

United. Here.



Welcome to United. Here.

Your quarterly newsletter from United Way BC dives into inspiring stories and exciting updates from across the province, highlighting our work to help those in need.

In this issue:

- Annual fall fundraising campaign kicks off today!
- Update on wildfire recovery fund
- A big shout-out from School's Out
- Labour Day recognizes importance of unions
- Regional update from the Southern Interior
- A spotlight on our beloved volunteers

United Way British Columbia [acknowledges the homelands of the Indigenous Peoples](#) of this place we now call British Columbia, and honours the many territorial keepers of the Lands on which we work.

Our Collective Impact

Nutrition Facts
1 in 5 British Columbians
struggle to access
nutritious food.

United Way
British Columbia

Donate to help

UNITED
for access to food

A close-up photograph of a single slice of white toast on a white plate, with a bite taken out of it, set against a dark wooden background.

Fall campaign launches today

Today is United Way BC Day!

Across the province, communities are lighting up local landmarks tonight in our signature red to help kick off our annual fall fundraising campaign.

The annual campaign, hosted through workplaces and [online](#), highlights the need in our communities for programs that address food security. More than 1.1 million people in BC lack consistent access to nutritious food. We're aiming to change that.

To get involved, participate in one of the kick-off breakfasts happening in our regions all across the province. United with us for food access for all by donating through your workplace campaign or [online](#).

[Learn more about UWBC Day](#)

Wildfire response update

As wildfires impacted our communities this summer, United Way BC mobilized to support those affected. Through our United for BC Wildfire Recovery Fund, we're delivering both emergency relief and long-term recovery services to help residents rebuild and heal.

Our team supported evacuees from the Wesley Ridge fire on Vancouver Island as well as those fleeing the Peachland fire with food and gas gift cards, social connection, and grants for partner agencies.

Long after the fires are out, we continue to support wildfire-affected communities by ensuring sustained recovery through local partnerships and programs that rebuild social connections. Free emergency preparedness guides are available to download from our website.

United, we're helping BC communities rise stronger from the ashes.



[Learn more about the wildfire fund](#)



School's Out shout out

Did you know that United Way BC's School's Out Program runs all summer long too? During the school year, these after-school programs offer kids a safe and supportive space to keep learning, growing, and connecting. But when summer begins, many children lose access to the vital out-of-schooltime supports that they're used to.

Thanks to your generosity, School's Out Summer ensures kids can continue benefiting from free or low-cost, quality summer programs are essential in promoting kids' emotional and social well-being, academic success, physical health, and overall well-being.

Our friends at the School's Out program at Woodland Park Elementary have a special shout-out just for you. Thank you for helping ensure year-round access to vital supports!

[Learn more about School's Out](#)



Former youth in care thrive

Post-secondary students are back in school too and one program from United Way BC aims to ensure they are successful in their endeavours.

[Youth Futures Education Fund](#) provides money for basic living expenses, like food, rent, technology, and more, for students formerly in government care. For recipients like Josh, who is pursuing kinesiology in Victoria, the help is a lifeline.

Youth in care like Josh age out of the system at 19, often leaving them without a financial nor emotional support system. YFEF provides that, helping 580 students last year alone.

[Read Josh's story](#)

Josh says knowing that he can get support from YFEF 'feels incredibly relieving' and support from donors is 'incredibly kind and inspiring.'

♥ United Way British Columbia Day Trivia ♥

Thanks to your generous support, last year we were able to directly support how many people in our communities across BC?

200,000

300,000

400,000

500,000

ANSWER: 500,000 British Columbians

Your dollars fund vital programs that support seniors, children, young adults, and neighbours in need throughout BC. To learn more about where we invest in BC, check out our [2024/2025 Annual Report](#).

Labour Day 2025

This year, United Way BC joined Labour Day celebrations across seven communities, hosted by Canadian Labour Congress labour councils. From rock painting in Victoria, to shooting hoops in Kelowna, to marching through Prince George with union partners, our partnership with labour continues to find creative ways to celebrate and strengthen local communities while building a more healthy, caring, and inclusive province.

Labour Day is about more than celebration—it's about honouring working people and the victories of the labour movement. The eight-hour workday, weekends, and workplace safety regulations were not granted, but won through the determination of unions and activists.



The North Okanagan Labour Council hosted a labour history scavenger hunt that brought this story to life. At our table, they shared a poster from the 1981 postal strike, where Canadian Union of Postal Workers members held the line for 42 days and won a national precedent: 17 weeks of paid maternity leave. That history resonated with visitors—one couple reflected on how his mother had been on that very picket line, and how grateful they were to now have access to those benefits as their own young family grows.



United Way and the Canadian Labour Congress have worked in partnership since 1988, united by a shared goal: ensuring that workers and their families have the supports they need to thrive. We are deeply grateful to our labour partners for walking alongside us in this work and for continuing to build stronger communities together.



Regional Update: Southern Interior



Learn about the West Kootenay
Volunteer Driver Program!

Rides help reduce isolation

Transportation in smaller, more rural communities is often a challenge for seniors. Even for Audrey — a former college instructor, City of Castlegar mayor, and avid volunteer — who celebrated her 98th birthday this year.

"My daughter lives here," she says. "She does my grocery shopping and helps with paperwork ... but she has a life too. I try not to overwork or over-need anybody."

This is where West Kootenay Volunteer Driver Program fits, supported by a grant from United Way BC. Since 2006, it's offered non-emergency transportation across the region, helping seniors get to medical, social, and wellness-related appointments.

Spotlight: Volunteers

Volunteers make community connections possible

United Way BC relies on passionate individuals to bring compassion, energy, and local knowledge to every corner of the province. They're called volunteers and we'd like to introduce you to two of them.

Ray finds joy in the rhythm of a small town. Chatting with folks at the coffee shop, cracking jokes, and making sure those in need feel seen. It's who he is and why he volunteers with United Way BC.

Ray is no stranger to volunteering. He was one of the first 20 supporters of Greenpeace in Vancouver, coached softball and soccer, and led Scouts and Cubs. Since joining United Way BC's Emergency Transit Assistance Program, Ray contributed more than 21 hours to support the program, which provides transit vouchers to agencies to give to people in need.



Learn more about volunteering via
[United Way BC](#)

Lydia is also a volunteer who took the time to listen. During the Covid-19 pandemic while caring for her mom she saw first-hand how easily seniors become isolated. As a volunteer with Brella Community Services Society in Surrey, she became the first Senior Connector, offering one-on-one support with housing, government services, and simply listening to folks who haven't been heard in a long time.

United Way BC's iVolunteer program pairs individuals with organizations and causes they care about.

Through the online hub, www.ivolunteer.ca, non-profits post volunteer opportunities and volunteers find opportunities.

You can find your perfect volunteer opportunity today.

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