



**United Way**  
Northwest Territories

# Annual Report

Strengthening Northern Communities

APRIL 1, 2025 – MARCH 31, 2026

**TOGETHER**  
**We Are Strong**

[nwt.unitedway.ca](http://nwt.unitedway.ca)



## Land Acknowledgement

*United Way NWT acknowledges that we operate on the traditional lands of Dene, Métis, and Inuit peoples. We are grateful for the privilege of living, playing, and working on those lands, which have been their traditional lands since time immemorial. We respect the histories, languages, and cultures of all Indigenous Peoples, whose presence in the Northwest Territories continues to enrich our vibrant community.*

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**Helping Northerners  
support Northerners -  
building a strong and  
healthy community  
together.**

## About United Way NWT

United Way NWT is a Northern non-profit registered with the *Societies Act* of the NWT that works to support Northwest Territory non-profits and charities. We strongly believe in supporting our community and in helping to create a sustainable, supportive North for our fellow Northerners.

We are a member of the United Way Canada – however, we are our own autonomous organization with our own Board of Directors. All funds raised in the North stay in the North.

## Mandate

We promote the organized capacity of people in the Northwest Territories to care for one another. By raising and redistributing funds through our Community Investment Fund and Emergency Funding Program, we support critical projects and local nonprofits addressing the most pressing needs of Northern communities.

## United Way NWT History and Current Programming

United Way Northwest Territories (UW NWT) started in 2001 as United Way Yellowknife. It was reinvigorated in 2012 and renamed itself to UW NWT to reflect its goal of supporting northerners throughout the NWT. UW NWT is currently the only United Way chapter north of the 60th parallel in Canada.

### UNITED WAY NWT

P.O.Box 1145, STN. Main, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N8

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# Letter from the Board Chair

The past year has been one of transition, renewed direction, and continued community impact for United Way NWT. Throughout the year, we remained focused on strengthening Northern communities, responding when help was needed, and positioning the organization for the future.

A significant milestone was the appointment of Mandi Parkes as our new Executive Director. Mandi brings extensive non-profit experience, a collaborative leadership style, and a strong commitment to community care and resilience. We are pleased to welcome them and appreciate the thoughtful way they have transitioned into the role.

We also extend our sincere gratitude to outgoing Executive Director Linda Bussey for her leadership and dedication. Linda guided United Way NWT through a period of considerable growth and change, including supporting Northern communities during evacuations. She also strengthened our internal policies and guided the development of our new Strategic Plan. We thank Linda for her lasting contribution to the organization.

Supporting communities remained at the heart of our work. Through our Emergency Response Fund, we worked with donors, partners, and local organizations to provide timely assistance to evacuees and affected communities.

We also made important changes to our Community Investment Fund in response to feedback from non-profit organizations. In 2026, United Way NWT awarded \$235,000 to 19 organizations across the Northwest Territories. Larger grants and expanded multi-year funding will give organizations greater stability to plan and build stronger programs.

Our new Strategic Plan, released June 2026, provides a clear path forward and reflects our commitment to listening, learning, and responding to community needs. We also welcomed Stephen Van Dine to the Board as the City of Yellowknife’s representative, strengthening our connection with a key community partner.

None of this work would be possible without our donors, partners, volunteers, staff, Board members, and community organizations. Together, we will continue building local capacity and supporting Northerners in caring for one another.



On behalf of the Board of Directors,  
Ben Linaker  
Chair of the Board, United Way Northwest Territories

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|                                    |                       |                  |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| <b>Vice-Chair:</b> Jhillian Adams  | <b>Board members:</b> | Margaret Lovely  |
| <b>Treasurer:</b> Ebere Duru       | Yanik D’Aigle         | Sandra Lester    |
| <b>Past Chair:</b> Tracy St. Denis | Sara-Jayne Dempster   | Stephen Van Dine |

# United Way NWT's Donation-Funded Programs

## Emergency Funding Program

In summer 2025, United Way NWT activated its Emergency Response Fund for the first time since 2023, helping communities respond to wildfire evacuations in Fort Providence, Whatì and surrounding areas. Powered by donor generosity, the fund distributed more than \$260,000 to local partners addressing urgent community needs.

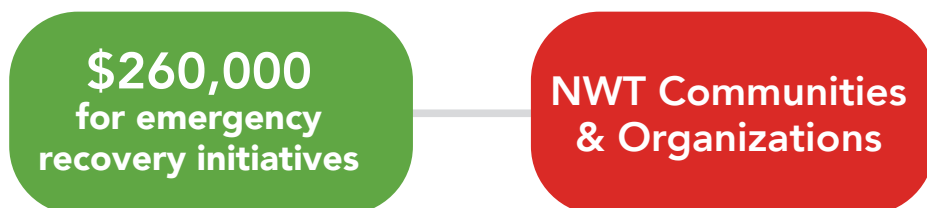
Funding supported food, fuel, transportation, short-term accommodations and essential supplies for evacuees. Grocery and personal-care gift cards helped displaced families meet basic needs, while community organizations received support to extend hours, expand programming and coordinate volunteers. Cleaning kits and emergency supplies also helped families returning home.

Designed to complement formal emergency operations, the fund directs resources to organizations and volunteers closest to community needs. This approach keeps donations working in the North, reduces pressure on local services and supports flexible, community-led relief and recovery.

Early donations totalling \$20,000 from the **Public Service Alliance of Canada Social Justice Fund** and the **Union of Northern Workers** helped launch the campaign and encouraged others to contribute. Local businesses and residents also stepped forward. In Yellowknife, **Lakeshore Co-op** donated \$10,000 and **Javaroma Gourmet Coffee's** community campaign raised nearly \$3,000 through individual contributions showing a powerful example of Northerners caring for one another.

The response drew on lessons from 2023, when United Way NWT funded more than 130 local initiatives across the territory. Stronger granting and coordination systems helped resources reach partners within days and, in some cases, hours, of receiving requests.

We extend our sincere thanks to donors, emergency responders, GNWT Public Safety officials, local and Indigenous governments, community organizations, volunteers and partners beyond the territory. Together, their contributions helped communities meet immediate needs while laying the groundwork for recovery, demonstrating the strength of a coordinated and compassionate Northern response.

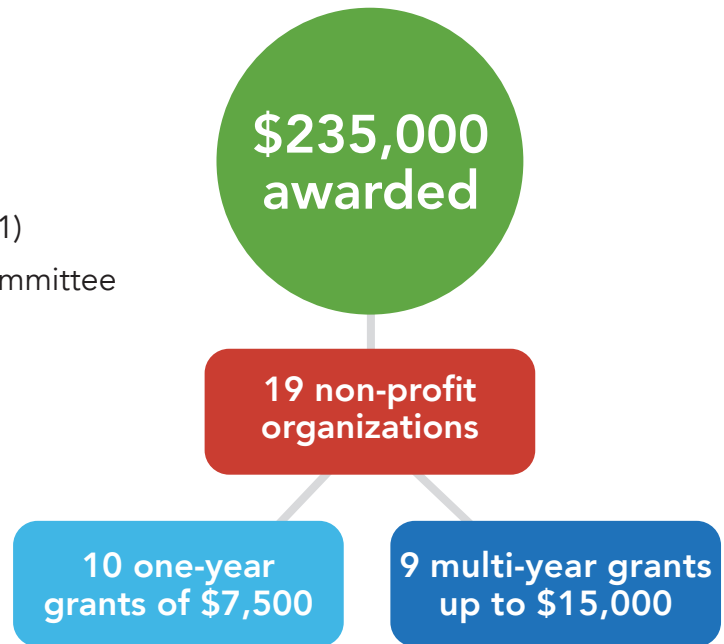


## Community Investment Fund

In 2025/26, United Way NWT awarded grants totalling \$235,000 to 19 non-profit organizations as part of its annual Community Investment Fund.

Ten organizations recieved one-time grants to support their 2026 programming:

- Ecology North
- YWCA NWT
- Yellowknife Education District No. 1 (YK1)
- Yellowknife United Church Outreach Committee
- Yellowknife Seniors Society
- Makerspace
- Hay River Youth Centre
- Hay River Soup Kitchen
- Habitat for Humanity NWT
- Northwest Territories Integration and Community Services (NWT ICS)



In response to feedback from community organizations and the growing need for stability in program funding, United Way NWT has also made a significant shift toward multi-year funding commitments. Multi-year grants provide organizations with greater predictability and allow them to plan, retain staff, and build stronger programs over time. This year marks an important step in that transition, with several organizations receiving new three-year commitments through the Community Investment Fund.

Six new multi-year grants were selected:

- Chickadee NEST (Multi-Year Grant: Year 1 of 3)
- Food Rescue Yellowknife (Multi-Year Grant: Year 1 of 3)
- Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (Multi-Year Grant: Year 1 of 3)
- Hay River Family Support Centre (Multi-Year Grant: Year 1 of 3)
- Fort Good Hope Garden and Arts Society (Multi-Year Grant: Year 1 of 3)
- Salvation Army (Multi-Year Grant: Year 1 of 3)

United Way NWT will also continue to support multi-year initiatives currently underway, including:

- Homebase Yellowknife (Multi-Year Grant: Year 2 of 3)
- Bushkids (Multi-Year Grant: Year 2 of 3)
- Northern Birthwork Collective (Multi-Year Grant: Year 3 of 3, via intermediary)

# Additional Spotlights from 2025/26

## Strategic Plan

UW NWT's Board and senior staff undertook this strategic planning process to establish a clear shared vision, align energy and resources, and focus on the priorities most important to the organization's long-term success.

Since 2018, consecutive emergencies have expanded UW NWT's scope and raised important strategic questions about how the organization should define and sustain its emergency role alongside its longstanding community investment mandate. Donor and volunteer patterns have also evolved, and UW NWT has grown from an organization distributing under \$500,000 annually to one that has, in peak emergency years, stewarded and distributed several million dollars.

This plan also responds to the realities of UW NWT's operating model: a working Board and limited staff capacity. It aims to support long-term sustainability, protect volunteer capacity, and ensure UW NWT can continue to deliver funds effectively and responsibly across the Northwest Territories.

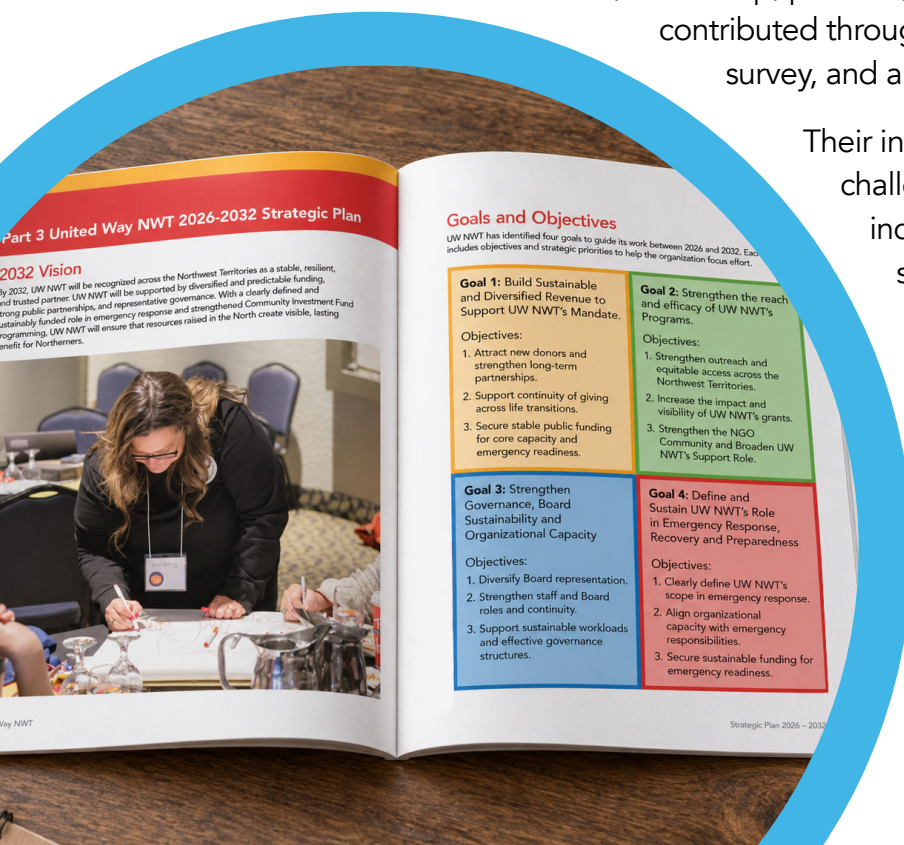
### Developing this Strategic Plan

United Way NWT developed this plan by reviewing its reports, financial and operational plans, emergency readiness work, and United Way Centraide resources. Board members, staff, leadership, partners, donors, and funding recipients contributed through interviews, meetings, a public survey, and a workshop.

Their input informed an analysis of strengths, challenges, opportunities, and barriers, included in the appendices. That analysis shaped the goals and priorities in this plan.

Read highlights of the Plan:

[\*\*Strategic Plan 2026-2032.\*\*](#)



# Gratitude & Donor Recognition: You Power Our Work

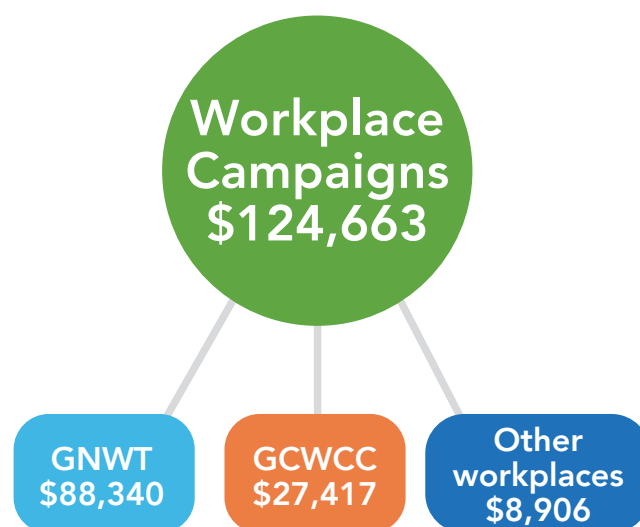
United Way NWT's impact is only possible thanks to the generosity of donors and partners across the North and beyond. From federal and territorial workplace giving campaigns to community fundraising events, major charitable foundations and individual giving what they can, your support fuels our Community Investment Fund and Emergency Funding Program.

Learn more or donate on our website: [nwt.unitedway.ca/donate](https://nwt.unitedway.ca/donate)

## Workplace Giving

We are especially grateful to the many public servants in the NWT who give through payroll contributions. The Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign (GDWCC) and the GNWT Workplace Giving Campaign remain the backbone of our annual fundraising.

These campaigns are powered not only by employee generosity but also by the dedication of department leads and volunteers who amplify their success.



## Major Contributions: Community Investment Fund

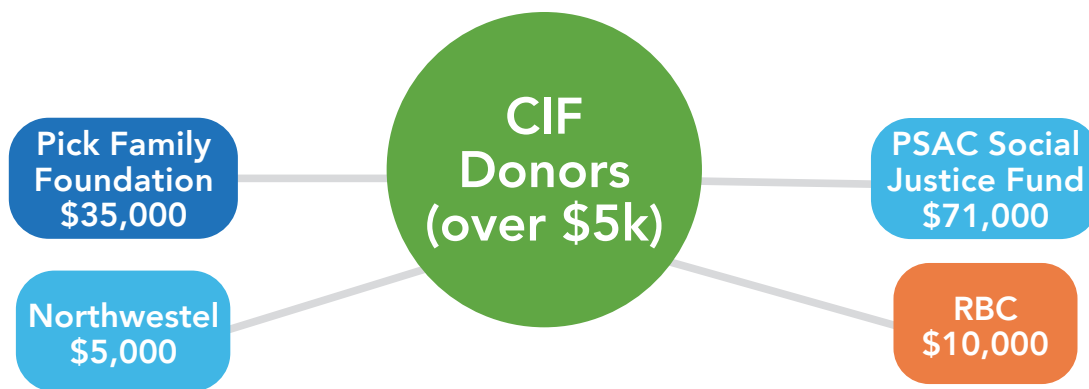
Our Community Investment Fund was bolstered by many significant contributions in 2025.

**The Pick Family Foundation** generously donated \$35,000. This gift honours the legacy of the Foundation's beloved founder, Tom Pick, whose vision made this support possible.

**RBC Foundation** contributed \$10,000, helping expand opportunities for Northern charities and nonprofits to deliver programs that empower youth, strengthen families, and build healthy communities.

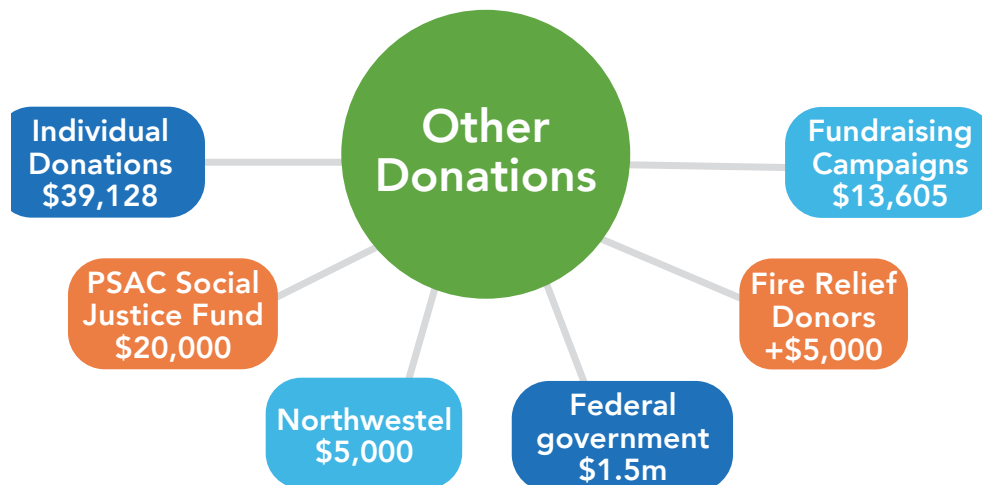
**Northwestel**, a dedicated service provider and supporter of community initiatives, have supported both our CIF and Emergency Fund over the years.

**PSAC Social Justice Fund**, through education, mobilization and empowerment, the fund works to advance the role of our members in building more equitable and sustainable communities in Canada and the around the world.



## With Heartfelt Gratitude

Every dollar donated, every hour volunteered, and every resource shared is a testament to the strength and solidarity of our communities. To all our donors, partners, and supporters: thank you for your belief in the strength of Northerners and your commitment to building a stronger, healthier, and more resilient North.



## Supporting Our Remote Neighbours

In June 2025, United Way NWT donated to wildfire relief efforts supporting evacuees from Flin Flon, Manitoba, and La Ronge, Saskatchewan.

The donations reflected gratitude for the support Northerners received during the NWT's 2023 wildfire season. Although United Way NWT traditionally directs funding within the territory, the Board recognized the shared experiences of northern and remote communities and the importance of extending that same compassion to others facing evacuation and recovery.

# Investing in the NWT's Emergency Response in Partnership with Public Safety Canada

In October 2023, United Way NWT launched Investing in the NWT's Emergency Response, a 30-month, \$1.472 million program supported by Public Safety Canada, creating space for collaboration around emergency preparedness and response, grounded in Northern voices.

## Restoring Hay River's Agricultural Lands

United Way NWT invested \$850,000 in Hay River Agricultural Restoration: A Path to Renewal, a project supporting the restoration and redevelopment of agricultural lands affected by the 2022 floods and 2023 wildfires.

Agriculture has long been an important part of Hay River's economy and community identity. This investment will help rebuild vital farming infrastructure, support local producers, and create a strong foundation for future agricultural growth. The project's long-term goal is to help re-establish Hay River as the Agriculture Hub of the North, strengthening local food production while generating benefits for the community and the wider territory.

The investment recognizes that disaster recovery is about more than repairing immediate damage. It is also about restoring livelihoods, revitalizing local economies, and helping communities become better prepared for future emergencies.

The project is part of United Way NWT's 30-month, \$1.472-million Supporting Northern Communities in Subsistence, Recovery and Resilience program, funded by the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. Through this program, United Way NWT is supporting community-led projects that address recovery needs and strengthen resilience and emergency preparedness across the Northwest Territories.





## Resilient Together: Building Skills and Strengthening Communities

In January 2026, United Way NWT hosted Climate Resilience Gatherings in Hay River and Inuvik, bringing together nearly 30 representatives from Northern non-government organizations, Indigenous governments, community organizations, and the health and wellness sector.

The gatherings were held in Hay River from January 13-15 and in Inuvik from January 19-21. They built on the success of the Resilient Together gathering held in Yellowknife in April 2025, where more than 45 participants identified community-led emergency planning, stronger coordination among service providers, and expanded mental health support as key priorities for Northern communities.

### Practical Skills for Times of Crisis

During the first two days of each gathering, participants completed Psychological First Aid certification delivered by the Canadian Red Cross. This practical, skills-based training equipped participants to recognize and respond to emotional and mental health distress related to climate events and other crises.

On the final day, community-led workshops focused on climate resilience and adaptability. Participants reflected on their experiences, shared community knowledge, and discussed practical ways to prepare for future challenges.

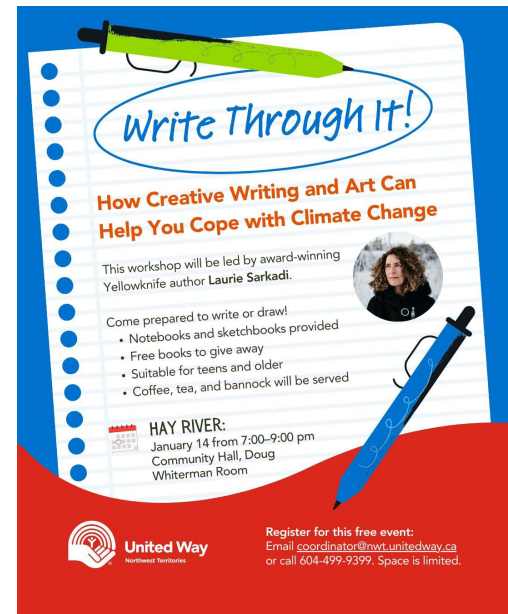
Representatives, Elders, and community members left with a tangible toolbox of skills and techniques to bring back to their organizations and communities. These tools will help them support individuals, families, colleagues, and neighbours, particularly during future climate emergencies.

Across both gatherings, participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to come together in their own communities, build new skills, and share their experiences. In Hay River and surrounding communities, where the impacts of recent floods and wildfire evacuations continue to be felt, the gathering provided an important space to reflect and discuss what comes next.

## Creativity as a Tool for Healing

Following both gatherings, award-winning Yellowknife author Laurie Sarkadi led a free community workshop exploring how creative writing and art can help people cope with climate change. Participants were invited to use writing and drawing to process climate anxiety, eco-grief, and the emotional impacts of emergencies in a welcoming and supportive environment.

The workshop demonstrated that resilience is not only about emergency plans and physical infrastructure, it is also about creating space for reflection, expression, healing, and connection.



The gatherings were part of United Way NWT's Supporting Northern Communities in Recovery and Resilience program. The \$1.472-million, 30-month initiative, is funded by the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. The program supports Northern communities in recovering from recent wildfires and floods while building capacity in three key areas: recovery, resilience, and preparedness.

## Service Continuity Plan Projects:

In August 2025 we released a funding opportunity for Territorial and community-based organizations to create a service continuity plan. These plans bring together policies and procedures to help keep critical operations going during the response and recovery phase of emergencies. The following 16 organizations received a total of \$428,310 to complete these projects over the winter of 2025-2026, and now have a blueprint to their emergency response and recovery needs for their community members:

- Fort Smith Metis Council
- Charter Community of K'asho Got'ine
- The Salvation Army - Yellowknife
- Nahanni Butte Dene Band
- YWCA NWT
- Inclusion NWT
- Home Base Yellowknife
- Foster Family Coalition of the NWT
- Community Government of Behchoko
- Hay River Youth Centre
- Deh Gah Gotie First Nation
- Western Arctic Moving Pictures
- The Tree of Peace Friendship Centre
- The Yellowknife Community Foundation
- Folk on the Rocks
- Inuvik Metis Council

# In Memory of Patrick Scott

A generous friend and  
supporter of United Way NWT

United Way NWT is deeply saddened by the passing of Patrick Scott, a generous community leader and a tremendous supporter of our work.

Patrick's leadership and commitment in United Way NWT's response to the 2021 flood and evacuation in Fort Simpson helped us support the community during a critical time and contributed to the growth of our emergency response work across the Northwest Territories. His impact will continue to be felt in the communities and by the people he helped us serve.

Most recently, we were honoured to partner with Patrick for his September 2025 head-shaving fundraiser in support of the Stanton Territorial Hospital Foundation, Inclusion NWT and United Way NWT. Even while facing his own cancer journey, Patrick continued to find ways to help others.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to Patrick's family, and his many friends, colleagues and community members. We are grateful for Patrick's support, his belief in our work and the remarkable legacy he leaves behind.

He will be deeply missed.









# United Way

## Northwest Territories

Audited financial statements can be found on our website at [nwt.unitedway.ca](http://nwt.unitedway.ca)

UNITED WAY NWT

P.O.Box 1145, STN. Main, Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N8

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