



## FINDING HOME AGAIN

"I should have been successful, but I wasn't.

When I was nine or 10, I was diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). That led to other diagnoses, generalized anxiety and depression. Growing up, I was in the gifted program at school, but I got into shouting matches with my teachers. Things like that happened a lot. Teachers were constantly telling me to leave. Eventually, I did — I'm a high school dropout. I pretty much stopped going to school in Grade 10.

My first job was working at a fast food restaurant, where they viewed me as difficult because I wouldn't take out the trash. My refusal to take out the trash was because of my OCD, which was germ-related and was very bad at that time. I would shower up to four times a day. I had little social life, which really hindered my growth as a person.

**THANKS TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO SHOW THEIR LOCAL LOVE BY GIVING BACK, UNITED WAY HELPED OVER 52,000 KIDS, FAMILIES, AND SENIORS ACROSS WINDSOR AND ESSEX COUNTY LAST YEAR.**

**"I volunteer with youth as a peer support worker - it really helps me to be able to help others." - AJ**

*United Way agencies helped AJ when he left home as a teen. Now he's reconnected with his family, thinking about school, and helping other young people.*

The OCD also made it difficult for me to get along with my family. I really love my parents. They helped me to find different doctors, but I felt like no one was listening to me.

My depression was so bad that it manifested as suicidal thoughts. By the time I was 18, it was way too much for me. I had no money. I had no education. I ended up leaving home. I would stay in the hospital for a 72-hour hold, or I'd go to a homeless shelter. I didn't want to go home. Eventually, I was connected with a social worker through a program that's supported by United Way. The social worker helped me get provincial disability support and access a range of services, including counselling, housing, peer support and skill development that made me feel more hopeful about my future.

Today, I volunteer with youth as a peer support worker at the agency. It really helps me to be able to help others. I no longer feel like a burden on society. I still work with my social worker one-on-one. We've looked at finding work for me and applying to schools as a mature student. It's nice to know that people care about me and want me to succeed. That's pretty powerful."



**UPRISING OF CARE:** The work of United Way is simply not possible without the incredible support of our donors, volunteers, residents and funded partners. Together, we're not only meeting the immediate needs of people in our local community, we're taking collective action to create opportunities for people to build their own prosperous futures. Visit [weareunited.com/ThankYou](http://weareunited.com/ThankYou) to learn more about our incredible donors, volunteers and partners. To see where your donations are being invested visit [weareunited.com/Results](http://weareunited.com/Results).

United Way strives towards the highest standards of accountability and trust. We are fully accredited under Imagine Canada's Standards programs, which evaluate the best practices of non-profits. To review our audited financial statements, visit [weareunited.com/FinancialStatements](http://weareunited.com/FinancialStatements).

Cover: Students play, read and enjoy a healthy snack at a Leamington After-School Program. ▶



**United Way  
Centraide**  
Windsor-Essex County

**IMPACT REPORT**  
TO THE COMMUNITY | 2017-2018

# UNLOCKING YOUTH POTENTIAL

Everyone wants to do better – to live better. It's only through collective action that we can achieve real and lasting change. Your generosity is an act of local love and it's changing lives in our community—for the better.

Here's how your gift is helping improve the well-being of local young people:

## AFTER SCHOOL SUPPORTS

### GOAL:

Kids participate in activities outside of school that help them learn, gain skills and get ready for the future.

### HOW:

By providing homework assistance, a healthy snack, and opportunities for physical activity, culture and recreation – all under the supervision of caring adults.

### SUCCESSSES:

472

Number of students attending an After School Program that runs five days a week.

9.6

What parents rate United Way-supported After School programs out of 10, in terms of how important it was to improving their child or family's overall situation.

252

Number of people who dedicated 31,208 hours to volunteering their time with youth in After School programs

▼ Students doing homework at an East Windsor site. Your donation supports six local After School program sites.



## BACKPACKS FOR SUCCESS

### GOAL:

The BACKPACKS FOR SUCCESS PROGRAM is led annually by United Way's Emerging Philanthropists group. The goal is to provide 1,000 backpacks filled with school supplies to children from across Windsor-Essex County. This program ensures that children who are living in low-income will be able to begin the school year with the supplies they need to succeed.

### HOW:

Community partners, sponsors, volunteers and donors rally together to donate supplies and funds to support the program. Once the supplies are in, the backpacks are stuffed and distributed to our local school boards and programs.

### SUCCESSSES:

1,000+

Number of backpacks stuffed and delivered to children across Windsor-Essex County

30+

Number of groups engaged in supporting the Backpacks for Success program in 2018

▼ Providing kids with back to school supplies increases classroom participation, attendance, student morale, and most importantly the confidence to succeed in school.



▲ United Way donors serve lunch to students in West Windsor.

## FOOD SECURITY

### GOAL:

The SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM ensures fewer kids are hungry over the summer so they can be ready to learn when they head back to school.

### HOW:

By providing a nutritious lunch and other activities to elementary aged children during summer when school nutrition programs are not available.

### SUCCESSSES:

892

Number of kids who were served 11,408 lunches (an increase from 655 kids last year).

17

Number of sites in Windsor and Leamington where the Summer Lunch program is delivered (an increase from 12 sites last year).

112

Number of volunteers engaged in making and serving lunches for the program.

## YOUTH CAREER BUILDING

### GOAL:

Remove barriers for youth who are living in low-income families, and help them succeed in school and develop skills to help them prosper in the modern job economy.

### HOW:

The ON TRACK TO SUCCESS program provides academic and financial support, mentoring, career building opportunities, and other family supports to high school aged youth to help them graduate and attend post-secondary or trade education.

### SUCCESSSES:

63

Number of students enrolled in the program, which operates in priority neighbourhoods in Leamington and West Windsor.

81%

Percentage of students who have achieved grades high enough to attend any post-secondary institution.

96%

Percentage of students who remain enrolled in the program – a retention rate much higher than similar Ontario student achievement programs.



▲ Success Coach Alicea assists a West Windsor On Track to Success student with his homework.