



United Way
Central & South
Okanagan Similkameen



United Way
North Okanagan
Columbia Shuswap

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – North, Central and South Okanagan, Columbia, Similkameen, Shuswap

Local United Ways announce plans to join forces in 2019

October 29, 2018 (Kelowna/Vernon) – Today, following careful discussion between their respective Boards, *United Way Central and South Okanagan Similkameen (CSO)* and *United Way North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap (NOCS)* announced they will join forces in April 2019.

The goal for this merger is to ensure a strong and efficient regional United Way, with local identity and impact. By combining and centralizing administrative functions, processes and systems – including HR, IT, Finance, website for example – they will avoid duplication of effort and be freed up to focus more energy on local impact and investment in the communities they serve.

*“United Way is all about local giving and local impact. That won’t change under this new regional model,” says Sinead Scanlon, Board Chair for United Way CSO. “Our Boards remain absolutely committed to the principle that **funds raised locally, stay local**. Local decision-making will continue to guide local community investments, focused on local priorities. What we gain is efficiency and the regional capacity to share what works.”*

The merger will also create opportunities to respond to community issues that are common across the region such as homelessness, mental health and poverty. These issues do not stop or start at lines on a map and the merger creates new opportunities to share and expand programs across the wider region.

“For many years, our neighbouring United Ways have enjoyed a supportive, collaborative relationship – sharing ideas and working together on several programs,” says UWNOCs Board President, Debbie Bagnall. “We have developed a strong and trusted relationship. On several occasions, we have explored the idea that we should come together, but only now have we decided that the time is right. A catalyst for this decision is the retirement of our long time Executive Director, Linda Yule in March 2019. Our community will of course miss Linda enormously, but we are excited about the future stewarded by Helen Jackman, Executive Director, United Way CSO.”

This is the direction that is being taken by United Ways across Canada. In fact, in recent years, 32 United Ways have combined their scale and capacity to create 12 integrated regional organizations while maintaining strong local presence.

In the next month, the recruitment process will begin for a new Community Engagement Manager for the North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap region. The new Manager will be based locally in Vernon but will be part of, and supported by, the wider regional team. We hope to learn from this approach to increase our presence and local impact in the South Okanagan and Similkameen.

Both United Ways are committed to working with partners throughout the transition and will provide updates as the merger plans progress.



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About United Way CSO

For over 65 years, the United Way of the Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen has served the region from Lake Country in the North, to Osoyoos and Princeton in the South. Our mission is to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action. The United Way invests time and resources in three focus areas that support all that kids can be, move people from poverty to possibility and build healthy, strong communities. For more information, visit unitedwaycso.com or call 1-855-232-1321.

About United Way NOCS

United Way of North Okanagan Columbia Shuswap has been supporting communities throughout our regions since 1961. We currently support 20 Community Partners from Vernon, Lumby, Enderby, Falkland, north to Salmon Arm and east to Revelstoke. United Way invests time and resources in three focus areas that support all that kids can be, move people from poverty to possibility and build healthy, strong communities. For more information, visit unitedwaynocs.com or call 1-866-GIVE4UW

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