

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 fundraising campaigns shift into top gear
- Largest-ever disbursement of education funds
- Kapwa fund transitions into recovery era
- New food security reporting shows bleak outlook
- Appreciating our Labour partners
- Regional update: Fraser Valley
- Spotlight: Social Prescribing

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



### FUNDRAISING UPDATE

## Fundraising provides much-needed dollars

Your generosity is outstanding!

Our annual workplace campaign launched in September with United Way BC Day, which saw local landmarks in communities across the province light up in solidarity. This campaign provides critical revenue generation and involves the participation of over 400 organizations and their workforces.

Our fall fundraising campaign was able to raise much-needed dollars for food security programs across BC. Not only that, we also raised awareness of the challenges people face as they try to put food on the table this holiday season.

Giving Tuesday saw hundreds of donors join the global movement to do good and give generously to United Way BC. And it's not over yet: Give to United Way BC before the end of the year and earn a tax credit for yourself.

By making your end-of-year donation to United Way British Columbia today, you're supporting local programs and services throughout our province, such as community kitchens and food banks, out-of-school activities for kids, helpline services for those who need support, and so much more.

[DONATE NOW](#)

## YOUTH FUTURES EDUCATION FUND

### Largest-ever investment of education funds

Inflation and economic uncertainty have left many post-secondary students facing tough financial decisions about essentials like rent and food.

For former youth in care, the situation is even more challenging, as they often lack the financial support of family or a stable network.

In response, United Way BC has made its largest-ever investment of \$700,000 through the Youth Futures Education Fund (YFEF), which provides flexible financial assistance for essentials like rent, groceries, childcare, and technology, allowing students to concentrate on their education rather than survival.



We released the funds early to provide immediate relief and ensure that former youth in care can maintain the stability they need to focus on their studies and achieve their post-secondary goals.

To learn more about what YFEF means to its recipients, check out Kiarah's story.

[Read Kiarah's story](#)

## KAPWA FUND UPDATE



UNITED  
for people in need

A central image showing two hands in silhouette, cupping a glowing heart shape. The background is a soft, warm gradient, suggesting a sunrise or sunset.

*Thank you for supporting*  
**United Way BC's Kapwa Strong Fund**

### **A community comes together after tragedy**

After the tragic events at Vancouver's Lapu Lapu Day Festival, the Filipino community continues to rebuild and recover.

Along with the outpouring of love and support, United Way BC and Filipino BC launched the Kapwa Strong Fund, inspired by the Filipino value of shared humanity, to provide urgent aid and culturally sensitive healing programs. Recovery efforts included food support, translation services, art therapy, and safe spaces at cultural events to rebuild trust and resilience.

This tragic event has strengthened community interconnectedness and inspired long-term healing efforts, including a new endowment fund for sustained support.

[Learn more about recovery initiatives](#)

#### FOOD SECURITY UPDATE

### Food bank use hits record-breaking levels

This year's [HungerCount reports another record-breaking year](#) for the number of individuals turning to food banks. With 1-in-4 British Columbians experiencing food insecurity, our food banks are reaching capacity.



Since 2019, we've seen:

- +200% increase in number of people with employment using BC food banks
- 75% of people using food banks are renters
- 32% rise in the cost of food in BC

Despite being stretched to their limits food banks are responding with ingenuity. MLAs from BC's provincial government recently toured United Way BC food hubs to see those innovative programs providing services in the Lower Mainland, adapting to meet the unique needs of each neighbourhood.

[Read more](#)

#### LABOUR PARTNERSHIPS



### Labour Appreciation Night celebrates success

On Nov. 20, more than 250 guests gathered for the 31st Annual Labour Appreciation Night, presented by Pacific Blue Cross, to honour the incredible contributions of union activists and community leaders across BC.

[2025 Award Recipients](#)

It was a meaningful reminder of how strong partnerships with labour help transform lives in our communities. A big thank you to everyone who contributed to making this a memorable and successful night!

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## Regional Update: Fraser Valley



### Hi Neighbour leaves lasting legacy

Thousands of Fraser Valley residents were devastated by the November 2021 floods. People lost homes, livestock, and, in some cases, livelihoods. United Way BC's Emergency Response Initiative quickly kicked into gear: supporting volunteers, facilitating the donations of goods and services, and stewarding dollars from donors to address important social needs from organizations.

After this rapid response initiative, United Way BC Hi Neighbour Sumas Prairie provided longer term social resilience building for the community.

As Hi Neighbour Sumas Prairie moves into the legacy phase of the initiative, we celebrate the dedicated Community Builders, Community Champions and United Way BC staff who led recovery efforts helping to bring residents together to rebuild community.

[Read more about Hi Neighbour Sumas Prairie](#)

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## Spotlight: Social Prescribing



### **Seniors program offers solutions for solitude**

Imagine living in isolation for years. Cut off from community, grieving a loved one, and struggling with depression. For one senior on Gabriola Island in the Central and Northern Vancouver Island region, this was her reality.

[The United Way BC Social Prescribing program](#) offers a holistic approach to health care that recognizes the powerful influence of social and environmental factors, such as isolation and lack of community connection, on a person's overall well-being.

Through this program, older adults are connected to non-medical services and activities in their communities that support their physical, mental, and emotional health. Referrals are made by primary care physicians or other health professionals, helping seniors access the support they need to thrive.

Services may include walking groups, art classes, and volunteer opportunities. Each activity is designed to reduce isolation, support mental well-being, and enhance quality of life.

Thanks to the Social Prescribing program and the compassionate support of a Community Connector named Mel, this story about a lonely senior has a happy ending.

[Learn more about Social Prescribing](#)

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♥ **United Way BC Trivia** ♥

United Way BC provided funding early to Youth Futures Education Fund to support former youth-in-care with flexible financial assistance for essentials like rent, groceries, childcare, and more. How much was United Way BC's investment?

\$300,000

\$450,000

\$500,000

\$700,000

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