



United Way
of London & Middlesex

Caring Report

Spring and Summer 2009

without **you**, there would be **no way**



Chuck Hounsell, Anthony Strangio, Zackery Denomy, Aden Hamza at 2008 Celebration

Celebrating generosity

Close to 300 people helped celebrate the generosity of our community at United Way’s annual Celebration event in February.

Despite the wave of job loss and anxiety about the economy, the people of London and Middlesex County continued to pledge their support. Thanks to their commitment, United Way exceeded its \$7.3 million 2008 Campaign goal by almost \$52,000. Most importantly, this meant United Way was able to increase its direct investment in the community to \$6.3 million for 2009/2010.

“Meeting our goal was important to help meet the needs that

increased as unemployment and the economy grew worse,” says Campaign Chair, Chuck Hounsell, a senior vice president at TD Canada. “When the recession unfolded we saw the worry on the faces of our friends who received layoff notices and in the increasing number of calls to counselling services. We were nervous it would be a challenging Campaign, and it was. However,” Hounsell adds, “we believed our community would respond to the increasing needs around them and do everything they could to help.”

The moving Celebration event featured seven people who each took a minute to share how their

lives have changed, with help from United Way. They also thanked those who helped make the change possible: those who invest in their community through United Way.

One person who shared his story was Anthony Strangio. Anthony was a Sponsored Employee, meaning his employer, General Dynamics Land Systems-Canada, loaned him to United Way for four months to work on the Campaign.

“I saw a lot of inspiring things that changed my life,” Strangio shared. “Getting to know some of the hardworking people who work in the community was one of the most enriching experiences. It really opened my eyes to the far reaching impact that United Way has within our community.”

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See the list of United Way’s investments in community services and initiatives for 2009/2010 at uwlondon.on.ca.



Meet Doug

Doug worked for McCormicks, a candy and biscuit maker in London. The pay was good but workers often spent decades doing jobs with few transferable skills and little upgrading. “I was trying to explain to them to get an education,” Doug recalls.

He understood the importance of an education from his own experience. As a boy, Doug struggled in school. “Back in the days when I was going to school, they didn’t know about ADD (attention deficit disorder),” Doug says.

Learning was a challenge for Doug. He dropped out of high school and worked hard to support himself with seasonal jobs. When he was 25, the old Unemployment Insurance program extended his benefits so that he could obtain a high school education. With help, Doug earned his diploma.

Knowing how difficult it was to get work without the necessary education or skills, Doug urged his co-workers at McCormicks to think about their futures and plan ahead. While they respected him enough to make him a leader in their local of the Bakery, Confectioners, Tobacco and Grain Millers Union, many scoffed at his warnings. They had jobs and even though a plant closure had been threatened for

years, it had never happened. But then, in 2007, it did – and it came with no severance or vacation pay.

Shortly after the company announcement, Doug’s member of parliament called him to say the province was willing to provide money to set up a resource or ‘action centre’ as part of the government’s Adjustment Advisory Program to help the workers. United Way was asked to manage the grant and to help set up the centre.

The centre helped workers identify their strengths, explore their options and get back into the job market. Doug says 95% of those who used the centre found a job, went back to school or decided to retire. Doug found work through a temp agency and runs a DJ business on the side.

“If it wasn’t for United Way acting like that, I don’t know what we would have done,” Doug says. “Since that time my life has changed considerably, from hopelessness to opportunity, and for that I will be forever grateful.”

About labour adjustment

The Adjustment Advisory Program is a provincial government program to help workers move on after company downsizing and plant closures.

Representatives from the company - ideally employees, unions and management working together - establish a physical resource or ‘action centre’. What is unique about the centres is that they are coordinated by co-workers for co-workers.

“It’s easier to ask for help from someone you know, and who you know is going to be empathetic because they’re going through the same thing you are.” explains Sharon Lupton, United Way’s Labour Programs & Services Coordinator. “The peer model increases the number of people who seek help.”

Workers are connected with services such as job-search, vocational, educational and financial counselling and personal support to help cope with the stress of job loss.

Increasingly, United Way is being asked to help with these committees and use our expertise and relationships to help leverage and manage the resources needed. We are currently involved with four action centres to help area workers find direction after job loss.

[Learn more at uwlondon.on.ca.](http://uwlondon.on.ca)



The current economy: what does it mean for United Way?

Even with incredibly generous donors and committed community partners, United Way is not immune to the challenges that the recession has created. The economy - and the result it has on people - has a direct impact on United Way's financial situation and, ultimately, on our ability to support much needed community services.

"We continue to be optimistic but we do need to have new strategies and contingency plans in place," says Ruth Young, Acting CEO, United Way of London & Middlesex.

Despite the benefit of a diverse local economy, there are financial and fundraising trends that have, or are expected to, affect United Way. These include:

Increased pledge loss

With the increase in unemployment and underemployment, we anticipate an increase in the number of donors who, despite their genuine intention, will not be able to fulfill their annual payroll pledges. United Way has compensated for pledge loss through its reserve fund in previous years but that reserve is now exhausted.

Increased donor designations

An increase in donors who designate to a specific charity

other than United Way reduces the total contribution we can direct to United Way funded community services.

Decreased investment income

The income from United Way's endowment fund is used to support future community initiatives. With less income, fewer initiatives will be able to be supported.

What we're doing

United Way is well positioned to face the economic challenges but is not prepared to take a 'wait and see' approach. The following are some examples of what we're doing to help lessen the impact now and to prepare for the future:

Continue what's working

- » initiate and invest in programs that help people in need now such as Family Networks and the advocacy program at London Employment Help Centre
- » maintain the success of our annual Campaign
- » collaborate with other funders to increase efficiencies and leverage resources
- » mobilize diverse sectors to work together
- » take a leading role in community collaborations focusing on prevention such as the Child & Youth Network's poverty strategy

Evolve and innovate

- » diversify our revenue streams
- » engage different people and engage people differently
- » consult our broader community to ensure our priority areas are right for the times
- » focus on initiatives that will create long-term solutions
- » build capacity of non-profits - United Way included - to better measure and communicate the impact of our work

"Now more than ever United Way needs to focus on understanding our community's most pressing issues, our unique role in helping to address them and how to better mobilize the broader community to bring together the right people and resources to find lasting solutions," says Young.

Learn more about the work of United Way at uwlondon.on.ca.



Do you have a story, suggestion or comment about United Way? We'd love to hear from you.

CEO search well underway

The search for a new CEO for United Way of London & Middlesex is well underway. Ruth Young, a recently retired United Way director, has returned as Acting CEO until a new leader is in place.

In March, United Way announced the resignation of its CEO, Bob Adams. "Bob leaves with our good wishes and gratitude," says United Way Board of Directors Chair, Keith Gibbons.

Strengthening your board of directors

Do you have an outstanding young person involved with your organization that you'd like to groom for your board?

United Way's London Life Young Leaders of Tomorrow is a unique program that enhances the leadership and decision-making skills of young adults and prepares them for prominent roles by offering specialized training on governance and placements on non-profit boards and committees.

Learn more about the program and how to get involved at uwlondon.on.ca.

Young Kipp recognized

A very surprised, Sharon Young Kipp (Thames Valley District School Board/Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation), received the 2008 Images of Hope Award at this year's Labour Appreciation Night.

Considered a lifetime achievement, the award recognizes the effort of an extraordinary individual from the labour community who has demonstrated leadership and provided outstanding volunteer service to United Way and the community. Nine other volunteers from local workplaces were recognized for their outstanding volunteer service to United Way.

Read more about Sharon and the other volunteers recognized at uwlondon.on.ca.



Sharon Young Kipp receives 10th annual Images of Hope award

United to serve more kids, better

United Way is pleased to have played a role in the recent unification of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters organizations.

United Way's planning and allocations volunteers identified the opportunity to serve more children more effectively with the two organizations working as one. United Way supported the process of unification by providing consultation and funding.

"This unification will build on the strengths of the two organizations and will allow them to bring their strengths together to serve more kids, better," says Gary West, Chair of United Way's Planning and Allocations Committee.

AGM June 24

Please join us Wednesday, June 24 for our annual general meeting, 4:30 p.m. at the Middlesex County Building at 399 Ridout Street in London. Hear highlights of our achievements over the year and our plans for the future.

United Way creates real, lasting change

United Way mobilizes the power of our community to create lasting change. We are a leader in understanding the root causes of social issues and bringing together the people and resources to find lasting solutions. By, inspiring people to come together, we have the power to make a real difference, in people's lives and in our community.

Contact us

Caring Report is the newsletter of United Way of London & Middlesex. It is published twice a year and is distributed to our volunteers, donors and partners. If you have a question, suggestion or address correction, please contact us at:

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