



United Way
Oxford



United.

2022-2023 COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

100% LOCAL, ALWAYS

VISION – A caring, inclusive and resilient community where everyone lives with dignity, belonging, opportunity and hope.

MISSION – Addressing Oxford County's social needs today and reducing the needs of tomorrow.

PROUDLY
SPONSORED BY:



UNITED TO MEET BASIC NEEDS

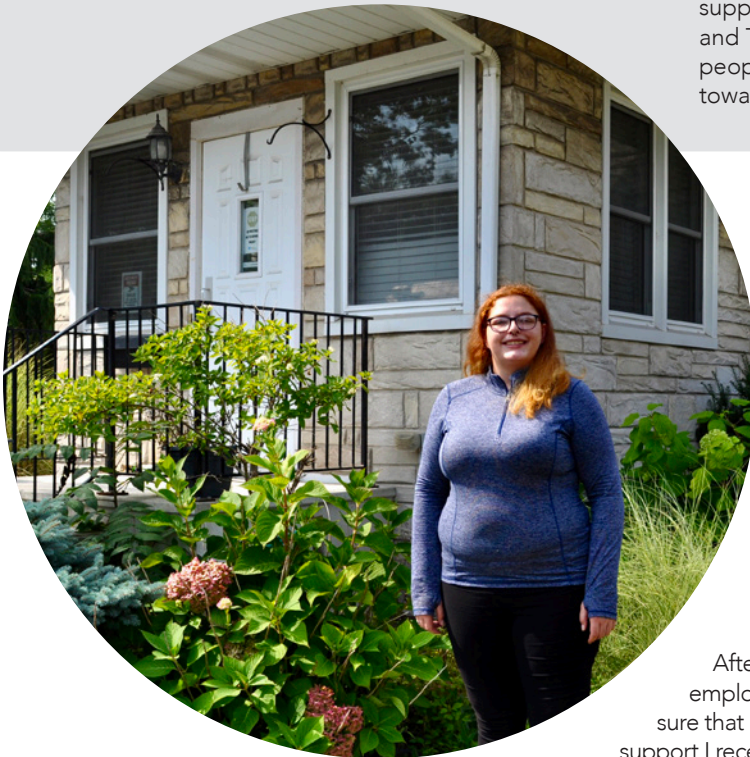
HOMELESSNESS

Community Need:

- In Oxford County, housing vacancy rates are less than 3% and 30-40% of all renters are paying more for their housing than they can afford. Many in deep poverty are paying over 50% of their income on housing.
- When vulnerable people are working to change their lives, they often need additional support along the way.

Supportive Transitional Housing and Housing Stability Outreach Work

Through the Oxford County Community Health Centre (OCCHC), the Housing Stability Team offers extensive wrap-around services to those in Oxford County who are experiencing homelessness, as well as increased support for those at risk of becoming homeless. These workers help support community members in making connections, finding affordable and appropriate housing and staying housed. Working in close partnership with United Way, supportive transitional housing is available in Woodstock and Tillsonburg, which provides a safe, affordable space for people to build trust and develop lifelong skills as they work towards a more stable and permanent situation.



Sadie's Journey

After the loss of her father, the grief, coupled with mental health struggles, was a lot for Sadie to endure. Tension grew in her home, and she was forced to move out.

"I struggled to get on my feet because of the cost of living. Apartments were expensive, and while I stayed with a few different people during that time, nothing was a permanent solution for me. I found myself homeless for 7 months, staying at the local shelter at night." That is when she met Jade from the OCCHC, who offered her a room at Huron House Transitional Housing.

After living at the House for almost 1 year, Sadie secured employment and moved into an apartment of her own. "I'm not sure that I would be here to tell my story today if it wasn't for the support I received at Huron House. My life is now on a different path and I am so grateful."



INVESTING IN IMPACT



137 individuals

were supported to stay housed in Oxford County and avoid eviction and homelessness.

22 people experiencing

homelessness were given the opportunity to reside at Huron House Transitional Housing while they worked to get back on their feet.

FOOD SECURITY

Community Need:

- The annual increase in the price of groceries was 11% this year, making it difficult for individuals and families to budget for healthy food.
- Demand for food programs in Oxford County increased 60%.

Food Forward Oxford

Food Forward Oxford works together with food rescue programs, food distributors, local businesses and partners to grow an innovative, efficient food recovery network to feed people and reduce the environmental impact of avoidable food waste. The program connects excess food from food donors to provide healthy, nutritious alternatives to families, housing insecure, and other local organizations that are providing meals to individuals in our community. United Way funding has allowed this program to develop and expand across Oxford County to benefit both people and the environment.



INVESTING IN IMPACT



14 local organizations
were supported with food deliveries,
helping meet the rising costs associated
with providing community meals.



18,317 lbs. of food
was rescued and distributed to organizations
that provide food to those in need.

Bryan Smith sees the impact every day

As an invested community volunteer, Bryan spends his time with a number of organizations, and has a special passion for the work that's happening at Lunch Bunch and STICH Supper Club in Ingersoll. These programs provide hot nutritious meals to children, individuals, families and seniors and utilize donations from Food Forward regularly. "The food donations we receive allow our budget to go farther, and for us to provide more meals to those in need. Sitting down for a meal doesn't just provide healthy nutrition, but also a sense of community and connection for everyone involved, which is important to our community as a whole."



OXFORD SUPPLIES4STUDENTS:

United Way Oxford and
Community Partners supported
1,325 students from across
Oxford County last year.



TAMPON TUESDAY:

1,491 boxes
of menstrual hygiene products
were collected and distributed
to 15 organizations across
Oxford County.

UNITED IN HEALTH & WELL BEING

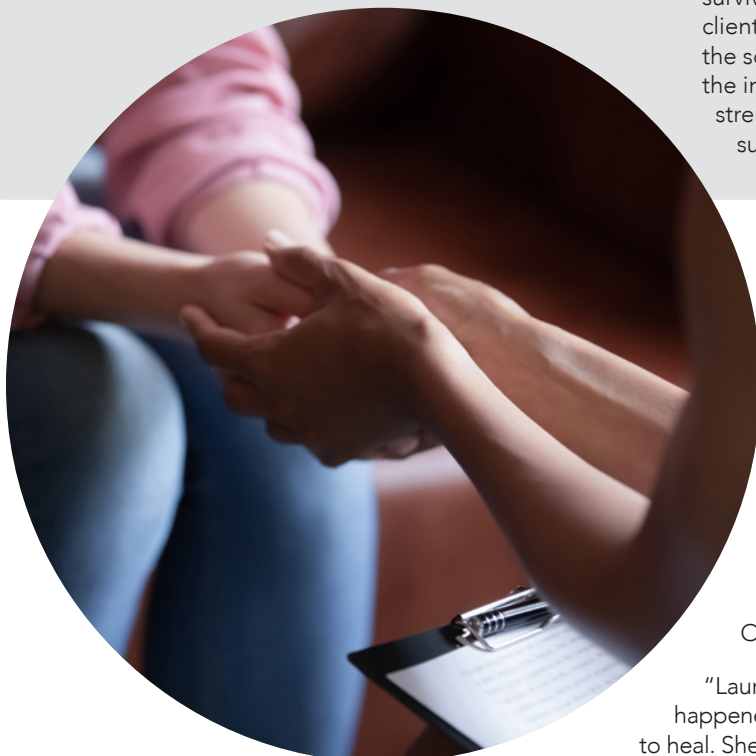
SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Community Need:

- Sexual violence impacts upwards of 1 in 3 women-identified people and 1 in 5 male-identified people.
- Gender-based violence is the only violent crime in Canada that is on the rise.
- Sexual violence support has historically been, and continues to be, under-resourced in Oxford County.

Oxford Sexual Assault Services

Oxford Sexual Assault Services provides specialized, trauma-informed care for survivors of sexual violence, such as psychotherapy, counselling, primary care, case management, support with navigating systems, advocacy, and psychoeducation. The program is structured to meet the unique needs of each survivor and makes for a true client-centered model focusing on the social determinants of health and ultimately addressing the impacts of trauma. By collaborating together, we are strengthening a crucial network of services to ensure that support is there when individuals need it most.



Sara's Journey

"I survived a sexual assault at a young age. The attack and the aftermath affected every part of my life from that day forward. Physically, mentally and emotionally. I am forever changed."

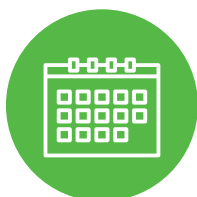
Sara suffered in silence for many years, until she was connected with Laura, a therapist from Oxford Sexual Assault Services.



Laura McCreery,
Therapist, Oxford
Sexual Assault
Services

"Laura quite literally saved my life. Then the extraordinary happened; she taught me how to save myself. She taught me how to heal. She taught me how to unlearn behaviours that I had been using as protection, and instead, how to listen to, and trust in myself.

This program changed every part of me for the better, and I carry the lessons with me into my daily routines, creating stronger relationships with all my family, friends and fiancé."



INVESTING IN IMPACT



United Way funding allowed OSAS to expand staff programming to **5 days a week**, resulting in an increase in available support for survivors of sexual violence.

90+ woman-identifying individuals accessed over 400 sessions through OSAS, receiving client-centred, trauma informed counselling, after experiencing sexual violence.

MENTAL HEALTH

Community Need:

- 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness.
- The demand for adult mental health services in Ontario increased by 47% between 2021 and 2022, while the demand for children and youth services grew by 104%.

INVESTING IN IMPACT



786 youth, individuals, seniors and families received counselling support from a United Way funded program.

1,318 hours of free, local, accessible, timely walk-in counselling was provided across Oxford County.



Casandra DiBenedetto, Crisis and Outreach Team Lead at CMHATV



"We are seeing more people access walk-in counselling; this is likely in large part due to people who historically have not accessed services are now reaching out for support. During the pandemic, people realized that they had some mental health needs, as they faced extra stress. Recently, we have seen more people accessing support due to the financial stress as the cost of living continues to increase which is putting more pressure on our community members. This program is helping people feel heard, hopeful and more confident in knowing the next steps they need to take to improve their mental health."

Walk-In Counselling

Working together with United Way and other community partners, Oxford County Walk-In Counselling provides immediate access to counselling services, with clinics available in Tillsonburg, Ingersoll, and Woodstock, in safe and accessible community spaces. Service is provided outside of regular "business hours", with availability into the evenings and on weekends, to provide assistance to those who are employed or in school during daytime hours. There is no cost to use this service, and it is a viable option for those waiting for ongoing support or treatment, allowing individuals to get the help they need, when they need it.



Canadian Mental Health Association
Thames Valley
Addiction and Mental Health Services

Ingersoll
Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic

ISOLATION

Community Need:

- Social isolation and exclusion are related to serious negative health effects and reduced quality of life for seniors.
- 24% of Canadians over age 65 feel isolated from others and wish they could participate in more social activities.



Sara Lattanzio, Literacy and Basic Skills Manager, Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre

"I have seen remarkable changes in our learners – from improved skills such as internet searching and social media engagement to a change in their posture and voice, reflecting the impact on their confidence and self-esteem. It is more than just digital literacy, it is providing a space that helps them stay informed and connected."



iPad Training for Seniors and Older Adults

With United Way funding, the Tillsonburg Multi-Service Centre's technology literacy program helps seniors, older adults, and community members learn digital skills – allowing individuals to learn the skills they need for employment, education or personal independence goals. The program is free to access, and participants are provided with course material to work through with assistance from a caring, knowledgeable instructor.

MSC MULTI-SERVICE CENTRE

UNITED IN OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

CONNECTING & SUPPORTING YOUTH THROUGH MENTORSHIP

Mentorship to Help Youth Reach Their Full Potential



Many children and youth struggle with societal barriers and face adversities in their lives. Facing prolonged adversity creates toxic stress in the brain that can negatively impact development. With the support of a mentor, these risks can be reduced or even avoided, and youth can reach their full potential. As a United Way funded partner, Big Brothers Big Sisters of Oxford County enable these life-changing mentoring relationships for youth across our community.

Kristen Ralph, Executive Director Big Brothers Big Sisters Oxford

"PRISM provides a safer space for young people to be themselves and offers opportunity to connect with peers and mentors in the 2SLGBTQIA + community."



"Since being part of the PRISM program, I have met so many incredible people. I have laughed and smiled more than I have ever before. The relationships that I have built have created so many memories that I will remember forever."

PRISM Program Participant



Chris and Damien, Big Brother Mentorship Program

Chris and Damien were matched through the Big Brother program over 4 years ago, and they knew right away that this was going to be an amazing experience for them both. Damien was matched with Chris as his Big Brother, during a very pivotal point in his life.

"In our first meeting, Chris made me feel very comfortable and created a space filled with respect and acceptance. I knew that if I needed anything, he would be there for me. Our relationship has helped me go from being shy and reserved to feeling more self-confident and like I can handle what life throws at me. We are at the end of our match now, but the beginning of a new friendship," Damien explains.



INVESTING IN IMPACT

3,361 children and youth

received support through a United Way funded program, helping them to reach their **full potential**.



1 caring adult

can change a child's life **forever**.

RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Recreational Activities to Enhance Mental and Physical Health

As day-to-day life becomes more expensive with rising inflation, families are struggling to make ends meet and parents have to make difficult choices when it comes to enrolling children into mainstream extra-curricular activities. At Fusion Youth Centre in Ingersoll, youth can access a wide variety of activities including different sports leagues, art classes, music lessons, culinary courses and video editing – all for a \$5 annual membership. United Way funding helps to cover the cost of these program supplies, ensuring that all youth can afford to access everything that Fusion has to offer.



Craig Boddy,
General Manager, Fusion Youth Centre

"There is a need now, more than ever, to provide youth with an opportunity to come to a safe, inclusive place where they can reconnect with each other. Fusion's programs are heavily focused on helping improve mental health and well-being, getting active, developing social skills and building self-confidence. One of our strengths at Fusion is our staff and their ability to impact youth's behaviour and well-being through our relationships with them. Our partnership with United Way allows us to keep our programs - like art classes, recreation gym time and music and technology - running and accessible to all youth."

INVESTING IN IMPACT



1,101 youth
between the ages of 10 and 18
accessed programs through
Fusion, finding a safe, inclusive
place to **grow and learn.**

EARLY LITERACY INTERVENTION

Community Need:

- Young children who were previously struggling with reading before the pandemic have now fallen an additional 4-12 months behind in literacy skills.
- 1 in 4 Canadian children entering Grade 1 are significantly behind their peers and poorly prepared to learn.
- Children experiencing reading difficulties by the end of Grade 3 almost never achieve average reading scores by the end of primary school, without special intervention.

Letters, Sounds and Words



Reaching children at an early age is critical; the earlier the intervention, the greater the impact. The Letters, Sounds and Words program is

designed for students in SK to grade 3 who have been identified as needing some extra support with their literacy skills development. This United Way funded program is offered at no cost to families and runs in schools during the school day, helping to remove barriers and make it accessible to all students and families.

Helen Kelch
*Regional Program Co-ordinator,
Strong Start*



"I have one student who would not raise their hand in front of their peers for fear of being wrong. At the 5-week mark of participating in the Letters, Sounds and Words Program, they started taking the risk. The 1:1 time with their volunteer coach provided them with a safe space to grow their confidence and ask questions; it is so impactful to see that carry over into the classroom." Kelly, Teacher at participating school.

INVESTING IN IMPACT



12 schools in Oxford County
currently participate in the program.

200+ students will be connected with
a trained, caring volunteer throughout the school year
to help develop their literacy skills and confidence.

UNITED IN ADVOCATING FOR OXFORD COUNTY



KELLY GILSON,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
UNITED WAY OXFORD

"As an organization that focuses on human social services and working to ensure that there are adequate resources available to meet the needs of our community, we certainly recognize that these are challenging times! We see more and more of our neighbours, friends and family struggling in a variety of ways. We recognize the incredible support that we receive from local citizens, community members, workplaces, businesses, labour groups and partners who believe in the work we do. We thank them for digging deeper year after year to allow us to try to meet the growing needs across Oxford County and we are grateful."

1 in 5 people are impacted by
a United Way funded program.

Total number of
United Way Volunteers: **696**

Total number of hours supported
by volunteers: **4,887**

Invested in **16** organizations
and **42** local programs.

173 workplaces across
Oxford County **UNITED** in
showing their **LOCAL LOVE**.

Dial 2-1-1
and we'll
point you
in the right
direction



HELP STARTS HERE



GOVERNMENT
PROGRAMS

FOOD ACCESS

MENTAL HEALTH

FINANCIAL RELIEF



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CHARITABLE REGISTRATION #: BN 11930 3642 RR 0001

Join us in standing
UNITED.
Donate today.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Explore our 2022/2023 Report to the Community
for more information, impact and to view our
Audited Financial Statements: unitedwayoxford.ca

CHECK OUT OUR PODCAST:

'Let's Talk Local, Oxford' on your favourite streaming service.