

**United Way Board Report**  
**To RDLC 2021 Annual General Meeting**  
**Marg Romanow and Wendy Daku**

United Way Regina has been working to positively impact the lives of vulnerable children, youth, and their families in our community by identifying and addressing barriers for over 60 years. The past year has tested the strength of both staff and resources. A lack of regular workplace campaigns and fewer donations in general decreased financial resources. It required a major shift in how things were done and how the community could best be served.

Through a grant from the federal government (Emergency Community Support Fund) in the last year, United Way Regina provided funding to 25 organizations in Regina to help those who needed extra resources during the pandemic. Later in the year a second round of funding was made available and an additional 35 organizations were assisted in Regina and surrounding areas. Visit their website at [www.unitedwayregina.ca](http://www.unitedwayregina.ca) for more information on the recipient organizations and the many valuable services they provided.

The pandemic also brought to light many increased mental health issues as people fought loneliness, loss of income and the difficulties associated with on-line schooling for their children. The increased funding from the Emergency Community Support Fund allowed the United Way to fund many projects with resources for mental health and well being.

Though COVID-19 provided additional barriers to United Way's work in the community, they found innovative ways to continue fundraising and providing services in Regina, and, more recently, these services have been extended to provide continued support in the communities of Moose Jaw, Swift Current and Weyburn.

With some modifications, much of the ongoing work for children and literacy has continued. The Vello program (one-on-one program where volunteers read to children virtually) continues in several community schools in Regina. As a result of this program, reading levels have shown to have increased by 71%. If you are interested in volunteering to read to children contact: [vello@unitedwayregina.ca](mailto:vello@unitedwayregina.ca).

United Way's Campaign for Grade Level Reading provides school readiness, (kits provided to pre kindergarten children to prepare for kindergarten), access to books, summer learning loss and attendance programs. This campaign is currently in 10 community schools in Regina. Book Vending Machines continue to be popular and

the goal is to add more schools as part of a three-year program. Kids are rewarded with golden book tokens which can be used in the vending machine for a book that can be permanently taken home.

Continued development and work has been done on 211 services in Saskatchewan. In 2020 this service finally became active across the entire country. This is a free, confidential service that connects people to critical social and community supports. More than 2000 contacts were made since January 2021, and 3000 referrals. 211 Saskatchewan saw a significant increase in Calls/Chats/Texts/ Emails as the result of the pandemic. The latest addition to 211 services is a portal called Parent Central which links parents to services in the community including childcare services. Parents can follow waitlists of licensed childcare facilities in the city and further services will be added as they become available. United Way Regina CEO Robyn Edwards-Bentz has been very instrumental in the work done in this area and is part of a sprint team dealing with the governance of the 211 phone system.

Tampon Tuesday just finished its fourth year. Last year, due to timing of the outbreak, donations of both product and money were quite low but this year we have rivalled 2019's product donations and doubled the monetary donations. Union and labour council donations accounted for over 60% of monetary donations received.

Though the pandemic caused many challenges, as board members, we continued to work as a team to find ways to keep donations coming in and funding allocated to as many organizations as possible. Rosalee Longmoore, a dedicated trade unionist and long-serving board member is retiring from her board service after many years and we appreciate her strong voice on the board.

Respectfully submitted,

Marg Romanow & Wendy Daku