



United Way
Central & South
Okanagan Similkameen



All That Kids Can Be – Haley's Story

One of the people United Way is working to help is Hailey. When you first meet this young woman, the first thing that comes to mind isn't "school teacher" but that's her career goal and we believe she will achieve it. At 17 years old, Hailey wears her hair in short spikes that are a different colour every time we see her, and she carries a drawing book everywhere she goes. She has an enormous heart and when you understand what she has overcome in her life, you can't help but want to support her.

The first time Hailey ran away from home, she was 14 years old, and she would stay with friends. If you ask her why she ran away she'll say "I just couldn't deal with it at home anymore." What she means is that she couldn't deal with what would happen when her parents were drinking. Unfortunately, the situation at home kept getting worse as she went through her teenage years. Her teachers were extremely worried because they saw how depressed and anxious she was becoming.

Eventually, Hailey ended up in a youth shelter and last year, when she was 16, she was helped by her counsellor to get her own small apartment partly funded by a youth agreement with the government that lets her live independently. She attends an alternate program and will complete high school next year, and she works 4 days a week at a restaurant to pay her bills.

Her talent as an artist and compassion for other students led one of her teachers to connect her with an arts program for children, and for the past 6 months she has been volunteering as an assistant to the instructor. She says that helping kids see what they can do is something that makes her feel good.

"I'm not going to lie - it's been really hard and I get lonely," she says. "Yeah, I'd like to have parents taking care of everything. I'd like to just come home and open the fridge and watch TV and not have to get ready for work. I'm still a kid, but I'm not, you know? But I just stay focused on what I want, and I know there are all these people who care and that keeps me going and doing what I need to do."

It is because of the generosity of people who give through United Way, that youth like Hailey get a second chance at a bright future.

With your help, we can:

- Support meals programs in schools for young people who need full tummies so they can focus in class.
- Fund counselling services for families and children who are struggling to cope.
- Ensure that outreach workers are available for youth who need a shoulder to lean on and help solving challenges around relationships, school and home life.
- Provide bursaries to youth who are overcoming tough life circumstances.

Community fund investments:

- Karis Support Society
- Kelowna Child Care Society
- Kelowna Family Center Society
- Okanagan Boys and Girls Club
- Reach Out youth Counselling & Services

Impact fund investments and other initiatives:

- Central Okanagan Family Hub - Kelowna
- Youth Initiative Grants
- Emergency Transportation Assistance program

Together, we are possibility.



All That Kids Can Be – Paul, Lisa and Max’s Story

Paul and Lisa were so excited to become parents for the first time. Their baby son Max was happy and healthy, and for the first 2 years of his life, everything seemed normal. They didn’t have a lot of money, since they were living on only one wage, but otherwise things were fine. Shortly after Max turned 2, something didn’t seem right. That was when they needed to rely on their community for the first time, and were so grateful that United Way was there for them.

Lisa was staying home to raise Max, and she had joined a moms and tots group so that they could meet other families with children the same age. “I noticed that he wasn’t doing some things quite as easily as the other children,” she says. “He didn’t seem to be noticing things and learning the way other kids were, and he got very frustrated.”

Lisa and Mike worked with their family doctor, and through testing discovered that Max was struggling with poor vision and sensory processing – basically, he was experiencing the world differently than other children. He would need therapies for the next 10 years to assist his development. Family counselling helped Paul and Lisa to cope stress, and they also received help finding excellent and affordable child care when Lisa was ready to return to work outside the home.

“It was not something we were prepared for at all,” says Paul. “We didn’t know how to help our son, and we were worried about what it meant for his future. We are so grateful this kind of help was available to our family.” Today Max is 12 years old and he loves playing with his dog, riding his bike and playing Guitar Hero.

With your help, we can:

- Provide counselling to families going through changes and crises
- Help parents find quality child care for their little ones
- Make sure children have access to therapies so they can reach their milestones

Community Fund investments:

- Building Healthy Families Society
- Okanagan Boys and Girls Club
- Starbright Children’s Development Association
- Karis Support Society
- Kelowna Child Care Society
- Kelowna Family Center Society

Impact Fund and United Way programs and initiatives:

- Central Okanagan Family Hub - Kelowna
- Child Safety Initiative
- Success by 6



Building Strong, Healthy Communities – Peter’s Story

Peter and Helen have been married for 47 years. When Helen started to show signs of dementia, Peter didn’t know where to turn for help.

“Helen was always the person who organized everything for our family,” he explains. “She was the one who always knew where things are kept, and talked to the kids about what was going on. I didn’t have the slightest idea how to cope with any of this, and how to find help for her and for me.” As Helen’s condition deteriorated and Peter became more stressed, he found himself panicking.

It was through the network of services supported by United Way that Peter began to find some answers. He needed to sell their home and move to a small apartment, and eventually Helen went to live in a care facility where Peter still visits her every day. He has help with his housekeeping and meals, and spends time with a friend he met through a support program for caregivers. Their adult children live elsewhere, but are reassured that their parents are secure and receiving the help they need.

“I miss her all the time,” he says. “Sometimes she can remember and she’s right there with me, and sometimes not. It’s not nearly the same, but we are getting by, day by day.”

With your help, we can:

- Help seniors navigate the network of services and systems.
- Advocate for those who are vulnerable and struggling on their own.
- Support families in times of crisis and grief.

Community Fund investments:

- Kelowna Community Resources Society
- Kelowna Family Center Society
- Peachland Wellness Centre
- Seniors Outreach Services Society
- Westside Health Network Society

Impact fund and other initiatives:

- Better at Home