

UNITED WAY SPECIAL EDITION 2023

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**YOUR
MCMURRAY
MAGAZINE**

A magazine for everyone who lives, works and plays here

United Way Special Edition 2023



Celebrating 45 Years of United Way

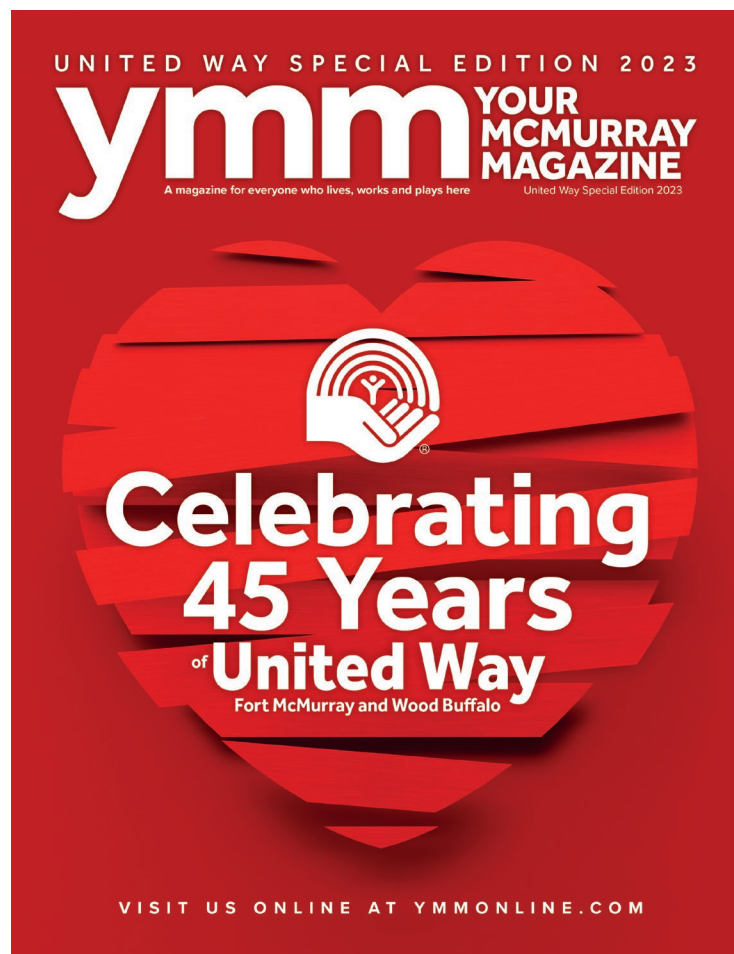
Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo

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YOUR MCMURRAY MAGAZINE

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ymm YOUR MCMURRAY MAGAZINE

A magazine for everyone who lives, works and plays here

Editor-in-Chief: Krista Balsom

Associate Publisher & Managing Director:

- Kerri Johnson

Creative Director:

- Andrew Johnstone

CFO/Accounts Manager:

- Pauline Kelley

Digital Media Coordinator:

- Finn Leland

Community Content and Events Coordinator:

- Mike Jones

Marketing and Communications Coordinator:

- Nathalie Gauthier

Coordinator:

- Stephanie Mallett

To contact *Your McMurray Magazine* for editorial or any other inquiries, please contact Kerri Johnson at kerri@balsom.ca.



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Balsom acknowledges that we live and create within the boundaries of Treaty 8 territory, the ancestral lands of the Dene and Cree peoples and the historical lands of Métis peoples.

Balsom and its employees are dedicated to learning more about how we can continue our efforts with reconciliation we respect the teachings that come from the Nations of Treaty 8 through land-based learning. We give thanks for the Elders and Knowledge Keepers. We will continue to strive to do our part to reclaim culture and language through our media platforms and tell stories of truth, and path towards meaningful reconciliation.

We are grateful for the opportunities to learn the truths of the past. We share in the responsibility of speaking openly about the experiences of our Indigenous friends and neighbours on their traditional lands we are honoured to live on.



Letter from The Editor

By Krista Balsom



United Way of Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo holds a very special place in my heart. I had the privilege of serving as one of the Board Members for this tremendously vital organization for six years and I hold the experience in very high regard, as well as the people I served with. To me, the United Way is more than a non-profit organization. It is an essential part of the community framework that helps to ensure that our region is a great place to live, play and work. Beyond supporting other social-profit organizations with funding, they provide resources, they lend a helping hand around the community and they support the Red Poll Centre. The dollars sure get spread throughout the community in a thoughtful, sustainable way.

During my time on the Board of Directors, the work of the Community Investment Committee Members

always impressed me the most. They are a group of volunteers who do an incredible amount of legwork and homework to ensure that the funding recommendations are the best possible based on the funding available. They do hard work. But they do it in such a meticulous way, but balance it with a whole lot of compassion and understanding of the needs in our region. I send a kudos out to you – it's never an easy job.

I give a salute to every current and past Board member of the United Way, along with the staff and volunteers that work tirelessly every day. The team at Balsom and Your McMurray Magazine are thrilled to partner with you on this special edition of YMM celebrating the work of the agencies, community volunteers and those who are impacted by the hard work of the United Way as a whole. Good luck to Bob Mackay as he embarks on the community campaign for 2023 – you're

leadership as community campaign chair is incredible and your efforts do not go unnoticed. Special shout-out to Cathy Steeves, the hard-working executive director of the United Way team – the work you and the team do changes lives!

Enjoy reading the stories found within this special edition and I encourage everyone in our region to get involved and help where you can. If you can give financially, it is dollars well donated. If you can give your time that is just as valuable. The United Way is all about "local love" and that drives what they do. Give what you can, how you can. I know first-hand, the contribution will make a difference right here in our region.

Krista Balsom
Editor-in-Chief/Publisher

REACH OUT ANYTIME!

You can send us an email at kerri@balsom.ca with any feedback or ideas for future story ideas or feedback.



Letter from The Executive Director

By Cathy Steeves

Celebrating 45 years of improving lives and building community, engaging individuals to mobilize collective action by raising, distributing, and stewarding donor funds is something to be proud of! It is quite an honour to be part of this organization as we work to solve real issues, moving the needle of humanity forward right here in our region.

I am so proud of our team here at United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, including board members, staff, Community Investment Team, and our Community Campaign Cabinet. Every single person is working with integrity, passion, and putting every ounce of their energy to making our world (ok, just our region for now) a better place to live for everyone.

We can all claim, “times are tough” and “things are challenging” or “we’re just exhausted” but those who rise above, who lead with authenticity and tenacity, who always see the cup as half-full, manage to look beyond the daily fray and frazzle and focus on the potential in economic and political change. Holding

on tight to a vision of a bright TODAY helps keep the momentum rolling, the volunteers coming, and the funds streaming in to help support the social profit sector.

United Way has, and will continue to be a part of the fabric of our region, funding agencies and leading community innovation projects to lead, to support, to inspire and to actively participate in ending homelessness, poverty, addictions and abuse.

As businesses grow in our region their sustainability depends on the health of the communities – a strong workforce is the backbone of our local economy. And as we know, people fall on hard times; the loss of a job, struggles with addictions, issues with mental health take their toll. Imagine if your child or a loved one suffered from illness, injury, suddenly you can’t go to work, you might suddenly find yourself staring poverty or homelessness in the face. Who do you turn to? I can tell you – our social profit agencies are here to help give you and your loved ones a helping hand.

United Way funded agencies need your help now. Your donations are put



to the best possible use, to attend to the greatest needs and to make the biggest difference right here in our region.

In the pages that follow, you will learn about what we do, how we do and most importantly WHY we do this important work. It’s for YOU. For YOUR family, friends, and neighbours.

We urge you to give generously, or to volunteer generously to support each other. We are all on the same mission – to build strong communities right here in our region. It’s time to do your part and to become part of the solution to issues that affect everyone. ■



Letter from The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors wishes to offer a heartfelt thanks to the many past and present donors, employees and volunteers of United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo.

United Way has accomplished so much more than funds raised since its inception 45 years ago. The services and programs offered through the organization and its agencies have impacted thousands of members of our community. We continue to work hard to ensure our community is equitable, safe and inclusive, and that residents have access to the resources and support they deserve.

Much has changed in our community over the past four and a half decades, but United Way's commitment to enhancing social support for residents is unwavering.

Our governance Board of Directors, sub-committees and Campaign Cabinet are composed of committed volunteers, confident United Way is poised for continued success under the leadership of Executive Director Cathy Steeves and her talented team.

To anyone who is not involved in making change in our region, we encourage you to consider becoming involved.

In the words of Winston Churchill, "We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give."

Photo: Back row, left to right - Funke Banjoko, Jesssical Lipton, Dwayne Flett, Bill van Beek, Michael Vickers, Nicole Rymes.

Front row, left to right - Michelle Velez, Dango Gogo, Suman Jafri, IJ Uche-Ezeala, Andrea Eldridge. **Photo by April Warren**

Our Board of Directors

Nicole Rymes

President

Michelle Velez

2nd Vice President and Community Investment Chair

IJ Uche-Ezeala (Kumon)

Director-Treasurer

Dango Gogo

Director

Dwayne Flett

Director

Jafri Suman

Director

Andrea Eldridge

Director

Funke Banjoko

Director

Jessica Lipton

Director

Bill van Beek

Director

Mike Vickers

Director



History of United Way Fort McMurray & Wood Buffalo



The United Way of Fort McMurray was established and incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act in April 1978. Sparked by local resident Mary Anne Warren, the organization attracted a wide array of community leaders volunteering both time and professional skills.

Once receiving its charitable status from the Canada Revenue Agency the first campaign was held in 1979. With the slogan “Lend a Helping Hand” United Way raised a total of \$83,022, which was invested into social service agencies in 1980. The United Way of Fort McMurray continued to hold its annual Community Campaign during the months of September and October until 2005 when the campaign was extended to mid-November.

To date over \$116,000,000 has been raised by United Way, which is then reinvested into our community. These Investments are recommended by the Community Investment Committee which is made up of a diverse group of community volunteers. Final recommendations are then approved by the Board of Directors.

In 2018, The United Way of Fort McMurray was renamed United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo to recognize that it serves the entire Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

Today, the United Way Fort McMurray & Wood Buffalo is readily assisted by hundreds of local volunteers from all walks of life, each contributing valuable skills, talents, and energy. We seek to strengthen the community so that it is a wonderful place for everyone to live, work and raise a family. ■

Frequently Asked Questions About United Way

With Cathy Steeves

WHAT IS UNITED WAY?

United Way, an international, volunteer-led not-for-profit organization, has 115 local United Ways in Canada. United Way is known as Centraide in Quebec and Ottawa and other French-speaking communities across Canada.

Each United Way-Centraide raises money and allocates funds locally to support its community. Each United Way-Centraide is governed by an autonomous local Board of Directors. With other volunteers and staff, they help build caring, vibrant communities and respond to a broad range of human needs.

WHAT GEOGRAPHIC AREA DOES UNITED WAY FORT McMURRAY AND WOOD BUFFALO (FMWB) SERVE?

United Way serves the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. This includes:

- Urban Fort McMurray
- Anzac
- Conklin
- Fort Chipewyan
- Fort McKay
- Janvier

HOW DO I GET INVOLVED WITH UNITED WAY?

Learn

Seek out information and further expand your knowledge about our community. Find information on our website fmwbunitedway.com.

Build Awareness

Talk to your family, friends, and colleagues – spread the facts about poverty and how everyone has a role in changing lives in our community.

Make a Donation

Donate to United Way and help generate the critical resources needed to fund programs and services. Then, celebrate the high-impact results that you help create.

Generate Momentum

Develop initiatives of your own, encourage support through the organizations and clubs you're a part of, and share your experiences with friends, family, and colleagues across the community.

Advocate

Call your government representative and tell them how important it is to end poverty in our community.

Volunteer

Explore how you can volunteer to help deliver programs or assist at events.

Find volunteer opportunities:

- Community Investment Team
- Board of Directors
- Events and Activities

United Way of Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo offers a variety of short and long-term volunteer opportunities. Options include:

Workplace campaign involvement

For workplace campaign information please email hello@fmwbunitedway.com or call 780-791-0077.

Give back to the community through a Day of Caring program

The Day of Caring program customizes volunteer opportunities for employees' individual skill sets with the need of United Way community partners to make an impact where it's needed most.

DOES ORGANIZED LABOUR SUPPORT UNITED WAY?

Yes. In fact, in our region, organized labour was a founding partner of United Way. United Way and labour work together to promote and cooperate in the establishment of joint labour-management campaigns in the workplace. For more information, please contact our office at 780-791-0077.

WHY SHOULD I GIVE TO UNITED WAY FORT MCMURRAY AND WOOD BUFFALO (FMWB)?

No one organization, or even government, can manage poverty alone. It takes an entire community. United Way brings together organizations, businesses, governments, community members, and community partners in the social services sector who care about the issues we face in our region. No other community organization does this.

Together, we represent one of the most critical and extensive collaborative approaches to change. With clear insight on the social needs of community members, and a collective drive with partners in all sectors. United Way will work to inspire a community-wide effort in achieving its new mission to empower everyone to improve lives and build strong communities.

Visit: www.fmwbunitedway.com



WHY WOULD I GIVE THROUGH UNITED WAY WHEN I CAN GIVE DIRECTLY TO AN AGENCY?

We have participation from many funded partners in the social services sector, delivering key community impact programs and initiatives. It is why, with United Way, donations and support go farther and wider than any other charitable investment a community member can make.

HOW ARE AGENCIES EVALUATED?

All Member Agencies are evaluated by United Way on an annual basis with the following criteria.

- Alignment with United Way Priorities — Does the program continue to fit with United Way priorities as determined by the changing needs of the region?
- Organizational Stability — Is the organization positioned, financially and structurally, to leverage United Way resources effectively and efficiently?
- Program Effectiveness — Did the organization deliver on agreed-upon results and did they demonstrate positive impact in the community?
- Accessibility — Is the program or initiative accessible to those it intends to serve and/or have steps been taken to address barriers?
- Resource Management — Does the organization review financial statements on a regular basis and did they submit to an audit or review engagement in the past year?
- Need for Funding — Does the Agency demonstrate a practical need for United Way dollars and is the proposed budget realistic?
- Agency support for United Way FMWB — Has the organization helped to promote United Way FMWB and have they adhered to relevant policies and procedures?
- Follow-up from Previous Report Recommendations — Has the Agency addressed outstanding items identified by United Way staff and/or volunteer committees from past reviews?

WHY AREN'T ALL AGENCIES A PART OF UNITED WAY?

There are many important programs in the community responding to individual and family needs. Our ongoing support of Community Funded Partners is a business decision involving a long-term financial commitment. In order to continue that support we must make decisions that keep us within our financial abilities. The number of agencies or programs funded depends on campaign dollars raised. In 2023, there are currently 22 funded community partners and new investments are considered annually. In addition, some agencies choose not to apply for funding.

DOES UNITED WAY FUND AGENCIES WITH RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS?

Some of our agencies have religious or cultural origins, such as the the Salvation Army, the Nistawayou Friendship Centre, and Wood Buffalo Wellness Society.

The services and programs offered by these agencies are open to all individuals regardless of religious affiliation.

Before an agency receives funding, we ensure agencies do not exclude people from participating in agency affairs or programs by virtue or religion.

DOES UNITED WAY EVER DISCONTINUE FUNDING TO AN AGENCY OR PROGRAM?

Yes. Some programs are designed as 'pilots' specifically funded or planned for a predetermined duration.

Also, United Way may reduce or discontinue funding for agencies for a variety of reasons. In recent years, our agency review process has been forced to consider phased reductions or cessation of United Way funding to several funded agencies. It may be the agency has governance issues, outcome measurement shortfall or simply no more requirements for United Way funding due to governments or other funding sources meeting its financial needs. United Way has an evolving community investment strategy that requires agency community impact plan alignment.

Before de-funding an agency, United Way engages in discussion to either remedy any performance or accountability issues, implement efficiency-building strategies or engage United Way volunteers to assist with governance, financial management or program delivery assistance. Discontinuance of agency funding from United Way is usually a phased, collaborative process.

HOW CAN I GIVE?

Here's how you can contribute to United Way and support your community:

Fill out the United Way pledge form (electronic or paper), available through your workplace campaign, or using the Dontae button on our website at www.fmwbugbitedway.com.

Additional options include payroll deduction, and pre-authorized payment (cheque or credit card). A one-time donation (cash, cheque or credit card) and a donation through our stock and securities program.

Give a legacy to United Way at www.fmwbugbitedway.com.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I GIVE?

Making a monetary contribution to United Way is a personal decision. It's up to you to decide what gift level best reflects your ability to give and your commitment to helping those in need in our community.

HOW DO I GET A CHARITABLE RECEIPT?

If you have donated to United Way in the calendar year 2023, you should receive your receipt by February 28, 2024.

Please note that if your gift to United Way was part of a workplace campaign by payroll deduction, you will not receive a separate tax receipt as the donation is recorded on the T4 statement from your employer.

To find more information on tax deductible and non-tax deductible giving, search the "Charities and Giving" section on the Canada Revenue Agency website at www.cra-arc.gc.ca.



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo

CAN I DESIGNATE MY DONATION TO OTHER CHARITIES?

Yes. The option of designating to specific agencies is an added service United Way provides to our donors. Agencies must be Canadian-registered charities.

United Way retains \$12 of the designated gift to recover the costs associated with this service.

WHAT HAPPENS TO MY MONEY AFTER I DONATE?

United Way determines where funds will be invested by conducting research to find needs and opportunities in the community. With this understanding, we are able to make sure funds are distributed to the most urgent issues that exist for people in the Wood Buffalo region. All money raised in RMWB is used for agencies in RMWB.

Please visit www.fmbwbunitedway.com for a list of our funded community partners.

WHERE CAN I FIND INFORMATION ON THE IMPACT AND RESULTS UNITED WAY AND ITS PARTNERS ARE MAKING IN THE COMMUNITY?

United Way and partner agencies regularly track the impact and progress we're making together in the region, with results covered in annual reports, promotional and educational documents, and online.

A broad selection of the latest results under each of the United Way's three focus areas can be found on our website. Please visit www.fmbwbunitedway.com.

WHAT ARE UNITED WAY COSTS?

In 2022, United Way FMWB raised just over \$3,200,000 at an approximate cost to the organization of \$592,703, which represents 18%. \$0.82 of your donation dollar goes directly to social profit agencies.

HOW DOES UNITED WAY KEEP ITS COSTS SO LOW?

Approximately 50 volunteers help United Way carry out its community work. During campaigns, five employees assist with our fundraising work. This helps United Way leverage resources and maximize efficiencies.

WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT FUNDRAISING COSTS?

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) requires all registered Canadian charities to report salary ranges that are subsequently published on the CRA website for public review. CRA also requires accountability, transparency, and stewardship of the dollars raised by Canadian not-for-profits in order to maintain charitable status.

Visit the "Charities and Giving" section on the CRA website for more information and:

- Click on "Charities Listings"
- Type in the charity name field and click "Search"
- Click on the name of your choice

United Way FMWB encourages all individuals to contact their charities of interest and learn the costs associated with each in order to make an informed decision.

WHAT PRACTICES DOES UNITED WAY HAVE IN PLACE TO ENSURE FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY?

When you make a contribution to United Way, we promise to administer it with great care. We set high standards for our conduct in all areas of our organization and continuously measure our performance.

It is up to us to ensure that our donors remain informed and confident their contributions will be well-managed and result in a positive impact.

Our volunteer Board of Directors conducts a regular, in-depth review of United Way's financial and community investment performance.

United Way FMWB, as part of United Way Canada Centraide, is a member of Imagine Canada's Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code. (In addition, we continue to follow internal transparency, accountability, and financial reporting guidelines which are intended to be defensible, acceptable, consistent, transparent, and simple in providing standardized reporting by United Ways across Canada)

United Way FMWB is externally audited to ensure we operate in a fiscally responsible manner.

Follow the link at www.fmbwbunitedway.com to review the Annual Reports of United Way FMWB.

HOW DO I KNOW MY PERSONAL INFORMATION WILL BE PROTECTED?

United Way is committed to protecting your privacy and maintaining the confidentiality of your personal information. In order to ensure your protection, we have adopted the ten privacy principles established by the Canadian Standards Association Model Code for the Protection of Personal Information. ■

For further information please contact hello@fmbwbunitedway.ca or call 780-791-0077.





For 45 years, United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo has united people and organizations, fostering community strength and easing poverty while uplifting children. Within this special edition, we proudly celebrate one of the hearts of our region: 365 Small Business Circle. Small businesses embody our community's essence, demonstrating that even a modest enterprise can create a profound impact. Entrepreneurs across the region are invited to join the 365 Small Business Circle, a platform that facilitates connections between like-minded business owners.

With a cost of a dollar per day, the circle's significance transcends monetary value. Witnessing the allocation of donor funds to our 22 supported agencies offers an awe-inspiring view of change in action. I often emphasize that the faces of those in adversity could easily mirror our own. The ripple effect is immense, and the ensuing sense of fulfillment is immeasurable. ■



We feel that Fort McMurray and the surrounding areas rely on the collective to work together to improve and maintain the quality of life for everyone in the region. United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo is a key component in promoting well-being and providing support.

—The Alley YMM



We felt this was an excellent opportunity to connect with other like-minded businesses to exchange service offerings and allow for local referrals. We believe this community can work together to support each other and our local businesses.

—Northern Plumbing & Heating Ltd.



How We Help

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graph TD; A((How United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo helps our region)) --- B((Seeing is Believing Tours)); A --- C((We fund social profit agencies)); C --- D((Services)); C --- E((Programs)); D --- E;
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**How United Way
Fort McMurray and
Wood Buffalo helps
our region**

**Seeing is
Believing
Tours**

**We fund
social profit
agencies**

Services

Programs



United Way
Fort McMurray

We do all of these things and more – to grow a region where everyone has the opportunity to meet their full potential in a changing world.



The Justin Slade Youth Foundation



The Justin Slade Youth Foundation has been around for as long as I can remember, and I was first introduced to it at the age of 8 before the centre became more focused on the adolescent demographic. I recall a woman that worked there named Kayla, and while attending I ended up in the local newspaper for a news article. This was certainly an incentive for little Erica to keep attending, and I enjoyed my time there until I eventually moved from the area with my family. I was unfortunately unable to attend again until my parents separated in my early adolescent years, when I had settled in at high school, I found myself showing up at the door on a regular basis.

It was a completely different experience, more structured, organized and with amazing programs that were tailored to kids my age. My friends and I frequented the center daily. The team at the time, including Mandy MacDonald, who is now the Executive Director of the Justin Slade Youth Foundation, were all amazing to me. The impact they all made was so strong that I remain in contact with them to this very day. I hardly spoke to them at first, so it moves me beyond words to see how much things have changed. This is all due to the effort, and hard work that they put in every day to give us a space where we felt safe, where myself and my friends all felt we could belong. We all went from being kids with our heads lowered to having “Fat chats” on the regular with the support workers. They were more than just workers; they were our mentors and that is a time I will never forget and always be grateful for.

The programs were all unique, and so much fun. It's hard not to get nostalgic...from classic all-nighters to Rock Band tournaments. It was all the rage when I was attending, we even came up with our own band names when we played. I still recall that the one I made with my friends was “Supercilious Fishes” of all things.

The programs were also fantastic opportunities to make connections, and inform us of amazing resources that were available to us from local as well as international organizations. We had a phenomenal team that came in from Ontario once, and they gave voice lessons to the youth. It was such an amazing experience!

It's easy to tell that having a program like The Dugout growing up was a crucial part of my life. During my teenage years, my life wasn't exactly ideal. As previously mentioned, my parents separated when I was very young and by the time I was in high school, I was moving around from place to place living at

friends' homes. I didn't get to experience structure and stability like most kids but that was something I was able to find in the Dugout. I attended every program, having those programs was exciting and I was grateful beyond words. It was because of the amazing workers at the Justin Slade Youth Foundation, that I saw firsthand what a real functioning adult looked like. Advice, mentorship, and even help with my homework. I don't think I would have graduated from high school without their support and encouragement.

So, of course, it is only natural that I would follow their footsteps. I proudly walked on the bricks that built me and became a youth worker myself. I find so much support, and I'm reminded of the impact my mentors had on my life. It also opened my eyes to the intense need for support in my community, and I am excited to be able to provide that same opportunity to kids out there who may be in my shoes, it is so empowering. Considering that this place is where I spent my entire upbringing, it is something I hold very close to my heart. It is a blessing that even in my adult years, I still find so much safety and comfort in this amazing place. I have been given so many tools, opportunities, and endless support...it makes sense that I full-heartedly give back.

—ERICA

The Dugout provides a safe, clean, and drug-free environment to interact with one another and have fun. This program is our Drop-in center, located in Borealis Park at the Haxton Center. The Justin Slade Youth Foundation's team of Youth Support Workers aims to build strong relationships with any youth who walk through our doors and provide them with the support they need as individuals to navigate their positive journey through life.



The Multicultural Association



MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION OF WOOD BUFFALO

The Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo (MCA) focuses on promoting equity, inclusion, and respect towards all community members. Thanks to United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, the MCA can continue to provide programs to the multicultural community. United Way aids with the English Language Learners Assistance (ELLA) program, aimed at ensuring English as a Second Language (ESL) students can feel confident and connected in the community. Together with United Way, we pave the path towards a strong, diverse community celebrating, educating, and integrating multiculturalism.

The MCA has been able to sustain and further build ELLA and is incredibly grateful for the support and ability to work with United Way. Collaboratively, we continue to meet the needs of newcomer students in the region. Without this support, MCA would no longer be able to offer one of its most valuable and highly sought-after programs which impacts the students and their families.

The MCA team is honoured to be able to provide social support and celebrate the rich diversity of the community. We provide a positive means to community living through inclusive events, social supports, interpersonal connections, and more as we help paint a vibrant and rich region ensuring all residents can flourish and persevere in life while feeling safe and secure with a sense of belonging. United Way plays an integral part in Wood Buffalo culture by continuously providing funding support so we may continue to provide services to community members.

United Way has been a continuous advocate for MCA, helping finance programs, and initiatives. Our agency works hard to ensure we can provide the highest level of service to the region, and we recognize how important it is to work together to foster positive relationships with our partners and stakeholders. United Way is essential in helping us to achieve our goals.

—MUNA ALI, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



AGENCY TESTIMONIALS

Safe Communities Wood Buffalo



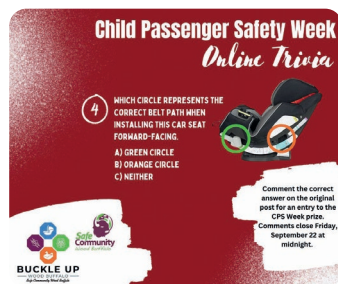
United Way helps our agency by providing some of the essential funding to run the Childhood Injury Prevention program.

One of the benefits of being funded by United Way is the ability to work with a group of partner agencies and have a community of organizations to lend support when rallying for funds or just to reach out to when in need.

The need to continue supporting United Way's efforts to raise funds is essential to us and to many social profit agencies. In the past few years, we have felt a significant decrease in our ability to raise enough funds and United Way is in the same situation – donors are typically giving less than usual, businesses are struggling to stay open, and job insecurity means people have fewer donation dollars than ever before. United Way has less and less to give to the social profit sector and sadly, being a small agency with limited capacity, we received a smaller portion of the funds this past year. This significantly limits our ability to provide services and programs to the community.

United Way has supported Safe Communities Wood Buffalo by partnering with us at several events which are partially funded through the "Childhood Injury Prevention" program.

—TIFFANY STAGG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR





Golden Years Society



United Way is aware of the importance of a place for seniors to have a purpose along with the need to have fellowship with like-minded people to prevent them from suffering from unnecessary physical, mental, and emotional challenges.

United Way's support enables us to pay for a coordinator to manage the center, which enables us to be open 5 days a week to meet the seniors' needs.

Thanks to the support from United Way, Golden Years Society is able to continue providing support services to our growing senior population.

United Way is also a great partner, assisting our agency with networking, promoting awareness of our services in the community, including general assistance or advice we may need to operate our programs and services effectively. ■

—TERRI LYNN BELLWOOD, OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR

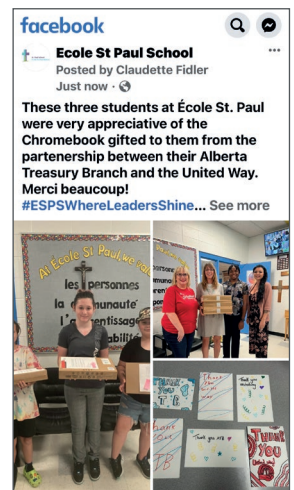


Chromebooks for Kids

Year after year, ATB Financial generously donates brand-new Chromebooks to United Way, which we then distribute to schools across our region.

This year's contribution of \$100,000 bolsters students and families throughout Alberta. Amidst the technologically privileged, the gift of access to technology is often taken for granted. The past weeks have seen intensive efforts to liaise with schools and arrange deliveries. Meeting school principals, teachers, and students has proven to be incredibly rewarding. The sheer number of young families and students in need within our community, along with the proliferation of new schools, is eye-opening. In conclusion, I find renewed hope in society and immense gratitude for collaborating with like-minded individuals committed to our community's well-being. When support is local, its impact becomes evident—solidifying the notion that our collective efforts make a difference. ■

	Dear United Way, Wood Buffalo and ATB Financial:
	For me getting a chromebook would help me a lot it can help me read and spell and it has google read and write, and that is really good to have for me it can help with so much and do so many other things to help me with.
	PS, thank you so much
	BY Hannah Adams.





Stuff the Bus! and Tools for School

TOOLS FOR SCHOOL

United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, in partnership with Staples, aims to ensure every child in our region has the support they need to reach their full potential in school.

One of the ways we do this is through our annual Tools for School program. This program allows students who may not otherwise have the means to obtain school supplies to access the materials they need to be school-ready without financial barriers. Tools for School provides kits with grade-appropriate school supplies to students in need from Kindergarten to Grade 12.



STUFF THE BUS



Running alongside the Tools for School Campaign is our Stuff the Bus event. This two day opportunity, in partnership with Staples, Sparksman Transportation & Boston Pizza, challenges us to "Stuff the Bus" full of school supplies for families needing support readying their children for school!

This program shares the donations of school supplies and ensures delivery to all school boards across the Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo Region. ■



Period Promise



DID YOU KNOW:

- Until 1972, advertisements for menstrual products were banned from television.
- The average person who menstruates spends upwards of \$5000 on menstrual products in their lifetime.
- Having reliable, barrier-free access to safe and affordable products decreases the risk of infections, and benefits reproductive health.

Periods are a fact of life, but unfortunately, so is period poverty. Period poverty is an often unacknowledged and complex issue. Multiple factors contribute to period poverty, including the inability to afford products, little or no access to washrooms, limited laundry services, stigma around gender identity, and shame around menstruation in general. In Canada, almost one-quarter of people who menstruate say they struggle to afford menstrual products for themselves and/or their children. Barrier-free access to affordable menstrual products means people don't have to miss school, or work, and are able to participate in daily life in a confident and comfortable way.

With funding and resources provided by the Government of Alberta, Grand & Toy, and Proctor and Gamble, United Way FMWB's Period Promise Initiative is tackling period poverty by providing free menstrual products and dispensers to thirteen schools and one community centre in the Wood Buffalo region.

United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo is committed to improving equity and supporting the overall well-being of individuals and communities in the region. By partnering with community agencies doing similar work, we will continue to raise awareness, provide education, and menstrual products to our region's schools. ■





United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo



GoRed FRIDAYS YMM

Presented by:



Birch Mountain Enterprises LP
Proud Member of Fort McKay Group of Companies

#GoRedFridays YMM is a new initiative by United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo to show support and solidarity with those experiencing the **#UNIGNORABLE** issues of poverty in our community.

Whether physically present on site, working remotely, or as an individual, you can help provide important resources for those experiencing poverty by buying a shirt and wearing it on Fridays. Your donation ensures essential food, clothing, housing and other services are available to people, children, families, and seniors in need.

In addition, you help raise awareness and encourage important dialogue by wearing RED. Please consider making a difference all year by making a monthly gift today. United, we are lifting people out of poverty and tackling important **#UNIGNORABLE** issues.



Selected merchandise available at
goredfridays.uwymm.ca/shop

#GoRed FRIDAYS YMM

GO RED



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo

FRIDAYS

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

All proceeds go to United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, and are then allocated to partner agencies helping support our community.

HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

Wear a RED shirt on Fridays, wear your own or purchase one from our online store.

#GoRedFridaysYMM is an initiative to raise awareness and show support for **#UNIGNORABLE** issues such as:

- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Addiction
- Alcoholism
- Domestic Violence
- Senior's Quality of Life
- And More!

**#GoRed
FRIDAYSYMM**

Presented by:

Birch Mountain Enterprises LP
Proud Member of Fort McKay Group of Companies

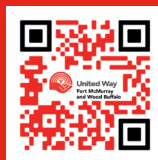


For additional information,
or to make a donation

SCAN THE QR CODE!



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo



SCAN THE QR CODE TO
DONATE ONLINE TODAY!



GoRed FRIDAYSMM

Presented by:



Birch Mountain Enterprises LP
Proud Member of Fort McKay Group of Companies

#GoRedFRIDAYSMM

is an initiative to raise awareness and show support for #UNIGNORABLE issues such as:

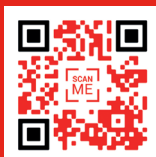
- Homelessness
- Poverty
- Addictions
- Alcoholism
- Domestic violence
- Seniors quality of life...and many more...

HOW TO PARTICIPATE

- Wear a RED shirt on Fridays, wear your own or purchase one for \$20 from UWWBFM.
- Talk about the #UNIGNORABLE with friends, family and coworkers.
- Donate online.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO?

All proceeds go to United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, and are then allocated to partner agencies helping support our community.



SCAN THE QR CODE TO FIND OUT
MORE ABOUT OUR PARTNER AGENCIES

#LOCALLOVE

WWW.FMWBUNITEDWAY.COM



The Redpoll Centre, located in Shell Place, opened in June 2015, and continues to be home to numerous non-profit agencies. Moreover, United Way acts as the anchor tenant of The Redpoll Centre.

Once settled on Franklin Avenue, United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo - and its original tenants from its former location - moved to the Redpoll Centre in June 2015.

The Redpoll Centre is a shared space sponsored by United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo and the Suncor Energy Foundation. The design for this non-profit shared office space was based on the principles of collaboration, mutual respect, and openness, and everyone is expected to operate within this philosophy.

It was named after the local Redpoll bird, which are small songbirds with a small red forehead patch, black feathering around a yellow bill, and two white wing bars. This is a hardy species that spends winter facing the cold weather in Fort McMurray, as opposed to flying south with most of the other birds. There are several sub-species of Redpolls, many which co-mingle within one single large flock.

The Redpoll has a very strong "sense of community" and the name was chosen as a metaphor for all the different agencies who come together to collaborate, and learn from one another like a flock of Redpoll birds.

Today, it shelters different non-profit agencies including: Alzheimer's Society, Brainstem Society, Fort McMurray Swimming Club, Kidsport Wood Buffalo, Pride YMM, CBC Fort McMurray, and St. Aidan's Society. ■



THE redpollcentre

A Community Hub where social profit, cultural, and sports organizations work with a common purpose to strengthen Wood Buffalo and each other



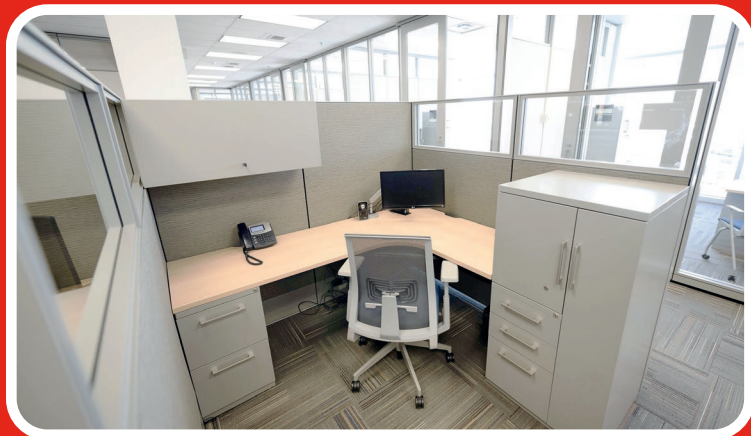
Community Culture

Collision Kitchen

A central gathering place where tenants break bread and make meaningful connections.

Flock Meetings

A bi-monthly occasion for tenants to come together and share opportunities, successes, and challenges.



Single-double work station office

- 12.5' X 12'
- \$896 per month, plus GST

Triple work station office

- 12' X 24'
- \$1,458 per month, plus GST



Drop-in work station (cubical style)*

- 42 sq. ft.
- \$15/day | \$60/week | \$235.61/per month plus GST

**Come and enjoy a workspace on an "as needed" basis. Drop in anytime to take advantage of a professional work environment with all the amenities, including wi-fi, kitchen area, copy centre, and all the furnishings to amplify your productivity.*



Affordable Cost

Copier Station Heaven

Our cost-recovery pricing makes it more affordable than ever to do the work of your organization.

All-in Lease Cost

You don't have to worry about utility costs, IT support, custodial or security services, coffee or a variety of other consumables that are taken care of within the scope of your lease.

Predictable Price

Gone are the unknown expenses of maintaining a nonprofit office space.

The Redpoll Centre offers a professional office environment with first-class amenities and an all-inclusive price with a variety of workspace options to work with your budget.



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo



Great Space

Collaboration Rooms

Two small collaboration rooms are available for those times when you need to spread out and innovate.

Meeting Space

Designed to accommodate meetings or workshops for up to 48 people, the divisible meeting room is one of the key amenities of The Redpoll Centre.

Natural Light

An abundance of natural light pours into every workspace thanks to the contemporary interior design.

The physical environment of The Redpoll Centre is designed to provide the perfect balance between professional and livable with natural light, modular glass walls, and common spaces that facilitate collaboration and learning.



Great Amenities

Turnkey IT Solution

The option to benefit from a thin client, virtual desktop environment, with broadband internet access, server storage, and VOiP phone technology.

Fully Furnished

All workstations are equipped with professional, functional, and modern furniture.

Copy Centre

A central copy station with two multi-function copier/printers and collating counter for putting those big projects together.

When you arrive at The Redpoll Centre, we want you to be able to get right to work. From your IT requirements to your office furniture, everything is provided to you within the cost of your lease.

Note: There will be an affordable cost-recovery fee for photocopying



A CONVERSATION WITH **Bob MacKay** United Way Community Campaign Chair 2023

It's been a few years since United Way had a Campaign Chair and this year, Bob MacKay has enthusiastically accepted the position. As a well-respected member of our community, Bob continued to exercise his exceptional leadership skills by inspiring his staff at Superior Propane to become more engaged in the community through volunteerism. You've likely seen the yellow tent set up with a barbeque, some great people in yellow shirts, that's them! The wonderful cast and crew Bob has skillfully honed into a finely tuned volunteer team.

Bob and I sat down to chat about why it's so important to participate in building a strong region. After 20 solid minutes of giggling over the fit and flare of his new red United Way shirt and the obvious glare off his head, we finally managed to be serious for a second and get through my list of questions. "Come on Bob, I have a deadline and you still have the photoshoot" which caused another eruption of laughter as sweat was already running down Bob's forehead, caused by the unbelievably non-breathable nylon material of his candy-apple red shirt. This is how most of our meetings go – laughing, then a moment of seriousness, followed by roars of laughter, then straight to the heart of the matter with a sentimental story of a recent experience volunteering, or witnessing someone realize the value of their time/energy in the service of others.

There are many times when Bob describes the reasons he volunteers or the purpose of his work that I wonder how so much kindness and empathy can be packed into one person. I am in awe of the person sitting across the table from me and wish there were more people like him.

Cathy: Knowing the amount of work involved in being the Campaign Chair, why did you accept the position?

Bob: I really, truly believe in the work of the United Way. Over the past few years, I've learned about what you do, how you do it and I believe – no, that's not right, I KNOW you are changing lives right here in our region. I've seen you in action and have learned just by watching you and your team that United Way is making a difference. United Way works to fund social profit agencies through fundraising, while orchestrating several big community impact events throughout the year. You never stop. United Way is the root of a powerful movement to change the way we think about tough social issues.

The role of Campaign Chair is an opportunity to help educate people about the work being done and to open their eyes and their hearts to opportunities to do their part in building a strong region.

Despite being in the region for 45 years, United Way needs help. I want to help inspire people to pitch in, either by volunteering, or donating, knowing every dollar stays in our region and we will see and feel the difference we make.

But most of all, I love this region. I raised a family here and I want my kids and grandkids to be part of something amazing. I want them to thrive, just as much as I want every person in this region to thrive and succeed in life. Sometimes, all they need is a helping hand and United Way, along with their partner agencies are here to do the heavy lifting in addressing big social issues.

Despite the perception that people living in our region are rich because we all work in the oil sands and big industries fuel our economy, there are too many people living in poverty, suffering from addictions, homelessness, and abuse.

As the Campaign Chair, I'd like to share the mission of United Way – and I want everyone to stop worrying about how much money social change will cost and start thinking about the value of a healthy region...and how much they can contribute to achieving this goal. Of course, donations are needed but let's not forget the tremendous value of giving time and service to volunteering, helping neighbours and becoming educated about the work that is already being done. Let's start asking ourselves how we can become constructive participants in solving social issues, rather than just complaining about problems.

Cathy: It sounds like you're on a mission to change the world (one region at a time... starting with ours of course). What's in it for you? Because you know the Campaign Chair is a volunteer position, and there are no big bonuses for reaching our goal or even a parade (darn it – cancel the clowns). What are you hoping to get out of this personally?

Bob: No clowns? I quit.

Cathy: Wait – there's a red chair in my office. You can have that. And some Tic Tacs. They're all yours.

Bob: Can I keep the red shirt?

Cathy: Yes, but don't wash it. No guarantees it will still fit if you put it in the dryer.

Bob: I'm in.

We spend the next 15 minutes laughing about all the things that are not included in this swanky role, including free time during the campaign. Bob will be on a speaking tour, signing autographs, dodging paparazzi, working full-time at his day job...but I'm pretty sure I offered him some old Christmas candies I found in a desk drawer and some colourful paper clips. We run a tight budget at United Way, we're cheap when it comes to office supplies.

Bob: Okay, seriously though. I get a lot more than my name in lights (Cathy: nope), and a shiny new red car (Cathy: you can borrow my Vespa), the best part about doing this work for United Way is the great feeling I get knowing I'm helping – big time. I am addicted to volunteering. It's true! You know that feeling you get when you really help someone? It's better than the feeling you get after a workout at the gym.

For example, I was unloading a truck full of snacks to Justin Slade Youth Foundation recently and the kids were helping us stack them inside. As we were organizing the last boxes, one of the young boys turned to me and asked,

"Is it okay if I eat some of these?" pointing to a box of cookies. I said, "Yes, of course, these are all for you and your buddies when you come here." The look on that kid's face was of total joy. He lit up and was so happy. Like he'd hit the after-school snack jackpot. If that's all it takes to help a kid, I would happily do it again and again. I know the kids that show up there don't always get food at home, many of them give their lunches to their little brothers and sisters, sacrificing their food for their little siblings. They show up at Justin Slade HUNGRY. Teenagers are always hungry. So, to be able to provide snacks for them made me feel like a million bucks. It didn't require a whole lot of effort on my part to organize a food drive and in that one instance, when the kid felt so happy, my heart was full.

The great feeling you get when you volunteer, when you put a smile on someone else's face – it's addictive.

So now, I make time to volunteer. I need it just as much as the social profit agencies, as much as the people I help.

Cathy: I know how you feel. After the pandemic, I was feeling low, like my energy had been drained and everyone was suggesting I should take some "me time," to go to the spa, read a book, journal, and a lot of other great ideas (apparently eating an entire bag of Oreo cookies doesn't make me feel better either. Weird) But the one thing that really filled my soul, that made me feel like ME again, was volunteering. It was seeing the joy I had sparked in someone else. I completely understand your addiction to volunteering.

Last question Bob. As the Campaign Chair, what are your goals for 2023?

Bob: Obviously, I want to help United Way raise funds to support the social profit sector. That work is paramount to success. Along with raising money, I'd like to focus on building awareness of what United Way does in our region and educating residents. Not only do you fund agencies, you monitor the impact of every dollar, you work with agencies to maximize the investment and you also steward several community impact initiatives such as Tools for School, Period Promise, Seeing is Believing Tours, and many others.

Tough economic times, job security and a load of other challenges are making it more and more difficult to raise funds for essential programs – while the need rises. More and more people in our region are on the brink



of poverty, some face abuse and addictions, and mental health is a serious issue for many people (maybe even most people). It's too easy to become someone who needs the help of a United Way-supported agency.

As the Campaign Chair, my goal is to inspire, educate and encourage every resident in our region to reach out to their neighbours, care for each other, volunteer, and give generously to United Way.

Cathy: You are truly inspiring Bob. Once again, it has been a tremendous pleasure speaking with you. Your passion for building a strong region is seen and felt in your quiet actions of volunteerism. Your compassion, followed by action makes you an exceptional person. I look forward to working with you during the 2023 campaign.

I also look forward to making more "Cathy's Carpool Karaoke" videos with you throughout the campaign. We both know raising funds and sharing information about United Way is a serious job, but we can also have serious fun at the same time. ■

A CONVERSATION WITH

Nicole Rymes

Chair, Board of Directors,
United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo

United Way is proud to have Nicole Rymes at the helm as a strong community leader. As a recipient of the Top 50 Under 50 in 2022, Nicole is passionate about making a difference in our region to support the vulnerable population. Cathy and Nicole sat down to chat about what really matters in life and how we can transform our region.

Cathy: You've worked as a workplace campaign team member, then chair, then board member, now board Chair for United Way! How did you get started on this incredible journey?

Nicole: I really didn't want to at first! I didn't know what it was all about and I was kind of skeptical about the whole thing. A co-worker friend invited me to help her with campaign merchandise at Syncrude and it was a lot of fun! We opened a little store on site where people could get shirts, hoodies, everything...branded with United Way. I was hooked.

The thing I loved most about being part of the workplace campaign was the networking opportunities. I enjoyed meeting people across the site, from office, to oil sands and everyone in between. It had a huge, positive impact on my career. It opened up opportunities for me I would not have had if I wasn't part of the campaign committee. So, taking on the role of co-chair, then chair was easy. My leadership and professional skills grew and so did my passion for building strong communities through United Way.

Cathy: You've been the Board Chair for less than a year and you're leading a fairly new set of directors. Let's talk about why you do this, why it's important to you and what you hope to accomplish.

Nicole: I believe we all have to do our part to build a region where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. This means it's my duty, as a resident of this region to do my share of the work, to pitch in to help and to volunteer my time with United Way. If everyone stepped up to support their neighbours, or vulnerable people, we wouldn't have serious social issues like poverty, homelessness, or addictions.

Cathy: After being a United Way "family member" for a few years, what is the ONE thing you wish more people knew about?

Nicole: That's easy. I wish everyone knew that the money they donate is stewarded by United Way. It goes to meet the greatest needs in the community. Every dollar is spent to help grow this region. We often hear people complaining about the "high overhead costs" which is not true in the case of United Way – first of all, our

finances are audited and made public. Anyone can see our operating costs are well below Canada Revenue Agency standards AND a large part of our operation funds go to community impact projects like, Tools for School, Period Promise, Days of Caring, Seeing is Believing Tours and so much more. United Way doesn't just fundraise; we also build communities while keeping our finger on the pulse of the social profit sector.

So, the one thing I want people to know about United Way is the funds are meticulously well managed and put to best use in the region.

Cathy: This is a great point. We act as donation investment advisors. We know the sector and we know the value of every dollar raised and we look for maximum return on investments in the social profit world.

Thank you so much for your hard work and dedication on the United Way board. Your energy and passion for service is extremely valuable and inspiring. ■



Pictured from left to right: Tori, Keira, Dexter, Patrick, Emerson and Owen.

A CONVERSATION WITH Patrick Kachur United Way Champion

Patrick Kachur, is a 16-year resident of Fort McMurray and a single father of five young children. He knows the value of contributing to United Way and growing a strong community around his family.

Working for Syncrude since 2008 and a proud member of Métis Local 1935, Patrick's busy life now includes starting an equipment rental company. He cheerfully admits that Fort McMurray is home, despite the cold winter months!

What sets Patrick apart from most of us is not the number of children he has to feed or the huge pile of little shoes at his front door, but the size of his heart, his passion for philanthropy and his generous, yearly donation to United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo. As an "individual donor," he ranks among the highest year after year. It took some convincing for him to tell us his story as he felt his annual donation was simply the right thing to do.

Here's what Patrick had to say about why he gives open-heartedly to United Way:

"I first heard about United Way at my Syncrude orientation. There was a representative who began talking about all of the charities supported by United Way funding. I remember I was at a table with four other new hires. They were very young and I remember them all saying there was no way they were going to donate

20 bucks per paycheck. I remember thinking to myself that they didn't understand the career opportunity they had been given. So I signed up to donate \$100 per paycheque to cover my table. That was my way of showing gratitude and thanking God for this opportunity.

During the 2016 wildfire, we evacuated to Fort Saskatchewan, where I was born and raised. I had family there and this was a stressful time for us all. The kids were enrolled in the local school during the evacuation and completed the year, making new friends and enjoying new experiences. At the end of the school year, I thought about relocating my family there so I enrolled the kids in school for the following year. I was commuting to and from Fort Saskatchewan to Fort McMurray and looking for work closer to my kids. Soon after, an enticing job offer came my way. By this time, I began to realize the Fort Saskatchewan I left as a young man wasn't the Fort Saskatchewan we were moving back to. My kids missed their home and their friends in Fort McMurray. We missed the small-town feeling Fort McMurray gave us and the way we come together in times of crisis. We moved back in the summer of 2017."

The team at United Way was very intrigued by Pat's generosity, thinking there must surely be a great story behind this annual giving. When digging to the heart of the matter, we discovered the beautiful simplicity of Patrick's

purpose, which was the good feeling he got when helping others and the sense of responsibility he felt as a human being to serve others who are less fortunate.

"I've always been a fan of philanthropy. It's a form of tithing. It feels good to help out but sometimes you don't know how or where the help is needed. That's why I was attracted to donate to the UW—they know the community needs better than I do and can direct the money where it is needed most. You also have an option to choose how you want your money distributed.

This community has also been so inspiring... people coming together and helping during floods and fires, the philanthropy of the many entrepreneurs like Chris Wilson of BME, Marty Giles of Ford, Malcolm and Jenelle Setter of Get Energy or Dawn Ohama at ATT Electric. As an entrepreneur, it is companies and people like this that will inspire me and my company to give back. But as an employee, it was contributors with leadership like Barb Jewers and Annie Lawley that inspired me to increase my donations almost annually."

A father, worker, business owner, community member, and leader in philanthropy. Patrick Kachur sets the tone and the pace of our United Way annual community campaign. Not only does Patrick donate, but he also reminds us of the value of contributing to the well-being of a region we call home. ■



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo



A CONVERSATION WITH

Michelle Velez

Chair of the Community Investment Committee

Cathy: What drives you to serve on the board of United Way?

Michelle: I am amazed by the support that United Way provides to the people who live in this region, my home. I want to contribute to the longer-term vision of the organization and be a part of our community's growth.

Cathy: Can you describe the Community Investment process and why is it so important to allocate funds this way?

Michelle: For me what makes the community investment process successful is the number of volunteers who give many hours to review the agencies' applications and who also make the time to learn and understand what services the agencies provide to the region. Having diverse teams with many different perspectives re-

moves the risk of biases within the group. Also, it creates a learning environment, we all learn from each other as we bring different strengths to the process.

Cathy: What are some of the challenges facing this committee?

Michelle: In my opinion, some of the challenges are that the agencies are so good at what they do and very passionate about their work it is hard to stay objective. The amount of money the agencies need is often more than the amount of money we raise in our campaign and it's hard to decide how much money to give an agency.

Cathy: What are the benefits and joys of being part of this committee?

Michelle: I have worked with so many wonderful people who have taught me how to be more collaborative, to be a better listener and to look at our community in different ways. To be surrounded by so many people who are caring and give hours of their time is inspiring.

Cathy: What's in it for you? Why do you do this work?

Michelle: The continued learning is so valuable to me. The people that work at the agencies we support are experts in their fields and they are constantly trying to do better and adapt to the needs of the community. I learn so much from them. Also building relationships with people, to connect and strengthen the community – our home. ■

Success Stories YMM

United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo is proud to support many different agencies in our region. Here's a look at some of our local success stories.



LOCAL HELICOPTER EMERGENCY RESPONSE ORGANIZATION (HERO) FOUNDATION

How many times a day do you look up into the sky in our region and see a helicopter? Quite often, right? Do you know that our very own Local HERO is one of those very helicopters?

Flying a twin-engine Airbus Helicopters H135 helicopter, fitted with Air Ambulance Technologies, the Local HERO helicopter and trained medical staff are on call and available 24/7 for medical emergencies.

Nobody anticipates an accident to occur, but for one individual, that very thing took place while snowmobiling. After being thrown from the snowmobile and suffering a severe fracture; 911 was called and the Local HERO helicopter was dispatched, providing lifesaving services and transportation to the nearest medical facility.

The funds awarded to the Local Helicopter Emergency Response Organization (HERO) Foundation, on behalf of United Way, remain in our region, assisting in keeping this valuable and essential service available and cost-free to the residents.



JUSTIN SLADE YOUTH FOUNDATION

Created out of a tragedy, the Justin Slade Youth Foundation (JSYF) provides youth in our region with organized programs, affording them the opportunities for community engagement as well as an on-site drop-in centre, which promotes social interactions. JSYF has the opportunities and connections to broaden the scope of assistance that can be offered on an individual basis.

For one such individual, being referred to a variety of out-sourced programs in order to ascertain new skills and break down any barriers preventing employment, was exactly what was required. Now, a successful student and employed part time, this is just one of the success stories to come out of this Foundation.

With the assistance of United Way, the Justin Slade Youth Foundation is able to provide our youth with new skills to use throughout their lifetime, the opportunity for new social interactions and just a cool place to hang out!



Success Stories YMM



AUTISM SOCIETY OF THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF WOOD BUFFALO

In addition to many other programs that are run within the Social-Respite scope of the Autism Society of the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, the PEERS program is on the list. PEERS (The Program for the Education and Enrichments of Relational Skills) is a caregiver-assisted social skills group for youth ages 13-17. This program focuses on relationship/social skill building, making and maintaining friendships, appropriate use of humour and how to handle bullying for those individuals diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder, or any other social disorder who have difficulty with peer interactions.

One such youth within the RMWB has successfully utilized this program, offered by the Autism Society. With every passing class, the youth is becoming more and more engaged with his peers. Great job!

With your help, the United Way can continue to provide funding for such valuable programs.



NISTAWOYOU ASSOCIATION FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is very culturally diverse. The Nistawayou Friendship Centre offers a selection of programs that build upon the traditional Indigenous values, cultures and beliefs, giving a sense of community and place to belong with acceptance to everyone, from all walks of life.

In the hustle and bustle of everyday life, the needs and wants of our Elder generations often tend to get overlooked. Nistawayou provides a safe culturally inclusive location to participate in a variety of programming, smudging ceremonies, building strong friendships or just a place to enjoy some tea and bannock. Alongside the Elders programs, Nistawayou also offers youth programming, focusing on relationship building, education and life skills.

United Way of Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo assists the Nistwayou Association Friendship Centre by providing funding to ensure that programming continues to run successfully & provides a safe place for those who choose to utilize it.



THE HUB

Funded in part by United Way, the Safe Visitation/Safe Exchange program allows for children to visit with their caregiver, supervised in a safe and fun setting, without caregivers coming in contact with one another. This program is a fit for families experiencing family violence, high conflict, custody, or substance issues. This service provides a safe environment that protects children from witnessing family violence as well as gives them stability and security with both caregivers, reducing stress upon parents/caregivers and children alike.

That isn't all that The Hub offers. The Hub's programming supports all different stages of early childhood development as well as offering support with various parenting challenges.

Families utilizing the services of The Hub, now know where to turn in order to get the knowledge and assistance required.

Programs such as these at The Hub, are funded by your donations to United Way.



THE SALVATION ARMY

If there were ever an organization that could be described as "pure sunshine", The Salvation Army would be just that. From radiating hope and kindness, to providing meals and a listening shoulder, The Salvation Army is there to assist, in any way they can.

Funded in part by United Way, The Salvation Army's Community Meal Food services program not only provides healthy meals, 365 days a year, but they also provide the opportunity to meet with families and individuals suffering from food security issues, to determine root causes that could be potentially impacting food surety.

The Salvation Army is committed to eradicating poverty, all the while, caring for people in all walks of life that are enduring hardships.

Food is an integral part of our lives. It nourishes and sustains, but meal-times also prove to be a time of conversation. In one particular instance, those community mealtime conversations assisted one resident of our region to overcome addiction and focus on living a life of sobriety. It all began with a caring shoulder, a warm meal and of course, a ray of sunshine from the Salvation Army. ■



**McMURRAY REGIONAL
LAW OFFICE**
(Previously Don Scott McMurray Law Office)

We celebrate with United Way on their 45th anniversary in Wood Buffalo. We thank the people and businesses in our region who make the fundraising possible to support non-profit organizations and agencies that provide important services and programs in our community.

McMurray Regional Law Office is proud to be a part of our generous community and continues to serve those who need legal representation. The Wood Buffalo community is our priority.

Areas of Law



We acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work and play is Treaty 8 Territory, the traditional lands of the Cree, Dene and the Métis peoples.

102-122 Millennium Drive,
Fort McMurray, AB T9K 2S8
Tel: 780-750-9888
Email: info@mcmurrayregionallaw.ca
www.mcmurrayregionallaw.ca



Seeing is Believing

For United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo

Seeing Is Believing tours are a United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo initiative created to show our donors their money in action. These tours not only shed light on the impact of the organization's efforts but also foster a deeper connection between donors, volunteers, and the projects they support.



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo

Seeing is Believing tours go beyond abstract figures and statistics, bringing stories of transformation to life. Participants have the opportunity to witness firsthand the tangible results of their contributions. A visit to a local after-school program, for instance, allows donors to interact with children who benefit from their support, putting a face to the positive change they help create. This personal connection empowers donors by showing them the real people behind the numbers.

Transparency is the cornerstone of any successful nonprofit organization. By opening our doors to the community, United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo display a commitment to

accountability and honesty. When donors witness the organization's work in action, they gain a deeper understanding of its mission, impact, and allocation of funds. This transparency fosters trust, encouraging continued support and engagement.

The region's unique challenges require diverse solutions. Seeing is Believing tours offer participants a comprehensive view of the breadth of United Way's initiatives. From supporting education and housing programs to promoting mental health awareness, the tours illustrate the multifaceted approach the organization takes to address the community's needs. This exposure not only educates participants but also empowers them to advocate for these causes in their own circles.



These tours spark a sense of shared purpose within the community. Participants become advocates for the organization, spreading the word about its impact and encouraging others to get involved. The tours serve as a catalyst for increased volunteerism, as attendees are motivated to contribute their time and skills to causes they've personally witnessed making a difference.

Collaboration is the key to creating sustainable change – we cannot do it without you! The tours highlight the united efforts of United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo with local organizations, government bodies, and businesses. By showcasing successful partnerships, the tours inspire a culture of collaboration within the community, encouraging other stakeholders to come forward and contribute their resources.

Seeing is Believing tours have an unparalleled ability to cultivate

empathy and compassion. Participants often leave the tours with a renewed perspective on the challenges faced by their neighbours. This heightened awareness translates into increased support and empathy for those who are marginalized or in need.

The power of Seeing is Believing tours lies in their ability to transform abstract concepts into tangible realities. United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo use these tours to build trust, inspire engagement, and showcase their holistic approach to community development. As the residents of this resilient region continue to face various challenges, the impact of these tours is poised to play an even more crucial role in fostering understanding, unity, and positive change. Through these tours, the community is not only witnessing the incredible work being done but also becoming an integral part of the transformation process. ■

**PROUD MEMBER OF THE
365 SMALL BUSINESS CIRCLE**



Edwards
and
Surveys Ltd. 

Congratulations United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo on Your 45th Anniversary

Serving Fort McMurray and all of Alberta

If you're buying or selling property, want to subdivide your land, or are building a new home or commercial building, Edwards Land Surveys can provide the professional land surveying services you need. We serve Fort McMurray and surrounding areas, so call us to order today!

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Alberta, T9H 0L2
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Empowering Communities

United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo's Annual Workplace Campaign

As we proudly celebrate the 45th anniversary of United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, we embark on another year of impactful change through our annual Workplace Campaign. This year, from September to November, we invite our incredible community to come together and support our social profit sector in a profound way.

The heart of our Workplace Campaign lies in its purpose: to rally the community to raise funds that serve as a lifeline for local agencies striving to create positive change. These agencies are dedicated to transforming lives and enabling individuals to realize their full potential. Through their endeavours, they champion equality, foster the growth of our youth, and provide essential health services that strengthen the very fabric of our region.

As we unite in this collective effort, we extend our call to local businesses and community members, urging them to contribute generously to our Workplace Campaign. These donations fuel our mission to sustain local agencies that, in turn, contribute to shaping Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo into safe, vibrant, and resilient communities.

This year's campaign holds special significance, commencing on September 16th and culminating on Giving Tuesday on November 28th. Throughout this time, our dedicated United Way staff channels their unwavering commitment into the Workplace Campaign. Their tireless efforts are focused on generating essential revenue and orchestrating events that not only raise funds but also foster a sense of unity and camaraderie within our community. This is all performed with the philosophy of keeping the cost of fundraising as low as possible to maximize the impact your donations have on our community.

Our goal for this year's campaign is set at an ambitious



\$3,000,000, and we know that achieving this milestone is only possible with the support of our community. Every contribution, no matter the size, holds immeasurable value. Each dollar donated resonates with hope and potential, forming the building blocks of a brighter future for all.

By participating in our Workplace Campaign, you become an integral part of a transformative journey. Your generosity echoes far beyond the dollar amount—it touches lives, sparks change, and ignites opportunities that ripple through the years. You empower us to continue making a tangible impact, amplifying the positive change that uplifts our neighbours, friends, and loved ones.

As we reflect on 45 years of united efforts, we celebrate the strides we've taken as a community. Through every challenge faced and triumph celebrated, the spirit of unity has remained steadfast, and the commitment to creating a better tomorrow burns brighter than ever.

Thank you, Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo, for standing by us for 45 remarkable years. As we embark on this year's campaign, we are humbled by your unwavering commitment and excited for the impact we will achieve together. ■

Empowering Change

Through In-House Production Excellence

At United Way, we understand the profound financial challenges our nation faces. Now, more than ever, responsible stewardship of donation dollars is paramount. Recognizing the public's desire for transparency regarding fund allocation, we are committed to optimizing our resources. Navigating the landscape of impactful events with a frugal budget requires ingenuity, and our Resource Development team embodies this attitude.

Our talented Resource Development team has successfully slashed fundraising event expenditures by adopting an “in-house” approach to event planning and marketing, eschewing external contractors. With immense pride, we spotlight the creative genius of Tammy McGlennon and Laurie Peddle, whose design prowess imbues every event with professional elegance. This strategic shift has allowed us to curtail expenses and channel more funds—directly benefiting the 22 agencies and 36 programs we wholeheartedly support.

As well, we have, Jonathan Davies, the maestro of our social media and design sphere, whose touch has magnified our digital presence in recent months. Through a comprehensive expense evaluation, we realized the potential to internalize various operations, affording us the opportunity to redefine our social media platforms, websites and marketing. With a dynamic team that thrives on innovation, the upcoming year promises a tapestry of excitement at United Way.

Anticipate a whirlwind of remarkable events in the upcoming months, all aimed at driving positive change. Be sure to stay connected through our social media channels as we unveil details and ticket sales. Your involvement fuels the engine of transformation. Together, let's usher in a future filled with impact and inspiration! ■



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo

211

Connecting Canadians with the help they need most

211's telephone line and online directory help Canadians deal with life's challenges. The service connects users with vital community and social resources, close to home and specific to their needs. From basic needs like housing and food, to support for seniors and children, to responding to crisis situations, 211 is there.

United Way is a proud founding partner of 211 in Canada, providing funding and support for the program, and working to make its services available to all Canadians.

unitedway.ca/how-we-help/211-2

OUR IMPACT

Every year, 211 connects over 2 million Canadians with the help they need most.

Percent of Canadians that currently have access to 211 service

100%

Percent of callers that report receiving the help they need from a 211 referral

89%

Number of Canadians each year calling 2-1-1 to connect with community services

575,000

Number of visitors accessing 211's online database of local resources annually

1.5 million

When you need community support.

Dial 2-1-1
or visit 211.ca



Help Starts Here



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo



Poverty Reduction Network

As part of our commitment to build strong communities, United Way is a leader for the Poverty Reduction Network (PRN). The PRN is a network of agencies in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo supporting people living in or near poverty. The PRN was established in 2014 with a mission to reduce the effects of poverty and support those whose lives have been negatively impacted by this serious issue.

The agencies work as a collective to advocate for strong poverty reduction policies and collaboratively seek innovative solutions.

The PRN spearheads Poverty Awareness Week each year in October, with various activities, speakers, and a simulation exercise. As part of our support to the PRN, United Way hosts the Make the Month website (www.makethemonthwb.ca), a simple virtual poverty simulation tool showing the impact of our daily choices on our ability to pay for necessities and potentially leading to more dire financial outcomes. ■



Coming soon!

• THE SOCIAL IMPACT LAB

thesocialimpactlab.com



OUR PURPOSE

Shifting Mindsets, Evolving Ideas

We discover the problems behind a problem and uncover truths about how existing systems perpetuate social issues. Then, we work to prevent them from arising in the first place.

We bring together philanthropists, non-profits, government, businesses, and community members to accelerate impact on critical issues facing our communities at a systems level.

The human experience is at the core of everything we do. We gain insights from those directly impacted by a social issue, and we bring those insights into the Lab to inform a process of co-creation with people who have the means, knowledge, and influence to affect real change.

We start with insights from those directly impacted by a social issue or within an inequitable system. We engage our network to collaborate with the right communities and organizations that can help take a project to scale.

We take participants through the human-centered design process and address the underlying cause of social issues in a collaborative and transformative manner. Our goal is to surface ideas and deliver innovative solutions to citizens and communities.

We build concepts that are tested and iterated to find the sweet spot for change and to test viability for scaling. Backing for ideas can come from combinations of venture funding and private or corporate philanthropy to take a project to scale.

SOCIAL IMPACT LAB ALBERTA

The Government of Alberta, through the Creative Partnerships Alberta initiative, under Alberta Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women, has granted \$1.75M over four years to United Way of Calgary and Area to scale the offerings of The Social Impact Lab to all non-profits in Alberta. This multi-year funding supports capacity building within the non-profit and charitable sectors. ■

WE design.

We use design to create inclusive, outcome focused change.

WE collaborate.

We enable collaborators to take a human-centred approach to innovation to design with people and empower communities.

WE connect.

We bring together non-profit partners, government, philanthropists, businesses, and the community to design for a better future.

Funded Agencies

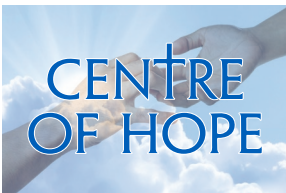
2023-2024

Here's a look at the programs being funded by United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo in 2023-2024



SUPPORT THROUGH HOUSING TEAM

Wrap Around Client Care and Case Management: offers life skill support, supportive transitional living and intensive case management from a holistic approach to wellness to individuals and families at risk of experiencing homelessness. Build and maintain collaboration between social serving agencies in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.



THE CENTRE OF HOPE

Intake Program: provides basic essential needs to individuals without judgment. This program organizes and implements shower, laundry, outreach, street connect clinic, AHS services, mental health worker, and community partner services.

Outreach Program: provides referrals and advocacy to other community services, connection to employment agencies as well as a direct link to housing programs.



THE SALVATION ARMY

Community and Family Services: provides direct services to low income families and individuals as well as homeless and near homeless individuals. Services may be financial in nature or tangible goods, food, safety, school fees, transportation, prescription, work related courses, and other requests such as rental arrears and overdue utilities.

Food Services Program (Community Meal): provides healthy meals and bag lunches to persons who are in need at non-meal serving time. This program aims to eradicate poverty and care for people who are struggling.



NORTHEACH
Harm Reduction & HIV Support

NORTHEACH SOCIETY

Wood Buffalo Regional Services (Educator): educator provides education on HIV, STBBI's, 2SLGBTQ+ awareness, and Harm Reduction to industry workers, social profit agencies, clients, schools staff members, students, community organizations, the oil sand community, businesses, and general population.

Administrative Support Program: provides administrative support to the Northreach Fort McMurray team and creates social media awareness campaigns that speak to the residents of the RMWB.



PASTEW PLACE
— DETOX CENTRE —

PASTEW PLACE DETOX CENTRE

Pre-treatment: provides a safe place for individuals to stay before entering residential addiction programs. It facilitates a smooth transition to the treatment facility for the client to increase their chances of success.



FORT MCMURRAY SEARCH & RESCUE

Wilderness First Aid Training, Swiftwater Training, and Training Presentation Materials: provide standardized training with materials for comprehensive first aid and CPR techniques to rescue an individual.

Coordinator Wages: it is responsible for handling the general administrative duties and transactions of the organization.



LOCAL HERO
foundation

LOCAL HERO FOUNDATION

Helicopter Emergency Medical Services: provides a medically equipped helicopter and crew on call 24/7/365 for immediate dispatch on medevacs for critically ill or seriously injured patients. Saving lives by saving time.



SOME OTHER SOLUTIONS
SOCIETY FOR CRISIS PREVENTION

SOME OTHER SOLUTIONS

Child and Youth Programs: offers preventive intervention and resiliency-based support for children aged 7-18 years of age. It also promotes healthy development as a foundation of social well-being & mental wellness.



NISTAWOYOU ASSOCIATION FRIENDSHIP CENTRE

Elder's Programming: provides opportunities to elders for social interaction, acceptance, and a dynamic to enhance quality of life.

Cultural Inclusion: allows opportunity to share cultural practices, and allows individuals and families to actively learn as well as participate in their cultural traditions.

Strengthening the next generation: provides resources for students who need and require extra help to improve and encourage completion of their education.

Executive Director: this allows the NAFC to continue to grow within the community, create and strengthen partnerships and relationships within the community, and our membership as well as participate in community engagements.



AUTISM SOCIETY

Social-respite Program: builds a strong foundation for social interaction, self-esteem and personal confidence for youth with autism and other neurological disorders, while providing respite for parents.



WOOD BUFFALO WELLNESS SOCIETY / MARK AMY

Organizational Support (Mark Amy Treatment Centre): a residential addiction treatment centre that focuses on trauma and decolonization through a blended traditional Indigenous and Western program, thus coined using a "two-eyed" lens.

Cultural Healing Camps / Hide Camp: Provides foundation for wellness in all four quadrants of the medicine wheel with a lasting connection to the land as well as one another.

Reconciliation Capacity Building: Are actionable policy recommendations to aid the healing process of 94 CTAs from the horrifying history of the residential school system.



GOLDEN YEARS SOCIETY

Coordinator's Wages: provides support for programs, board and members, recruits volunteers, keeps the Facebook and website up to date, and handles the daily transactions of the organization.

Hot Meal Program: enhances the quality of life for persons aged 55 and older residing in Fort McMurray. Provides nutritious foods and socialization for individuals.



St. Aidan's
Society

ST. AIDAN'S SOCIETY

Seniors Outreach & Advocate Program: promote and safeguard the health, dignity, rights, and quality of life of seniors. The program cultivates support for seniors and delivers inclusive services and projects that help seniors age in the community with dignity, respect and a high quality of life.



WAYPOINTS

WAYPOINTS

Waypoint's Sexual Assault Program: assists individuals who have experienced a form of sexual trauma. It also provides counselling and support services to family members, partners, and friends of the individuals.



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Wood Buffalo
Mental health for all

CANADIAN MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION

Recovery College (Peer Support Program): focuses on helping people recognize and develop their own resourcefulness and awareness to support themselves and their loved ones' mental health journey. Courses are delivered by both a peer support worker (CMHA WB Staff) and a peer.



LEGACY COUNSELING

LCC Professional Counsellor: provides quality counselling to assist and help individuals and families who are faced with life issues related to addictions, mental health, and behavioural challenges towards holistic and healthy living.



**Multicultural Association
of Wood Buffalo**

MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

ELLA Program (English Learners): provides support to catholic and public schools through collaborative learning and fosters the development of the students' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, where English is not their first language.



THE HUB – FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRE

Family Support and Early Learning (FSEL) Core Operations: offers tools and strategies to ensure the best possible development of the children and families in RMWB through healthy child development, positive parenting strategies, and social connection.

Family Access Services: a safe visitation service that provides a comfortable setting between a parent/caregiver and child.



THE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

Food for Two Pre/Postnatal Program: offers free-of-charge classes to all pregnant and new moms in our region.

Headstart Preschool Program: provides an opportunity for children aged 3-5 years to get a "headstart" before entering the school system.

Administrative Assistant/Data Entry: responsible for all the day-to-day general administration duties and transactions in the office.



JUSTIN SLADE YOUTH FOUNDATION

The Dugout: provides a safe, clean and drug-free environment centre for youth ages 12-17. The workers provide structured and unstructured activities to keep the youth away from the negative elements of the streets.

JSYF Presents: provides a full calendar of events and activities, transportation provided and cost covered, throughout the different areas of our community to ensure that programming activities are accessible for all youth.



SAFE COMMUNITY WOOD BUFFALO

Childhood Injury Prevention Program: provides safety information through presentations and sessions and organizes fun activities for the family.



KIDSPORT WOOD BUFFALO

Operations Cost (Executive Director's Salary): oversees Kidsport operations, providing sports grants and funding to RMWB athletes. ■

DOING WHAT'S BEST FOR KIDS

The Fort McMurray Public School Division is committed to preparing all our learners for the 21st century! From elementary to high school, our students are following a pathway designed to support engaged thinkers and inspire students for life-long learning.



Enroll Now

www.fmpsdschools.ca/registration

(780) 799-7900



**Fort McMurray
Public Schools**



Community Investment Committee



United Way Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo is committed to responsible and transparent stewardship of all funds received, especially from our donors. The Community Investment Committee (CIC) is one crucial way we ensure funds are thoughtfully allocated equitably and aligned with current community needs.

The CIC is a volunteer committee, comprised of community members who ensure a fulsome review process is applied to each funding application. Funding recommendations are based on visiting agencies, interviews with each agency, and a committee review of the applications. Much effort is taken to provide the committee members with as much information as possible to make their decisions. We provide volunteers with training, documentation, and technical assistance so they can make informed and sound decisions.

In keeping with our commitment to engage community members in the process, our volunteer recruitment holds diversity and representation as priorities. Our recruitment process casts a wide net to encourage interest and participation from all demographic groups in the region. Volunteer commitment is 30 hours per year, primarily between November and February.

Being a CIC member is a great opportunity to help shape the future of our community! ■

United Way would like to acknowledge and thank the following community members for their time and commitment to participating in the Community Investment Committees:

- Andy Geres
- Jeneatte Amarelo
- Steve Kean
- Angie Goredema
- Jennifer McLeod
- Tyler Elcombe
- Barbara Muise
- Mariko Kerr
- Vaibhav Chemburkar
- Chris Pan
- Mat Campbell
- Yvonne Osawaru
- Dan Clancy
- Michael Hurlburt
- Diya Laha
- Muzaffar Malik
- Dustin Stuyt
- Patricia Christie
- Freeman Falloon
- Rajeev Varma
- Gwen Leepart
- Rebecca Morency
- Jen Quigley
- Skyanne Patey



**United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo**



Invest in Your Community

Through United Way

If you are going to save for your retirement, would you trust your investment dollars to just anyone? Of course not! You'd want to do your research, find out which investment would have the highest returns and you'd place your trust in a professional investment advisor who has proven her/himself in their field. Then, you'd sit back and over the years, watch your investments grow. Once in a while, you may even check your financial statements to see for yourself how your money has multiplied. Thanks to your careful investing, you reap the rewards and retire happily, sailing off into the sunset. Or something like that, right?

It's exactly the same situation when you invest in your community. You don't want to throw your donation dollars into the wind and hope they will do some good somewhere. When the dust settles on your bank account at the end of the month and you decide to donate to a charitable organization, you want to know every nickel will make a difference. You know it's important to give back to organizations that may have helped you out along the way and you are committed to building a strong community for your kids, your family, and

your friends. You're investing in people and making your world a better place.

Rather than take a chance and invest your donation dollars haphazardly, consider giving to the United Way. Here are four great reasons why:

Local focus. Every dollar stays right here in our region. Your donation will be invested in social-profit organizations and people here – where you live, work, and play. You likely know someone (or maybe even you) who has used the services/programs supported by United Way funds.

United Way is a registered charity, reporting to the Canada Revenue Agency every year. You can look it up online and see how much money comes in, how much is used for “overhead” and operating expenses and how much is given to the agencies. We're pretty transparent. To make it easier, we publish our financial statements every year in our Annual Report – which you can access on our website. These reports are audited. They are legit.

Social profit agencies receiving funds through the United Way are asked to submit reports every three months to let us know how the money is being spent. We carefully steward the funds to make

sure every dollar goes the extra mile. And, to make things even more exciting for you, we share the data collected in the reports with our members – you in our monthly newsletters, online and in award-winning speeches (kidding, we don't give a lot of speeches but when we do, they are packed with real data).

Just like a financial advisor who knows the investment market, we know our market too. The social profit sector – the business of helping people – is our business and we take it very seriously. We know about emerging issues and we tackle big social problems with passion and determination.

Working with the agencies, we collaborate, share resources, and make every effort to erase poverty, homelessness, addiction, and abuse from our region. It's no small task, but our team members are relentlessly looking for innovative ways to support our funded agencies.

United Way is your philanthropic investment advisor. Let us do the heavy lifting and you can rest assured your investment will grow a strong, vibrant community where everyone has the opportunity to thrive. ■

91%

feel reducing poverty
is important to our
region's wellbeing



87%

feel seniors do not
have adequate access
to affordable housing



86%

feel all residents
should be entitled to a
living wage



What we **KNOW** about the people in our region*

33%

of children have
vulnerabilities in areas
of early development



19%

of people (12 years and up)
feel extremely high levels
of life stress most days



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo

*VitalSigns Fort McMurray Wood Buffalo 2022. Based on a population of 73,837.

78%

are concerned about
the level of poverty



72%

struggle with mental
health issues



65%

reported an
inadequate supply of
childcare services



38%

feel a sense of
social isolation



54%

reported good or
excellent access to
food security



**1 out of
10,000**

people has been
hospitalized due to
significant opioid poisoning



6%

unemployment rate



Our Agencies

We are fortunate to work alongside an impressive array of community agencies and partners, each playing a crucial role in our efforts to alleviate poverty. By maintaining a diverse portfolio of poverty-fighting organizations, we can respond to changing needs, develop lasting solutions, and address critical issues. Together, we are all making a meaningful impact in our community.

From Poverty to Possibility



Healthy People, Strong Communities



All That Kids Can Be



United Way
Fort McMurray
and Wood Buffalo

For additional information,
or to make a donation
scan the QR code ➤

