

Western University and United Way Elgin Middlesex:

A partnership based on strategy, shared goals and fierce local love

With a relationship built upon mutual support and community building initiatives that evoke thought and action, Western University and United Way Elgin Middlesex are creating long-term, lasting change in people's lives. Together, we share a long legacy of working together to address some of our region's most pressing needs and helping each other work toward achieving our respective organizations goals. This summary provides insights on how our partnership not only strengthens our community, but aligns with Western's strategic priorities.

Raising Our Expectations:

Create a world-class research and scholarship culture

- United Way staff and volunteers work in partnership with four multi-disciplinary research centres at Western or Affiliate Colleges on community planning tables, collaborative community-based initiatives and research including:
 - Center for Research and Education on Violence Against Women & Children
 - Centre for Research on Health Equity and Social Inclusion
 - Human Environments Analysis Laboratory
 - London Poverty Research Centre at King's University College
- In 2019, United Way Elgin Middlesex provided funding to the London Poverty Research Centre at King's University College to develop a set of local indicators based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to integrate social, environmental and economic targets for change. This localization is intended to inform collaborations, gaps, duplications and needs to move our community toward positive systemic changes

Leading in Learning:

Provide Canada's best education for tomorrow's global leaders

- Seven undergraduate students were provided with full year volunteer experience as part of Canada Life Youth United Advisory Committee, a youth-driven community grants program
- Two undergraduate geography students worked with the Community Impact team work on a CSL project
- A student from King's University College built their knowledge of the social sector by assisting in the administration for impact experiences and corporate volunteering across the community



Reaching Beyond Campus:

Engage alumni, community, institutional and international partners

- Faculty, staff and students raised over \$620,000 for the Community Fund in 2019, making Western one of Canada's largest university-based United Way employee campaigns
- "London for All" is the roadmap to end poverty in London in a generation. United Way led the ambitious project to implement the 112 recommendations from this report. Partnership with experts from Western was a vital part of this initiative's success. Contributors included: Jayne Garland – Dean, Faculty of Health Sciences, Western; Joe Henry – Dean of Students, King's University College; Mike Courey, Luis Patricio, Jeffery Preston, and Tracy Smith Carrier
- Four Western leaders serve on the United Way Elgin Middlesex Cabinet and Board of Directors
 - Andrew Hrymak, Provost & Vice-President (Academic)
 - Lynn Logan, VP Operations and Finance
 - Eric Mallory, AVP Financial Services
 - Maly Bun-Lebert, Manager, Centre for Research & Education on Violence against Women & Children
- Over 100 Western staff, students and faculty were connected to community through United Way Impact Experiences at many agencies across our community including: Y.O.U., Boys & Girls Club, Glen Cairn Neighbourhood Resource Centre and SARI Therapeutic Riding
- Annually, a Western employee is seconded to United Way as a Sponsored Employee and is provided with a 16-week community-based professional development opportunity and unique work experience

Taking Charge of Our Destiny:

Generate and invest new resources in support of excellence

- \$2,000 provided by United Way Elgin Middlesex to support student-led projects addressing poverty and other social challenges

If I can inspire one student, then maybe they can inspire 10 more.

Growing up was tough—I was diagnosed with depression and anxiety as a kid. In grade nine, I started attending a United Way-funded tutoring and mentoring program after school. The support I had there made such a big difference. During high school, my family struggled with poverty, which made life very hard. After we paid for rent or other necessities, sometimes we couldn't afford to pay our heating bill, or had no money left over for food. Eventually, my family of five became homeless and we had to split up to find housing.

The people at the tutoring program helped me get through it all—no matter what happened. They made sure that we were okay every night and had food to eat before we left. Without them we would have gone hungry. Just knowing that there was support was huge for me.

I want to work with the United Nations, or maybe become a human rights lawyer who focuses on Indigenous issues. And one day, I want to be the first Indigenous female prime minister of Canada. But for now, I'm going to school and working full-time at the same program that helped me so much. It feels amazing that I could take my own story and inspire other students to keep going and be the best that they can be.

