

Township supports United Way of York Region

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The Township of King held a fall harvest corn roast in support of the United Way of York Region this past Thursday.

The corn roast was held to raise money for the United Way. The goal of

the fundraiser was to urge Township employees to contribute to the United Way by donating a portion of their weekly pay check to the organization.

"This is something I felt strongly about," said Mayor Steve Pellegrini, adding the Township has never held a fundraiser of

this nature to support the United Way. "This is our opportunity to help support people within York Region and King. One dollar out of every pay will make a difference. I urge everyone to do what they can. This is one more thing we can do to show King as the great employer we are."

Although the corn roast raised funds for a worthy cause, the fundraiser also served another purpose.

"The United Way serves not only King but York Region. It's a great opportunity for staff to feel good, for morale building," said Pellegrini. "It's fun and it shows we care about the community you live and work in. It's a good cause, it's a good cause and the corn is good. It's an all-around great thing."

Ken Turriff, a campaign representative of the United Way York Region, was on-hand to thank Township staff for their support on behalf of Daniel Zanotti, president of United Way York Region.

"Let me express our most heartfelt appreciation for having us at your United Way kick off event for the Township of King," said Turriff. "I think this is phenomenal."



The Township of King recently kicked off its United Way of York Region campaign with a fall corn roast.

photos by Angela Gismondi

The United Way of York Region affects one in three people – that is one third of York Region's population or about 333,000 residents including children, teens, adults and seniors, Turriff explained.

"These are your neighbours, your co-workers, and in many cases, some of us here," he commented.

Turriff pointed out that although King is an affluent community, there are people living in the area that use the 41 agencies and 100 programs supported by United Way of York Region.

There are more than 112,000 York Region residents (nearly 13 per cent of the population) living on less than \$35,000 per year for a family of four. The price of an average home in York Region is in excess of \$600,000.

He added York Region has a severe shortage of affordable housing with wait lists of more than 8,000 households and a shortage of rental units and among the highest average rents in the GTA.

"This does not bode well for those who are poverty stricken and marginalized," Turriff stated. "York Region is expected to grow by 500,000 residents by 2031. We need to implement infrastructure and social infrastructure and the situation will be greatly exacerbated unless we do something to get ahead of the curve."

The United Way York Region aims to help kids be all they can be, move people from poverty to possibility and create strong and healthy neighbourhoods.

He encouraged everyone to fill out their employee campaign pledge form. A \$5 contribution from every paycheque would go a long way to making a difference and positively impact the lives of others, he concluded.

Lounita Lue-Shing was



Mayor Steve Pellegrini took a big bite out of his corn on the cob during the fall corn roast in support of the United Way of York Region.

at the corn roast to share with Township staff her personal story of struggle and how an agency of the United Way helped her through. Lue-Shing was a client of the Women's Centre York Region, a centre for women dealing with abuse or financial challenges. The organization has been in York Region for 20 years.

"Three things I learned as a client is it takes courage to ask for help, we are not alone and people are always willing to help," said Lue-Shing. "One in three people in York Region will be coming to a United Way agency to look for help. I think that means there are a lot of courageous people in York Region because it takes courage to ask for help."

She recounted her own personal story and the stories of three local women who attended the Women's Centre and inspired her.

"I had family and friends tell me I needed help and I didn't know I did," she explained. "Through your donations, your support, these programs are making changes. These are people in our

backyard. They are your friends, neighbours and loved ones."

As a result of her struggles, Lue-Shing wrote a book, *Back to loving me, back to your authentic self*.

"It has been an amazing spiritual journey," she said. "These women inspired me and I hope they inspire you as well."

Township CAO Susan Plamondon had some words of encouragement for employees.

"We all recognize the power that an organization like the United Way can have in the community," said Plamondon. "We want to encourage more people to start in the payroll dedication program. Even \$1 off every pay will make a difference in people's lives. If we value with the fact that these services are available to us, we should step up and support them. It means a lot to the community to know those services are available to people in King and York Region. Council has paid for all this (the harvest corn roast) so that every dollar that is raised here today goes to the United Way."