



**United Way**  
Halton & Hamilton



# THE WAY FORWARD

**STRONGER TOGETHER**  
Your Community Impact Report 2016 - 2017







# THE WAY FORWARD

## STRONGER TOGETHER

As United Way board chairs, we have been honoured to help lead our organizations during this crucial time.

This past year, our local campaigns once again benefited from remarkable community support. In total, more than \$11 million was contributed by generous people across this region. We are incredibly grateful to those donors, and to our campaign volunteers and staff, all of whom have never wavered from our commitment to creating possibility.

That is the strength of United Way. Along with our partner agencies, we share one vision and work together to provide vital support to individuals and families. We are proud to say that United Way's tradition of taking collective action to improve lives locally is still going strong almost 100 years after the birth of our national movement.

Locally, each of our organizations has its own history of achievement. Innovative programs have been launched, key relationships have been nurtured, and highly effective campaigns and events have taken place.

While it's rewarding to see that we have been able to have a positive impact in our own communities, we now know that's not enough. The issues we all care about are becoming increasingly complex and often cross sector and geographic boundaries.

We believe that, through collaboration, we'll be better able to understand root causes, find common solutions, and optimize our resources while maintaining a local focus on the communities we serve. That's why our boards of directors championed the initiative to create one United Way for this region – United Way Halton & Hamilton.

This impact report marks the end of an era for our individual United Ways. As we honour our traditions and every success of our past, we move passionately forward to address the complex issues in our communities. Our new United Way will continue to ensure money raised in each community, stays in that community – in other words, local gifts will remain focused on meeting local needs.

That's our promise to you, and to the many people our new alliance will serve in the years to come. We will be **stronger together**, and lead **the way forward** with confidence and compassion.

Burlington & Greater Hamilton  
Anne Bermingham  
2WA Consulting Inc.

Halton Hills  
Chris Cooke  
CIBC

Milton  
James McAskill  
O'Connor, MacLeod, Hanna

Oakville  
John Armstrong  
KPMG





## ALL THAT KIDS CAN BE

To succeed in school and life, children need role models and the skills to help them graduate and achieve their full potential. United Way supports mentorship, counselling, crisis prevention and recreational programs that nurture self-esteem, confidence, positive behaviour and a sense of belonging so kids can grow into engaged and productive adults.



**Trend:** United Way's focus on children and youth is one of the most powerful ways to address the root causes of many social problems. Children and youth in Canada today face a number of challenges that did not exist a generation ago. Alarming trends in areas like social disengagement, mental health, substance abuse and bullying point to some of the many reasons why children and youth struggle.



**Goal:** Our efforts to support kids helps to ensure the next generation will devote their energy to building strong communities and healthier societies well into the future.



**Results: 71,427 children served**



United Way supported programs gave Katona a part-time job, homework help and the opportunity to go on summer canoe trips.

## MAKING GREAT FRIENDS

When Katona was a child, her family moved a lot, so she had a tough time making friends. By the time she was on her fourth or fifth new home, getting close to anyone had become a scary prospect.

As a teen, Katona moved with her family to a community with United Way supported programs that gave her a part-time job, homework help and the opportunity to go on summer canoe trips. These programs connected Katona to mentors who supported her, inspired her and pushed her to work hard in school. She began to get "amazing" grades and find stable social connections for the first time in her life.

Katona says she was able to laugh and cry through tough times with the support of her "agency mom," a mentor at one of the programs she attended. "You're welcome from the jump," she says. "You get shown love."

When the family moved again, Katona made the difficult decision to stay in the community that had become a real home to her. At 18, Katona is now a community engagement outreach worker, helping young people connect to the same kinds of programs and services that changed her life. Katona plans to use the leadership and time management skills she acquired from United Way supported programs when she attends college in the fall.

United Way mentors Katona has met have played a big role in her life through instilling stability, success, and ambition. "My mentors gave me tiny bits of themselves."

"When I get older, I want to be a police officer... to give back to the community."



## WHAT IT MEANS TO GIVE BACK

Abdi knows that the opportunities he received as a child – opportunities created by donors who gave to United Way – changed the trajectory of his life. Without the community programs that kept him and his friends engaged, Abdi says, "Some of us would have been in jail or even long gone."

Now, Abdi has a clear goal. "When I get older, I want to be a police officer... to give back to the community." With that goal in mind, Abdi devotes every hour he can to volunteering. "One of my coaches, he helped me quite a lot. He told me what it means to give back to a community, and to aim for the younger kids because they're the new generation. They're the future. Everything that happens depends on them."

By engaging young kids in the kinds of camps and activities that were so important to Abdi growing up, he knows that "it gets them off the streets and gives them a better opportunity in life and in the future." When he looks at the programs that changed his life and at the volunteer opportunities he has today to build his connections, skills and contributions to his community, he recognizes exactly how important all of these initiatives are to creating a vibrant and healthy hometown. "Agencies like United Way that come together and help raise money for other agencies," he says, "if they didn't exist, Hamilton wouldn't be Hamilton."

## FEATURE DONOR

Susan Ksiezopolski  
Campaign Chair  
United Way Halton Hills

## WELL-ROUNDED IMPACT

I choose to donate to United Way because it is the only organization I know that addresses multiple social issues making a difference for a wide range of people; maximizing the impact of my donation and providing well-rounded support for the community.

I first became involved collecting donor forms and organizing fundraising events such as a bake sale. As I heard the stories of those impacted by United Way funded agencies, how their lives were transformed, I was hooked.

Throughout my public service career, I continued to stay involved as a canvasser and eventually campaign coordinator. Motivated to do more, I found out about the Sponsored Employee Program (loaned associate) and felt as though I had won the lottery when I was chosen! I spent four months in Halton Hills, experiencing first hand the hard work behind the scenes and the impact in the community. I learned that because United Way focuses on fundraising, the local agencies are better able to focus on doing what they do best, providing much needed services.

My four months as loaned associate had a profound impact on me. When I returned to work I was more committed to growing our work place campaign. I became a board member and have been with United Way Halton Hills since that time.



Since retiring in 2013, I have taken on the Campaign Chair role, as I am now able to devote more time. I've published three books donating all proceeds to United Way. I strongly encourage all to be generous, not only with monetary donations, but to give of their time and talents to help build stronger communities. Without United Way, our residents would not receive the help they need. They could be your friends, co-workers, neighbours, or your own family, we all benefit from the work that United Way does.

I am confident this amalgamation will not only allow us to leverage our combined resources, but will increase impact in our respective communities.





## HEALTHY PEOPLE, STRONG COMMUNITIES

The health of our neighbourhoods and the wellbeing of individuals have a profound impact on the quality of life in our communities. United Way supports mental health, parenting, wellness, recreation and social programs that give people the tools, confidence and support to live independently and take better care of themselves, their families and their community.



**Trend:** Visible minorities often struggle to access important supports and are unaware of services that could help them meet their needs. The most effective way to support people is to invest in preventive and asset-building supports which include building self-esteem, coping skills and dignity.



**Goal:** United Way works to build strong communities and promote health and wellbeing for everyone. Through surveying local needs, and focusing our efforts on vulnerable neighbourhoods, United Way helps vulnerable individuals and families build the assets they need to handle life's challenges and achieve their goals.



**Results: 283,926 people served**



Lee is passionate about giving those same kinds of opportunities to other people in her community.

## THE GOOD LIFE

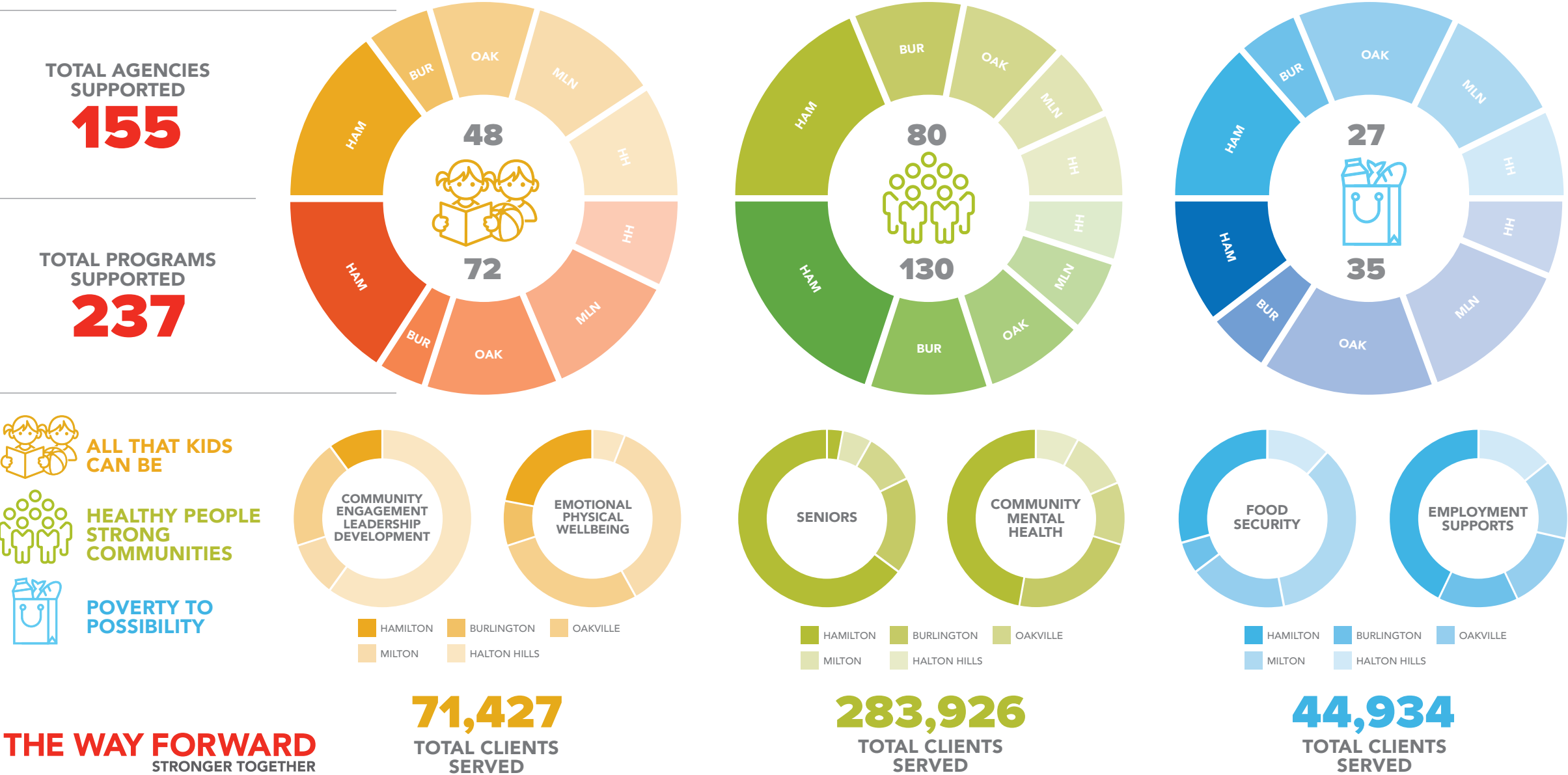
Known as “the famous one” in her community, Lee’s smile and energy are contagious. Always looking for a hug, she loves being connected to others.

At 35, Lee lives with her parents, but with the help of United Way supported programs, she is expanding her sense of independence and connection to her community. She has learned life skills ranging from ordering in a restaurant, to using public transportation and she’s now a weekly fixture at bowling, crafting and bingo events. A Special Olympian, Lee has a strong drive to stay active and engaged. She’s doing that in part by taking on a number of jobs including serving as a receptionist for two community agencies.

Lee, however, isn’t the only person in her family to benefit from United Way supported programs. Lee reports that when she is out participating in a program, her parents “get to sit back with their feet up and watch T.V., just like other moms and dads.”

Knowing what United Way supported programs have done for her and her family, Lee is passionate about giving those same kinds of opportunities to other people in her community. Unfortunately, the drop-in programs she attends have long waitlists. That inspired Lee to become a United Way volunteer so she could play a role in helping her “friends learn life skills too.” She has made more than 100 presentations in the community, to tell the story of what she calls her “good life” and the role that community support plays in making that life. “We can make more room,” she says, “if we raise more money. That’s why I love helping United Way.”

HERE'S HOW YOU CHANGED LIVES LAST YEAR IN OUR COMMUNITIES





## WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT

"We support the leadership of the four United Ways serving Halton and Hamilton in their bold initiative to amalgamate in order to better address the root causes that push members of our community to the social and economic margins."

— Joey Edwardh, Executive Director,  
Community Development Halton (United Way Supported Agency)

"I want to congratulate United Way with the development of a strategy that broadens our horizons and is building new relationships for the potential for longer-term impacts."

— Don Jaffray, Executive Director,  
Social Planning & Research Council of Hamilton  
(United Way Supported Agency)

"It shows immense courage and vision to embark on this degree of change... it's inspiring to us to see this kind of leadership from all of the United Ways in support of the greater good."

— Melissa Cameron, Director,  
Acclaim Health (United Way Supported Agency)

"It is important to be dedicated to what you do, but more important to be dedicated to who we do it for. United Way must become more effective and efficient due to the fact that it is good for those we serve."

— Glenn Harkness, Executive Director,  
Boys & Girls Clubs of Hamilton (United Way Supported Agency)

"For many years, the neighbouring communities of Halton and Hamilton have joined forces to support each other regardless of the geographic boundaries shown on a map, I believe that amalgamation of the United Ways will make us stronger, and that we can achieve more together than we could alone."

— His Worship Mayor Gord Krantz,  
Town of Milton / Chartered Member of United Way Milton

"I have supported United Way Oakville for many years. By amalgamating the United Way teams across the region, we have an exciting opportunity to increase our impact on our community's most pressing social needs. We can increase efficiency, better coordinate impact across the region and become more strategic in our solutions."

— Mike Miller, 2016 Leadership Cabinet Chair

## FEATURE DONOR

Julie Cole, Co-Founder  
Mabel's Labels  
Donor, Volunteer, Supporter

## I MAKE THE TIME

Julie Cole, like most professional working moms is a busy woman. Her day-to-day is a delicate home-life-work balance as she's not only the co-founder of Hamilton-based business, Mabel's Labels, she's also a parenting blogger, a regular conference speaker, TV contributor and a mom of six who is often traveling for work. It's no secret, she is busy.

However, being actively involved in her community and giving back is important to Julie. She has volunteered with United Way in various leadership capacities over the past couple of years and has utilized her various platforms to encourage others to contribute their time, talent and financial supports as well.

Quite simply, Julie makes the time; she finds the time because she knows the work of United Way is vital to those who need it most in our community. Between school drop-offs, tying up skates, getting kids to music lessons and doing the job that makes her able to pay for all this, Julie believes that volunteerism is something that needs to be built into our lives. "We've all heard the old adage: if you want to get something done, ask a busy person to do it," she jokes, adding "I give because I can. I give because we need long tables and no fences."

We hope you will join Julie and the many dedicated volunteers and donors alike at our table.

**GIVE BECAUSE OF THIS. GIVE BECAUSE  
WE NEED LONG TABLES AND  
NO FENCES.**





## POVERTY TO POSSIBILITY

To be financially stable and self-sufficient, individuals and families first need the knowledge and tools to maximize their income and savings. United Way supports money management, financial counselling, social enterprise and employment training programs that help individuals and families build their assets for long-term financial stability.



**Trend:** Poverty is a complex set of stubborn, intertwined social issues. United Way works to address poverty in a meaningful way by helping to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable people in our community, building the capacity of individuals to become economically independent and advocating for the removal of systematic and discriminatory obstacles to economic security.



**Goal:** United Way helps people experiencing poverty to develop plans and prepare for a better future – to move from poverty to possibility.



**Results: 44,934 people served**



As much as I love my independence, it's comforting knowing someone is always here.

## REIGNITED

Sarah had a great childhood, but then what she calls her “lived experience” altered the trajectory of her life. She began struggling with depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder and addiction. She found herself drifting through hospitals, shelters and treatment centres without finding what she needed. “I was sick of feeling like just another patient. I needed someone who understood me,” she says. Sarah found that understanding in transitional living and recovery programs made possible by United Way support.

“Sometimes people just need someone to talk to,” Sarah says. “If I had that a long time ago, I may not have had such a troubled life.”

Now sober for more than a year and a half, Sarah is utilizing her time in transitional living to the fullest. “There’s always somebody here 24/7. This is nice for me because as much as I love my independence, it’s comforting knowing someone is always here.”

Sarah believes that the programs she has accessed through United Way have given her hope for a brighter future. It’s a future she’s working to change as she trains to be a peer mentor in order to give back to her community. “There are so many people in need, and these programs give people hope, something I didn’t have for a long time. I have my spark back. I feel like I’ve been given a chance.”



## WHAT'S NEXT

For United Way in our region, the past year will be remembered as the period where we set the stage for transformation – the year our four organizations came together to redefine the future.

As leaders of United Ways in Burlington & Greater Hamilton, Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville, we came together, over the course of two years, to engage in a thoughtful, exhaustive process of discussion and enlightenment, with a commitment to become a more relevant, impactful organization. We engaged our board members, community partners and community leaders in conversations about the possibility of being **stronger together**. The result: United Way Halton & Hamilton (UWHH), a new alliance which has led to a forward thinking, newly structured strategy and focus, that became official on April 1, 2017.

This is the way many United Ways across Canada are going. It has become increasingly clear that, in order for our movement to remain strong, we need to broaden our scope and pool our resources.

UWHH will be a single, more effective and more sustainable organization that is able to deliver greater community impact in each of the five communities we serve, than the four United Ways have been able to achieve independently. While challenges remain, we see the opportunities as limitless and much broader in scope.

Amalgamation is creating efficiencies and opportunities that will allow the new United Way to invest more money, more wisely. This will help us generate substantial community outcomes, while maintaining strong local connections, so that we are well equipped to bring the generosity of our donors to their local communities. Already we're seeing the benefits of coordinating our efforts and optimizing our resources. And, as we plan for 2017-18 and beyond, we will continue to fine-tune our focus. Working alongside our new colleagues, volunteers and supported agencies, we're excited to be part of an evolution that has resonated widely, and offers extraordinary promise.

Please join us as we map **the way forward!**

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A heartfelt thanks to the staff, Board of Directors,  
Campaign Co-Chairs, the special event committees and all  
of our volunteers, for their dedication to the organization  
and tireless work.

Jeff Vallentin, CEO  
United Way Burlington  
& Greater Hamilton  
Interim CEO, United Way  
Halton & Hamilton

Janet Foster, ED  
United Way Halton Hills

Brad Park, CEO  
United Way Oakville

Kate Holmes, CEO  
United Way Milton



**United Way**  
Halton & Hamilton





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# **THE WAY FORWARD**

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[www.uwhh.ca](http://www.uwhh.ca)

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