



United Way  
Toronto

# Helping seniors live independently



Photo: Tori Smoucha/PhotoSensitive

As we age, we are increasingly vulnerable to poor health, depression and poverty. A spouse dies, children move far away and suddenly frailty, illness or disability leaves us isolated in our homes. The struggle to maintain dignity and independence can be overwhelming.

All of us would like to maintain our independence as long as possible. The demand for homecare and social supports is rising as our population ages, while the shift from hospital care to community care as a result of hospital restructuring is also presenting increased demands. With fewer beds and shorter hospital stays, homecare services are being redirected to acutely ill patients at home and putting greater pressure on services leaving many seniors to struggle with the demands of daily life alone.

No senior in a city like Toronto should have to cope alone and at risk. By providing such services as meals on wheels and recreational day programs, United Way agencies are making it possible for seniors and their caregivers to remain safe and supported in their homes and communities—independent, but not alone.

## *Did you know...*

- Seniors made up 14.1% of Toronto's population in 2006. The fastest growing 5 year age group is the 80-84 year olds, which increased 30% between 2001 and 2006.
- By 2031 the number of people ages 85 and over is projected to be 85% larger than in 2001.
- 21% of Toronto seniors were living with before-tax income below Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off (LICO) in 2006. This represents 71,420 individuals.
- Historically, income for senior women has been significantly lower than men. In 2006, average before-tax personal income for senior women was 40% below that of men.
- Low income rates for Toronto seniors were nearly double that of seniors in the rest of the GTA and Ontario.
- 47.2% of Ontario's seniors (age 65+) have a disability.



Photo: Peter Bregg

*Your gift helps seniors to live independently by supporting:*

- ▶ Meals on wheels and nutrition programs
- ▶ Homecare
- ▶ Outreach to isolated seniors
- ▶ Respite for caregivers of a frail, ill or disabled senior
- ▶ Social and recreational day programs, drop-in programs and fitness classes

### *United Way's work in the community*

*United Way Toronto funds 88 agencies that provided an estimated 218,000 seniors with services like homecare, respite for caregivers, recreational programs, meals on wheels and more. In one year, United Way agencies delivered 442,299 meals on wheels to seniors, people with disabilities and others with health care needs, helping them to maintain their independence.*

## A new home gives a senior independence and freedom

"I became ill, my health deteriorated and I could no longer negotiate stairs," explains William Dumbleton who found himself looking to Mid-Toronto Community Services, a United Way agency that helps adults and seniors cope with illness and disabilities. The agency helped him find an appropriate home at a crucial time of need. "They found me a place where I can still have my independence and freedom. You can't imagine what a relief that was."

Many seniors like William are being helped every day through services and programs offered at United Way agencies.



## How your generosity makes an impact

**\$130** provides a low-income senior with two hours of cleaning services, shopping and meal preparation once every two months for a year, helping him live independently in his own home.

**\$480** provides a senior a friendly visit from a trained volunteer once a week for a year, helping her maintain her independence and live in her own home.

**\$780** provides one senior with once-a-week return transportation for a year, enabling her to attend medical appointments, go grocery shopping and visit family to maintain her independence.

**\$1,000** provides 10 seniors or adults with specialized health care needs with a day at a program that gives them support, recreation, socialization and personal care to keep them active and healthy, while providing vital relief for their caregivers.