

# Guest Speaker

## **Daniele Zanotti**

### **President and CEO of United Way Greater Toronto**

- Led merger of United Way Greater Toronto – the largest funder of social services next to government
- Decades of experience in community services – from frontline to policy to philanthropy
- Long-time resident of Vaughan and former employee of York Region





**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

# **Homelessness in York Region: A United Way Greater Toronto Perspective**

Daniele Zanotti, President and CEO  
United Way Greater Toronto

## The Current Landscape

“We are not going to government or social service or fundraise or private sector our way out of the real, raw social transitions in our suburbs, and their social impact on our region.”

(circa 2009)





**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

## **Social Infrastructure: Ongoing Challenges**

1. Communities are experiencing unprecedented change, growth, diversification and human need
2. Investment in sustainable social infrastructure is as critical and needed as roads, sewers and stores
3. Social planning action and innovation starts with community voices – and includes business, labour, government in new partnerships



**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

## **Continued Solutions**

1. Strengthen our shared social infrastructure
2. Seek ways to mature the human and social service system
3. Finding and forging new partnerships



**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

## Regional Accomplishments



## Calls to Action

- Partner with UWGT on the development of the Homelessness Service System Plan
- As the Region develops its Plans – prioritize deeply affordable housing options (e.g. consider non-profit acquisition fund in partnership to enable this)
- Advocate to provincial and federal governments to ensure adequate resources







**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

**Together we must act to address the homelessness  
and housing crisis in York Region**







**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES IN  
**PEEL, TORONTO  
& YORK REGION**

**Questions?  
Thank you!**

**Contact: Daniele Zanotti, [DZanotti@uwgt.org](mailto:DZanotti@uwgt.org)**

# Guest Speaker

## Jim MacSween

### Chief, York Regional Police

- Responsible for 2,300 employees, and community safety for 1.2 million citizens
- Recipient of the Governor General's Exemplary Service 20-year medal
- Volunteered with Habitat for Humanity and Special Olympics Ontario
- Member of the Board of Directors for St. John Ambulance and previously served as Chair of the Community Services Committee





# Homelessness in York Region: York Regional Police Perspective

Presented by:  
Chief Jim MacSween



DEEDS SPEAK

# YRP & Community Based Policing



York Regional Police aims to ensure the safety and security of all people and property by:

1. Partnering with organizations and local municipalities to advocate, support and respond to the needs of vulnerable members of our community.
2. Providing support to the community through various communications and initiatives.
3. Providing intervention and law enforcement where appropriate.

# Supporting People Experiencing Homelessness: Partnerships



- Chippewas of Georgina Island
- Emergency Housing Service Providers -  
Inn from the Cold, Blue Door, The Salvation Army  
(Belinda's Place, Sutton Youth Services)
- 360°kids – various initiatives directed  
towards youth
- Krasman Centre
- LOFT Community Services
- Community Treatment Court
- Routes Connecting Community
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Canadian Mental Health Association  
(CMHA)
- Your Support Services Network (YSSN)
- York Region Outreach Program |  
Homelessness Community Programs
- York Region Situation Tables
  - Rapid Response Table (RRT)
  - Child, Youth and Family Situation Tables  
(CYF)
  - Vulnerable Seniors Network (VSN)



# Supporting People Experiencing Homelessness: YRP Initiatives

- **Mental Health Engagement and Outreach Team**

- Provides education, support and resources to marginalized and vulnerable communities who are underhoused (includes youth, racialized persons and members of Indigenous communities).

- **Mental Health Support Team**

- Provides supports to people experiencing mental health crisis through programs, referrals and resources.

- **Community Oriented Response Unit**

- Builds relationships through regular visits to encampments, provides resources through programs that train people in trades, work with the Safe Beds program (CMHA) to find people experiencing homelessness a place to stay.

- **Project Hope in Motion**

- Patrol officers hand out backpacks to people experiencing homelessness or people who lack shelter during winter months. Backpacks contain food, gift cards, socks, hats.

- **Project Pathway**

- Identify and attend encampment sites in partnership with York Region Outreach Encampment Team to offer assistance. YRP uses a human rights-based approach to address people living unsheltered.
  - Pilot in progress to include known encampment areas in YRP's Business Intelligent tools

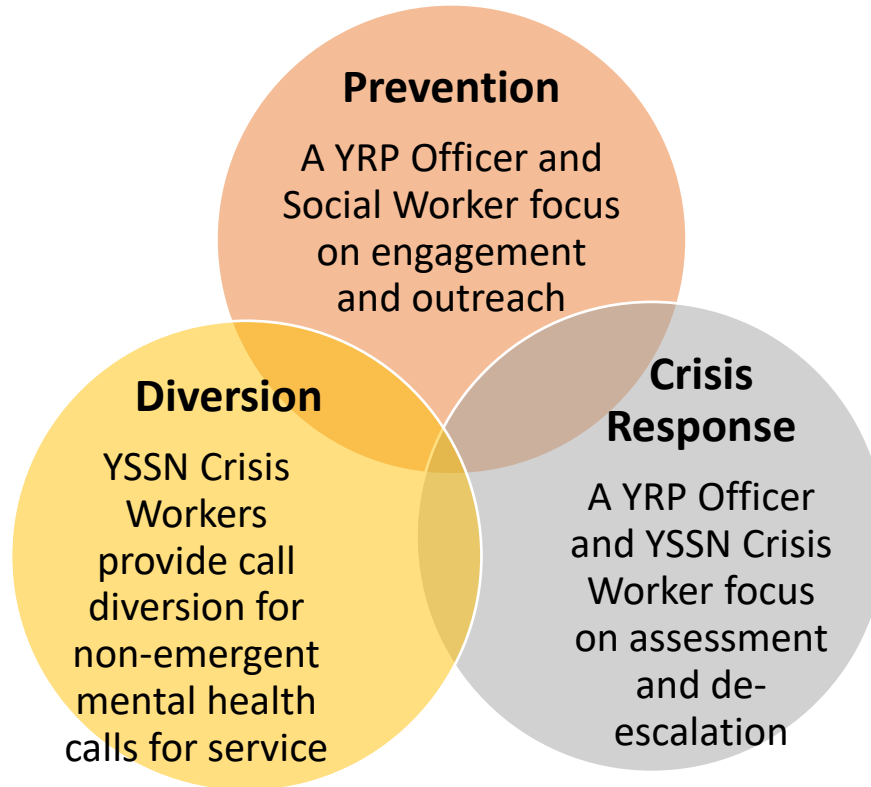
- **Adult Pre-Charge Diversion Program**

- Alternative justice process for minor offences which connects individuals with support services instead of laying a criminal charge.





# Mental Health Strategy

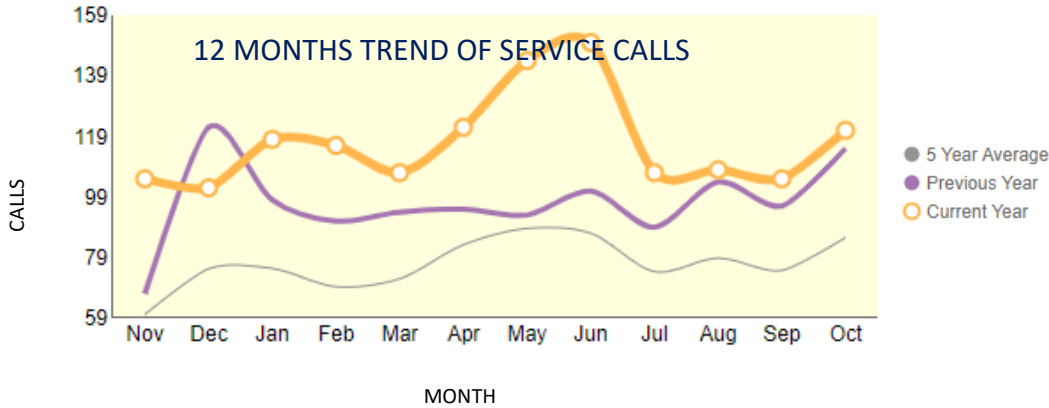
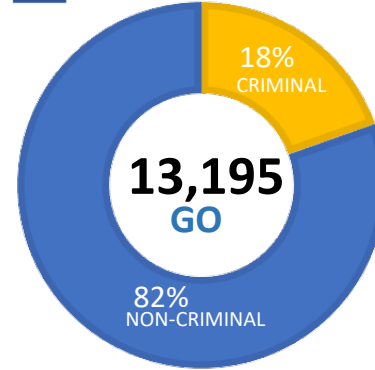


# Related Data Trends

**CALLS FOR SERVICE**  
2022 JAN to 2023 OCT



**GENERAL OCCURRENCE**  
2022 JAN to 2023 OCT



**\$315**  
AVERAGE COST  
PER CALL

**2:17**  
AVERAGE HOURS  
PER CALL

**3.9**  
AVERAGE #UNITS  
PER CALL

*Notes: BI Data Source: call priorities, types, occurrences with the word 'homeless' in the call remarks or text pages. The report is unaudited and subject to change and was not validated for homeless incidents specifically. Data as of November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023.*



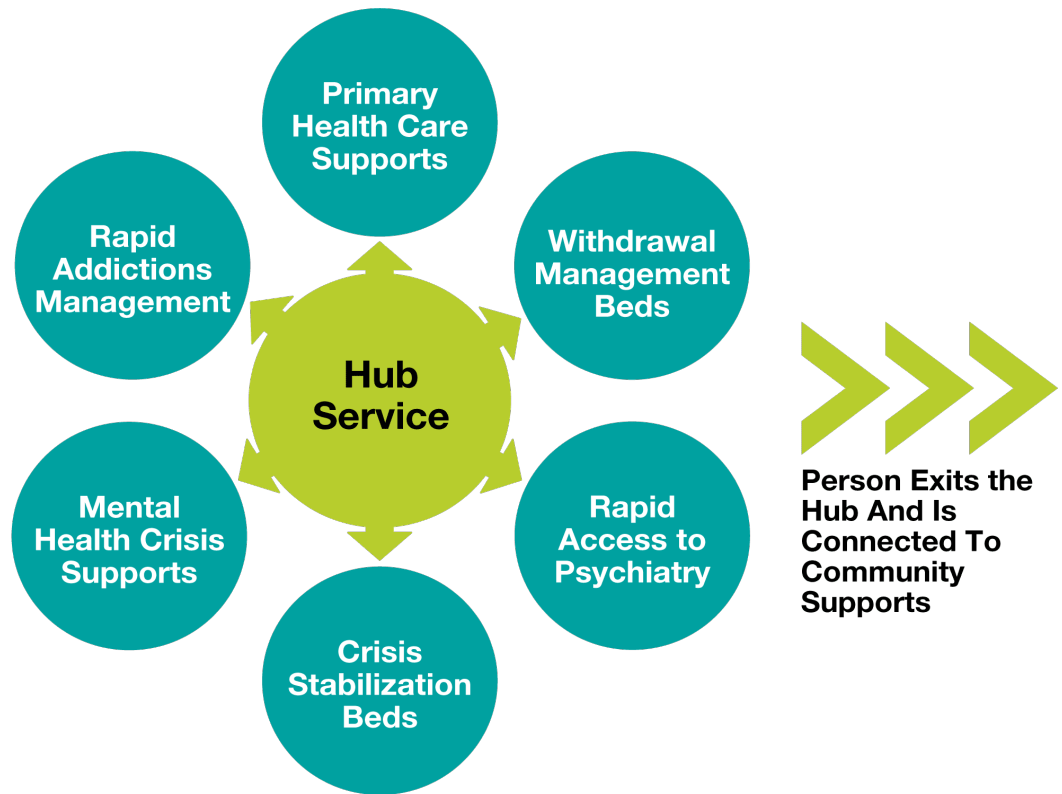
# A Path Forward: York Region Mental Health Community Care Hub

## THE HUB SERVICE MODEL



Person Enters Hub

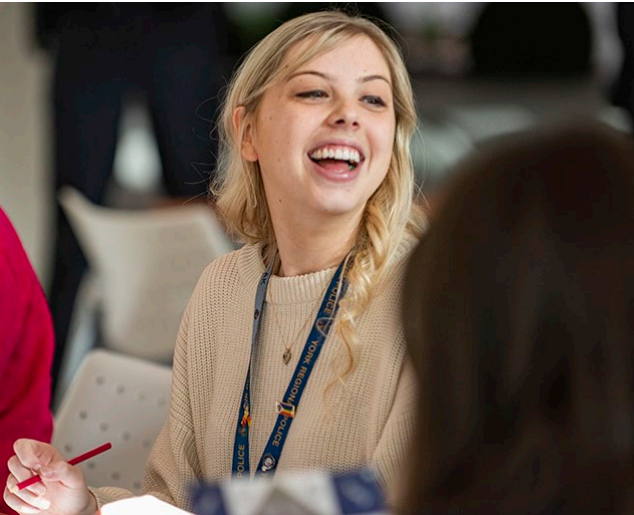
Triage, Assessment & Intake



Person Exits the Hub And Is Connected To Community Supports



**Thank you**



**Questions?**

# Guest Speaker

## Jeff Schlemmer

**Executive Director, Community Legal Clinic of York Region**

- Executive Director of the Community Legal Clinic of York Region, which serves low-income residents with a staff of 18 lawyers and licensed paralegals
- Practiced “poverty law” in Legal Aid Ontario’s legal clinic system for over 30 years



# Homelessness in York Region: Community Legal Clinic of York Region Perspective

Jeff Schlemmer, Executive Director  
Community Legal Clinic of York Region



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*



## Homelessness | The Growing Crisis

- Homelessness is a growing crisis in York Region, and across Ontario and Canada
- Homelessness has increased over the past few years due to:
  - unprecedented rent increases in the private housing market
  - inadequate social benefits (e.g., Ontario Works) which have not kept up with inflation and cost of living
  - shortage of deeply affordable housing
- Current federal and provincial homelessness reduction programs are band-aids



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*

## Homelessness | Challenges and Gaps

- Housing unaffordability is steadily increasing across the Region and the Community Legal Clinic is educating and supporting people to save their tenancy
  - Since the start of 2023, the Community Legal Clinic **helped 300 people to save their tenancies**
- Limited supply of rental housing is a key contributing factor to escalating rents
- Tenants with mental health challenges are often on fixed incomes, and if evicted cannot find affordable housing
- Many landlords know that if they can evict tenants -- they can increase the cost of rent



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*

## Lessons from the Waterloo Court Decision

- Ontario Superior Court ruling in January 2023 – found Waterloo infringed on charter rights by evicting people living unsheltered on Regional property while there was no safe, accessible shelter spaces
- Community Legal Clinic of York Region sent a letter to all Ontario municipal and regional councils to urge them to follow the Waterloo case
  - **We believe that the Region is using a human rights-based approach with encampments**
- Litigation in relation to encampment evictions is currently happening in Hamilton, Waterloo, Kingston, with possibility of further litigation



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*

## Lessons from the Waterloo Court Decision

- The Waterloo decision has ramifications for how municipalities engage people who are living unsheltered – a **human rights-based approach** is critical
- Residents are increasingly finding that tents and outdoor locations are their only place to reside – this is a problem that we, the community of York Region, need to address
  - We are not aware of people being removed from outdoor spaces in York Region or left in the cold and rain without tents



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*

## Collaboration Critical to Prevent & Address Homelessness

- The Legal Clinic urges local municipalities and community agencies to continue collaborating and partnering with the Region to address homelessness across York Region
- Working together to prevent evictions is better than re-establishing people in housing
- Some property standards may have unintended consequences and contribute to homelessness (e.g., requiring people to move out of trailers during the winter)

We urge local municipalities to ***“pull in the same direction”***, exercise discretion, and implement services to prevent an increase in homelessness among residents



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*

# QUESTIONS?

## Thank you!

**Contact:** Jeff Schlemmer, Executive Director  
Community Legal Clinic of York Region  
[jeff.schlemmer@yr.clcj.ca](mailto:jeff.schlemmer@yr.clcj.ca)



**Community  
Legal Clinic**  
*of York Region*