

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 6, 2024

United Way to launch New Program to Address Local Housing Crisis

Midhurst, ON September 6, 2024 – United Way Simcoe Muskoka has announced that they will be launching a “Home Relief Bank” to prevent evictions and foreclosures by offering interest-free loans and individualized support services to those at risk of losing their homes.

“The Home Relief Bank is a direct response to the growing housing crisis in our region and is rooted in our commitment to strengthen communities through innovative partnerships and targeted funding,” said United Way Simcoe Muskoka’s Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer, Brian Shelley.

With housing and rental costs soaring and the cost of living continuing to rise, many in Simcoe Muskoka are struggling to make ends meet. According to the 2021 Census, 131,870 people in Simcoe Muskoka reside in unaffordable housing. A short-term financial crisis such as relationship breakdown, job loss, or health issue which some households may have sufficient resiliency to recover from without assistance, can put these people on the precipice of eviction or foreclosure. The program will not only provide financial assistance but also will connect individuals with additional resources to help them achieve long-term housing stability.

“The Home Relief Bank is more than just a financial safety net,” said the United Way’s Chief Administrative Officer, Sharon McCormick. “It’s a holistic approach to housing stability that offers not only financial assistance but also the necessary support services to help folks navigate through challenging times. Repayments are reinvested into the program meaning that households who may never have thought they would be in a position to help others, can pay it forward.”

The pilot program will be evaluated for feasibility over a three-year period, with a vision of establishing a sustainable model that can be expanded across Simcoe County, the District of Muskoka, and the Town of The Blue Mountains.

Shelley added, “Our goal is to empower individuals and families to regain stability and prevent them from falling into the cycle of homelessness.”

For more information on the Home Relief Bank, contact Sharon McCormick at smccormick@uwsimcoemuskoka.ca.

Housing statistics for Simcoe Muskoka:

- It is estimated that 883 individuals are experiencing homelessness across Simcoe Muskoka (County of Simcoe and Muskoka Community Foundation Vital Signs Report)
- Ontario’s mortgage delinquency rate was .15% in Q1 2024, up from .10% in 2023. (CMHC)

- Last year 37,690 households were evicted for non-payment of rent in Ontario; this is a 20% increase over the previous year. (Tribunals Ontario 2022-2023 Annual Report)

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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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