

# AMBITIOUS FUNDRAISING TARGET TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY RECOVERY

In Halton Hills, 11.3 per cent of seniors live in poverty, according to the United Way of Halton/Hamilton, which has launched an ambitious campaign of recovery.

Over the past 18 months, COVID-19 has exacerbated already pressing issues for individuals, families and neighbourhoods experiencing inequities like poverty, homelessness and social isolation.

"Their needs, along with the challenges of those pushed into crisis for the first time, require attention now more than ever. It is hard to believe we have been going through the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020. COVID-19 has pushed so many of our neighbours into crisis," said Brad Park, President and CEO of United Way Halton & Hamilton (UWHH).

This year, the UWHH is

aiming to raise \$10.8 million to support the network of essential social services across Halton and Hamilton, "an ambitious goal" as the agency works to support the most vulnerable in the community.

The community is slowly beginning to open up, and vaccines provide tremendous hope when it comes to stemming the tide of COVID-19, however, the work to address deepening poverty - and the pressing issues at the root of it—is not a quick fix, he said.

"As we move into recovery, our goal is to ensure that the community's social safety net is there to help, not only in times of crisis, but far into the future as we continue to rebuild," said Park.

"This means calling on our partners and supporters to help community reach its fullest potential. With Halton Hills and its



UWHH photo

This year's United Way Halton/Hamilton campaign has an ambitious goal of \$10.8 million.

people, I am confident we can achieve this."

At the beginning of the pandemic, the federal government relied on UWHH to distribute COVID-19 emergency funding quickly and with the deepest impact; since then, UWHH has invested \$4.1 million in rapid response emergency funding to local agencies to

ensure they have the resources to meet the rising need, he said.

The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 have transformed every aspect of the community, and hundreds of thousands have come to rely on community programs and services to get the help they need, said Park.

In Halton Hills, UWHH funds 48 programs that serve more than 7,870 people. The average cost of a nutritious food basket in Halton has risen by 7 per cent since 2018 and 71 per cent since 2003, according to UWHH.

"We're looking forward to standing shoulder to shoulder with community

as we move toward recovery," said campaign chair Anna Iacobelli.

"Last year, gracious United Way supporters and partners rallied together as so many were plunged into crisis. Together, we were able to meet our target goal.

"Whether you are a long-standing supporter or considering giving for the first time, we hope you will stand united with us this year to help rebuild lives."

UWHH kicks off the \$10.8 million campaign with its signature Walk this Way, starting Sept. 24.

Teams are encouraged to walk, hike, bike or stroll 266 minutes in support of the 266 United Way-supported programs in Hamilton/Halton.

The goal is to raise \$50,000 with the walk.

For more information, or to make a donation, visit [www.uwhh.ca](http://www.uwhh.ca)

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