

United Way launches annual campaign

United Way of Peel Region kicked off its 49th annual workplace campaign last week at the Vic Johnson Community Centre in Mississauga.

Kris Smith, 2016 campaign chair and executive vice-president of refining and marketing at Suncor Energy Inc., and Shelley White, president and CEO of United Way, kicked off the event that welcomed more than 300 community members.

"Last February, I participated in the Longest Night," Smith said. "It was cold, it was uncomfortable, it was eye opening. That experience has driven me to dig deeper. Knowing that there are men, women and children in our neighbourhoods in need – some sleeping in their cars has motivated me as the chair of the 2016 campaign."

"I am honoured and proud to lead this year's Campaign Cabinet," he added. "Poverty in our community is a very real issue, but together we can do something about it. Together, we are possibility!"

In 1980, two per cent of Peel's neighbourhoods were considered low income. Today it's 45 per cent. The needs of the community have evolved. More people are struggling – many are working multiple jobs to make ends meet, supporting an ill family member, or struggling to find work. With the continued support of concerned people throughout the region, United Way is working to reduce and prevent poverty, and support those in crisis right now.

"In our community, there are people among us that do not have a roof over their heads or enough to eat," said United Way of Peel Region Board Chair Tom Dyck, financial services senior executive with TD Bank Financial Group. "Your support is what changes lives. Together we are making Peel a safer, healthier, and more vibrant community."

"Poverty can happen to anyone at any time," White observed. "We will continue working with our partners because we know the need is growing. This year, together with all of our supporters and volunteers, we aim to impact over 200,000 lives. Our ultimate goal is to eliminate poverty in Peel."

To learn more about the work of United Way Peel Region or to invest in your community visit www.unitedwaypeel.org