

UNITED WAY CENTRAL ALBERTA



2022 IMPACT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge that the communities we serve are located in the Indigenous traditional territories represented by Treaties 6 and 7 and an historic Métis gathering site. We offer respect to this land and its 21 First Nations. United Way Central Alberta is committed to building stronger relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples in this region to ensure that we contribute to meaningful lasting prosperity. We pursue this work as individuals and as an organization.



Our VISION:

Thriving communities
where everyone can
reach their potential.

Our MISSION:

Strengthening vital
connections that support
people in need across
our communities.

Our COMMITMENT:

We are committed to
creating spaces where
diversity is celebrated,
inclusion is evident, and
everyone can reach their
potential.



2022/23

Last year we invested **\$1,011,000** to support a critical network of more than 34 programs and services. These programs helped over 22,932 local people and families.

CEO Report

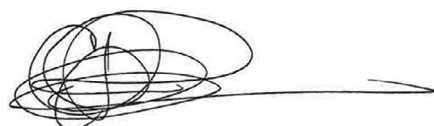
The past year at United Way Central Alberta (UWCA) continued an intentional pace of change as we set forth to design, release and begin to implement our new Community Impact Strategy. The community consultations and information we gathered across our region in 2021-2022 informed not only a new community investment strategy, how we collaborate in community and our advocacy efforts, but has shifted our internal operations, volunteer engagement and granting processes.

The Community Impact Council (the volunteer-led Council is responsible for investment decisions at UWCA) and staff worked over the fall to review the research and consider how UWCA could best position ourselves to improve lives in this region. We believe the best opportunity to enable people and communities to thrive rests in three focus areas: Ensuring access to Basic Needs, Increasing access to suitable Mental Health services, and creating Brighter Futures with new possibilities.

We understand that the best way to support people is with a holistic approach, considering the physical, mental, spiritual and cultural aspects of thriving. We acknowledge that culturally based practices have been intentionally erased, impacting generations of First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. Not recognizing different cultural practices has also led to the oppression of newcomers and people of colour. While we do not presume to define these cultural practices specifically, we understand their significance in enabling people to live a fulfilled life.

In February, we announced our new three-year strategies for supporting change in Central Alberta. We extended our current funded partner agencies grants an additional three months to ensure programming continued right through to the transition to our new multi-year granting cycle beginning in July. Thank you to our partner agencies who delivered incredible impact over the past three staggering years and continue to face the long-term social, economic and mental health impacts of the pandemic.

Going forward, and starting with this year's report, our impact across the region will look and sound different than it has in the past. As we continue the journey of learning and unlearning, we hope it becomes more meaningful. As we look back on the significant impact of our donor dollars to UWCA programming and programs delivered by partner agencies, I would like to extend gratitude to the community partners, donors, and volunteers who have generously contributed to making this all possible. All of your continued support plays a vital role in enabling United Way Central Alberta to fulfill our new mission of strengthening connections and fostering thriving communities.



Chelsea O'Donoghue, UWCA CEO

INVESTMENT:

\$1,011,000



Funding Distribution

\$563,755

Brighter Futures

48%

\$283,882

Mental Health

23%

\$174,610

Donor Designations

15%

\$163,512

Basic Needs

14%



Basic Needs

- 6 Agencies
- 6 Programs
- **Clients Served: 9,421**

Mental Health

- 7 Agencies
- 7 Programs
- **Clients Served: 1,811**

Brighter Futures

- 17 Agencies
- 1 Coalition
- 21 Programs
- **Clients Served: 11,700**

Donor Designations

Our donors always have the option to direct their donation to the charity of their choice. In 2022, \$174,610 was donor-directed beyond the \$1,011,000 investment in our three focus areas.

BASIC NEEDS

Sweating the Small Stuff

We are addressing the barriers that prevent people from meeting their basic needs in Central Alberta.

Reducing Stigma

Amidst economic fluctuations and unforeseen challenges, many Central Albertans struggle to meet their basic needs, including essential resources like menstrual products, school supplies, home utilities, and more. Through transformative initiatives like United Way's Period Promise, Enmax's Lights On Fund, and Tools for School in collaboration with the Outreach Centre, United Way Central Alberta has not only amplified broader conversation around these community issues but has championed local organizations to act and lead community change.

We understand that for communities to thrive, the needs of individuals living there must be met." said Chelsea O'Donoghue, United Way Central Alberta CEO. "Needs like period products, safe housing, stable income and social connections. This ensures that everyone can participate in tackling complex social issues."

In 2022, our work around Period Promise supplied over 62,000 period products to 39 schools and nearly 10,000 menstrual products distributed to 13 agencies across Central Alberta. Period Promise Policy Agreements with organizations and municipalities have also enabled us to address local needs while challenging menstruation stigmatization. A pilot project with the City of Red Deer saw the installation of barrier-free dispensers in all women's, men's, and gender-neutral facilities at the Collicutt Centre, G.H. Dawe Community Centre, and City Hall.

"Our goal is to ensure that users of our



facilities feel comfortable and safe accessing necessary products," said City of Red Deer Community Services General Manager, Sarah Tittermore. "We know that over half of the people who menstruate have struggled to afford products at some point in their life, and that lack of access can be a barrier to school, work and other activities."

Tools for School, another integral United Way community program delivered by Red Deer Outreach Centre, seeks to support academic success by ensuring children at all grade levels have the school supplies needed for an entire school year. Through the combined collection efforts of our community, Tools for School provided 1,100 backpacks filled with school essentials to students throughout Central Alberta.

Another essential United Way program helping people meet their basic needs is the Enmax Lights On Emergency fund. UWCA partnered with Red Deer Native Friendship Society and Canadian Mental Health Association Red Deer to aid 125 people and families facing financial difficulties avoid utilities disconnection last year.

9,421
People Helped

INVESTMENT:

\$163,512



Our Partner Agencies

Canadian Mental Health Association

- Navigation and Outreach

John Howard Society

- Client Intake and Liaison

Sundre and District Nutrition for Learning Society

- School Breakfast and Snack Program

Red Deer Native Friendship Society

- Enmax Lights On Emergency Fund

Canadian Mental Health Association

- Enmax Lights On Emergency Fund

Outreach Centre

- Tools for School

\$50
BUYS

15 Pairs of warm
winter socks
Sockey Day

\$100
BUYS

13 packs of 24 Pencil
Crayons
Tools for School

\$250
BUYS

25 boxes of 40
Tampax Tampons.
(enough for 50
periods (avg))
Period Promise

PERIODS
ARE A FACT OF LIFE



United Way
Central Alberta



ENMAX



**LIGHTS
ON
FUND**



United Way
Central Alberta



AltaGas

Basic Needs Survey



MENTAL HEALTH

Ensuring people who are facing a mental health issue, addiction or trauma are helped in a manner that meets their uniqueness.



Surviving Addiction and Alcoholism

Ken Makinaw's Inspirational
Journey to Recovery

In Red Deer, an inspiring story of courage, and community support shines a light on the power of overcoming addiction and alcoholism. Ken Makinaw's achievement of 18 months of sobriety stands as a testament to personal determination, community resources, and unwavering support.

"I have had a pretty traumatic addiction life," Makinaw said. "I was evicted from each place I had and every time, I had to start over from scratch."

49-year-old Makinaw came to Red Deer after living on the Ermineskin First Nation, followed by a year in Wetaskiwin. "I heard there were supports in Red Deer that would help me deal with my addiction," he said.

The "Many Healing Blankets" program at Safe Harbour, supported by the United Way Central Alberta played a pivotal role in Makinaw's recovery journey. The program offered a lifeline, providing shelter, counseling, and

essential tools for rebuilding his life.

A turning point came in April 2021. Makinaw faced a life-threatening overdose. "I took too much of something," he said. "My friend saved my life giving me CPR and ran into the drugstore to get me a Naloxone kit. The emergency services worker told me in the ambulance I had been dead for 15 minutes."

He continued, "After that, I went cold-turkey and I've been clean and sober for 18 months. I got tired; I just don't want to do it anymore. I reached out to Safe Harbour; they've always been there for me. I went to Poundmakers, I completed that, I got my head back on. I can think clearly. Things are starting to happen for me. I'm giving back because they've given me so much."

Makinaw also found mentorship and guidance from Elder Lynn, who adopted him as his own, and Makinaw fondly refers to him as "Pops." Makinaw said "Elder Lynn

says, 'How's it going my son?' I love everybody who has helped me. I know now how to deal with a crisis, I know how to reach out. It's not hard to pick up a phone."

An article from March 31, 2018, published by RDNewsNow, highlighted the commitment of organizations like Safe Harbour emphasized the importance of community engagement and financial backing in initiatives like the "Many Healing Blankets" program, which significantly aided Ken Makinaw's recovery.

Makinaw's story is filled with hope and underlines the importance of community-driven initiatives to address multifaceted challenges. It shows the impact of giving essential resources and a supportive environment to individuals.

To read the RDNewsNow article about Ken Makinaw's journey, scan the QR code:



INVESTMENT:

\$283,882



People were able to access affordable counselling services



People were helped to find a new way to cope with personal challenges.

Our Partner Agencies

Association of Communities Against Abuse
- Childhood Abuse Treatment

Canadian Mental Health Association
- Wellness Education

Catholic Social Services
- Individual and Family Counseling Program

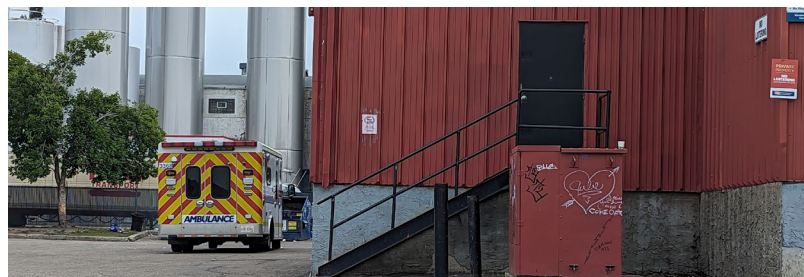
Central Alberta Safe Harbour Society of Health and Housing

- MIH-ET NATAW-HO AKOHPA (Many Healing Blankets Program)

Family Services of Central Alberta
- Counselling Services

Shalom Counselling
- Counselling Services

Turning Point Society of Central Alberta
- Harm Reduction Program & Rural Program



\$50
BUYS

One Wellbriety
Manual
Safe Harbour

\$100
BUYS

1-hr session with a Masters
- level clinician registered
with a professional body
Catholic Social Services

\$250
BUYS

An outreach worker to
provide 10 hrs of 1-on-1
support for clients in their
recovery journey.
Turning Point

BRIGHTER FUTURES

Nurturing Futures and Fostering Friendship

Emily and Sydney's Journey with Big Brothers Big Sisters Lacombe



Creating positive futures with new possibilities by building skills and strengthening relationships.



A Big Brothers Big Sisters Lacombe match is making a big impact on the lives of Emily and Sydney. Emily, who is studying to become a social worker, emphasizes how this match is shaping her path: "Being a part of Big Brothers Big Sisters has been more than just a volunteer role. It's an invaluable experience for my future career." Her dedication to giving back extends to her accumulated volunteer hours, which serve as building blocks for her journey in social work. "I've been able to put theory into practice, and that's immensely valuable for my schooling," she said.

"Making a positive impact on my community and the future generation feels good," she added. "No matter what's going on in my life, meeting Sydney lifts my spirits," Emily said.

Their bond is nurtured through shared activities. "Engaging in enjoyable and fun activities with Sydney lets me detach from the stresses of daily life. It's therapeutic in a way people might not realize," she said. They share activities like painting, baking, and even cleaning. "Yes, cleaning! It might sound weird, but it's something we both enjoy," Emily laughed.

However, their connection isn't limited to specific interests. "We're kindred spirits in so many ways," Emily said. "From crocheting to sushi-eating, from shopping to relaxing at the beach – we've built a bond through these shared experiences."

Emily shares that consistency is important for Sydney's growth. "Showing her she is worthy of being loved and having someone show up for her and stick to their word, in turn, builds her self-esteem and overall view of relationships for the future," she said.

One of the most significant impacts is the trust Sydney places in Emily: "I am not perceived as a 'buzzkill'. My hope is that my words and actions make a real impact on her," Emily added. This perception as a friend rather than an authoritative figure creates a unique dynamic. "She views me as someone 'cool', which helps us communicate openly," Emily explains.

United Way Central Alberta's support for Big Brothers Big Sisters is Building Futures, one connection at a time. Emily and Sydney's is a great example of United Way's goal of creating positive futures by building skills and strengthening relationships.



INVESTMENT:

\$563,755



Our Partner Agencies

Bashaw and District Support Services Association

- Family Wellness Program
- Home Support

Big Brothers Big Sisters Lacombe & District

- Community Mentoring & Blackfalds Mentoring

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Red Deer & District

- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Red Deer & District

Boys and Girls Club of Red Deer & District

- Camp Alexo
- After School Kids Clubs

Heartland Youth Centre

- Big Brothers Big Sisters Caseworker

kcs Association

- Early Learning and Early Intervention

Ponoka Youth Centre

- Child and Youth Mentoring
- Ponoka Youth Centre/Boys & Girls Club

Rocky Youth Development Society

- Clearwater Boys and Girls Club

Cosmos Community Support Services Ltd.

- Career Pursuit

Family Services of Central Alberta

- ABC of Financial Literacy

Junior Achievement of Southern Alberta

- Financial Literacy Volunteer

Outreach Centre

- Julietta's Place

Central Alberta Pregnancy Care Centre

- Maternity Care Program

Outreach Centre on Behalf of DRVIC Collaboration

- Program Coordinator

Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre

- Outreach Program

Red Deer Meals on Wheels

- Meals on Wheels

Schizophrenia Society of Alberta

- Peer Support

Spinal Cord Injury Association

- Community Development and Systemic Change
- Rehabilitation Support and Service Coordination

\$50
BUYS

Volunteer
orientation and
training
BBBS Lacombe

\$100
BUYS

One or two workshop
enrolments for
individuals, couples or families
Family Services Central Alberta

\$250
BUYS

Provides containers
for 142 meals.
Red Deer Meals on Wheels

#UnitedWeAreStronger

#UnitedWeAreStronger



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