

# Community Impact Report





# Looking Back, Moving Forward

The past year has been nothing short of inspiring, and none of it would have been possible without your generous support.



Thanks to your commitment, we have been able to place a strong focus on literacy, building meaningful partnerships, laying solid foundations, and achieving milestone goals that directly benefit our community. Through this focus, thousands of students and families have experienced the joy of learning, creating ripples of impact that strengthen our community as a whole.

We believe that meaningful early engagement in literacy and education is the cornerstone of success. This belief drives everything we do at United Way Regina. By partnering with schools, educators, and community organizations, we are creating opportunities for children and families to engage in literacy-focused activities - from summer learning programs to family literacy nights and access to books that they can take home and treasure. These moments ignite curiosity, nurture a love of learning, and instill the confidence children need to thrive. Early engagement in literacy is more than a stepping stone - it is a critical step toward achieving third-grade reading proficiency which is an early predictor of educational and lifelong success. Every book read, every story shared, and every spark of excitement for learning sets children on a path toward opportunity, growth, and achievement.

The magic of these programs is seen in countless small but powerful moments: a child's pride in choosing their own book to take home, the anticipation of attending Summer Success camp, the confidence in reading aloud, improved attendance, and growing literacy levels. These immediate impacts blossom into a lifelong connection to learning, fostering resilience, curiosity, and the motivation to reach one's potential. When children develop strong literacy skills today, they grow into capable, compassionate adults who help build stronger, more vibrant communities. This work is about creating equitable opportunities for all children and families, ensuring that every child has a chance to reach their full potential.

While literacy remains a cornerstone of our work, we continue to invest in 211 Saskatchewan, a vital resource connecting thousands of people across our province to essential services. Every day, 211 helps people navigate challenges related to mental health, addiction, housing, food security, income support, family services, interpersonal

violence, childcare, and much more. By providing a trusted and non-judgmental connection to support, 211 empowers individuals and families to find solutions and regain stability, creating pathways toward brighter futures.

None of this work would be possible without you. Whether you have contributed financially, volunteered your time, or championed United Way Regina in your networks, your support is the life line of our community initiatives. Every contribution—big or small—helps create a stronger, more equitable, and more resilient community. Your belief in this work transforms lives, and for that, we are deeply grateful.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to advancing grade-level reading, tackling the root causes of some of the most complex challenges in Regina, and building stronger systems of support for children and families. Achieving lasting and meaningful outcomes requires the strength of our collective community. Together, through collaboration, dedication, and shared purpose, we can ensure that every child has access to the opportunities they need to succeed. This is about so much more than books; it is about hope, potential, and the future of our entire community. Every story shared, every day of learning, and every step toward literacy helps shape a brighter tomorrow.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your partnership, your dedication, and your unwavering belief in the power of community. With you by our side, we will continue to create opportunities, inspire learning, and build a future where every child has the chance to thrive.

Kristin Nelson

Kristin alson

Director of Community Impact

Robyn Edwards-Bentz

K. Edwards - Bentz

Chief Executive Officer

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### **Our Mission**

Ignite the desire in everyone to improve lives by mobilizing our community for lasting social change

### **Our Vision**

To build a strong, caring community where everyone has the opportunity to live a good life

## **Our Values**

- Demonstrate trust, integrity, respect, inclusivity and transparency
- Energize and inspire volunteerism and volunteer leadership
- Endorse innovation, partnerships and collective action
- Provide non-partisan leadership
- Embrace diversity

## Building Pathways to Potential

Investing in children's literacy today to open doors for their future success.





Early grade level reading has a lasting impact on the lives of children. Research shows that when children are present and engaged in the early years of their education, they are much more likely to stay on track and graduate.

By working with dedicated partners, United Way Regina is committed to addressing barriers and creating equal opportunities for all kids to engage in their education. Early literacy sets the stage for a lifetime of success – all students deserve the chance to achieve that success.

Despite the progress we have seen, there is still work to be done to ensure all children are successful in their education. By getting to root causes and ensuring access to literacy-rich resources, we want to see every student reading proficiently at grade level.

Working alongside our valued partners, United Way Regina is proud to have invested in the following initiatives:

#### **Classroom Libraries:**

This year marked the achievement of a major milestone for literacy in our community.

Over the past decade, **75 classroom libraries** have been installed in schools across both

the Regina Public and Regina Catholic School Divisions. During the 2024–25 school year, sponsorship for the final twelve libraries was secured—bringing this ten-year initiative to a successful close. In total, this represents more than a \$750,000 investment in children's literacy over the past ten years.

Classroom libraries are much more than shelves of books. They create daily opportunities for children to engage with high-quality, age-appropriate, and literacy-rich materials right where they learn. Having a library within the classroom removes barriers and puts books directly into students' hands, making it easy and natural for them to choose stories that reflect their interests, cultures, and experiences.

Research shows that when children have regular access to books they enjoy, they read more often and with greater confidence. The simple act of choice - being able to select a book that sparks curiosity or imagination - encourages students to read for pleasure, not just for assignments. This steady exposure helps children build critical literacy skills, expand their vocabulary, and strengthen comprehension. Just as importantly, it nurtures a lifelong love of reading and learning.

The impact of these 75 classroom libraries goes beyond the individual child. Classrooms with refreshed and diverse libraries are better equipped to foster inclusive learning environments where every student can see themselves represented in the stories they read. Over time, this investment builds stronger foundations for academic success, improved self-esteem, and brighter futures for thousands of children across Regina.

#### **Attendance Matters:**

The 2024–25 school year marked the fifth successful year of the Attendance Matters vehicle, a program designed to break down one of the most common barriers to learning - getting to school each day. Chronic absenteeism can have lasting effects on a child's ability to keep up in class, build relationships, and develop a love of learning. The Attendance Matters vehicle ensures that transportation challenges don't stand in the way of a child's education.

From September 2024 to June 2025, the vehicle supported more than **80 families**, a remarkable **51% increase over the previous year**. In total, **151 students from eight schools** in the Regina Public and Regina Catholic School Divisions had consistent,

reliable access to school thanks to this initiative. The majority of students served—about 92–95%—were between the ages of six and nine, the critical years when foundational literacy and numeracy skills are developed.

For families, the service was there as a safety net on the days when simply getting out the door and to school felt overwhelming. For children, it meant showing up ready to learn, see their friends, and grow in confidence. Each ride represented more than just a trip across town - it was a step toward stronger attendance, stronger learning, and brighter futures.

By removing a practical yet significant obstacle, the Attendance Matters vehicle helps children build the habit of regular school attendance, giving them the best chance to thrive now and in the years ahead. "This service has become a critical lifeline for many of our most vulnerable students, ensuring they have the opportunity to succeed despite the numerous barriers they face.

The difference the attendance van makes in some of our most vulnerable students' lives is nothing short of amazing! For a portion of our youth, getting to school every day is a major barrier to success - just this year, some students faced unstable housing, a lack of household transportation, or traumatic family events. This service doesn't just provide a ride; it provides consistency, care, and the belief that these students matter.

Thank you for supporting our kids so generously. Your contribution has made a significant impact on their lives, providing them with the stability and care they need to succeed."

- Lori Daelick, Superintendent



#### **Book Vending Machines:**

The book vending machines located in twelve community schools across the Regina Public and Regina Catholic School Divisions are sparking excitement about reading in a whole new way. These brightly lit machines aren't filled with snacks or treats—they're stocked with stories. Students get to **choose** books that speak to their interests, and the best part is they don't have to return them. Each book becomes theirs to take home, building personal home libraries that grow right alongside their love of reading.

Students earn golden tokens as a special recognition for progress, good attendance, and positive behaviour in the classroom. Dropping that golden token into the vending machine is more than just a fun moment - it's a celebration of effort, achievement, and choice. With each token, a child gets to pick a book that reflects who they are and what they enjoy, in either English or French, at just the right level for their reading journey.

During the 2024–25 school year, United Way Regina helped keep the magic alive by ensuring the machines stayed full, supplying schools with more than **7,000 brand-new books**. For students, the vending machines are more than a literacy initiative - they're a symbol of encouragement. The recognition makes them feel proud, and the reward of a book strengthens both their skills and their confidence.

By making reading both accessible and exciting, the book vending machines inspire children to see themselves as readers. Each book chosen is a step towards stronger literacy, a greater sense of accomplishment, and a lifelong love of learning.



"I would give reading books 6 stars!"

#### **Kindergarten Kits:**

57.5% of students entering kindergarten were deemed school ready. That means more than 4 in 10 children in Regina arrived at school not fully prepared to begin learning. Being ready for kindergarten is about more than supplies - it's about confidence, curiosity, and the ability to fully engage in those critical first years of education. We want every child to have the chance to start strong and feel excited about learning.

That's where Kindergarten Kits come in. Handed out before the school year at kindergarten welcome days, these kits are designed to spark excitement and help families prepare their children for this big milestone. Each kit is filled with tools and activities that make learning fun and accessible: a dry erase board to practice numbers and letters, brand new books to inspire imagination, and all the essentials—pencil case, primary pencils, sharpener, erasers, scissors, glue, exercise books, markers, and crayons.

This past year, United Way Regina proudly provided over **500 Kindergarten Kits to twelve community schools**. For many families, receiving the kit is a moment of relief and joy - it means their child can begin school with the same materials and opportunities as their peers. For children, it feels like a special gift just for them, building confidence and anticipation as they step into their very first classroom.

By placing these simple but powerful tools in children's hands, we are helping to create an equal start for every child. Kindergarten Kits do more than prepare kids for school; they send a message that their community believes in them, supports them, and wants them to succeed.



## **Summer Success Literacy Camps Impact**



2 School Divisions



16 Summer Success Camps



48
Teachers



248
Campers/Students



2,400 books distributed



250 backpacks with school supplies distributed



\$32,000 invested to address food insecurity

## Summer Success Literacy Camps (2024):

The summer slide occurs when children lose academic traction and literacy gains over the summer months. Summer Success literacy camps offer engaging, structured learning experiences with a low student-teacher ratio. By supporting literacy, math, and social-emotional skills, Summer Success camps play a vital role in ensuring children return to school confident and ready to succeed. Confidence and school engagement are grown through camps with some students even asking if they can come to camp on Saturdays and Sundays.

It can be common for students from marginalized communities to experience the summer slide or loss of reading levels. During follow-up assessment in the new school year of students who had attended Summer Success, it was found that one camper had an increase of eight reading levels.

#### **Family Literacy Hub:**

As Regina's Family Literacy Hub partner, we see every day how early literacy can flourish when families are empowered as their children's first teachers. Through strong partnerships, families are invited to take part in fun, engaging, and meaningful literacy-focused activities like **family literacy nights** and the always-popular **Storywalk®**. These opportunities not only strengthen literacy skills but also create special moments of connection and joy.

Storywalks, in particular, have become a community favourite. By combining reading with movement, they allow families to explore a story page by page while walking outdoors together. It's an interactive, hands-on way to experience books that makes reading feel playful and accessible to all ages.

One family who lives near the permanent Storywalk® shared that they make a point of visiting every time a new story is installed. For them, it has become a cherished routine - a way to enjoy fresh air, spend time together, and spark conversations inspired by the story. They've noticed their children's love of reading grow, and they treasure the quality family time it brings.

These moments reflect the true heart of family literacy by making reading a joyful, shared experience that builds skills, strengthens relationships, and sets children on a path to lifelong learning.

#### Family Literacy Hub Impact

44

family literacy events and programs delivered 3,300

Over 3,300 parents and children participated in various free literacy events and programs 12,000

Approximately 12,000 books distributed

#### **Scholastic Canada**

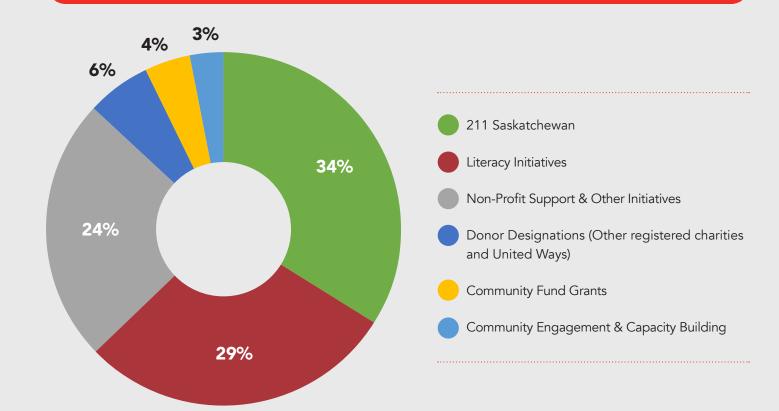
Thanks to the incredible generosity of **Scholastic Canada**, over the last ten years more than 150,000 brand-new books have been placed directly into the hands of children and families across Regina and surrounding area.

Books are more than just pages and words – they open doors to imagination, learning, and possibility. For many children, having a book to call their own is the first step in developing both confidence and a lifelong love of reading.

Through our partnership, United Way Regina is ensuring more children have access to high-quality stories that spark curiosity and inspire a joy for learning. By putting books where children live, learn, and play, we are creating more opportunities for reading to become a natural and joyful part of daily life.

By working together with Scholastic Canada, we are breaking down barriers to literacy, empowering children to dream big, and supporting families as they nurture strong reading habits at home. This partnership is helping to create brighter futures for kids across our community - one book at a time.

#### **Total Community Investment: \$2,262,076**





## 211 Saskatchewan



#### 211 is one number leading to thousands of pathways to support, resources and

**information.** 211 Saskatchewan continues to be a critical connector to vital support services and information across our province. Individuals can connect with a caring navigator over the phone (24/7/365), or via text, chat or email (during regular hours) who will assist them to find services that meet their individual or family needs. Independent online search is also available at sk.211.ca.

In addition to offering connection to services in the areas of housing, mental health, addictions, interpersonal violence, family support, income assistance, and much more, 211 Saskatchewan offers specialized sites and services like the Parent

Central site, Re:CONNECT Helpline and the Interpersonal Violence website. These specialized services ensure focused, non-judgmental support is available when people need it.

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#### 211 Saskatchewan Impact

#### **Contacts**

266,835

unique site

3,418

24%

Mental Health and Substance **Abuse** 

23% **Basic Needs** 

**Top Needs** 

14% **Health Care** 

13%

Income/

**Employment** 



Food Banks

**Unmet Needs** 

Homeless Shelters

Domestic Violence Shelters

> Rent Payment Assistance

Contacts by Location:

27.2% Saskatoon

25.7% Regina

4.6% **Prince Albert** 

2.6% **Moose Jaw** 

2.3% **Swift Current** 

Contacts by Type:

Number of **Email Communities:** 

Towns/Cities/Communities across Saskatchewan accessed 211 Saskatchewan

#### Interpersonal **Violence Site**



112,571 unique visitors to the IPV site

#### **Top Links Accessed by Users:**

16% I am experiencing abuse or violence 9% How do I know if I am being abused? 9% I need to plan to escape a violent

situation

9% I have been sexually assaulted 9% What are my legal rights?

#### **Parent** Central



11,247 unique visitors to Parent Central



31% increase in New Parent/Guardian **Accounts from last** year

#### **Top Links Accessed by Users:**

Childcare

Early Learning

Family and Parenting Support

#### Re:CONNECT



12,237 minutes of support through brief counselling sessions



of callers reporting

they felt better compared to when they first called



2.021 referrals made to external programs

**Community Impact Report United Way Regina** 

#### **Women United**

Women United is a community of dedicated changemakers committed to creating brighter futures for children in Regina. Through their support of United Way Regina, they help ensure that more children have access to the resources and opportunities they need to grow, learn, and thrive.

Their support goes beyond simply providing funding - it helps spark curiosity, inspire a love of learning, and build confidence in children at every stage of their education. By investing in literacy and learning, Women United empowers children to explore the world around them, develop new skills, and embrace the joy of discovery.

Women United's commitment also strengthens the broader community. Their involvement encourages collaboration, inspires others to contribute, and helps build a culture where literacy and learning are celebrated as vital to every child's success. Each child who gains access to books and learning resources carries forward the benefits of this support - stronger skills, greater confidence, and the sense that their community believes in them.

Through their vision, generosity, and advocacy, Women United is making a lasting difference in the lives of children and families across Regina - helping to lay the foundation for a brighter, more equitable future for everyone.

#### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are the heartbeat of United Way Regina's work. Their generosity of time, energy, and skills helps bring programs to life and ensures that children, youth, and families in our community have access to the support and resources they need to thrive. Every event, activity, and initiative is strengthened by volunteers who step in to lend a helping hand wherever it's needed. Their commitment creates a bridge between community resources and the people who benefit most, making a tangible difference in the lives of thousands. They model generosity, compassion, and community spirit, leaving a lasting impression that extends well beyond the classroom or program space.

Most importantly, volunteers amplify the work of United Way Regina and help ensure its sustainability. By giving their time, they allow programs to reach more children and families, expand access to resources, and build stronger connections within the community. Volunteers demonstrate the power of collective action - when people come together, even small efforts create extraordinary change. Their dedication shows that building a brighter, more equitable future is a shared responsibility, and every act of volunteering moves us closer to a community where all children have the opportunity to succeed.





Together, through collaboration, dedication, and shared purpose, we can ensure that every child has access to the opportunities they need to succeed.



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