



United Way
Greater Toronto

DIY (DO-IT-YOURSELF) GUIDES: VOLUNTEER FROM HOME

There's no denying that more individuals and families than ever before are in crisis because of COVID-19. And as always, we know that the desire to help others by giving back remains strong.

In this guide, you will find ways to contribute in creative, flexible and impactful ways while practicing physical distancing. You can take part in these activities on your own, with your colleagues, family or neighbours.

List of DIY Guides Included:

- Baby essentials kits
- Cozy cocoa kits
- COVID-19 protection kits
- Family meal kits
- Feminine hygiene kits
- Homemade masks for frontline workers
- Hygiene kits
- Literacy kits for kids
- Kits for kids
- Science experiment for kids
- Seed planting
- Seniors' activity kits
- Write A Note to Community Frontline Workers

Canadian Health and Safety Guidelines

As we maintain social distancing to reduce the spread of COVID-19, please refer to the Canadian Health and Safety Guidelines while participating in these and any other United Way volunteer activities. The Public Health Services has listed various prevention methods and can be found in [here](#).

Booking Information

For more information, contact your United Way partner or email donorengagement@uwgt.org



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BABY ESSENTIALS KIT

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: women

Women, often with their children, are forced to seek emergency and provisional shelter due to a combination of factors, such as intimate partner violence, mental health issues, and high housing costs. United Way invests in programs and services designed especially with women in mind and we know that supporting women means their children will also benefit.

Activity Description

Baby essentials are one of the biggest needs for mothers and families experiencing poverty. Help take that stress away for families during this challenging time.

Supplies

- Diapers
- Formula
- Baby wipes
- Baby blanket
- Baby bath wash
- Baby shampoo
- Baby Book or Toy
- Baby Bag or Tote Bag

Directions

- Fill the bag with the items you chose to get
- Write an encouraging note to the mother. Example 'Thinking of you'
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

- Deliver and donate to a local agency in your area
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COZY COCOA KITS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: senior isolation

With widespread anxiety across our community there is an increased need for mental health support especially for vulnerable seniors. United Way funds a broad range of services aimed at increasing access to mental health services and strengthen support networks to reduce social isolation.

Activity Description

Help spread cheer by creating Cozy Cocoa Kits for older adults. These kits will warm their hearts and make their days brighter.

Supplies

- Box of 8-ounce jelly jars
- Roll of holiday wrapping paper
- Box of mini candy or cookies
- Box of hot cocoa packets
- Bag of shredded gift filler
- Scissor
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Approximate Total: \$20

Directions

- Fill the jelly jar with a handful of shredded gifts filler-just enough to cover the bottom of the jar
- Put one hot cocoa packet and candy or cookies in the jar on top of the filler
- Place the metal flat disk on top of the jar
- Cut a 6-inch x 6-inch piece of wrapping paper
- Place the wrapping paper square on top of the flat disk
- Screw the ring on the jar.
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

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COVID-19 PROTECTION KIT

The Impact - #LocalLove in a Global Crisis

There's no denying that more individuals and families than ever before are in crisis because of COVID-19. And the network of agencies we support is reaching a critical breaking point. Some of the ways we can offer hope during this unprecedented community crisis is by spreading some #LocalLove.

Activity Description

Hygiene Kits are always in high-demand and is one of the biggest needs of our agency partners, especially in this time of crisis. Create kits that have supplies that can last for at least a month so people in need have what they need to maintain good hygiene.

Supplies

- Face Masks
- Gloves
- Disinfectant cloths
- Bar of soap
- Hand Sanitizer
- Laundry Detergent

Directions

- Collect items and put kits together using a plastic Ziploc bag
- Get creative and write an encouraging note with your own personal greeting. Example 'Thinking of you'
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

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FAMILY MEAL KITS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: food security

Many seniors, individuals and families during these times are struggling to access healthy food. Many are unable to cover all their essential costs and pay for basic healthy foods. Food insecure households may be forced to put their food budget towards other pressing expenses. United Way supports programs to improve access to high-quality, affordable, nutritional, and culturally-appropriate food in areas where it is needed most.

Activity Description

Everyone deserves a wholesome meal. Caring for our neighbors is key to a strong community. Show someone you care by gifting a meal to a family in need. Create a family meal kit to supply all the ingredients needed to make a homecooked meal. There are a few options that offer culturally relevant food items to meet the needs of families with different cultural backgrounds. The following is a list of meal kit options, supplies and an approximate budget per kit.

Option A:

- Jar of Pasta Sauce
- Spaghetti Noodles
- Dry Parmesan Cheese
- Salad Dressing
- Basket/Bowl (to hold ingredients)

Total: \$20

Option B:

- 2 Cans of Chickpeas
- Packet of Basmati or Long Grain Rice
- Can of Tomato Paste
- Small Packets of Spices – turmeric, chilli, coriander, cumin
- Basket / Bowl (to hold ingredients)

Total: \$20



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Option C:

- One Pack of Shelf-Stable Tofu
- Packet of Long Grain Rice
- Packet of Asian Noodles
- Soy Sauce
- Basket / Bowl (to hold ingredients)

Total: \$20

Option D:

- Canned Ackee
- Canned Red Beans
- Packet of Short or Long Grain Rice
- Packet of Flour
- Basket / Bowl (to hold ingredients)

Total: \$20

Directions

- Choose one of these options or put together a dinner of your choice
- Arrange all the ingredients in a bag, bowl or basket
- Leave a note in the kit, such as "Thinking of you!" or "Enjoy!"
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

- Deliver and donate your kits to a local agency in your area
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FEMININE HYGIENE KITS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: women

Women, often with their children, are forced to seek emergency and provisional shelter due to a combination of factors, such as intimate partner violence, mental health issues, and high housing costs. United Way invests in programs and services designed especially with women in mind and we know that supporting women means their children will also benefit.

Activity Description

Often ignored is the urgent and continuous need for feminine hygiene products. These items are not very affordable and becomes an expensive necessity for women in vulnerable positions. Our agencies always have a high demand for these products and supply is always short.

Supplies

- Feminine pads
- Feminine protection tampons
- Deodorant
- Body wash

Directions

- Collect items in a bag
- Write an encouraging note. Example 'Thinking of you' or 'Share some of your kindness today too'
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

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HOMEMADE MASKS

The Impact - #LocalLove in a Global Crisis

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Activity Description

Many supplies are needed to assist to front-line workers in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As more staff return to the workplace, masks will be needed to keep front-line community workers and their clients safe. You can help by creating homemade face masks to help supplement the limited supply.

Supplies

- Sewing machine and thread
- 100% cotton fabric (preferably double-layered with a tight weave)
- 1/8" flat elastic or 4 fabric ties made of the same fabric
- Scissors
- Ruler
- Straight pins

Cutting your Material

For mask:

- Adult: Cut one fabric rectangle 16" long and 8.5" wide
- Child: Cut one fabric rectangle 14" long and 6.5" wide

For elastic ear loops:

- Adult: Cut two 7" long pieces of elastic or up to 8" for a larger adult size)
- Child: Cut two 6" long pieces of elastic

For fabric ties (if you aren't using elastic):

- Cut four rectangles 18" long by 1.75" wide. Fold the long sides to meet in the middle, then fold in half again to encase the raw edges. Stitch down the length of the rectangles along the edge to create the ties. Ties can be cut slightly shorter for a child mask.



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Directions

- Cut fabric to adult or child size indicated above.
- With the fabric's pattern facing up, fold in half by bringing the two 8.5-inch sides together. Sew along the top edge with a ¼-inch seam allowance. This will create a tube.
- Turn the tube inside out so the right sides (pattern facing up) are on the outside. Press flat. Fold the two non-seamed edges inside ½ inch to create a folded finished edge. Press to smooth.
- To make the pleats, measure 11 ½ inches up from the bottom of the long edge and mark with a fabric pen or chalk. Make another line 1 inch above the previously marked line. Fold the top (seam edge) down to the first line making a crease. Flip the piece over, fold the crease edge down to the second line and press. Pin in place.
- Repeat the previous step two more times to create two additional ½ pleats. For further guidance on this step, watch this step-by-step [tutorial](#)
- To attach the straps or elastics, place the pre-measured elastics or ties at the top and bottom of the mask between the two layers of fabric and pin.
- Sew the sides of the mask and trim the threads. Your mask is now complete!
- Take a picture of completed masks and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Reference sites & Video Tutorials

- [How to sew a surgical mask for hospitals – free pattern](#)
- [Video tutorial on YouTube](#)
- [Facemask – a picture tutorial](#)
- [Facemask- sewing pattern](#)

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HYGIENE KITS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: homelessness

The combination of high housing prices, surging rental rates and record low vacancies has created a crisis for those looking for shelter. In 2018, combined “counts” in Peel, Toronto and York found 10,026 people using shelters, 24-hour respite services or living outdoors. United Way’s funding provides a range of supports to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness as well as to help people transition to or maintain housing.

Activity Description

Hygiene Kits are always in high-demand and is one of the biggest needs of our agency partners, especially in this time of crisis. Create kits that have supplies that can last for at least a month so people in need have what they need to maintain good hygiene.

Supplies

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Deodorant
- Shampoo & Conditioner or Shampoo 2-in-1
- Body wash
- Hand wipes or sanitizer
- Band-aids
- Comb or brush
- Soap
- Socks

Directions

- Collect items in plastic Ziploc bags
- Get creative and write an encouraging note with your own personal greeting. Example ‘Thinking of you’ or ‘Share some of your kindness today too’
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

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LITERACY KITS FOR KIDS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: child and youth poverty

A group that is overrepresented in poverty is children and youth. Evidence shows that there are gaps in cognitive skills and behaviours between low-income children and children who are not low income, even before they begin school. United Way funds programs critical in childhood development, characterized by brain development, increasing independence from parents, and growing attachment to peers.

Activity Description

The literacy kits are designed to focus on the skills young children need when learning to read while, at the same time, diving deeper into the book and its themes.

Supplies

- A children's book
- Related activities such as puzzles, coloring books
- Crayons or pencil colors
- Small bag

Directions

- Fill the bag with the items you chose to get
- Write a personal note of encouragement
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

- Deliver and donate to a local agency in your area
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KITS FOR KIDS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: child and youth poverty

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Activity description

To help kids keep active and learning at home and throughout the summer, make a kid's care kit filled with learning essentials, fun activities and goodies to send a child or youth to show them some local love.

Supplies

- Tote Bag
- Coloring Book
- Crayons
- Stuffed Animal or Toy
- Stationery – Pens, pencils, erasers, notepads, sharpeners
- Stickers
- Craft Supplies (Ex: Pom Poms, Pipe Cleanings Googly Eyes, etc.)

Directions

- Fill the totes with the items you chose to get
- You can make specific totes for older kids or younger kids and adjust the items by age
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

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SCIENCE EXPERIMENT VIDEO

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: child and youth poverty

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Activity description

In the spirit of “Distance Learning”, develop a fun, STEM-related activity for students to try at home. Record a video tutorial. We have included basic guidelines below and invite you to create the rest. Not a professional? Don’t let that stop you! Students are grateful for unique ways to connect. Knowing that you are thinking of them during this time is a gift.

Directions

- Record videos of a science experiment which is STEM based
- Video tutorial should be 5 minutes or less
- Target audience: students in 3rd-5th grade & 6th-8th grade; you may design your activity for one age group or recommend simple modifications that will allow application to both groups
- Make a connection to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)
- Ensure accessibility by leveraging supplies that are likely on hand and of little to no cost, such as paper, water, cups, etc.
- Keep instructions simple and well organized so that students of various learning abilities may participate with enthusiasm
- Make your video personal, engaging, and keep the camera steady
- Email your completed video to us at donorengagement@uwgt.org and we will forward it to the agency

Example of Video

- [Science Sunday – Experiments you can try at home](#)



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SEED PLANTING

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: food security

Many seniors, individuals and families during these times are struggling to access healthy food. Many are unable to cover all their essential costs and pay for basic healthy foods. Food insecure households may be forced to put their food budget towards other pressing expenses. United Way supports programs to improve access to high-quality, affordable, nutritional, and culturally appropriate food in areas where it is needed most.

Activity Description

Many community gardens are encouraging people to grow 'kitchen container gardens' at home which is a safe volunteer option in time of social distancing. Simple seedlings can be started in your home with most supplies in your own kitchen or garage.

Supplies

- Containers such as egg cartons, Dixie cups, plastic food containers or water bottles to start seeds
- Seeds such as lettuce, basil, peppers, mushrooms, any other herbs or vegetable seeds
- Potting soil, topsoil or any dirt will work for starting seeds
- Plant pots (optional)

Directions

- [Sample video tutorial](#)
- Plant seeds now, care for them for a month and deliver the plants to a community garden in June / July

Donate

- Decorate plant pots (optional) and deliver to your local community garden
- A list of community gardens in your area will be provided
- For more information or to be connected to a United Way agency in your community, contact your United Way partner or email donorengagement@uwgt.org

SENIORS' ACTIVITY KITS

The Impact - #UNIGNORABLE issue: senior isolation

With widespread anxiety across our community there is an increased need for mental health support especially for vulnerable seniors. United Way funds a broad range of services aimed at increasing access to mental health services and strengthen support networks to reduce social isolation.

Activity Description

Help spread kindness and joy by creating Activity Kits for older adults. These kits will give seniors a chance to be active and occupied during long days of isolation.

Supplies

- Crossword Book
- Post Cards
- Coloring Sheets
- Puzzles
- Pens
- Candy
- Letter pad
- Tote bag

Directions

- Arrange all the supplies in a tote bag
- Leave an encouraging note in the bag, such as "Thinking of You! Or You are loved! Or 'Enjoy!'"
- Take a picture of completed kit and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)

Donate

- Deliver and donate to a local agency in your area
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WRITE A NOTE TO COMMUNITY FRONTLINE WORKERS

The Impact - #LocalLove in a Global Crisis

There's no denying that more individuals and families than ever before are in crisis because of COVID-19. And the network of agencies we support is reaching a critical breaking point. Some of the ways we can offer hope during this unprecedented community crisis is by spreading some #LocalLove.

Activity description

Show your #LocalLove to frontline workers who selflessly continued to provide essential services to the members of our community and especially to those in vulnerable situations.

Supplies

- Card stock
- Blank white cards and envelopes
- Cutting tools like scissors
- An X-ACTO knife or a paper trimmer
- Paper-friendly adhesive
- Additional supplies for cards you choose to make

Directions

- Get creative and write an encouraging note with your own personal greeting. Example 'Thinking of you' or 'Share some of your kindness today too'
- Take a picture of completed card and tag @uwgreaterto on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#)
- You can get card making ideas [here](#)

Donate

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