

## United Way Kingston, Frontenac, Lennox & Addington Strategic Plan 2013

The Board and staff of the United Way serving KFL&A have developed a new Strategic Plan to help guide the organization over the next 5-7 years.

### **Process:**

The Board first reviewed and revised its mission, vision and values statements. A Strategic Planning Committee was recruited to design the process for Strategic Planning, which included stakeholder interviews and focus group sessions with funded agencies and staff. A total of 75 people shared their impressions about the issues, future trends and the role of the United Way.

The Board then participated in facilitated discussions to review this information and articulate a set of desired outcomes. Strategies to achieve these outcomes were developed.

### **Statement of Purpose**

To guide their work, the Strategic Planning Committee developed the following statement of purpose:

To: Develop a challenging forward looking plan for the evolution of the role and work of the United Way over a 5 – 7 year horizon that aims to materially improve the health and sustainability of the social fabric of our community.

In a way that:

- Builds from an informed understanding of the social needs of our community today, while anticipating emerging challenges as demographics and society change into the future.
- Applies best practices and encourages innovative approaches to improve effectiveness and outcomes of our work
- Brings increased focus to underlying causes to influence public social consciousness with appropriate and balanced consideration for a hand up, while recognizing the ongoing desire to address immediate needs.
- Collaborates with key stakeholders and critical thought leaders who can influence outcomes while building credibility and community confidence in the United Way.

So That: Our United Way strengthens the capacity and capability for people in the community to care for one another by meeting urgent needs and addressing root causes today and into the future.

### **Environmental Scan**

The following steps were undertaken to provide information about our current and future state. First, data and input was gathered from key informants: 75 individuals were consulted, including community leaders, frontline agencies, volunteers and donors. These interviews were conducted by Board members and staff. The input was then analyzed and summarized. This information (i.e. data interpretation and context) guided the development/reaffirmation of outcomes.

The process of consultation with board, staff and stakeholders identified strengths that have contributed to the organization's success. These conversations also confirmed that the community, by and large, feels that the United Way is living its mission and mandate, and that it is headed in the right direction. It will be important for the United Way to continue to build on these strengths. A summary of the findings from these conversations is included in this document (Appendix 1).

## Existing Strengths

United Way is an organization that learns and evolves, growing organically to meet community needs, building on our successes and constantly striving for improvement and excellence in all areas.

- We have a strong, motivated and engaged Board, staff and volunteer team.
- We have a robust Resource Development plan. This plan is reviewed annually, with in-depth analysis forming the basis for strategies that maximize our fundraising potential. Through a strategic process, we explore new opportunities, adapting to changes in demographics and the economic climate as required.
- Our marketing and communications strategies are targeted and include new and emerging trends in social, print and other media that provide effective ways to communicate our key messages.
- Through existing and new opportunities, we continue to build engagement in our target audience i.e. workplace and community donors, youth, seniors and Next Gen.
- Volunteers and staff work collaboratively with agencies and fund vital programs in KFL&A.
- We use an outcome measurement process that effectively measures and communicates program impact.
- We partner with other funders including the City of Kingston and Service Canada to distribute funds collaboratively.
- We offer programs that build and strengthen capacity in our community. These include the Volunteer Centre, Labour Community Advocate (union counseling), Leadership Development Services (board governance), Community Data Consortium and Caring for Others.
- We facilitate and participate in networks including: Food Providers Network, Homelessness Service Providers Network, Dental Coalition, Housing Advisory Group L&A, Homelessness & Housing Advisory Group Kingston, Children & Youth Services Planning Committee.
- We are working with diverse sectors of the community to increase awareness of the issues and address root causes of poverty reduction, youth homelessness and affordable housing.
- We increase the awareness of the importance of early years, working towards children in our community being given a chance to succeed in life.

## United Way Mission, Vision, Values

The United Way mission, vision and values were revised based on input from Board and staff.

**Mission:** “To build and strengthen our community by bringing people and resources together to facilitate change.”

**Vision:** We see a future where people are self-sufficient in a community where individuals live with hope, dignity and a sense of belonging.

**Values:** We will be known as an organization that:

- ✚ Operates with integrity, transparency and accountability to the highest ethical standards to ensure public trust
- ✚ Provides leadership in driving social change, partnerships and collaborative innovation
- ✚ Respects community wisdom by considering diverse viewpoints
- ✚ Harnesses and engages the talents and resources in our community to enhance a philanthropic culture
- ✚ Promotes volunteerism through creating awareness and engagement.

## Desired outcomes:

Based on input from the community and information collected from consultation with stakeholders, we have identified the following outcomes:

1. Human care services will be available to those who need them the most. We will advance optimization of community support systems through better coordination, integration and streamlining, reducing duplication of effort and resources, and effectively leveraging community resources and expertise.
2. A shared community plan will be developed to respond to forces of change in our community, seeking alignment and community consensus on critical causes that we believe need to be championed.
3. The community will see us as a leader in the social service sector, as a place where they go for information regarding social issues impacting our community, and where they seek us out for informed opinion, policy development and thought leadership.

## Strategies to achieve these outcomes

**A) Human care services will be available to those who need them the most. We will advance optimization of community support systems through better coordination, integration and streamlining, reducing duplication of effort and resources, and effectively leveraging community resources and expertise.**

How will we do this?

- The focus of our efforts will be centred on the people who directly benefit from these services.
- We will identify gaps and challenges in service delivery systems from a client perspective.
- Acknowledging that our funded agencies are partners and have frontline knowledge of the issues, we will work with them to reduce duplication of effort and resources at the system level, ensuring more effective and productive use of overall community resources and expertise.
- We will review our funding and outcome measurement processes to ensure that we continue to focus on programs and initiatives that demonstrate the most impact.
- In addition to tracking annual program outcomes, we will develop processes to track the impact and long term outcomes of preventative programs.

**B) A shared community plan will be developed to respond to forces of change in our community, seeking alignment and community consensus on critical causes that we believe need to be championed.**

How will we do this?

- Building alignment on the causes we have identified  
We will identify the critical issues facing the people of KFL&A.
  - Our current focus is on poverty reduction, youth homelessness and early years.
  - We will participate in community conversations and analyze information and data to identify gaps and issues in our community.

- Based on this research, we will evaluate what currently works and begin the process of consultation where there are opportunities for community development.

Our community plan will focus on poverty reduction, rather than alleviation.

- We have identified, through community consultation, 5 key themes to be addressed: Health, Housing, Supports to Education, Skills Development & Employment, Social Services & Community Supports.
- We will engage the community in conversations and solutions, ensuring representation from government, agencies, private and public sectors, Labour, business and individuals with lived experience.
- We will work collaboratively with these groups, facilitating input and conversations that lead to action plans.
- We will identify potential solutions and actions to address the root causes of poverty.
- We will adapt our policies and funding models to address some of these root causes.
- We will measure and evaluate along the way to ensure we are achieving our stated outcomes.
- We will work with the City of Kingston and other partners to increase awareness of the issue.

Working with youth and the community, we will develop a plan that mobilizes local capacity to identify and address the unique challenges faced by youth and end youth homelessness,.

- We will participate in a Canadian pilot project (as one of just two communities in the country) to develop processes and plans to address underlying root causes of youth homelessness
- As part of this pilot, we will access resources and best practices from the Canadian Steering Committee and share our own learning and plans with others in Canada.
- We will also seek input from the Youth Homelessness Steering Committee, and consult with local partners and youth.
- We will then implement a final plan, based on what we learn from our consultations and using best practices from across the country.

We will make KFL&A child friendly so every time we make a decision, it is through a lens of: “Is this good for our children?”

- We recognize that we have an opportunity to work together as a community to positively influence and improve the lives of young children.
- We will continue to build awareness about the importance of early years, ensuring that people know that maximum brain development occurs between the ages of 0 and 6.
- We will encourage people, through Success By 6 Week, to embrace the concept of “Take the Time, Make the Moments Matter”.
- Through data analysis, we have identified 7 high-risk neighbourhoods in KFL&A.
- We will map data and services, consult with residents, identify what is needed in these neighbourhoods, review programs and confirm changes needed to help children become ready to learn when they go to school.

**C) The community will see us as a leader in the social service sector, as a place where they go for information regarding social issues impacting our community, and where they seek us out for opinion, policy development and thought leadership.**

How will we do this?

- Using both quantitative and qualitative data, including anecdotes and community conversations, we will continuously research the issues that impact people in our region.
- We will become knowledgeable about these issues, seeking information and consulting with individuals with lived experience, agencies and researchers.
- We will continue to build strong relationships in the community, participating in local initiatives and groups.
- We will work with partners and agencies collaboratively to provide education, awareness and reports on emerging issues and their potential impact.
- We will use our research, knowledge and partnerships to help influence public policy.
- We will use this information and research to determine how best to invest resources for maximum impact.

### **Next Steps:**

The CEO and staff will develop a detailed implementation plan, which will identify action required for the Board, CEO and staff over the next 5-7 years. This plan will include timelines, measurement, evaluation and reporting processes. The plan and strategies will be reviewed and monitored periodically to allow for course corrections as changes in the organization or environment may require.

## APPENDIX 1: SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

### Introduction

As part of the current strategic planning process, we sought input from key stakeholders. They included frontline agencies, key volunteers, donors, organizations, community leaders and staff. We asked questions related to current and future critical needs of the community and about the role of United Way.

Between January and March 2013, we consulted 75 individuals.

### Summary

In general, the feedback was positive, reinforcing the direction the United Way has been taking.

### Critical needs and issues

Respondents, almost unanimously, pointed to the need to address root causes, rather than symptoms. Several also thought we should be engaging with seniors, youth and the next gen demographic.

Respondents expressed concern about the economy, government cutbacks and the impact this will have on employment for our community, agencies and individuals. Concerns were also expressed about poverty, housing, coordination of services, seniors and youth. Surprisingly, mental health and early years were mentioned by just a few respondents.

### Role of United Way

Respondents felt that the United Way was high-profile, respected, engages the community and is in a position to leverage change. A number of respondents suggested that we have a role to play in advocating on issues of concern and in facilitating a better coordination of services to avoid duplication. Respondents encouraged us to continue to identify issues and gaps, saying we could play a larger role in increasing awareness and in advocating and mobilizing people around issues.

### Emerging Themes

The following themes were raised as the community's most important social issues – current or emerging:

1. poverty
2. housing, homelessness
3. impact of increasing number of seniors
4. the economy, government cutbacks and jobs

The most prevalent themes raised regarding the role for the United Way were:

5. helping to avoid duplication of services and improving their coordination
6. advocacy (education, awareness) on issues of concern