

United Way advocates to end homelessness

United Way of Peel Region joined United Ways across Ontario in a joint meeting with MPPs at Queen's Park recently to create awareness and to ultimately, end youth homelessness.

Community leaders and organizations throughout the province attended to learn more about how they can work together to put an end to this growing issue.

Last year, the one youth shelter for Caledon, Brampton and Mississauga, Our Place Peel, experienced such high demand, they turned away more than 450 kids due to lack of space. In addition, service providers working to address youth homelessness through prevention, early intervention, counselling and mental health supports are stretched. Many services to address youth homelessness don't exist in Peel.

With more than 12,000 people waiting, the Region has one of the longest social housing wait lists in the country. In excess of 200,000 individuals in Peel neighbourhoods are struggling to make ends meet. For them, the threat of homelessness is very real.

"Youth homelessness is a critical issue in our community," United Way of Peel Region President and CEO Shelley White said.

"When young people are turned away from emergency shelter due to lack of space, where do they go? They couch surf, sleep in cars and sleep on the streets. United Way of Peel Region is working with key partners to build strategies to end homelessness. Needless to say, we are pleased by the province's recent commitment to end chronic homelessness in 10 Years."

"As a movement, United Way has a long history of collaborating with partners within our borders and beyond," commented aid Anita Stellinga, vice-president of community investment with United Way. "I look forward to continuing this dialogue to identify solutions to end Youth Homelessness in Peel and across the province."