



United Way
Toronto

Helping people with disabilities live independently



The major accomplishments of medical science in the last 50 years allow us to live more comfortably with disease and disability, with life expectancies dramatically better than those of previous generations. But with this good news comes the critical need for more and better health care support for an aging population and people living with disabilities.

Living with disease and disabilities presents tough challenges. It's difficult to find work or secure homecare, so you are more likely to live in poverty and alone. You'll also encounter a shortage of places to live that are adapted to your special needs.

United Way agencies provide community support services that prevent illness and unnecessary institutionalization of people who are disabled, improving their well-being while easing the demands on an already overburdened health care system. Given the growing pressure on the health care system to limit homecare services only to the acutely ill, these services are now more important than ever.

Did you know...

- *Approximately 1.85 million people in Ontario have disabilities, representing 15.5% of Ontario's population.*
- *51% of food bank users report having a disability or serious limitation.*
- *47.2% of Ontario's seniors (age 65+) have a disability. Among the working age population (age 15-64), 12.6% have a disability. Among children (age 0-14), 3.8% have a disability.*
- *The employment rate for people with disabilities is 50.5% compared to 75.5% for people without disabilities.*
- *By 2026, the majority of people with disabilities will be 65 years of age or older—some 3.05 million people in Canada.*
- *One third of adults and just under half (46%) of children with disabilities who require some type of aid or device have unmet needs. As the severity of the disability increases, so does the rate of unmet needs.*



Photo: Richard Lautens/Toronto Star

United Way ensures that creative souls have the opportunity to spread their wings.

United Way agency helps intellectually disabled earn living through art

Quyen Ngo smiles broadly as he sits at the end of the table admiring his latest creation. "I like to paint flowers, trees and animals," he says, pointing proudly to the table-top-sized board with an avant-garde daisy blooming at the centre. Ngo has painted and sold scores of works since he joined the art program at Community Living Toronto's Etobicoke Employment Training Services centre. He's among dozens of adults with varying degrees of intellectual disability who come to the art studio every Thursday to unleash their creative juices. Though some of the artists may have trouble communicating, their art speaks volumes about how they feel and who they are.

Community Living Toronto offers support services to about 6,000 people annually in more than 70 locations in the city. It helps them reach their potential while living more independently in the community. Community Living Toronto is one of United Way's 200 health and social service agencies. United Way funds pay for the agency's camp at Shadow Lake in York Region, and a number of staff, services and activities.

Adapted from an article in Toronto Star, October 13, 2007, by Leslie Ferenc
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Your gift helps people with disabilities live independently by supporting:

- ▶ Homecare (house cleaning, yard maintenance) and personal care
- ▶ Meals on wheels
- ▶ Respite for caregivers
- ▶ Mental health and physical rehabilitation programs
- ▶ Employment and skills training

United Way's work in the community

Of the network of agencies that United Way Toronto funds, 47 offer a better way of living for people with disabilities. In just one year, United Way support enabled an estimated 28,500 adults with disabilities to participate in United Way agency programs and services, helping them to live independently and stay engaged in the community.

Health care support services and programs, counselling, rehabilitation, skills training, social and recreational day programs, homecare and transportation to medical appointments make a critical difference to thousands of people in Toronto every day, giving them independence and dignity.

How your generosity makes an impact

\$90 provides one deaf or hard of hearing adult one day in a sign language program, helping her prepare for employment and be more independent.

\$400 provides seven hours of weekly support sessions for one month to a youth with developmental and physical disabilities, helping him become more mobile and connect with others in the community.

\$800 provides a special needs child with a personal worker for one month at a day camp, enabling her to have a regular camp experience and learn with her peers.

\$1,000 provides a senior with specialized health care needs 10 days in a program that keeps him active and healthy while providing vital relief for his caregiver.