

UNITED WAY INVESTS \$1.5-MILLION TO HELP COMMUNITY PARTNERS ADDRESS EMERGING ISSUES

Seven projects will take a proactive approach to fight against local poverty

December 6, 2018 —United Way Greater Toronto is announcing a \$1.5-million investment over three years to help community partners address emerging issues in the fight against local poverty in Peel, Toronto and York regions. This investment will support seven new projects that take a collaborative approach to creating systemic change.

This investment includes:

- 1. *The York Region Youth Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stabilization Strategy.*** Poverty is growing in the 905 – and being met with a lack of social infrastructure. This program will help partners from different sectors work together more efficiently to ensure that young people in York Region receive timely supports to reduce the likelihood or re-occurrence of homelessness.
 - Led by **360° Kids**, in partnership with A Way Home Canada, York Region Collaborative, Social Planning Council York Region and YouthRex.
- 2. *Building Resiliency and Access to Justice for LGBTQ2S Survivors of Violence.*** The LGBTQ2S community is vulnerable to incidents of violence and discrimination — incidents that often go undetected. This program will engage LGBTQ2S organization members, survivors of violence, policy makers, government officials, members of the police and media to create rapid response protocols, media strategies, advocacy and survivor support strategies to address escalating violence and reduce the vulnerabilities of LGBTQ2S people in our communities.
 - **The 519** in collaboration with community partners, government and policy makers, survivors of violence and the legal system broadly.
- 3. *#AndMeToo.*** While the Me Too movement has raised awareness about the issues, the day-to-day reality for many women has not improved -- the number of precariously employed women requesting law-related help has increased. This program will focus on advocacy to address sexual assault, harassment and coercion in the workplace. It will assess and direct services through research, focus groups and a public campaign to work towards reforming legislation.
 - Led by the **Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic**, in partnership with OCASI, CUPE National, UNIFOR Women's Right's division, Barb McQuarrie, Community Director, Centre for Research & Education, Western University; Fay Faraday, Associate Law Professor, Osgoode Law School; The Equal Pay Coalition.
- 4. *Toronto Supportive Housing Plan: Meeting the Needs.*** Supportive housing is an effective way to help people with addiction and mental health issues. This program will build and implement a consensus-based plan for supportive housing for people facing addiction and mental health issues.
 - Led by the **Canadian Mental Health Association**, in partnership with the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness, Canadian Mental Health Association and The Wellesley Institute.

5. **Parkdale People's Economy: Building Pathways towards Decent Work in Affordable Housing.**

You can't solve an issue if you don't know it exists. This program will focus on neighbourhood-based solutions in Parkdale, and produce research that intersects decent work and affordable housing. The data will be compiled by local residents who themselves are precariously employed and living in poverty. By training and hiring residents, the project will support local leadership and place-based solutions.

- Led by **Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre (PARC)**, in partnership with the Parkdale Intercultural Association, Kababayan, Silver Brush, Green Thumb Enterprises, Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, Parkdale Community Legal Services, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, West Neighbourhood House.

6. **Peel Community Benefits Network.** Community Benefits Agreements can support more than the bottom line – they can create meaningful careers and pathways to opportunity. United Way is developing a collaboration between government, community groups and residents to work with builders and leverage infrastructure investments in Peel Region to create employment opportunities for people facing barriers.

- A partnership with Indus Community Services, Family Services of Peel Region, Peel Poverty Reduction Strategy Committee, Peel Halton Workforce Development Group, the Region of Peel and United Way Greater Toronto

7. **Ontario for All.** Civic Engagement in public policy processes can drive meaningful change – placing communities at the centre of creating solutions that work best for them. This forum will continue to support community partners to ensure that residents have a strong, collective voice to combat poverty in all its forms. These initiatives will increase collaboration among resident groups by creating civic action planning workshops, a digital network, and civic action teams that sustain and encourage community organizing.

- Led by Toronto Neighbourhood Centres (TNC) and the Scarborough Civic Action Network (SCAN) which is trusted by Agincourt Community Services Association (ACSA), in partnership with Indus Community Services and other community organizations across Peel and York Region, our **Ontario For All** efforts will aim to strengthen our region's civic engagement capacities.

QUOTES:

“To truly solve the problem of poverty, we need to address systemic barriers to create opportunities for people. This investment is about helping community partners work together and work differently to tackle the big issues that are emerging in Peel, Toronto and York Region. Ultimately, these collaborations will create long-term change in GTA communities.” -- **Daniele Zanotti, President & CEO, United Way Greater Toronto**

“We're very encouraged that our program, *The York Region Youth Homelessness Prevention and Housing Stabilization Strategy*, will develop a system of care that involves improved service coordination

across sectors – with government, researchers and other organizations. In this way, we can be more efficient in our responses to ensure that more young people in York Region receive timely supports and reduce their likelihood of falling into homelessness.” -- **Clovis Grant, Executive Director, 360° Kids**

“The LGBTQ2S community continues to experience ongoing challenges in relation to violence and discrimination. We are thankful for this investment as it will increase our capacity to engage in meaningful conversations and partnerships and will improve the channels of communication with our communities and stakeholders. We are grateful for United Way’s support and leadership through this grant which will help us to advance our anti-violence work,” said **Maura Lawless, Executive Director, The 519**.

“We understand how important Community Benefits Agreements are in terms of giving individuals facing barriers an opportunity to secure good-paying jobs. We’re excited to be partnering with United Way and have already created a Community Benefits Framework in Peel. Further collaboration with government, builders and residents will make real change happen and connect residents with economic opportunities to build a better future and reduce poverty.” – **Sonia Pace, Co-Chair, Peel Poverty Reduction Committee**

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These grants are made possible in part by the generous support of The Jalynn H. Bennett Social Change Fund.

About United Way

United Way Greater Toronto is dedicated to fighting local poverty in all its forms, working with communities in Peel, Toronto, and York Region. Together with our partners, we create opportunities for a better life for everyone across our region. As the largest non-governmental funder of social services in our region, United Way Greater Toronto mobilizes people and resources to support a network of agencies that help people when and where they need it most. Join United Way’s #UprisingofCare and help us build a region where poverty has no power. unitedwaygt.org

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