

# Wesley Urban Ministries

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Spanning across hundreds of kilometres, Hamilton Conference is host to 245 pastoral charges and 60,000 church members. So how do they all stay connected and committed to one of the largest United Church outreach ministries in Canada?

Whether it is the Contact Network, our Sunday Dinner Program, a walk-a-thon, or a Christmas support program, the congregations, pastoral charges, and members from across Hamilton unite to share in their mission of supporting those that need help the most.

## Sunday isn't just for worship at Wesley Urban Ministries

In Hamilton at Wesley Centre, Sunday is a day where each congregation takes on a mission—a mission to prepare and serve a hot, healthy, and nutritious meal to over 200 people that are often homeless, street-involved, or at risk in our community.



Each church group picks “their Sunday” and when the day approaches, they come to Wesley Centre with all the fixings. They don't just cook and serve the meal, they are also involved in hosting Sunday worship with many of the folks that access Wesley Centre for help, and build relationships with people in the community that need us. It makes it worthwhile and helps the members to see first-hand the work they are helping us achieve.

An ingenious idea created what is now known as the Contact Network—a network of representatives from each congregation and pastoral charge in Hamilton Conference that connects twice annually to learn about and support one of the largest United Church outreach ministries in Canada: Wesley Urban Ministries.

Each of the Hamilton Conference congregations and pastoral charges has a representative who is charged with ensuring each of their church members knows how their financial investments are making impacts at Wesley Urban Ministries and in the community. It can be for any one of our 15 programs that help children and youth living in poverty, teens who are street-involved and possibly homeless, adult men and women who are homeless and struggle to make ends meet and often deal with drug and alcohol addictions, or for seniors that need income support and social programming. This network allows each of the congregations in our Conference to remain connected to and working with a United Church outreach ministry.

### **It all started with an idea and a local congregation in 1993**

When the Case For Kids Walk-A-Thon started in 1993 at Westdale United Church, they had no idea that 25 years later it would be the largest single fundraiser for Wesley Urban Ministries and the many programs we provide for children and youth living in poverty. It was an idea that seemed crazy at the time—reaching out to congregations and pastoral charges to raise pledges for walking around a Bay. But it caught on...



Today nearly 90 churches and outreach groups raise over \$100,000 annually in recognition of their walk around the Hamilton Harbour the first Sunday in June. All in support of an end to child and youth poverty. Way to go!

### **How can you help 5,000 women, children, youth, families, and seniors at Christmas?**

Well, if you're Wesley Urban Ministries you work with your contact network and all of the Hamilton Conference members—that's how. Every Christmas Wesley Urban Ministries operates a Christmas Assistance Program to help those less fortunate and experiencing low family income with food and gifts. Many of the Conference congregations host White Gift Sundays where they collect food and gifts to bring to the Christmas program to help put smiles on children's and parents faces at one of the hardest times of the year.

### **It's about unity...unity of a vision and our call to God...our mission**

But it's more than just raising money and gifts and serving food. It's about uniting the many congregations and pastoral charges and our mission, and uniting us all as one for the greater good, to make positive impacts in our lives, for the people around us, and for our communities.

Wesley Urban Ministries is incredibly lucky to have dedicated individuals who work with us to live out our mission and vision. It is a community where justice and compassion guide the way we live, and where all people are treated with respect and dignity.



Visit us at [www.wesleyurbanministries.ca](http://www.wesleyurbanministries.ca) to find out more about how Hamilton Conference is United with Wesley Urban Ministries.