

Media Release

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
1110 Highway 26, Midhurst, Ontario L9X 1N6
UWSimcoeMuskoka.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 25, 2024

Holiday with a Hero: United Way Simcoe Muskoka Brings Joy to Vulnerable Children and Youth

Barrie, ON, November 25, 2024 – United Way Simcoe Muskoka hosted its fourth annual *Holiday with a Hero* event this past Saturday, bringing together vulnerable children and youth with local heroes, including firefighters, paramedics, and police officers, for a heartwarming holiday celebration designed to break down barriers.

The day began early, with each of the eighty children being paired with a hero for a fully funded shopping spree. This was followed by a grand procession of emergency vehicles leading to the Innisfil YMCA. There, participants enjoyed a festive breakfast, face painting, and cookie decorating. Meanwhile, a dedicated team of volunteers gift-wrapped each child's purchases, ensuring every family left with a personalized gift sack filled with surprises.

Brian Shelley, United Way Simcoe Muskoka's Chief Executive and Philanthropy Officer, reflected on the event's impact. "*Holiday with a Hero* was all about coming together to support amazing kids and their families. It was impactful for everyone involved."

The event showcased true community spirit, with over 130 volunteers giving their time to make the morning a success. All funds for the initiative were raised through generous donations from individuals and businesses including the lead sponsor Honda Canada Manufacturing.

"We are deeply grateful to everyone who supported *Holiday with a Hero*," Shelley added. "Thanks to all of the partners who made this possible, including the YMCA of Simcoe Muskoka and Walmart"

Heroes Participated from Organizations Including:

- Barrie Police
- Beausoleil Fire Emergency Services
- Beausoleil First Nation Paramedic Services
- Bradford West Gwillimbury Fire & Emergency Services
- CFB Borden
- County of Simcoe Paramedic Services
- Innisfil Fire Rescue Services
- O.P.P.
- Orillia Fire Department
- Oro-Medonte Fire Emergency Services
- Penetanguishene Fire Department
- South Simcoe Police Service
- Township of Tiny Fire and Emergency Services

To learn more or to make a donation to support United Way Simcoe Muskoka's efforts to support children and youth visit: <https://uwsimcoemuskoka.ca/give/>

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/>

Photo cutlines:

File named Volunteers – Volunteers at United Way Simcoe Muskoka’s Holiday with a Hero event

File named Heroes - Heroes at United Way Simcoe Muskoka’s Holiday with a Hero event

Media Inquiries

United Way Simcoe Muskoka
Deborah Neary
Marketing & Communications Specialist
(647) 545-9703
dneary@uwsimcoemuskoka.ca