



IMPACT REPORT

UNITED WAY/CENTRAIDE WINDSOR-ESSEX COUNTY'S
ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY

REFLECTIONS

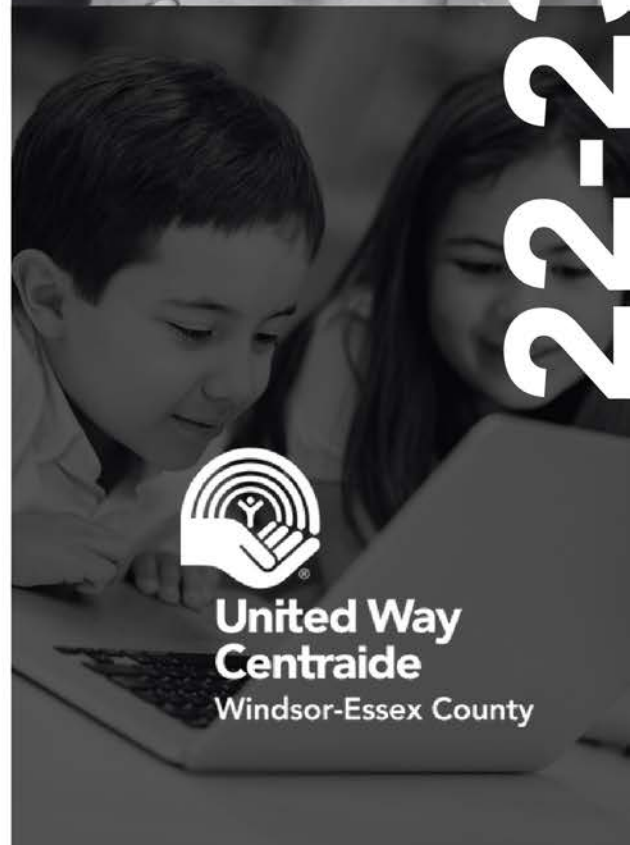
Gratitude. That's what we feel so strongly within our organization. Without the generosity of our donors and volunteers...none of our important work is possible. Together, we can help local kids find the path out of poverty.

Thanks to the power of your donations: more kids are succeeding in school because they and their parents are supported and nurtured during out-of-school hours; more high school students are graduating and moving on to post-secondary education, even if they're the first in their families to do so; and more young people are finding employment opportunities in relevant career fields because they have the education and skills to get there.

I'd like to personally thank everyone in the Windsor-Essex community who joined us on our mission to end childhood poverty over the past year. Together, we've done a lot of great work so far and we're just getting started!

Lorraine Goddard

CEO, United Way/Centraide Windsor-Essex County



22-23



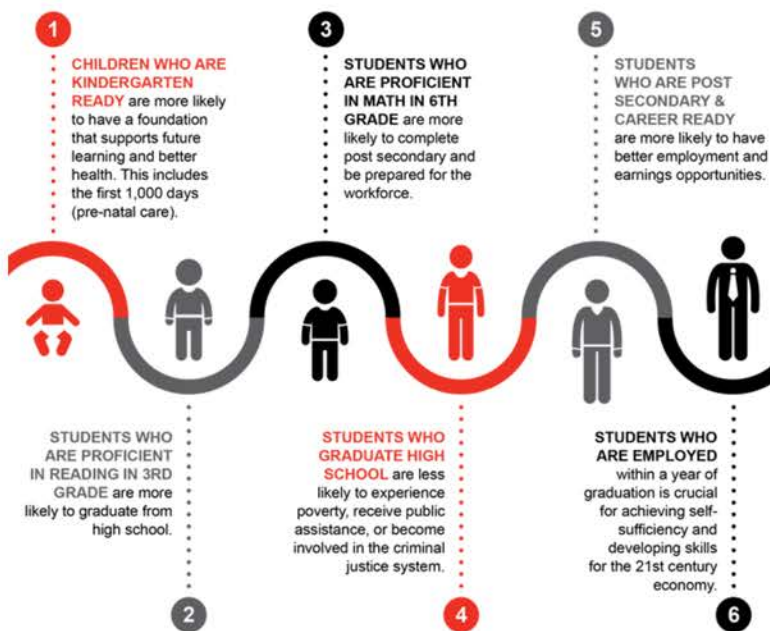
**United Way
Centraide**

Windsor-Essex County

HOW DOES EDUCATION AFFECT POVERTY? IT CAN HELP END IT.

Imagine if we could eliminate childhood poverty in Windsor-Essex County. Imagine if every local child had the chance to succeed and reach their full potential regardless of the postal code they live in.

But how can we make an impact on such a complex problem as poverty? First, we need to accept that it IS a COMPLEX problem. History has shown us that when we focus on only 1 obstacle at only 1 point in a child's life, it may not have the strongest lasting impact. We must create multiple solutions to help children at multiple key stages throughout childhood.



Cradle to Career Milestones:

Research has shown again and again that education is the best path out of poverty. United Way's Cradle to Career programming currently focuses on helping kids achieve 4 key milestones:

- Being proficient in reading in grade 3
- Being proficient in math in grade 6
- Graduating high school on time
- Successfully entering a post-secondary program in either the skilled trades, college, or university

We are targeting Cradle to Career investments in neighbourhoods where the data tells us more help is needed to support children and families. By supporting those most in need, our whole community can thrive. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we can help change the life trajectory for local kids through education. Every child deserves the chance to reach their full potential.

MILESTONES 4 & 5:

GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL,
POST-SECONDARY & CAREER READINESS



Did you know?

A student in a low-income family has a 38% likelihood of attending college or university

But a student from a higher income family has a 63% chance of attending post-secondary education

Trends suggest that by 2030, all jobs will require post-secondary education – be it trades, college or university. A child's chance to succeed in life should not be determined by the postal code they live in or by factors beyond their control. We need to level the playing field for these students.

On Track to Success is a wrap-around intervention for high school students and their families to help them graduate high school, and go on to college, university, or a trade.

The program wrap-around supports include: a success coach for each student and their family that focuses on family well-being and academic success; access to academic tutoring four times a week; social supports and career mentoring; up to \$8,000 in post-secondary bursaries and additional financial supports to remove barriers to success such as: transportation, school supplies, technology, mental health supports.

In addition, to help equitable outcomes, our Ujima program provides specialized supports for racialized youth to ensure their success in the On Track program in four areas: Community mentoring, mental health & wellness, cultural support, and social events.

90% Percentage of students in the program who graduate on time from high school.

76% Percentage of graduates who are actively enrolled in a post-secondary program. In comparison, the national average is 47% for similar households.

90% Percentage of students who started in the program and are still enrolled. This is a higher retention rate than similar support programs.



Mohamad

Mohamad faced challenges with virtual learning in high school, leading to struggles in math class. OTTS provided vital support through a tutor who understood his learning style. His extra work with the tutor helped him pass the class and graduate on time. Now, Mohamad is thriving in university, with the help of On Track On Campus. His goal is to attend law school and pay it forward by helping immigrants and refugees come to live and prosper in safe communities. "On Track has helped me with every step of the process. From applying to university to securing loans and community-based scholarships. On Track has also helped me get familiar with the campus and my future classes. Knowing that I have that support and someone always in my corner makes me feel confident that I can succeed."



Brittney

Brittney, a student in the On-Track to Success program, shares her story, which many students can relate to. "In the beginning, I was very shy, very scared to talk to my success coach." However, being part of the program has made a significant difference. "Now, I feel much more confident. I am open with other people who are in the program, and I feel like I can be myself." Through On-Track, Brittney has discovered her career goals. "My dream career is to work at Sick Kids Hospital, where I get to either be a nurse or a doctor, be in the medical field." The program has given her unique opportunities, including a one-on-one meeting with a medical student. Reflecting on that experience, she states, "The one-to-one meeting with the medical student helped me understand what it's like to be a medical student, their idea of how to be a doctor, and what it takes to be a doctor." Brittney's story illustrates how On-Track empowers students by helping them find their strengths and pursue their dreams with confidence.

MILESTONES 2 & 3:

MEETING ELEMENTARY MATH
& LITERACY STANDARDS



Dominik & Soheil

Did you know?

If children do not meet provincial standards in reading by grade 3, research tells us they are less likely to graduate from high school on time.

If kids do not meet provincial math standards by grade 6, they are less likely to complete post-secondary education.

Kids deserve the chance to reach their full potential. We need to stop kids from falling behind their more affluent peers and set them up for success in high school.

The success of the On Track To Success program showed us that a wrap-around approach is the key to supporting kids and their education. Ignite Academy's wrap-around supports include: healthy and nutritious food for kids during the program and to bring home to their families; individualized tutoring sessions; regular 1 on 1 personal connections and mental wellness sessions; Social workers to help the family connect with vital community resources and special events that provide opportunities for caregivers to connect and create a personal support system with others who truly understand what their life is like and what challenges they and their families are facing.

Ignite Academy is delivered collaboratively in schools with 4 other community partners. We wrapped up our first year of programming in June with 153 students enrolled and supported their families with 298 referrals to food, housing, mental health, and academic services.

We saw great results from a pilot program at 2 schools that offered individualized literacy intervention to kids who were furthest behind in reading. The kids' reading levels were boosted by over half a grade level in only 5 weeks! We are excited to expand this intervention to include literacy and math at all 6 Ignite Academy schools throughout the entire 23/24 school year.

Ignite Academy represents hope for students like Dominik and their families. For Dominik's Grandmother Soheila, the program is incredibly important because it brings out generosity and kindness in the students and provides a sense of safety. "When my kids were little, there was nothing like this. It shows kindness in the world. It shows support. Positivity. Kids need it." When Dominik goes there after school, Soheila says it's like a mental filter that helps him leave behind any school-related problems and come home with a happy and positive attitude.

Soheila is grateful for the unwavering support they receive from Ignite Academy, both financially and emotionally, not only for the students but also for their families. "The program is super supportive for families and people who actually need that safety net, it's there." Ignite Academy isn't just a regular program; it's a place where students can thrive and become better versions of themselves while also creating a kind and supportive community.

73%

Percentage of students who reported being proud to be a part of the program

74%

Percentage of students who are still enrolled in the program. This is a great retention rate and speaks to the strength and results of the program.

97%

Percentage of caregivers who feel that their child benefits from the program

SUMMER PROGRAMS 2023

Hunger is a devastating challenge for kids. Summer Eats for Kids helped ensure families had access to healthy food during the summer. Unfortunately, food challenges are amplified during the summer months when school nutrition programs are closed. Families receive a week's worth of nutritious fruits, vegetables and snacks and can return each week during the months of July and August.

Back-to-school season is an exciting time for many children, but unfortunately, some children don't have access to the supplies and resources they need for a successful school year. Backpacks for Success provides low-income students with backpacks filled with grade appropriate supplies from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Providing kids with school supplies increases classroom participation, attendance, and boosts morale.



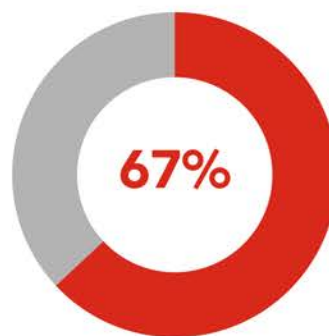
4,204

Food bags distributed



2,244

Backpacks distributed



67% of households visited Summer Eats more than once

THE NEED
is increasing

40% more


Households visited Summer Eats than '22



1 out of 3 food bank users are kids

10% more

Backpacks distributed than '22



Thank you, Summer Program Volunteers. We couldn't do it without you!



4,721

Free books distributed



Thanks to Women United, free books are provided to kids to encourage reading over the summer.

PROSPERUS ADVOCACY

POWERED BY UNITED WAY



The Community Action Network (CAN) is a network of residents living in priority neighbourhoods, whose input and lived experience drives the work of ProsperUs towards community change. Beginning in the Summer of 2019, the CAN engaged in the co-design of solutions for each Cradle to Career Milestone. They worked diligently with neighbourhood data and input from community service providers to develop over 50 solutions to increase outcomes for children and youth. During this process barriers were identified that cannot be tackled through programmatic solutions alone, these barriers require coordinated advocacy, which inspired the creation of two new Advocacy Working Groups (AWGs).

The AWGs prioritize advocacy issues and create action plans to work together with community partners, all levels of government and the wider community to compel change. These groups are co-chaired by residents living in priority neighbourhoods and meet bi-monthly. The groups consult data, learn from experts, cultivate government relationships and develop advocacy plans to create specific systemic change that is supportive to the new C2C programming and overall goal of positioning youth for success in the 21st Century economy.

At this time, the Windsor Advocacy Working Group is focused on increasing community wide access to Primary Care Providers and the Leamington Advocacy Working Group is focused on increasing access to affordable housing. Both groups are currently implementing action plans developed with accountability measures. A report on this promising area of work and our learnings as a network is scheduled for Spring 2024. The CAN is always looking for passionate residents from the priority neighbourhoods to join the network, you can learn more and apply at www.weunlockpotential.com/community



The community has told us, loud and clear, that not knowing where to go is a significant barrier to accessing support when it's needed most. That is why United Way supports 211, a free and confidential referral service that easily connects people to the local community support they need. This navigation service is offered in 150 different languages by phone, chat, text, and web. Last year, 17,000 needs were identified in Windsor-Essex with health and information services being the most prevalent.



Demand for emergency food support continues to be driven by high rates of inflation, increase in precarious work and the gig economy, and wages that have not kept pace with the cost of living. The monthly cost of groceries for a family of four in Windsor-Essex is over \$1,300 (Nutritious Food Basket, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit). Two full-time working caregivers earning minimum wage, even with the recent increase to \$16.55, would still be spending 24% of their budget on food, and many families can't afford that. That is why United Way continues to support the Unemployed Help Centre Food Bank as the Hub of the Windsor-Essex Food Bank Association, so families can access emergency food when they need it most.

LOOKING AHEAD:

Local data is clear: childhood hunger is a problem in Windsor-Essex County. Inflation continues to drive up the cost of basic needs, making it harder for families to afford food. Last year, over 185,000 people accessed food banks in Windsor-Essex, with priority neighbourhoods experiencing some of the highest reported increases in usage (West Windsor usage increased by 64%). Children continue to be the largest group of local food bank users (33%). The emergency food system that was designed to be a last resort has now become an ongoing necessity for many local families and demand has increased to unsustainably high levels.

Research shows a direct connection between nutrition, well-being, and academic achievement – children who go to school hungry can't reach their full potential. School lunch programs can act as powerful social equalizers. That is why United Way is ramping up our efforts to advocate for and support the implementation of healthy school meal programs in priority neighbourhoods.

A local school lunch program will require strong partnerships and strategic re-alignment of resources. We must develop cost-effective solutions to procure, prepare, transport and store food. This is an ambitious task which is why we are challenging local stakeholders to stand together to bring a comprehensive school lunch program to children in our community— because no child should be hungry at school.



School Meals - an Opportunity to Nourish



1,000 Books Before Kindergarten

We partnered with St. Clair College, Windsor Public Library and Essex County Library to address early learning gaps in literacy and support kindergarten readiness in priority neighbourhoods. The 1000 Books Before Kindergarten program was a research project piloted with over 170 children under the age of 5 and their caregivers. Although we were hoping to engage more families, this project allowed us to work in new ways with partners and implement a data-sharing evaluation plan. Collectively, families read over 20,000 books and 84% of our post-project survey respondents (n=50) expressed that visiting the library has become a higher priority for their family. Our library partners are exploring how they can continue to offer this program and foster more excitement and enthusiasm in early readers. You can read more about the outcomes of this project from St. Clair College's final report, which is going to be published this fall.



THANK YOU

Visit weareunited.com/ThankYou to learn more about our incredible donors, volunteers, and partners.

To see how your donations are being invested visit weareunited.com/Impact. United Way strives towards the highest standards of accountability and trust.

Our 2022-23 audited financial statements will be available to the public in October 2023 at weareunited.com/FinancialStatements

If you have any questions about this report, please call 519-259-6164 or email info@weareunited.com

Charitable Registration # 108160334RR0001