

All Families are Strong



be change
make change
see change



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Families are one of the most important building blocks of our community. Strong families are characterized by a low incidence of violence, high economic security, and high involvement in community affairs. Targeting the source of family issues helps strengthen our community's families.

the facts: building strong families

United Way has identified three long term outcomes within this priority: families are free from violence, families with complex needs are supported, and families are resilient and supported by their community. Through a combination of funds, research, and skilled staff and volunteers, United Way supports local programs and initiatives that help strengthen the families of this community.

Families are free from violence

Family violence often stems from root causes such as poverty, parenting stress, and dysfunction in the parents' family of origin. In fact, 90% of domestic homicides in Waterloo Region are preventable. This suggests that if we as a community address the root causes that underlie family violence, we can help these families before it is too late. Breaking the cycle of abuse while understanding the need for more comprehensive family supports is a key priority of this community. United Way invests in programs and services that help families escape violent situations through various means such as safe housing and counselling supports, treatment and intervention for violent offenders, and services that encourage participants to make positive, lasting change in their behaviours.

Families with complex needs are supported

Difficulty in one area of life often leads to obstacles in other areas. Surprisingly, 80% of adult mental illness emerges during adolescence, often resulting in increased challenges when completing school and attaining economic security. Of those people experiencing homelessness and using formal shelter services in Waterloo Region, 35-45% suffer from mental health issues. United Way supports a range of complementary programs that address the challenges faced by families with complex needs. Some of these services include individualized support, peer support, one-on-one volunteer relationships, and respite services.

Families are resilient and supported by their community

Family has been cited as the most important basic unit of every society and community. Ongoing research demonstrates the need for programs and treatments that consider the needs of all members in a family. Community development and outreach efforts that strengthen the social networks of families are also critical. United Way invests in a number of programs and services that help families cope with emotional, social, psychological and relationship challenges, providing them with the strength and confidence necessary to prosper.

