

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITIES OF SIMCOE COUNTY 2008



United Way
of Greater Simcoe County

A Study Commissioned by the United Way of Greater Simcoe County

June 2008

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INTRODUCTION

In May 2008, the United Way of Greater Simcoe County commissioned three professors from Lakehead University-Orillia to complete a “Community Profile” of the United Way catchment area. This profile was to provide recent socio-demographic data, highlight significant social trends, and to indicate community needs.

This report summarizes the results of this project. Section 1 documents some of the ongoing socio-demographic changes in Simcoe County and highlights changes since 2001. Section 2 focuses on trends and issues related to the five Impact Areas of the United Way: safe, supportive communities, reduced cycles of poverty and abuse, living with independence and dignity, healthy, thriving children and youth, and, strong, nurturing families.

Unlike an earlier report produced in 1995, this report does not include an evaluation of existing community service programs but rather identifies areas of potential need. Section Three suggests further directions for investigating community needs which will be of use to the Allocations Committee of the United Way Board. This report should be seen as a first step in identifying a set of priority funding areas based on local data and trends.

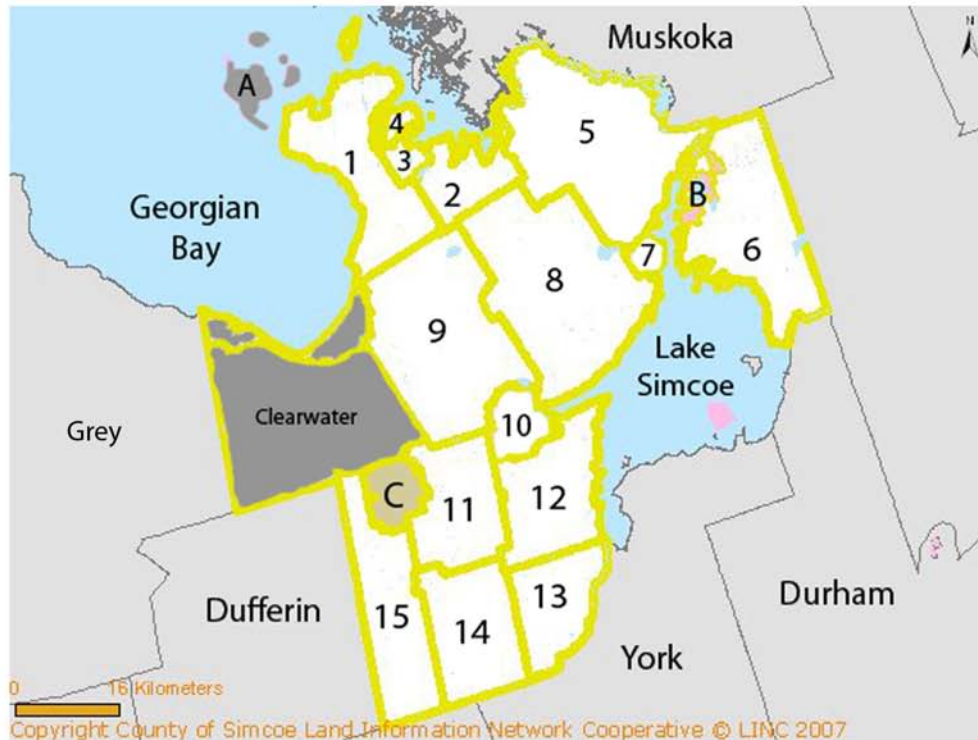
THE UNITED WAY CATCHMENT AREA

For the purposes of this study the United Way of Greater Simcoe County catchment area is defined as those municipalities in the County of Simcoe as defined in the reorganization of 1994 with the exception of the municipalities of Collingwood, Wasaga Beach and Clearwater, which are served by the United Way of South Georgian Bay. Where possible, references to Simcoe County exclude the three municipalities listed above.

Where appropriate, the municipality names of Adjala-Tosorontio, Bradford-West Gwillimbury, Oro-Medonte and Penetanguishene have been shortened to save space and improve readability.

Three federal areas within Simcoe County: CFB Borden, Christian Island First Nation and Chippewas of Rama First Nation (formerly Mnjikaning First Nation) are discussed separately.

United Way of Greater Simcoe County Area



Legend:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Tiny | 10. Barrie |
| 2. Tay | 11. Essa |
| 3. Midland | 12. Innisfil |
| 4. Penetanguishene | 13. Bradford West Gwillimbury |
| 5. Severn | 14. New Tecumseth |
| 6. Ramara | 15. Adjala-Tosorontio |
| 7. Orillia | A. Christian Island |
| 8. Oro Medonte | B. Mnjikaning |
| 9. Springwater | C. CFB Borden |

THE ONTARIO ENVIRONMENT IN 2008

Ontario has long been the economic powerhouse of Canada and although it remains the leading contributor to Canada's GDP, the manufacturing sector in particular has undergone considerable decline. Originally due to the shift of manufacturing to lower cost areas in the developing world, this trend has been accentuated by the rising price of fossil fuels, the higher value of the Canadian dollar, and continued penetration of the Canadian market by manufactured goods from Asia.

The increasing demand for fossil fuels in China and India suggests that fossil fuel prices will not decline in the near future. Ironically, Canada's own fossil fuel resources help to keep the Canadian dollar at a level which makes exporting manufactured goods more difficult and at the same time encourages imports. Further, Ontario's dependence on fossil fuels for electricity generation suggests the cost of electricity will also increase.¹

The loss of manufacturing jobs has increased the number of people employed in the tertiary sector of the economy which tends to be divided into high paying jobs in business and financial services and low paying jobs in consumer services which are a combination of low wage, part time and seasonal. Erosion of the middle class thus becomes a concern.

The social structure of Ontario is also changing. Immigration to Canada now exceeds natural increase and will make up nearly all growth by 2025. Forty five percent of all immigrants settle in the Greater Toronto Area and with 58% coming from Asia and 11% from the rest of the Americas, other than the United States. The ethnic and linguistic makeup of the province is changing. Although the Aboriginal population makes up only 1.6% of the total population demographic characteristics, in particular much higher birth rates, are increasing the size of this community.²

Barrie Census Metropolitan Area is now the 26th largest in Canada and the rapidly growing demands for services put pressure on community organizations such as the United Way to both obtain sufficient donations and to distribute these funds to meet changing needs. The following pages provide specific details about some of these issues.

¹ Robert Bone (2008) *The Regional Geography of Canada* Toronto: Oxford

² Ibid.

Section 1

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS

Demographic Patterns

Housing

Education

Mobility

1.1 Demographic Patterns

1.1.1 Population Growth

The combination of total population and population growth rate are a basic measure of the demand on community services. The 2006 Census identifies both the population distribution and growth rates over the period 2001-2006. The following results indicate that the demands for services across the county are not equal.

The Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal in a report published January 16, 2008 projected a population for Simcoe County in 2011 of 484,000, in 2021 of 583,000 and in 2031 of 667,000. Provincial legislation designed to control growth in existing urban areas and restrict growth in agricultural and other rural areas was passed in 2006.³

With a population of 128,430 Barrie has already surpassed the projected population for 2011 given in the United Way's 1995 report. With the fastest growth rate in the county (23.8%) its domination of the county can be expected to continue.

The 2006 population of Barrie is almost equal to that of the total for the five next largest municipalities: Innisfil, Orillia, New Tecumseth, Bradford and Oro. Further, all have much lower growth rates, four between 6% and 9% and Orillia at only 3.9% which is the third lowest in the county. The Province projects the population of Orillia to be 33,000 in 2011, 37,000 in 2021, and 41,000 in 2031. Barrie, which is now just over four times larger than Orillia, will be over sixteen times larger than Orillia in another fifteen years and Bradford and New Tecumseth will have populations similar to Orillia's.

The next cluster of municipalities has sizes between 16,000 and 18,000. While Springwater is matching the municipalities above, with an 8.4% growth rate, Essa and Midland grew less than 1% between 2001-06.

The population of the remaining municipalities ranges between 9,000 and 12,000. Tiny Township has the second highest growth rate in the county (19.4%) followed by Penetang at 12.5% and Ramara at 9.4%. The final two communities Tay and Adjala are growing at just over 6%. The two First Nation reserves are discussed below.

³Ontario Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal (2006) *Places to Grow: Better Choices, Brighter Future*.

TABLE 1: 2006 POPULATION AND GROWTH 2001-2006 (%) ALL MUNICIPALITIES

| MUNICIPALITY | POPULATION | %GROWTH 2001-2006 | MUNICIPALITY | POPULATION | %GROWTH 2001-2006 |
|------------------|------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------|-------------------|
| Barrie | 128,430 | 23.8 | Orillia | 30,259 | 3.9 |
| Adjala-Tosoront. | 10,695 | 6.1 | Oro-Medonte | 20,031 | 9.4 |
| Bradford- WG | 24,039 | 8.1 | Midland | 16,300 | 0.5 |
| Essa | 16,901 | 0.6 | Ramara | 9,427 | 9.4 |
| Innisfil | 31,175 | 8.8 | Severn | 12,030 | 8.0 |
| New Tecumseth | 27,701 | 6.0 | Penetanguishene | 9,354 | 12.5 |
| Springwater | 17,456 | 8.4 | Tay | 7,748 | 6.4 |
| SIMCOE | 422,204 | 12.0 | Tiny | 10,784 | 19.4 |

Source: Census Canada 2006

1.1.2 Age Distribution

Community services tend to be offered to specific age groups, in particular youth and seniors. These groups can be identified on the Census and variations across the county are again visible. The municipalities to the south of Barrie have slightly higher proportions of the population under the age of 15 (19%-21%) than those north of the city (14%-18%) but no relationship was found between this figure and the population growth rates discussed above. Further, the percentage of the County population under age 15 has decreased from 23%, in the 1995 report, to 19% on the 2006 Census.

Conversely, there are more seniors over age 65 than there are children under age 15 in all the northern municipalities and more youth than seniors in all the municipalities from Tay and Oro southward. The percentage of seniors in the northern municipalities ranges from 16% to 20% with Ramara, Orillia and Midland having the highest values. In the south the range is from 7% to 15% with Essa, Adjala and Barrie having the lowest values.

An examination of seniors who are over the age of 80 finds that the highest value is in Orillia at 34.7%, followed by Penetang and Midland. Barrie at 28.8% is followed by Bradford and New

Tecumseth. The townships of Oro, Innisfil and Springwater fell between 20 and 23% and the remainder of the townships have between 16% and 11% of seniors over the age of 80. It may be expected that this age group will require more services than the younger seniors.

TABLE 2: PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION UNDER AGE 15 AND OVER AGE 65

| MUNICIPALITY | % < 15 | % > 65 | MUNICIPALITY | % < 15 | % > 65 |
|------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|--------|--------|
| Barrie | 21.3 | 10.9 | Orillia | 16.5 | 19.2 |
| Adjala-Tosoront. | 20.3 | 9.8 | Oro-Medonte | 18.0 | 13.5 |
| Bradford- WG | 20.8 | 8.7 | Midland | 15.5 | 19.8 |
| Essa | 21.2 | 7.7 | Ramara | 15.5 | 20.3 |
| Innisfil | 19.4 | 13.6 | Severn | 16.5 | 16.6 |
| New Tecumseth | 19.5 | 14.8 | Penetanguishene | 14.5 | 17.5 |
| Springwater | 19.9 | 11.9 | Tay | 17.3 | 14.6 |
| SIMCOE | 19.0 | 13.9 | Tiny | 14.5 | 19.0 |

Source Census Canada 2006

In 2006 the largest single cohort was the 40-44 age group in Springwater, New Tecumseth, Innisfil, Essa, Bradford, Barrie, and Adjala; and 45-49 in Orillia, Penetang, Tay, Midland Oro and Severn. The aging of the population predicted in the 1995 report has not happened. However, the largest cohort in Tiny is 50-54 and 55-59 in Ramara. Even though the county's senior's population is only 1% higher than it was in 1991 an increase in demand for services for seniors can be expected over the next 10 to 20 years, particularly in the northern half of the county.

1.1.3 Special Populations

1.1.3.1 Aboriginal Population

In Simcoe County, 12, 485 people identified themselves with at least one of the following aboriginal groups: North American Indian, Métis, or Inuit; Treaty Indian and/or Registered Indian; a member of an Indian band and/or First Nation. Of this overall group 89.4% live off reserve. As a proportion of municipal population, Penetang reported the highest figure for aboriginal peoples living off reserve with 13.8% followed by the neighbouring municipalities of Tay 10.2%, Midland 8.7%, and Tiny 7.6%. All are adjacent to the Christian Island reserve but a significant part of this population may be Métis. Orillia at 4.4%, Ramara 3.2%, and Severn 2.2%

are adjacent to the Mnjikaning First Nation. The city of Barrie at 2.1% is the only other municipality with an Aboriginal population over 2%.

Christian Island (population 600) and Mnjikaning (population 750) are both small communities but are undergoing rapid population increases at 13.4% and 41.7% respectively between 2001 and 2006. The percentage of the population under age 15 is much higher than anywhere else in the county, 31.6% and 27.8% respectively. The two communities have only 35 people over the age of 65 and only 5 over the age of 80.

1.1.3.2 Immigrant Population

Information on immigration is provided in the mobility section which follows. At this point the report will discuss the proportion of the population who do not have knowledge of one of Canada's official languages and those reporting membership in a visible minority.

Individuals who did not have knowledge of either English or French were highest in the southern part of the county: Barrie 350, Bradford 310, Adjala 100, Innisfil 85, New Tecumseth 60 and in Orillia 100. All other municipalities had fewer than 35 residents who could not speak an official language with three municipalities reporting zero.

The seven municipalities in the southern part of the county have higher visible minority populations than Aboriginal populations; from Oro northward the Aboriginal population is larger than the visible minority population. Tiny, Tay and Penetang have the smallest visible minority populations. These statistics clearly identify where the majority of immigrants are settling within Simcoe County.

1.2 Housing

A discussion of housing should consider quantity, type and cost.

Table 3 highlights the lack of housing options outside the urban communities of Orillia, Barrie, Midland, Penetang, and Bradford. Over 90% of all dwellings in all the other municipalities, except New Tecumseth, are detached single family units.

TABLE 3: TYPE OF HOUSING AND AGE

| MUNICIPALITY | % SFH | %> 1986 | MUNICIPALITY | %SFH | % >1986 |
|--------------------|-------|---------|-----------------|------|---------|
| Barrie | 62.0 | 61.5 | Orillia | 58.6 | 25.0 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio. | 92.7 | 44.1 | Oro-Medonte | 95.9 | 41.8 |
| Bradford- WG | 75.1 | 47.8 | Midland | 63.5 | 24.4 |
| Essa | 80.4 | 41.8 | Ramara | 88.0 | 39.2 |
| Innisfil | 93.8 | 44.3 | Severn | 93.6 | 40.9 |
| New Tecumseth | 72.4 | 45.6 | Penetanguishene | 67.6 | 37.0 |
| Springwater | 91.8 | 44.5 | Tay | 93.5 | 31.9 |
| SIMCOE | 75.0 | 46.2 | Tiny | 96.4 | 37.4 |

Column 2: Single detached houses as a % of total occupied private dwellings

Column 3: Percent of total private dwellings occupied built since 1986

Source: Census Canada 2006

The construction of dwellings in the last twenty years shows the marked difference between municipalities of south Simcoe and those in the northern part of the county. Not surprisingly, Barrie has by far the largest percentage of new dwellings. The fastest growing communities of Tiny, Penetang, Ramara and Oro are not keeping pace with any of the slower growing municipalities of the south. New housing makes up 56.7% of dwellings on Christian Island and 75.4% for Rama.

Financial institutions generally argue that a household should not spend more than 30% of its income on housing.⁴ Additional money spent on housing will have to come from other areas of the budget which may include food, clothing, and health care.

⁴ Basic Needs Task Group, Child, Youth and Family Services Coalition of Simcoe County (2008) *Our Most Basic Needs* Issue 2

TABLE 4: MEDIAN MONTHLY HOUSING AND RENTAL COSTS COMPARED TO HIGH AND LOW MEDIAN INCOMES AVAILABLE FOR SHELTER COSTS

| Municipality | Married Couple Median Housing Allowance | Median Cost of Home Ownership | Single Parent Median Housing Allowance | Median Rent |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|--|-------------|
| Barrie | 2,011 | 1,333 | 849 | 911 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio. | 2,321 | 1,320 | 1,019 | 806 |
| Bradford- WG | 2,249 | 1,466 | 864 | 885 |
| Essa | 2,052 | 1,166 | 881 | 849 |
| Innisfil | 1,928 | 1,209 | 925 | 1,001 |
| New Tecumseth | 2,145 | 1,223 | 951 | 851 |
| Springwater | 2,193 | 1,078 | 881 | 757 |
| Orillia | 1,668 | 9,31 | 804 | 778 |
| Oro-Medonte | 1,969 | 1,046 | 911 | 897 |
| Midland | 1,605 | 898 | 737 | 701 |
| Ramara | 1,628 | 792 | 850 | 876 |
| Severn | 1,788 | 878 | 824 | 709 |
| Penetanguishene | 1,646 | 889 | 754 | 689 |
| Tay | 1,535 | 803 | 803 | 751 |
| Tiny | 1,794 | 651 | 683 | 750 |
| SIMCOE | 1,918 | 1,128 | 850 | 832 |

Table 4 identifies the highest median income in each municipality, usually that of double income married couples; although in Adjala, Innisfil, and Severn common-law couples report the highest incomes. This figure was multiplied by 30% and divided by 12 to obtain a maximum monthly housing figure. This is compared to the median monthly payments for owner-occupied dwellings. The next column calculates the median income figure for the lowest income group, single parent families led by women except in Springwater where they are male led. The housing figure for the low income group is compared to the median monthly rent figure for each

municipality. (Tiny is the only community where monthly payments for house ownership are cheaper than renting.)

As with other indicators, total incomes are higher in the southern part of the county than in the north for both double income households and single parent households. However, there are also differences in housing costs.

The median double income couples in the southern part of the county would have to spend between 49% and 66% of their shelter allocation to afford the median house ownership costs. This suggests sufficient room to obtain accommodation. The situation is even better for couples in the northern part of the county who need to spend between 36% and 55% of their shelter income. A May 15, 2008 CTV News report stated that housing prices in Ontario have stabilized and are not likely to increase in the near future.

In contrast, the median single parent families cannot afford the cost of ownership of the median house in any municipality except Ramara and Tay. Unless such families are prepared to give up part of their disposable income, they are forced into the rental market. Even here, the situation is bleak in all parts of the county. The median family cannot afford the median rent in Barrie, Bradford, Innisfil or Ramara and would either have to devote an additional 3%-8% of their income to rent or live in cheaper accommodations, which forces the families at the bottom of the scale onto the streets. In other municipalities single parent families are spending over 90% of their shelter allowance to obtain accommodation except in Springwater (86%) and Adjala (79%). The effect of low income on access to shelter is obvious.

Income levels for Rama were comparable with neighbouring municipalities but Christian Island figures were well below any other places. Housing costs are not given in the census.

1.3 Education

1.3.1 Growth Trends

Simcoe County's primary and secondary school systems have responded to a range of pressing issues related to funding, growth, and existing capacity. The period between 1994 and 1999 alone witnessed an increase of just under 8,000 student enrolments. However, the rate of growth began to plateau by 2000 and has remained at roughly the same level. At the same time an effort to link capacity to the rapid growth in enrolments is discernable. In 1998-1999, the number of enrolments stood at 73,587 with 139 schools. In 2007, there were approximately a combined total of 74,613 students enrolled in the public and separate school systems with about 158 schools.

Expansion in enrolments was most marked at the secondary level, with a 14.3% increase between 1999 and 2005. Over the same period, only three new schools were built – one in the public system and two in the separate system. Elementary enrolments grew by 4.2% while seventeen new facilities were created – ten in the separate system and seven in the public system.

The period between about 2002 and 2008 witnessed the entry of the so-called echo boom generation into public secondary education, accounting for the modest declines at the primary level and a steady rise in numbers of high-schools students. The latter trend is expected to wane after 2008. In fact, overall projections are for a levelling off of numbers of four- to eighteen-year-olds entering the system with general declines in the 2% range, particularly elementary students, until about 2015.⁵

TABLE 5: ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS SIMCOE COUNTY 1998-2005

| BOARD | 1998-9 | 1999-0 | 2000-1 | 2001-2 | 2002-3 | 2003-4 | 2004-5 |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| SEPARATE | 14,312 | 14,694 | 15,305 | 15,419 | 15,75 | 15,389 | 15,069 |
| PUBLIC | 36,572 | 37,508 | 37,969 | 38,169 | 38,532 | 38,609 | 38,042 |
| TOTAL | 50,884 | 52,202 | 53,274 | 53,588 | 54,007 | 53,998 | 53,111 |

Source: Ministry of Education School Board Profiles

⁵ *Standard and Poor's Canadian Ratings: Simcoe County District School Board.*

TABLE 6: SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS SIMCOE COUNTY 1998-2005

| BOARD | 1998-9 | 1999-0 | 2000-1 | 2001-2 | 2002-3 | 2003-4 | 2004-5 |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| SEPARATE | 5,452 | 5,986 | 6,451 | 6,673 | 6,992 | 7,030 | 7,457 |
| PUBLIC | 17,251 | 17,671 | 17,806 | 18,243 | 18,150 | 18,262 | 19,020 |
| TOTAL | 22,703 | 23,657 | 24,257 | 24,916 | 25,142 | 25,292 | 26,477 |

Source: Ministry of Education – School Board Profiles

TABLE 7: ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS SIMCOE COUNTY 1998-2005

| BOARD | 1998-9 | 1999-0 | 2000-1 | 2001-2 | 2002-3 | 2003-4 | 2004-5 |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| SEPARATE | 35 | 37 | 41 | 41 | 41 | 42 | 42 |
| PUBLIC | 81 | 84 | 87 | 90 | 91 | 91 | 91 |
| TOTAL | 116 | 121 | 128 | 131 | 132 | 133 | 133 |

Source: Ministry of Education – School Board Profiles

TABLE 8: SECONDARY SCHOOLS SIMCOE COUNTY 1998-2005

| BOARD | 1998-9 | 1999-0 | 2000-1 | 2001-2 | 2002-3 | 2003-4 | 2004-5 |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| SEPARATE | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| PUBLIC | 15 | 15 | 15 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 17 |
| TOTAL | 23 | 23 | 23 | 26 | 26 | 26 | 26 |

Source: Ministry of Education – School Board Profiles

1.3.2 Major System Changes

Given the rate of growth since the mid-1990s, changes in the education system were inevitable. After a period of reform and reorganization, particularly in matters of curricula and grade-level

standards, funding and capital investment for new facilities and needed repairs began to dominate at the political level. More recently, the creation and implementation of “safe schools” protocols and “green” programs have become key priorities. Reflecting more recent demands to improve the culture of public education, since 2005 the Simcoe County District School Board has addressed four priority areas: Student Achievement, Safe and Supportive Environments, Leadership and Staff Development, and Employee Excellence.⁶

1.3.3. Adult Learning

In light of the changing economic context and increasingly diverse demographic profile of the province, the Government of Ontario has recently targeted the needs of adult learners as a priority area. “These learners,” wrote Kathleen Wynne, parliamentary secretary to Ontario’s minister of education, in a 2005 memorandum, “are the parents of the children in our public schools. They are newcomers whose expertise we require in our workforce. They are young adults who want to contribute but need to find a way back into the education system before they can enter the workforce. Often, they are students at risk of leaving school, even 16- and 17-year olds, who can benefit from strategies used in adult programs. And they are seniors who will stay healthy and mobile if they are able to remain active in the community.”⁷

As a major regional component of adult education, there are five Simcoe County District School Board Learning Centres serving communities in the study area (Alliston, Barrie, Bradford, Midland, and Orillia). Approximately 20,000 people access these programs annually. Yet adult learning only accounts for about 2.5 % of the SCDSB’s annual budget. The Learning Centres provide a range of upgrading, training, and certification programs, including numeracy and literacy training; high school certificates (grade 10) and diplomas (grade 12); post-secondary prerequisites; computer training and certification; IT training and certification; leadership and management training; workplace certification; and driver training.⁸

In addition to these resources, access to post-secondary education in the region has expanded with the development of partnerships between Barrie-based Georgian College and a group of five universities (Laurentian, York, Central Michigan, Embry-Riddle, and Nipissing), including a full degree program through Laurentian University. Three of Georgian’s six campuses are located in the study area (Barrie, Midland, and Orillia). In 2006, Lakehead University established a satellite campus at Orillia with just over 100 students. The expected enrolment for September 2008 is 500 and plans for a free-standing campus in 2010 will allow enrolment to increase to over 1,000.

⁶ “*Creating a Caring Culture of Educational Excellence*”: Simcoe County District School Board 2006-2007, 4.

⁷ Letter from the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Education, June 22, 2005.

⁸ www.scdsb.on.ca; www.thelearningcentres.com.

1.4 Mobility

1.4.1 Change of Residence

Residential mobility is often the result of lifecycle and lifestyle alterations and adjustments such as family break-ups and changed employment status. These may have significant personal and familial repercussions. Mobility can also create a sense of detachment and alienation from the broader community, with individual and social implications which may require the assistance of community agencies. It is however impossible to generalize from the data available as some moves have positive outcomes such as new family formation and better employment situations.

According to the 2006 Census some 10% to 17% of the total population moved within the last year, a relatively high level of mobility. Movements within the municipality are closely related to the availability of rental properties (see Table 3) with the highest values (5% to 10%) in Orillia, Barrie, Midland, Penetang, Bradford and New Tecumseth. Only Severn has high mobility and few rental units. Local mobility in all other municipalities is below 4%.

The Census does not provide in-county movements as an option; however, movements into municipalities from other parts of Ontario, which would include other places in Simcoe County, represented the largest segment of movers in all municipalities except Barrie, Orillia, Penetang and Severn, which had higher internal movements. The narrow range from 5.8% to 7.6% shows no specific destinations.

Essa is the only municipality to have significant in-migration from outside of Ontario. No other municipality had more than 1% of the population as new arrivals from outside the province. Barrie, Adjala, and Midland were marginally higher as immigrant destinations but new immigrants represented less than 1% of the population in all municipalities. It was noted earlier that Barrie and Adjala have the highest number of citizens who cannot speak either English or French.

Movement on the First Nation reserves consisted of between 4%-5% moving internally and a similar number moving from within Ontario. No new residents came from outside of Ontario.

TABLE 9: MOBILITY RATES IN SIMCOE COUNTY
 PERCENT OF POPULATION OVER AGE ONE TO MOVE IN 2005-2006

| MUNICIPALITY | WITHIN TOWN | WITHIN ONTARIO | WITHIN CANADA | OUTSIDE CANADA | TOTAL MOVERS |
|--------------------|-------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|
| Barrie | 9.8 | 6.5 | 0.6 | 0.5 | 17.4 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio. | 3.5 | 7.4 | 0.2 | 0.7 | 11.8 |
| Bradford- WG | 4.0 | 6.5 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 10.9 |
| Essa | 3.7 | 7.1 | 4.6 | 0.2 | 15.6 |
| Innisfil | 3.1 | 6.8 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 10.2 |
| New Tecumseth | 4.7 | 6.4 | 0.2 | 0.2 | 11.5 |
| Springwater | 2.4 | 5.8 | 0.1 | 0.2 | 8.5 |
| Orillia | 10.5 | 6.1 | 0.4 | 0.4 | 17.4 |
| Oro-Medonte | 2.7 | 7.1 | 0.1 | 0.4 | 10.3 |
| Midland | 5.9 | 7.6 | 0.1 | 0.5 | 14.1 |
| Ramara | 2.3 | 8.1 | 0.3 | 0.0 | 10.7 |
| Severn | 4.7 | 4.3 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 9.6 |
| Penetanguishene | 6.9 | 6.6 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 14.2 |
| Tay | 3.5 | 6.8 | 0.7 | 0.0 | 11.0 |
| Tiny | 2.7 | 6.8 | 0.0 | 0.2 | 9.7 |
| SIMCOE | 6.4 | 6.6 | 0.5 | 0.4 | 13.9 |

Source: Census Canada 2006

1.4.2 Place of Work and Commuting

Statistics on place of work and commuting reveal high levels of mobility for the purpose of earning a livelihood. In Simcoe County, 46.8% of the workforce met the Census definition of commuting to work in 2006. The established towns and cities: Barrie, Orillia, Midland, Penetang and Bradford tend to have lower commuter totals suggesting they are destinations for employment. New Tecumseth, home of the Honda plant in Alliston also has a low commuter figure. High values are found in rural areas; Springwater to Barrie, Tiny and Tay probably to Midland and Penetang, Severn to Orillia, Ramara to Orillia and Casino Rama at Mnjikaning. High in-county values in Innisfil, Essa and Adjala may relate to their proximity to Canadian Forces Base Borden. Borden employs 3,250 military personnel and 1,500 civilians. It also trains about 15,000 personnel annually.⁹

The Simcoe County rate for commuting beyond county borders shows high values in the southern-most municipalities adjacent to York, Peel, and Durham Regions and in Ramara which also neighbours Durham.

Also noteworthy is the percentage of people who reported working at home. Figures in this category for Simcoe County are roughly the same as the provincial and national findings. At-home employment is concentrated in Adjala, Springwater, Oro and Tiny and has lowest values in Orillia, Midland, and Penetang.

There is also a significant gendered dimension to these findings. In 2006, women made up 46.9% of Simcoe County's labour force and comprised 45.7% of all commuters. In Barrie, the study area's most populous centre, women represented 41.3% of those who commuted to another town within the county and 35% of those who commuted out of county.

⁹ www.mdn.ca/site/home_e.asp

TABLE 10: PLACES OF WORK AND COMMUTING IN SIMCOE COUNTY

| MUNICIPALITY | TOTAL LABOUR FORCE > age 15 | % WORK AT HOME | %COMMUTE DIFFERENT TOWN IN SIMCOE CO | % COMMUTE OUTSIDE COUNTY |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Barrie | 67,700 | 6.0 | 14.4 | 18.7 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio. | 6,055 | 10.6 | 35.6 | 36.0 |
| Bradford- WG | 13,520 | 6.3 | 4.6 | 57.3 |
| Essa | 9,380 | 7.0 | 38.0 | 13.4 |
| Innisfil | 16,135 | 6.5 | 28.7 | 35.3 |
| New Tecumseth | 14,570 | 7.4 | 7.3 | 37.8 |
| Springwater | 9,575 | 11.6 | 56.2 | 8.3 |
| Orillia | 14,610 | 5.8 | 25.2 | 5.5 |
| Oro-Medonte | 10,960 | 11.7 | 57.0 | 8.8 |
| Midland | 7,575 | 5.7 | 26.8 | 3.3 |
| Ramara | 4,615 | 8.9 | 48.4 | 14.9 |
| Severn | 6,265 | 9.4 | 52.1 | 8.6 |
| Penetanguishene | 4,075 | 5.8 | 43.0 | 3.3 |
| Tay | 4,890 | 6.9 | 66.4 | 5.2 |
| Tiny | 5,165 | 10.5 | 56.5 | 11.4 |
| SIMCOE | 217,525 | 7.5 | 27.0 | 19.8 |

Source: Census of Canada 2006

For some time now commuting has been identified as an area of concern bearing on questions of physical and mental health, and, more recently, environmental degradation.

According to Simcoe County's medical officer of health commuting is a major impediment to physical activity in adults. Daily physical activity helps prevent incidences of adult onset diabetes as well as mental health problems such as depression. Time devoted to commuting erodes opportunities for recuperative and therapeutic physical activity.¹⁰

Moreover, according to Best Start, a province-wide social agency specializing in childhood and maternal health issues, commuting is among the major stress factors impinging on women's and men's reproductive health. Problems ranging from decreased libido, damaged sperm and ovum, and infertility, to birth defects, miscarriage, and childhood developmental problems are associated with various job-related stress factors which include regular commuting.¹¹

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit has also cited commuting as a growing and serious environmental concern. Fossil fuel-based transportation is a major cause of air pollution, witnessed in the growing incidents of so-called smog days. In recent years medical experts have pointed to rising rates of childhood asthma, low birth weights, respiratory complications and premature death in the elderly, and the cost of hospitalization and emergency room use as outcomes of the environmental impact of intensive automobile use.¹²

¹⁰ Charles Gardner, "Get Moving, One Step at a Time" (www.simcoemuskokahealth.org)

¹¹ Wendy Burgoyne, Workplace Reproductive Health (www.beststart.org)

¹² www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

Section Two

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SERVICE AND SUPPORT

Living with Independence and Dignity

Healthy Children and Youth

Reduced Cycles of Poverty and Abuse

Strong Nurturing Families

Healthy Stable Communities

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the United Way is to improve the life chances of the people within the service area. This involves working with individuals, their families, and the communities within which they live through five main service areas: living with independence and dignity, healthy thriving children and youth, reduced cycles of poverty and abuse, strong nurturing families and healthy stable communities. It may be argued that healthy communities are created by healthy families and healthy families are created by healthy individuals. It is therefore difficult at times to separate these three levels of society.

The “traditional” household consisting of a couple (married or not) with children make up 33% of all households in Simcoe County, the largest group but not the majority. A product of the aging population, couples without children at home constitute 32% of households. Single person households represent 21% of all households, reflecting both the postponement of marriage and a significant number of divorced or widowed individuals. One-parent families constitute 14% of households.

2.1 Living With Independence and Dignity

In North American society dignity is often associated with financial independence and therefore with the ability to be gainfully employed. The dependent members of society include children under the age of 15, seniors over the age of 65, and those who are unable to work due to physical, mental or emotional disability. Children are discussed below in section 2.2. Adults who are not in the workforce are often subject to being ignored, abandoned, and even abused by other individuals, their families and the community at large. This leads to a loss of self-esteem or dignity.

2.1.1 The Elderly

As identified in Part One, Simcoe County has a large and growing population of seniors and these seniors are growing older. The needs of this group of individuals include financial assistance, appropriate housing, social involvement, and health care.

Growing older means retirement from employment and this often means a drop in income. This will affect ability to access shelter, adequate food, clothing, and leisure or recreation activities. These problems may be accentuated by declining health.

The federal government provides retirement income to seniors through a number of programs. Individuals who have been members of the workforce and have contributed to the Canada Pension Plan are eligible for payment equal to about 25% of their working income. The average figure in 2008 was \$481 a month. All seniors with incomes under \$64,718 are eligible for Old Age Pension payments which average \$476 per month. Pensioners with higher incomes receive reduced payments reaching zero at an income of \$104,903. Persons with incomes under \$36,528

are eligible for Guaranteed Income Supplement payments based on need and averaging \$435 per month in 2008.¹³ The Government of Ontario also provides income assistance to individuals in receipt of OAP and GIS. The combined income from these various programs will almost certainly be less than the wages earned while in the workforce. Individuals have therefore been encouraged to contribute to their own retirement pensions using the Registered Retirement Income Program. Most people do not contribute the maximum amount allowed and since this is a voluntary program many people become discouraged when market funds lose value and they may stop contributing.

Reduced income calls for reduced expenditures. One means of doing this is by selling the family home and moving into cheaper, although possibly less comfortable accommodation. Simcoe County is now responsible for social housing which will be discussed below under the topic of poverty. Non-profit organizations also provide low-income housing. Some seniors will sell their homes and be able to afford condominium or park model homes which will reduce the cost and effort required for maintenance.¹⁴ Canada Mortgage and Housing has encouraged various forms of granny flats as a means of keeping seniors with their families. Unfortunately these may be prohibited by municipal by-law.¹⁵ The Ontario Government's call for municipalities to increase the density of residential areas could be seen as a reason for municipalities to reconsider such bylaws.

The loss of a driver's license may restrict a person's ability to access supermarkets where food is cheaper than corner stores, recreation activities, and health care facilities. Public transit including disabled transit is therefore important to seniors. Services to apartments and retirement homes should be encouraged.

The provincial government provides a wide range of services to seniors and access to seniors programs. The Ontario Seniors' Secretariat provides web links to a wide variety of information on topics such as elder abuse, Alzheimer Disease, government and community services, retirement homes and care planning.¹⁶

Some seniors are doubly disenfranchised by having disabilities and illnesses such as those discussed below. The Ontario Drug Benefit Plan provides low cost medication to seniors.

2.1.2 The Disabled

The disabled are another group that encounters financial challenges which reflect on housing, nutrition and other basic services. Access to much needed health care and support services may

¹³ www.servicecanada.gc.ca

¹⁴ W.R. Horne (2004) "Housing Options for the Elderly: Giving Up the Owner occupied Single Family Home" *Geographical Helvetica* V59, 4, 270-278

¹⁵ Canada Mortgage and Housing (1988) *Housing Choices for Older Canadians*, Ottawa: CMHC

¹⁶ www.culture.gov.on.ca/seniors

be of particular concern. Often the disabled fall into other dependant categories such as the elderly and children.

The United Way currently supports national and provincial programs offered to the visually and hearing impaired, and those with physical and mental challenges. Many of these organizations have regional offices in Barrie, which provide services to other municipalities. Some people who require these services may find it difficult to find information about these organizations at the local level.

According to a 2001 Statistics Canada report, households with disabled children (between 5 and 14 years old) have lower annual incomes than households with non-disabled children. The study found that 53% of households with disabled children earned \$50,000 or more compared to 61% of households with non-disabled children; 23% earned \$30,000 to \$49,000 compared to 21%; and 24% earned \$29,000 or less compared to 18%.

Nationally, about 23% of disabled children in 2001 needed assistance with their daily needs. The vast majority, 85%, of these children had severe disabilities. Parents, families, and government organizations provided care for disabled children, with mothers providing personal care in 62% of cases, fathers and mothers in 30% of cases, and fathers in 3% of cases. Other sources made up the balance, about 5%.

Crucially, some 69% of parents with children with severe disabilities reported that they need more help. In 71% of cases financial considerations were the main reasons for shortfalls in their child's care; 62% reported a lack of available help from family and friends; 42% reported inadequate local services; and 36% were unsure of where to find resources.¹⁷

2.2 Healthy Thriving Children and Youth

2.2.1 Demographics, Location, and Economics

Community services promoting the healthy development of children and youth fall into three broad categories: mentoring; counselling and education; and support for the physically and mentally disabled. Demographic patterns, geographic location, and economic factors weigh heavily on levels of need for these services.

In the catchment area the distribution of children under age 15, outlined above (see Table 2), suggests a range of between 14% and 21% of overall community populations, with the values only slightly lower in the northern municipalities. The comparative size of this dependant population to the elderly group was discussed above. In Barrie, the largest centre in the study area, the proportion of children exceeds that of seniors, by over 10%. On the other hand, in the northern division, where economic problems facing young people are most evident, children

¹⁷ Stats Can (2003) *Children with Disabilities and their Families*, 7-9, 16.

comprise a slightly smaller proportion of the overall population, particularly compared with persons over the age of 65. In Midland the number of seniors is 4.3% higher than the number of children.

According to the 2006 census, economic factors bearing on children are particularly significant in the three major urban centres and in the northern division. In Barrie, Orillia, and Midland, as well as the smaller municipality of Penetanguishene, the percentage of children under age 18 living in low-income households exceeds the county average of 10.7% by no less than 2.3%. In Barrie, where the highest proportion of children in the study area is located, 13.1% of children under age 18 live in low-income households. In Midland the figure is 18%, the largest in the study area. In neighbouring Penetang the figure is 13%. In Orillia, 16.3% of children live in low-income households.

The townships of Severn, Tay, and Tiny also exhibit values near or slightly exceeding the county average; while Oro and Ramara fall in the low range. Overall, the picture is much different in the south. With the exception of Innisfil, none of the southern municipalities approach double figures for levels of children living in low-income households. In Adjala, Springwater, and Bradford the values are less than 5% despite the larger percentage of the population under 15.

TABLE 11: CHILDREN 18 AND UNDER LIVING IN LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS 2005

| MUNICIPALITY | % LOW INCOME CHILDREN | MUNICIPALITY | % LOW INCOME CHILDREN |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Barrie | 13.1 | Orillia | 16.3 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio | 3.9 | Oro-Medonte | 7.5 |
| Bradford- WG | 4.3 | Midland | 18.0 |
| Essa | 5.3 | Ramara | 5.0 |
| Innisfil | 8.4 | Severn | 12.7 |
| New Tecumseth | 6.7 | Penetanguishene | 13.0 |
| Springwater | 4.9 | Tay | 12.9 |
| SIMCOE | 10.7 | Tiny | 10.6 |

Source: Census Canada 2006

The economic situation in Simcoe County is such that 63.4% of all women over the age of 15 are either working or looking for work, not far behind the participation rate for men, 73.9%. Both couples with children and single parent families find themselves in need of daycare facilities for children under school age and in some cases for out of school hours. The slightly higher unemployment rate among women, in part, reflects the restrictions of child care availability. This also explains the fact that women commute shorter distances and less frequently than men.

The availability of child care and its quality is a concern for many parents. There are a variety of types of services including: parent drop-in centres, nursery schools, institutional daycare, home daycare and after-school programs. These may be offered by private companies, service agencies such as YMCA, or at public schools. Compilation of a complete list of providers would help to identify places where services are not available or where waiting lists exist. This task is beyond the scope of the current study, but does constitute an area worthy of investigation.

2.2.2 Mentoring

The combination of economic difficulty and the high rate of single parent families, with a clear correlation between low income status and lone family heads (particularly female-headed families), presents numerous difficulties for children and youth. Among these is a lack of meaningful time spent with responsible adult figures, who are either absent or preoccupied with earning a livelihood and running a household, often in difficult circumstances. These factors also have an impact on family stability and the safety of home environments.

In this context child mentoring agencies, such as the Big Brothers and Big Sisters Associations, offer valuable individual and group mentoring to boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 16. These organizations promote self-esteem; improve child behaviour at home and in school; cultivate social skills development; and provide an impetus for greater educational achievement and the fostering of practical competencies.¹⁸

Besides economic considerations, ethnic diversity and the arrival of new immigrants are increasingly among the factors presenting challenges for child and youth mentoring programs (see Section 1.1.3). In 1997, in response to a growing awareness that mentoring organizations were not connecting with ethnic groups beyond those of British or French background, the Big Brothers and Sisters of Canada commissioned a report outlining ways to best liaison with various ethnic groups.¹⁹ In places such as Barrie, Bradford, Midland, and Orillia, where the numbers of visible minority groups exceed the county average in 2006, ethnic background should be a consideration in how mentoring resources are allocated and targeted.

¹⁸ www.kidsdomatter.com.

¹⁹ *Ethnic Mentoring Study: Final Report* (1997).

2.2.3 Counselling and Education

Young people are susceptible to a range of risk factors and behaviours that affect their physical and mental well-being, often with disruptive outcomes for families and communities. Individual and family counselling are therefore crucial community services directed towards youth and their families. Potentially negative risk factors for youth welfare include use of illicit substances, early sexual behaviour, criminal activity, and depression and suicide.

The ongoing Ontario Student Drug Use and Health survey (OSDUH) for 2007 found high rates of alcohol use (61.2%), binge drinking (26.3%), cannabis use (25.6%), opioid pain relievers use (20.6%), and cigarette use (11.9%) among students in grades 7 through 12. In these categories no major difference was noted between males and females, but older students registered progressively higher use values. Students in grades 7 and 8 registered significantly elevated levels for the use of alcohol and pain relievers as compared to the other substances; while solvent use among children in grades 7 and 8 was also high (9.3% and 10.1%), indeed higher than any other grade groups.

The same study found that in the North Simcoe Muskoka “Local Health Integration Network” use of illicit substances amongst students was greater than the provincial average in a number of categories: alcohol use (83.0% v. 73.1%), binge drinking (41.4/35.3), cannabis (48.3/34.7), and hallucinogens (13.2/7.6). Students also reported higher than provincial levels of hazardous drinking (27.8% v. 25.5%), drug use problems (31.7/20.1), drinking and driving (12.3/11.6), and cannabis driving (18.6/15.6).

On the whole the OSDUH survey found that age and grade were major correlates of drug and alcohol use and risk behaviours among Ontario students. Sex was also linked to the use of certain substances, with males more likely to use hallucinogens and hard drugs such as heroin and females more likely to use stimulant pills, pain relievers, and over-the-counter sleep aids.²⁰

A Statistics Canada study reports non-causal associations between smoking, drinking, and early sexual behaviour amongst adolescents (14 or 15 year olds). The study noted that low income status and poor “self-concept” was related to higher levels of sexual activity for girls and boys. Early sexual activity increases the risk of teenage pregnancy, the consequences of which include declining school performance, a lack of economic opportunities, and an increased probability of living in poverty. Babies born to teenage parents also face health problems such as low birth weights and infant mortality.²¹ Nonetheless, according to Statistics Canada, in Ontario between 1994 and 2004 there was a decline across the board in the rates of pregnancy (-20.6%), live births (-10%), and induced abortions (-9.5%) for girls between the ages of 14 and 19.

²⁰ Edward M. Adlaf and Angela Paglia-Boak (2007) *Drug Use among Ontario Students, 1977-2007*, I, 233-234, 238.

²¹ Didier Garriguet (2005) *Early Sexual Intercourse*, 12-13.

Youth crime is another major concern. Nationally overall crime rates have been decreasing over the last quarter century. In 2006 a decline of 3% marked the lowest recorded rate in 25 years, while youth crime rates rose 3%. Even so, they remained 25% lower than the peak recorded rate in 1991. Experts warn, however, that violent crime among youth is on the rise, up 12% over the last decade, with as much as 5% of youth crimes committed using a weapon; drug-related crimes were also up. Ontario had the highest rate of youth charged for criminal offences in the country and a quarter of those charges were for violent crimes. Lastly, male youth were more likely than females to be charged for both property and violent crimes.²²

The 2007 OSDUH survey, which covered a broad range of indicators of youth health and well-being, shows significant levels of delinquent behaviour. Overall, 13.1% of Ontario students reported taking part in some form of delinquent behaviour; 8.7% of students admitted to carrying a weapon in the past year; 15.9% reported that they had set something on fire; and 15.8% reported fighting at school. In all of these categories males are over-represented.

Lastly, the OSDUH survey also reports that 21.2% of students sought mental health care; 11.4% reported suffering from poor mental health; 8.5% reported having low self-esteem; 30.8% admitted to elevated psychological stress in the past few weeks; 9.8% had thought about suicide and 3.3% attempted suicide. In all of the above categories females are over-represented.²³

2.3 Reduced Cycles of Poverty and Abuse

Rates of unemployment, use of illicit substances, and gambling represent major challenges for community agencies committed to fighting identified social factors and behavioural patterns leading to the occurrence of poverty and abuse.

2.3.1. Unemployment, Poverty, and Homelessness

According to the 2006 census, the county-wide unemployment rate was 5.7% of the population over age 15 (see Table 12). Midland was the only municipality with a rate more than 1% above this level while Adjala, Bradford, and New Tecumseth were at least 1% below the county average. Springwater and Orillia were the only places where the female unemployment rate was lower than the male rate with the most striking differences in Essa 5.5% and Tay 5.8%. The Mnjikaning First Nation reserve reported high levels of unemployment at 13.3%. The rate for Christian Island was 23.1%. As Table 4 shows, low income status is also closely linked to lone-parent families, with female headed families most at risk.

Individuals and families coping with unemployment and poverty, face difficulties retaining adequate shelter and maintaining utility services in their homes. Orillia's *Packet and Times*

²² Andrea Taylor-Butts and Angela Bressan (2008) *Youth Crime in Canada, 2006*, 1, 4, 5.

²³ Edward M. Adlaf et al. (2007) *The Mental Health and Well-Being of Ontario Students, 1991-2007*, vi.

reported, that Canadians are now spending an average of 37% of their income on housing, which, as discussed above, would put pressure on food and other budget items.²⁴

TABLE 12: UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG MALES, FEMALES AND ALL OVER AGE 15

| MUNICIPALITY | MALE | FEMALE | ALL | MUNICIPALITY | MALE | FEMALE | ALL |
|---------------|------|--------|-----|--------------|------|--------|-----|
| Barrie | 5.3 | 6.8 | 6.0 | Orillia | 6.0 | 5.5 | 5.7 |
| Adjala | 3.0 | 5.7 | 4.2 | Oro-Medonte | 4.9 | 5.8 | 5.3 |
| Bradford- WG | 4.3 | 5.3 | 4.7 | Midland | 6.9 | 7.8 | 7.4 |
| Essa | 3.8 | 9.3 | 6.2 | Ramara | 3.9 | 6.0 | 4.8 |
| Innisfil | 4.8 | 7.2 | 5.9 | Severn | 4.8 | 6.0 | 5.4 |
| New Tecumseth | 4.2 | 5.3 | 4.7 | Penetang | 5.6 | 6.8 | 6.3 |
| Springwater | 5.9 | 4.9 | 5.5 | Tay | 3.9 | 6.6 | 5.1 |
| SIMCOE | 5.1 | 6.5 | 5.7 | Tiny | 3.1 | 8.9 | 5.8 |

Source: Census Canada 2006

Within the catchment area a number of services are available for those in need. A Housing Retention Fund, which includes a Rent Bank, is accessible in Simcoe County through various local agencies; it offers assistance for rental arrears and utilities payments for low-income families struggling to avoid eviction and service cut-offs. A Winter Warmth Fund, co-sponsored by the United Way, Enbridge Gas Distribution, and Union Gas Ltd., was established in 2004; offered throughout Simcoe County it ensures continued service for low-income households during the winter months. Since 1991, Barrie Housing Support Services has provided a valuable resource for those without adequate shelter or at risk of losing their home. Its program includes a housing registry, a help line, and mediation of tenant-landlord disputes. The registry helps match tenants to potential housing. Religious institutions, including Barrie's Samaritan House Community Ministries, are also involved in supporting those in need of secure, low-cost shelter.

For individual men in need of emergency assistance, the Barrie Salvation Army provides 18 shelter beds and 12 transition beds. It also offers referral assistance for legal matters and medical and housing services. In Orillia, Lighthouse Christian Ministries runs a men's emergency

²⁴ Colin Perkel, "Home Ownership at Record Levels," *Orillia Packet & Times*, 5 June 2008, A9

shelter. It provides beds and a soup kitchen as well as referral services, counselling, and addiction support. A recent item in *Orillia Today* reported record numbers using Orillia’s Salvation Army food bank and that increasingly those seeking the food bank’s services are coming from the working poor.²⁵

2.3.2. Substance Abuse and Addiction

Addictive behaviours among adults often perpetuate cycles of poverty and abuse. In 2002, 2.1% of Ontario’s population over age 15 was addicted to alcohol, while 0.6% were addicted to illicit drugs.²⁶

A small 2007 survey of respondents aged 18 or over in the North Simcoe-Muskoka Region on alcohol-related behaviours and problems, conducted for the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, reported that in all categories the region exceeded provincial averages. According to the survey, for example, 87% of respondents in North Simcoe-Muskoka used alcohol in the past year (6 % higher than the provincial average); 14% reported weekly binge drinking (3% higher); 20% reported hazardous drinking – drinking that results in mental or physical problems – (7% higher); and 10% reported drinking and driving (2% higher).²⁷

TABLE 13: DRUG OCCURANCES BY TYPE, BARRIE, 2001-2005

| DRUG TYPE | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 |
|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| HEROIN | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| COCAINE | 35 | 66 | 74 | 65 | 120 |
| CANNABIS | 433 | 448 | 233 | 252 | 264 |
| OTHER | 61 | 41 | 38 | 42 | 49 |

Source: Barrie Police Service Annual Reports 2003 – 2005.

Although less widespread than problem drinking, drug use is also an issue of concern in the catchment area. In 2005, Barrie Police Service (BPS) reported a minor 3-year rising trend in the number of drug “occurrences” in its jurisdiction; this followed a substantial decline after a high point in 2002. In 2003, BPS recorded 293 drug incidents, which resulted in 221 charges; in 2004, 360 incidents resulting in 298 charges; and in 2005, 433 incidents resulting in 267 charges. Close to 2/3 of all cases involved cannabis; while from 2003 to 2005, the rate of incidents

²⁵ “Working Poor at Sally Ann,” *Orillia Today*, 7 May 2008, 10.

²⁶ Michael Tjepkema (2004) *Alcohol and Illicit Drug Dependence*, 13.

²⁷ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (May-June 2007) *CAMH Population Studies eBulletin: Special Report*, table 3.

involving cocaine increased by 38.4%.²⁸ Indeed, as Table 13 shows, cannabis incidents have declined since 2001 while cocaine incidents have been rising.

Problem gambling is a fast growing addiction issue. Nationally, the gaming industry has expanded enormously since the early 1990s. Between 1992 and 2006 revenue from government-run lotteries, video lottery terminals, and casinos rose from \$2.7 billion to \$13.3 billion. Some 40,000 Canadians are employed in the gaming industry. There are two major casinos in the catchment area, Georgian Downs in Innisfil and Casino Rama in Mnjikaning.

Between 2000 and 2005, national rates of gambling (at least once a year) remained stable, fluctuating between a high of 74% and a low of 69% of those surveyed. Men between the ages of 45 and 64 were most likely to gamble (66%), though rate variations by age and sex were not substantial.²⁹ According to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), in 2003-4 Canadian adults spent on average \$596/year on gambling. Though men and women gamble at roughly the same rate, men spend more money. Some 332,000 Ontarians are believed to suffer from problem gambling – defined as gambling that has an impact on work or school, physical and mental health, financial stability, personal reputation, and family and personal life. Young people aged 18 to 24 were most likely to develop problem gambling, double the rate of older adults. The CAMH also notes that gambling is growing in popularity among students.³⁰

2.3.3. Violence and Abuse

A Statistics Canada study conducted in 2002 found that about 27% of all of violent crimes nationwide took place within the family context. Females were most likely to be the victim of family abuse, at a rate of 85% of all cases, with younger women between the ages of 25 and 34 highly susceptible to spousal violence. In cases of spousal abuse common assault was most often reported. Children under age 18 were the victims of family-based sexual assaults in 61% of reported cases; they were also the victims of common assault at a rate of 20%. Girls were the victims of family-related sexual assaults 71% of the time. Lastly, approximately 1-in-12 children ages 4 to 7 had witnessed physical violence in the home setting.³¹

The Barrie Women and Children's Shelter reports that some 9,500 women and children have sought emergency refuge at its facility, since its founding in 1981. In 2005 alone Barrie police responded to 1,303 calls related to domestic violence. Criminal charges were laid in about 40% of these cases.³²

²⁸ Barrie Police Services, *Annual Report 2005*, 14.

²⁹ Stats Can (2007) *Perspectives on Labour and Income: Gambling*, 1, 4.

³⁰ Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2006), *Problem Gambling: A Guide for Families*, 10-11.

³¹ Stats Can (2004) *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2004*, 1.

³² www.barrieshelter.com

In addition to the Barrie Women and Children's Shelter, in the catchment area there are shelters for victims of family and spousal abuse in Alliston (People in Transition/My Sister's Place), Midland (Huron Transition Homes or Rosewood Shelter), and Orillia (Greenhaven Shelter for Women). Throughout Simcoe County, women and children who have experienced family violence can also seek information and support through New Path Youth and Family Counselling and its Partner Abuse Program. In the catchment area, this program is available in Alliston, Barrie, Midland, and Orillia.

According to the 2002 Stats Can survey, although abuse perpetrated against older adults (aged 65+) was least likely to be reported to police, this phenomenon is becoming more widely recognized as a serious social problem. The report notes that most of the violence experienced by elders took place outside the family context, accounting for 70% of reported cases. In instances of family-based abuse, adult offspring were the perpetrators 38% of the time, while spouses and ex-spouses were responsible for the violence at a rate of 26%. Males were the perpetrator in about 80% of cases.

The report also noted a significant increase in the rate of reported elder abuse between 1998 and 2002. During this period abuse against females increased by a rate of 42%, while for males the rate jumped by 30%. Elder abuse can take many forms: physical, emotional/psychological, verbal, sexual, and financial, and includes neglect and abandonment.³³

The Ontario Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse (ONPEA) is dedicated to raising awareness of elder abuse and neglect, through public education, professional training, advocacy, and service coordination. In addition to implementing Ontario's Strategy to Combat Elder Abuse, ONPEA supports a growing number of vital projects and research in elder abuse and neglect prevention. Specifically, ONPEA's mandate is to educate professionals and the public about elder abuse and neglect, promote information-sharing among professionals and advocates involved in elder abuse prevention, develop educational and training programs about elder abuse prevention and intervention for professionals and caregivers, advocate for legislative action to meet the needs of victims and their families, and to deal with perpetrators of abuse, provide services and support to victims of elder abuse and neglect, and practice and promote sensitivity to multicultural issues related to elder abuse.³⁴

In Simcoe County an affiliate of ONPEA, the Prevention of Senior Abuse Network, is operated out of Barrie's Royal Victoria Hospital. The committee is comprised of older adults and service professionals. It has established a protocol document addressing the problem of elder abuse in Simcoe County. As well, it has produced educational materials – including an informational

³³ Simcoe County Elder Abuse Committee (2005) *Abuse of Elders and the Vulnerable Adult: Management of the Issues in Simcoe County*, 3-6.

³⁴ www.worklifecanada.ca

bookmark – to publicize the problem of elder abuse and holds workshops with the goal of raising awareness and promoting the safety of seniors.

2.4 Building Strong Nurturing Families

Anthropologists tell us that the family has been the basis of society from the beginning, but the nature of the family has undergone considerable change in western society, from the extended family to the multigenerational family to the nuclear family and most recently, to many people living in part or single member families (35% of Simcoe County households). These shifting patterns have resulted in transformed personal support systems, including the elderly living on their own apart from the extended family home, the dependence on out-of-home daycare for children, and for adult individuals living on their own, disappearance of support networks associated with “traditional” family arrangements.

These transformations are exceedingly complex and cannot be reduced to any single cause. Moreover, a given family structure does not in itself imply negative family outcomes. At the same time, economic considerations are clearly at the forefront in how scholars explain these changes and few would dispute that economic inequality and its associated stressors often militate against efforts to establish positive family situations. This is often the case for lone-parent families attempting to function on a single income – a group for whom United Way funded services are obviously vital.

In every municipality in the catchment area, for example, single parent families were the lowest income group. And in most instances, save for Springwater and Tiny, the median annual incomes for lone-parent families headed by males exceeded, sometimes dramatically, those of families headed by single females. In 7 of the 15 municipalities the gendered income differential was over a third higher for single, male-headed families: Barrie (34.4% higher), Bradford-WG (32.9%), Essa (30.2%), Midland (34%), Oro-Medonte (37%), Penetanguishene (39.7%), and Ramara (37%).

Census data also indicate a high proportion of single parent families in these potential problem areas. In Barrie, Orillia, Midland, Penetanguishene, and Tay the number of single parent families for each municipality as a percentage of the overall number of families exceeds the county average of 14.2%. The value for Midland – again the highest in the study area – is 22.2%, of which 17.9% constitutes female headed families. The results for Orillia are similar: 20.8% of all families are single parent, with 16.6% headed by females. In fact, females led the overwhelming majority of single parent families in the study area, with the most dramatic differentials in the five jurisdictions noted above.

It should come as no surprise that in all 15 municipalities, the median income for lone parent households was substantially lower than the median income for all other census families. By way of illustration, the median monthly income for lone-parent families in 2006 ranged between

a low of 38% (Tiny) and a high of 52.3% (Tay) of the median monthly income for married couple families. Of the 15 municipalities in the catchment area, 11 fell within the 40% range for lone-parent median incomes as a percentage of the median for married couple families (see Table 4).

TABLE 13: MEDIAN ANNUAL INCOME FOR CENSUS FAMILIES 2005

| Municipality | MEDIAN ALL FAMILIES | SINGLE PARENT FEMALE HEAD | SINGLE PARENT MALE HEAD |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Barrie | 71,547 | 33,975 | 45,535 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio. | 81,725 | 40,761 | 43,057 |
| Bradford- WG | 82,736 | 34,561 | 45,389 |
| Essa | 76,011 | 35,251 | 47,572 |
| Innisfil | 71,676 | 37,021 | 42,804 |
| New Tecumseth | 80,315 | 38,046 | 43,934 |
| Springwater | 81,970 | 43,503 | 35,240 |
| Orillia | 56,951 | 32,161 | 33,494 |
| Oro-Medonte | 73,962 | 36,444 | 46,547 |
| Midland | 54,115 | 29,491 | 39,544 |
| Ramara | 61,377 | 34,038 | 53,221 |
| Severn | 64,377 | 32,966 | 34,125 |
| Penetanguishene | 58,127 | 30,193 | 46,226 |
| Tay | 57,564 | 28,282 | 30,655 |
| Tiny | 67,212 | 28,804 | 27,359 |
| SIMCOE | 69,263 | 34,039 | 42,421 |

TABLE 14: PERCENT SINGLE PARENT HOMES 2006

| Municipality | TOTAL FAMILIES | % SINGLE PARENT FEMALE HEAD | % SINGLE PARENT MALE HEAD |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Barrie | 35,635 | 13.5 | 3.0 |
| Adjala-Tosorontio. | 3,160 | 7.1 | 2.6 |
| Bradford- WG | 6,915 | 8.9 | 2.8 |
| Essa | 4,725 | 8.0 | 2.6 |
| Innisfil | 9,285 | 8.8 | 3.5 |
| New Tecumseth | 8,135 | 9.4 | 2.6 |
| Springwater | 5,175 | 7.6 | 2.0 |
| Orillia | 8,405 | 16.6 | 4.2 |
| Oro-Medonte | 6,160 | 6.0 | 1.7 |
| Midland | 4,800 | 17.9 | 4.3 |
| Ramara | 3,000 | 8.6 | 1.6 |
| Severn | 3,745 | 9.0 | 2.2 |
| Penetanguishene | 2,605 | 13.0 | 3.0 |
| Tay | 3,005 | 11.9 | 2.9 |
| Tiny | 3,450 | 7.3 | 2.1 |
| SIMCOE | 122,655 | 11.3 | 2.9 |

Although, as noted above, teen pregnancy has declined in Ontario since the 1990s, experts nonetheless demonstrate that life outcomes for teen parents and their children are often diminished, particularly levels of education and lifetime earnings. Thus to help ensure that student parents remain in school the Young Parent Program offered by the YMCA in Alliston,

Barrie, Orillia and Midland, provides young families with daycare for their children between the ages of 18 months and 2.5 years.

More generally, transformations in the nature of modern families, the vanishing of older forms of familial support, and the particular demands of contemporary society have given rise to new community-centred approaches. A number of health and social agencies operating in Simcoe offer services to help parents nurture positive households and build effective families. For instance, Ontario's Early Years program, the Simcoe County District School Board's Learning Centres, and a number of local health and social service agencies offer access to a Positive Parenting Program (Triple P). Triple P offers support, encouragement, and resources to help parents better cope with the stresses of raising children and to improve parent-child relationships. The program is designed to assist with a range of everyday issues and behavioural concerns, including how to handle sibling rivalry, separation anxiety, emotional problems, and how to instil values such as responsibility in youth.³⁵

A renewed concern for the role of fathers has also recently emerged. The Father Involvement Research Alliance (FIRA) is a national organization committed to spreading awareness of fatherhood issues and cultivating a better understanding of father involvement in family life. FIRA and its partners engage in various research initiatives and focus on sharing up-to-date knowledge about father-child relationships with various experts, social policy makers, and the general public.³⁶

2.5 Healthy Stable Communities

Clearly, communities play a vital role in nurturing healthy families. The health of communities themselves is therefore of utmost importance. The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has taken a keen interest in the problem of creating healthy communities, observing that where people live has a distinct impact on their health. The amount of physical activity people engage in and their exposure to environmental factors such as air quality and water purity are major concerns. The SMDHU also notes the role that community infrastructure, such as availability of sidewalks, bike lanes, and playgrounds has on levels of physical activity and occurrences of serious health problems such as obesity. Along with these are high levels of commuting to work, school, and shopping owing to poor residential planning.

Problems of "community design" are also cited as factors undermining social integration and connectedness with the wider community, which in turn affect people's overall sense of comfort,

³⁵ www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

³⁶ www.worklifecanada.ca

security, and contentment. “Knowing your neighbours and being involved in community activities,” the SMDHU concludes, “can increase your sense of wellbeing and happiness.”³⁷

Community involvement, however, faces serious challenges. Although, as noted, lone-income households face tremendous economic obstacles to achieving positive family outcomes, one of the negative side effects of double income families has been a reduction in the level of community-based volunteerism. This is happening at a time when many of the programs needed to support individuals and families must rely on voluntary service. Promoting community involvement is therefore an important consideration. Developing ways of making participation in civil society easy and enjoyable are needed. To that end, the City of Orillia’s Department of Culture and Heritage notifies potential volunteers of upcoming opportunities each month and organizes volunteer appreciation events.

A community that makes an effort to improve the built and physical environment and offers opportunities for citizens to meet together will help to create happier families and individuals. This may help to reduce some of the demands put on a wide variety of services.

At the same time, the internet has increasingly assumed a vital role connecting people to community services and mitigating the cost of labour and promotion. An important new community resource is the web-portal, 211Ontario.ca. Founded in 2002, Community 211 and its local offshoots (including 211SimcoeCounty.ca) offer access to a broad range of social, health, and government information and services. The 211 system will be most successful if local service providers are aware of its existence and ask to be listed, if these providers notify their clients of the existence of 211, and if the service becomes widely known in the community. Recognizing the value of this system, the United Way’s Training and Consulting Services not only provides training to volunteer and other agencies but it now also provides an opportunity for expansion of awareness of the 211 service.

³⁷ www.simcoemuskokahealth.org

PART THREE

3.1 Network of Care Services

3.2 Preventative Solutions

3.3 Education and Advocacy

3.4 Community Impact United Way

SECTION THREE

In this section a series of recommendations will be made. These are based on the data presented in the first two sections and as such are comments on overall need and not on their current level of provision as the researchers were not asked to explore this question. The comments below are not to suggest that the United Way should solve all of these issues; however, these findings are intended to suggest areas where greater involvement may be warranted.

The strategic plan of the United Way of Greater Simcoe emphasizes community building through the marshalling of people and resources and with the goal of improving lives and realizing positive social change. To accomplish this objective, the UW has identified three strategic approaches: the development of its core community services, long-range preventative action aimed at confronting root causes of major social problems, and supporting public education and advocacy as a means of encouraging people to address issues of concern in their communities. To better synchronize with the mandate and direction of the UW, the authors have incorporated these approaches as a framework for presenting their recommendations.

3.1 Network of Core Services

Diverse regional concerns place a complex burden on the organization of community support networks. The increasing concentration of population in Barrie, and its projected long-range growth, will mean that demand for the expansion of services will be greatest in that municipality; while the centralization of services in Barrie will be a significant concern to other communities if it is at their expense. Moreover, although Barrie is accessible geographically from the rest of the county, the rising cost of fuel will reduce the ability of many of the people who are in most need of assistance to access services at any significant distance.

The United Way currently provide funds for county wide organizations that although based in Barrie provide services to other communities including Orillia, Midland, and Alliston. These organizations (CNIB, Canadian Hearing Society, Canadian Red Cross, Elizabeth Fry Society, etc.) provide important networking functions as well as local services, some of which are not fully described on their web homepages. The identification of community based organizations such as (Orillia and Area Good Food Box, Midland Area Reading Council, Borden Family Resource Centre) is also seen as important. Increasing awareness of such organizations at the local level, for example via public libraries, municipal offices and community websites, as well as links to the United Way website, should be encouraged.³⁸ This information distribution process could start with the larger communities of Innisfil, Orillia, New Tecumseth, Bradford and Oro and continue with Springwater, Essa, and Midland. All of the municipalities in the

³⁸ United way of Greater Simcoe County “Community Investment” pages

county have sufficient populations to support some services which should be recognized. As mentioned earlier, the existing Community 211 service needs a higher profile.

The decentralization of services is also important, because a county wide measure of providing services will not meet the needs of everyone. Rather individual municipalities, or groups of municipalities (north/south, urban/rural), have different needs that should be considered worthy of support. We believe that this upholds the identified United Way strategic priorities of strengthening collaborations to mobilize local resources and achieve positive social impacts in the communities of Greater Simcoe County.

3.2 Preventative Solutions

This study has identified areas of concern rooted in certain structural conditions, particularly with respect to vulnerable populations and the poor. It has also explored manifestations of various at-risk social behaviours which may be connected to these conditions and/or susceptible to greater negative outcomes as a result of them. In this section we have attempted to isolate specific short-term issues and long-range projections for possible areas of need.

3.2.1 The Dependent Population

As might be expected social issues affecting dependant populations, children, youth, and seniors, are noteworthy. This study has found that in terms of age there are important regional differences within the catchment area.

The largest single five year cohort was younger in the six southern municipalities than in the northern municipalities. This helps to explain why the dependant population under age 15 is larger in the south while the dependant population over 65 is largest in the north. The report identified Orillia, Midland and Penetang as urban places with over one third of their seniors over the age of 80. For this group mobility and housing issues will likely continue to increase in these and other communities. Also, the promotion of greater awareness and education about problems such as elder abuse should be addressed.

The examination of children suggested that in the major urban centres, particularly Barrie, which exhibits both a high ratio of children to adults and high levels of children in low-income households, support for urban-based youth services should be a priority. While in the north-western part of the county, despite the fact that children represent a smaller fraction of the population than seniors, the incidence of markedly high rates of children in low-income situations in specific localities also demands attention.

3.2.2 Special Populations

The report also identified that the northern part of the county may have more people of Aboriginal background who may require assistance. This is all the more significant in view of

recent findings that Aboriginal peoples are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population. The local First Nation communities have the highest birth rates in the county.

The southern part of the county has more people from visible minorities and who do not speak an official language and who may require assistance. Some funded agencies, such as Big Brothers, have for a number of years identified cultural differences as potential barriers in their outreach and therefore as an area of needed organizational development; similar sensitivities are encouraged for other service providers who may not yet have addressed such concerns.

3.2.3 Economic Need

The working poor are a growing part of society. In part this is due to a larger number of single person families and in part due to the fact that minimum wage and part time jobs are increasingly the only employment available.

The study found that single parent families, particularly female led households, consistently have lower incomes than any other type of household and may be expected to have problems with housing and therefore other basic needs such as childcare. Assistance with childcare and with disabled children in rural areas needs further investigation.

Part time and minimum wage jobs are endemic to the rapidly growing and now dominant tertiary sector. To provide adequate support for a family, wage-earners might need to work at more than one job and, where possible, families often rely on the income of more than one parent. In view of the fundamental transformation of Ontario's economy away from better paying forms of industrial production to lower-wage commercial services needed support for the working poor can only be expected to increase in the next several years.

Service jobs also often lack any form of medical or dental benefits which may result in significant costs to individuals and families or simply deter recourse to professional care. The creation of an advocacy group for such individuals that could act as a basis for group insurance might be a possible solution to decreasing individual health costs and safeguarding the health of the economically vulnerable.

Lastly, given the close correlation between income and education the promotion of high school completion, adult education, trade school certification and academic/professional training should be encouraged. For those with immediate needs, life skills training including how to reduce food, housing and other costs should be a part of the programs that provide immediate assistance.

3.2.4 At-Risk Behaviors.

Counseling and preventative education for youth and adult risk behaviours such as illicit drug use, problem drinking, and problem gambling should remain a priority. These behaviours are

often linked to economic problems and are known to perpetuate cycles of family abuse and often involve a range of criminal activities.

Findings for the northern section of the catchment area suggest that problem drinking is a critical area of concern for adults. And while the rate of drug use remains low compared to alcohol, the rise in criminal violations in Barrie related to incidents involving cocaine and its derivatives raises concern.

Though it is difficult to generalize about problem gambling based on the above findings, surveys indicating that youth are increasingly susceptible to such behaviour points to the need for continued attention to educative programs similar to those aimed at curtailing drug and alcohol abuse.

3.4 Education and Advocacy

A most encouraging finding in this study was the number of community organizations committed to tackling serious social problems. Since the United Way's strategic mandate emphasizes preventative solutions as a means of mitigating root cause social issues, the health and vitality of these organizations is obviously crucial. Though it is beyond the scope of the UW to fund all of these programs, we believe it is well suited to help nurture broader knowledge of local resources, to advocate for at-risk groups, and to help build and nurture local volunteer networks.

Recognizing that economic considerations, high levels of mobility, the complex nature of modern communities, and myriad choices with which to spend extra time do not often support broad-based pools of volunteers, it is clear that information technology and its potential as a core means of community outreach and public education will continue to grow in importance. This is all the more true given the diverse nature of the catchment area, including north/south disparities, metropolitan dominance, and complex social configurations with distinct needs.

3.5 Community Impact United Way

We trust that the above comments demonstrate support for the Community Impact model of the United Way, one which works with the strategic agendas set by the citizens of all member communities in a collaborative manner to maximize positive outcomes by addressing the root causes of the problems identified rather than just attacking the symptoms. This will require a more extensive identification of service providers and potential partners in United Way programs at the community level. This should be the next step in the implementation process of the community impact process.

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