



United Way Maritimes 2025 Campaign Communications Guide for Fundraisers

It's that time of year again! As we all gear up for another campaign season, we want to prepare our awesome fundraising teams with the tools and resources you need to run a smooth, successful campaign. This communications guide has been developed to help! In this document, you'll find

- Our 2025 Campaign theme, explained
- Key messages related to our campaign theme
- Clear calls to action you can include in your communications with donors
- A story bank you can pull from when presenting, emailing, or meeting with donors
- Links to helpful resources like Conversation Guides, FAQs, our 2025 Annual Report, and more

So, let's get into it!

i) 2025 Campaign Theme

Our Campaign theme for 2025 is: **"United is the Way Forward."**

Why we chose it:

"United is the Way Forward" is more than a campaign theme, it's a call to action. In the face of growing social challenges and economic uncertainty, now is the time to come together. United, we are stronger. United, we can move positive change forward.

ii) Key Messages

When we are out speaking with donors and prospective donors, we want to ensure we are all confidently sharing the same messages. These messages reinforce our Campaign theme and help donors understand the answer to the question "Why United Way?".

1. Together, we can solve our community's greatest challenges. **United** is the **Way** forward.

*"The challenges facing our communities are complex. Poverty, hunger, social isolation, mental health and addictions, and housing insecurity are all growing social issues that feel insurmountable. But we are not powerless. United, we are finding bold, innovative, local solutions that change lives. **United** is the **Way** Forward."*

Key points that this messaging reinforces:

- We rally communities, donors, nonprofits, partners, and individuals with lived experience to create real solutions.
- Every voice, every contribution, and every action helps shape a better tomorrow.
- Solutions come when we work across sectors, geographies, and lived experiences.

2. Together, we are stronger in uncertain times. **United** is the **Way** forward.

*"In times of economic hardship, the strength of a United community is critical. When we lift each other up, we all succeed. **United** is the **Way** forward."*

Key points that this messaging reinforces:

- Economic pressures and uncertainties are affecting everyone, in every community.
- United Way is nimble and adaptable. We find innovative solutions to address new and growing challenges impacting our communities.
- During times of uncertainty, United Way is there, providing stable funding for our partner organizations and ensuring there are reliable, effective programs and services available for those who need them most.
- Your support helps us respond swiftly and strategically to shifting needs.

3. Building stronger communities, together. **United** is the **Way** forward.

*"Together, we are building communities where everyone has the chance to live with dignity, purpose, and hope. **United** is the **Way** forward"*

Key points that this messaging reinforces:

- It takes all of us, working together, to make our Maritime communities the best they can be.
- By working together - neighbours, businesses, government, and organizations - we create lasting change.

4. What feels heavy alone is possible together. **United** is the **Way** forward.

*"The power of a united effort goes far beyond what one person can do alone. Every donation and act of generosity multiplies to build stronger, more vibrant communities. **United** is the **Way** forward."*

- One individual's actions become part of something much bigger. Donating, volunteering, and advocating all matter, and they all add up for impact.
- What feels heavy alone is lighter when we carry it together.
- When we each do a little, we achieve a lot.

Highlighting the Unification:

A stronger United Way for the Maritimes. **United** is the **Way** forward.

*"Seven United Ways have come together as one to better serve our region. With combined strength, shared resources, and a unified vision, we are meeting today's needs and tomorrow's challenges head-on. **United** is the **Way** forward."*

- This unification marks a bold step forward in how we serve communities across the Maritimes.
- We're more efficient, more strategic, and more impactful – streamlining services while deepening local reach.
- We are future-ready: adaptable, resilient, and built for long-term community impact.

iii) Calls to Action That Highlight our Impact Areas

In 2025 we introduced our new CI Framework, outlining our key areas of focus and impact. To inspire giving and help donors understand how their gifts are being put to work in our communities, you can use these short and simple calls to action:

Food Security

Everyone should know where their next meal is coming from. You are increasing access to safe, nutritious food so that nobody in our community goes hungry. Donate today, because **United** is the **Way** forward.

Housing & Homelessness

Everyone, in every community, has a right to housing. You are helping people experiencing homelessness find stability and a safe place to call home. Make your gift, because **United** is the **Way** forward.

Wellbeing & Safety

Income should never be a barrier to wellbeing. You are removing barriers and bring mental health care within reach for everyone. Donate today, because **United** is the **Way** forward.

Social Inclusion & Access

Everyone deserves to feel like they belong. You are increasing access to safe, inclusive spaces where people can connect to community and increase their quality of life. Please make your gift today, because **United** is the **Way** forward.

Education & Employment

Everyone deserves to have the opportunities needed to live with dignity, hope, and purpose. Your support helps ensure education and employment opportunities are there for people when they need them most. Please give generously, because **United** is the **Way** forward.

iv) 2025 Story Bank

Stories are an excellent tool for engaging donors and inspiring action. Wherever possible, we encourage you to use stories to demonstrate to donors the impact their gifts are having on local lives. This story bank is not exhaustive, so please reach out to the Marcom team if you are looking for a story with a different focus.

PEI

Navigating mental health challenges, and thriving

For years, Family Service PEI has been a lifeline for Islanders navigating mental health challenges, helping people find their footing when life feels overwhelming. As the province's only community-based counselling service, their impact is far-reaching, offering both in-person and virtual support to those who need it most.

Thanks to a longstanding partnership with United Way of PEI, Family Service PEI is able to increase its capacity and offer subsidized therapeutic counselling to Islanders who might not otherwise be able to afford it, ensuring that income is never a barrier to care.

For Melanie, that support was life-changing.

After years of living under the weight of untreated depression, chronic illness, and the trauma of medical scares, Melanie found herself in a local clinic, desperate to be heard. A referral to Family Service PEI marked the beginning of a new chapter; one built on healing, resilience, and reconnection.

"In therapy, I realized I wasn't just dealing with a physical illness," she recalls. "I was grieving. Grieving the life I used to have, the energy I used to depend on, the version of myself I had lost."

Through Family Service PEI's counselling support, Melanie began to process that grief and rebuild her sense of self. A symbol of that journey came in the form of a wooden giraffe carving named Matilda.

Melanie learned that baby giraffes fall six feet at birth. That fall? It's not gentle, but it's necessary. It jumpstarts their first breath, and within an hour, those wobbly legs start to stand tall. That resonated with Melanie, and now Matilda is her symbol, representing resiliency, grace, and standing tall even after the fall. "I carry her with me everywhere now. When life feels overwhelming, I look at her and I remind myself: breathe, stand tall, and look up."

The impact of Family Service PEI, made possible in part through United Way of PEI's stable funding, extends far beyond individual counselling sessions. It provides a foundation of support in a province where access to affordable mental health care remains a challenge.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, United Way of PEI is ensuring that more Islanders can access the tools and support they need to not only survive, but to thrive.

"I'm here because of the support I received through Family Service PEI and United Way. That support gave me a lifeline when I needed it most, and I will be forever grateful." - Melanie

Central New Brunswick

Sue's Story: A Journey from Discomfort to Community

Raised in a family of nine in Saint John, Susan's early life was marked by trauma and dysfunction. Despite these challenges, she persevered, earning a Human Services diploma and building a life. She got married, owned property, and had a career. At age 28, a struggle with addiction began, escalating into a period of homelessness that led her to seek a new beginning in Fredericton.

The journey was far from easy. She found herself cycling in and out of a women's shelter and living in a tent. While living rough, she experienced an incident that served as a stark, terrifying moment of clarity. It convinced her to accept an offer for a home in the 12 Neighbours community, a place where people who have experienced trauma and homelessness can find a safe place to heal. United Way provides funding to 12 Neighbours to help support residents to achieve independence and stability.

Even with a home, Sue's struggle continued. She grappled with addiction and mental health issues that left her feeling isolated and scared. It was a harrowing low point that led her to a turning point and to seek help once more.

This time, her path to recovery led to an outside rehab facility. It was there that she learned a crucial lesson, echoing a guiding phrase from a favourite journal:

You're going to have to taste this bitter before you can appreciate the sweet.

It was a lesson she took to heart, realizing that the struggles were part of her healing process.

An opportunity to return to 12 Neighbours with the support of their community contingency program helped play a vital role in her recovery, providing accountability and routine. Her dedication and commitment to the program led to an opportunity to work in the 12 Neighbours property maintenance department, where she learned new skills like woodworking and painting. The contingency plans and programs at 12 Neighbours are deeply individualized, which helps each resident focus on their own personal healing and growth.

"The reward of being nine months clean isn't a physical thing—it's getting to live in a nice, quiet, safe neighborhood, the opportunity to have a job, and be around good-minded people. The programs here at 12 Neighbours are awesome; these people are taking a chance on us. Even though we have all been broken, we are becoming stronger together as individuals and as a community."

Sue recently started the 12 Neighbours entrepreneur program, which has helped her rediscover her passion for woodworking. Having worked with wood for years, Sue can use the resources and support to sell her unique pieces in the onsite 12 Neighbours Ventures initiative, located inside its social enterprise Neighbourly Coffee.

Today, Susan's life is profoundly transformed. The reward, not a physical possession, but a restored sense of peace and purpose.

Saint John, Kings & Charlotte

A fresh start, with support

Tanya came to the Saint John Learning Exchange in early 2023, feeling like she was starting over – separated from her daughter, her husband having been arrested, and no stable place to live. She felt alone and hopeless. Searching for a fresh start, she found Saint John Learning Exchange's BEST program, funded and supported by United Way Saint John, Kings & Charlotte, through an online search.

BEST stands for Basic Education & Skills Training, and it's for adults who want to develop themselves as a whole individual. Program facilitator Janelle explains that

often their learners come seeking an accreditation. “They often have a desire to finish their GED or adult high school graduation, and I can certainly help them with that, but it’s so much more than that.” The program helps learners develop personalized goals that can help in several different areas of their lives. They offer training for things like money management, soft skills development, digital literacy skills, CPR and first aid. “It’s really a self-pacing kind of program which is really flexible for them.”

A unique aspect of the Learning Exchange’s programs is their incentives. They believe learners should be compensated for the time and effort put into working towards a better future. Incentives help learners achieve bigger goals, have more confidence, and reduce their own barriers to success. Coupled with their wrap-around supports, the vast majority of learners move on to jobs or post-secondary education upon completion of their programs.

Tanya began working with Janelle from the BEST program, and, shortly after her intake, her pride and confidence in herself were reignited. Tanya passed two GED exams but, with encouragement, switched to the Adult High School Diploma program – moving quickly through credits with one-on-one coaching support.

Beyond academics, she received domestic violence support and her first laptop, all at no cost. She found a community, rebuilt her self-esteem, and discovered new goals through connections in class. Now preparing to apply to a PSW program, Tanya says she wouldn’t have made it without the support she received. The day her transcript was sent, she finally felt proud, capable, and ready for what’s next.

This is just one example of the many lives that are changed thanks to programs at the Saint John Learning Exchange, made possible by the generosity of United Way donors.

Pictou County

Karma Closet is serving up success

Students at Northumberland Regional High School in Pictou County get excited about lunch time. It’s not just because they get a break from classes and a chance to socialize. For nearly 200 students each day, lunch time means they get to take advantage of the Karma Closet free lunch program, with tasty and nutritious meals – with a side of learning.

Karma Closet started as a literal closet, where students could come to pick up a snack or clothes if they needed them. It’s since expanded, to include hygiene products and

snacks available in bins around the school, lots more clothing, and the daily meal program.

Megan Henshaw and Carly Barnes are this year's co-leads of the program. Both volunteered with Karma Closet for all four years of high school. Megan runs the weekly meetings and helps out with lunch, while Carly manages the free clothing program.

The free clothing program accepts donations from the community, but it's more than just making them available. "I sort through them and make sure what we're putting out is appropriate for the season, and if we think people will actually wear them," Carly explains. "Whatever we don't keep, we discard and give back to Value Village, and then we keep whatever else we have in the School's Plus room." At any given time, there are t-shirts, jeans, jackets and hats available for students to choose.

The incredible lunch program

"Sometimes I'll serve or help clean dishes, but mainly I organize the volunteers to do different things around the school," says Megan. There are 42 student volunteers across four grades, helping to do everything from filling the bins to serving students to washing dishes. "Every Monday we sit down with the group of volunteers, and we organize five or six people to help a day."

Ten minutes before the bell rings, a group of students assembles in the room where the food will be served, putting food into serving dishes and preparing for the influx of students who are about to show up. Each day, they have a salad bar with three salads, two or three soups and four hot meals. The meals preparation is part of classroom curriculum, where 16 students per semester take part in the Grade 11 course. They do everything from planning the meals, to budgeting, to preparing the food. In 2024-25 they served 19,000 meals, at a cost of \$2.22 per student. The most popular meals? "Definitely mac and cheese, grilled cheese, and pizza," says Megan.

Building volunteer skills

Student and teacher volunteers are key to the success of the program. In addition to student volunteers, 30 staff also volunteer their time, taking on tasks like monitoring the line, tracking the number of meals served and supervising students. The student volunteers know this is a great opportunity that will help them in the future. "It's a great working opportunity," says one student. "I get to talk to people every day and see how they are."

The program also reduces stigma around food insecurity and poverty.

"If you forgot your lunch, you just want to have something to eat, maybe you have food at home and maybe you don't - it doesn't matter. No one's judging you, because everyone uses it." - Megan

Lunenburg County

Youth in Lunenburg County are thriving, thanks to United Way and YMCA

Youth in and around Lunenburg have a safe, supportive space where they can build skills, relationships and a sense of belonging; thanks to the support of United Way donors. The YMCA Southwest Nova Scotia has a number of programs to ensure youth are getting opportunities to thrive, and it all started with a grant from United Way Lunenburg in 2009.

Before the YMCA programs launched, youth in Bridgewater didn't have a lot to do. There were no youth programs for kids over the age of 12 aside from fitness and childcare programs. But that changed when the YMCA started a Friday night program funded by a United Way Lunenburg grant. It was so well-received by local youth that the older kids wanted to volunteer to help younger kids. From there came the Youth Leader Program, and eventually, the King Street YMCA Youth Centre which opened in 2012.

Building skills for life

The Youth Leader program operates out of the King Street Youth Centre and is one of three YMCA programs receiving funding from United Way Lunenburg. It provides youth with several skill-building opportunities, like learning to cook, budgeting and other workshops. They're involved in decision making for the programs under Youth Leadership, giving them some responsibility for its success. It's a safe space where they can play games, socialize and make friends. They also spend hours volunteering in community.

One parent of an autistic 12-year-old youth leader explains what a difference it's made in their child's life.

"Cooking classes, interaction, trying new things with other children, youth leader programs, and having the opportunity to be a junior youth leader with other children has taught him many life lessons that as a parent I'm unable to teach him." He's able to employ coping skills learned elsewhere in real-life situations. "The impact is great. He speaks more, talks in social situations, and can express his feelings and offer his thoughts now. This time last year, he couldn't do that."

Kim Whitman-Mansfield, the program director, says the goal of the program is prevention. "The things kids were concerned about in 2009 compared to now have changed dramatically," she says. She's watched how world events have impacted local kids, resulting in increased mental health challenges, substance abuse and self-harm. But despite these pressures, offering kids a safe, judgement-free space is clearly making a difference. "We've never had any destruction or fights, never had to call the police. We treat youth with equity and empathy, empowering them to take responsibility for their actions."

Testimonials from their participants also demonstrate how this approach is working. "We're the next generation, we're like the future of tomorrow," says one participant. "We can make a great society for us when we grow older. I learned that we are more capable than we think."

Thanks to the generous support of United Way donors like you, this program has helped young people in Lunenburg County trade isolation for inspiration. With every shared meal, coaching session, and mentorship moment, this program continues to light a new path forward.

Colchester & Cumberland Counties

Maggie's Place - Building Community through Playgroups

For 26 years, United Way funding has been the foundation for Maggie's Place, allowing them to nurture families and build vibrant communities across Colchester and Cumberland counties. While how that happens has changed over the years, they're still committed to addressing social isolation and fostering connection for parents and young children in their communities.

For many parents of young children, everyday life can be very isolating. Maggie's Place's opens up the opportunity for parents to get much needed socialization that would otherwise be hard to do so as a new parent. "It's often the only outing some people have all week, the only interaction with other adults and children," says Colchester sit manager Nancy, about the playgroup program. "It's a safe, trusted space where support is readily available." Parents know they can come to a playgroup on a tough day, find someone to talk to, and have their child engaged.

Serving rural communities

Their programs bring developmental activities, parenting information, healthy snacks, and even essential items like food and winter gear to rural communities. These communities include Debert, Stewiacke, and Bible Hill in Colchester County. In

Cumberland County, programs serve families in Wallace, Springhill, Oxford, Advocate, Parrsboro, and Pugwash.

Cassie, a program participant in Colchester County, says the program improved her mental health and her connections in community. "The simplicity of talking to another parent that is at the same stage as you and dealing with the same issues as you, has had a massive effect on making me feel normal and validated," shares Cassie. It's impacted her children's behaviour and relationships too:

"There is no doubt that these outreach programs have contributed to my children's independence by providing a safe space where they can freely interact with others, explore and play."

Adaptability

The adaptability of Maggie's Place is also a testament to its enduring success. They consistently think outside the box, adapting program locations as needed. They also connect families for shared travel and find solutions for safe walking, removing transportation barriers.

Ultimately, Maggie's Place provides more than just playgroups. It's a place where children make connections with future classmates, and parents build a crucial community of support that often extends far beyond their time in the program. Thanks to the support of United Way donors, Maggie's Place continues to be a cherished and vital resource, creating ripples of connection and well-being throughout the community.

HRM

Support in times of change

Katrina began attending Club Inclusion's Drop-In program in early 2025 during a time of great change. Katrina's father, her primary caregiver, passed away. She and her sister Brittany were navigating a significant transition. Brittany stepped into the role of primary caregiver and was looking for a supportive environment where Katrina could thrive, connect with others, and build a community.

Joining The Club Inclusion quickly became one of the most positive changes in Katrina's life. She looks forward to every visit, knowing that each day brings something new and exciting. Whether it's a creative arts and crafts session, a lively dance party, or sharing meals at Supper Club, Katrina finds joy and fulfillment in the variety of activities.

"I like volleyball, art, swimming, and dancing," Katrina shares with a bright smile. She especially enjoys taking part in Paint Night, which takes place monthly on Tuesday evenings: "I enjoy painting because it's fun. My favorite thing to paint is animals."

Now also a member of the day program, Katrina is thriving. She's made close friendships, discovered new interests, and gained confidence through meaningful social interactions. Being a part of an inclusive community has shown a remarkable transformation in her independence, communication, and sense of self.

As she looks ahead, she's excited to continue taking part in her favourite activities with her friends and experience new opportunities offered through the Club. Thanks to the generosity of donors, Katrina's story has become a beautiful example of how connection, support, and community can spark incredible growth.

v) Links to Helpful Resources

2025 UWM Annual Report: [United Way Maritimes 2024-25 - United Way Maritimes](#)

CI Framework Conversation Guide: [CI Framework Conversation Guide.pdf](#)

Unification Donor FAQ (2024): [United Way Maritimes FAQ - UWH.pdf](#)

Conversation Guides: [Communications & Brand](#)

Branded Templates: [Communications & Brand](#)

Logo Suite: [Communications & Brand](#)

Impact Area Snapshots: [Communications & Brand](#)

Campaign Material Request Form: [MARCOM Material Request Form 2024.docx](#)

Workplace Campaign Team Sharepoint: [Workplace Campaign Team - Home](#)

Looking for impact numbers for your region? Check out the 2024-25 Annual Report!

Looking for statistics you can use? Check out the Impact Area Snapshots!

Questions about housing projects? Check out the FAQs and Conversation Guides!

Want more info on our new CI Framework? Check out the Impact Area Snapshots & CI Framework Conversation Guides!

Happy fundraising and reach out to Emily McMillan for any questions around donor communications and campaign materials!
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