muskoka Connects 30 Organizations with Funding to Address Housing and Homelessness in Rural and Remote Communities

Over \$3.5M in federal government funding to be administered and invested by United Way

Midhurst, ON, May 1, 2024 – United Way Simcoe Muskoka is announcing the funding of thirty projects focussed on addressing housing and homelessness in rural communities across Ontario through Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy. The funding will be directed towards a wide range of initiatives, including those that provide emergency shelter services, housing stability resources, and system navigation for individuals and families experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

In total, the United Way is disbursing \$3.5 million from Reaching Home to support these community projects.

“This is great news for Simcoe Muskoka. Reaching Home: Canada’s Homelessness Strategy is a community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness across Canada,” said the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities. “Using outcomes-based approaches keeps decision making at the local level. It also gives communities greater flexibility to address local priorities, including homelessness prevention, and invest in programming that meets the needs of vulnerable populations.”

“United Way is proud to partner with the federal government to administer funds to support these critical projects.” said Brian Shelley, Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer, United Way Simcoe Muskoka. “Housing and homelessness in rural and remote communities is a complex issue and this funding represents a significant investment in communities where it is needed most.”

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Simcoe Muskoka is one of the organizations receiving funding. The local charity will be directing the funds to the Muskoka Youth Trusteeship program. The program provides youth with the support they need to remain enrolled in school and succeed in their education goals; assist with securing employment; and provides interventions to secure safe, affordable, and stable housing.

“Our Muskoka Youth Trustee & Rural & Remote Programs would not exist without the support of United Way Simcoe Muskoka. We deeply value their support and partnership in funding these high in demand programs for the most vulnerable folks in Muskoka. With United Way’s support, we are able to assist folks to stay on track with life skills and stabilization, and secure safe, affordable housing.”, said Kaitlin Odom, Director of Community Programs, Elizabeth Fry Society Simcoe Muskoka.

Another agency receiving funding is the Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamli Biosphere, who will use the funds to support a mobile outreach program to provide supports to Indigenous youth.

Rebecca Pollock, Executive Director, from Georgian Bay Mnidoo Gamli Biosphere stated, “The Reaching Home program has provided our organization with the ability to support Indigenous youth-led initiatives that enhance cultural connections, strengthen community support systems through land-based Anishinaabeadziwin, and provide youth with opportunities to revitalize their cultural identities. Thanks to the capital equipment funded by this program, the Georgian Bay Anishinaabek Youth are able to provide mobile outreach to culturally connect Indigenous youth. Miigwech to the United Way for this important support.”

All projects were vetted and selected by the United Way’s Regional Advisory Board, which is made up of a group of volunteers interested and invested in addressing housing and homelessness across Ontario.

“I want to thank our committed volunteers for recommending projects that are taking an innovative approach to addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in rural and remote communities,” added Shelley. “With our partners, including the federal government, we are working towards a future where everyone has access to safe, stable, and sustainable housing.”

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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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