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ShareLife funds more than 40 member agencies that support the needs of the community. Programs focus on children and youth, families, single and teen parents, elderly, people with special needs, immigrants and refugees, while also helping fund the education of seminarians and the formation of permanent deacons. Photo courtesy of ShareLife

ShareLife's goal grows as charity needs expand

By [Mickey Conlon, The Catholic Register](#)

- March 10, 2019

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After topping \$13 million for the first time last year, ShareLife is reaching even higher this year as it brings three more agencies under its charitable umbrella.

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The fund-raising arm of the [Archdiocese of Toronto](#) is looking to raise another \$440,000 after consecutive record parish campaigns.

The 2019 campaign is already starting off in the hole as [ShareLife](#) has committed to spending \$460,000 on the three agencies which will no longer be receiving funds from the United Way. On top of that, two regular donations totalling another \$460,000 have ended their run with the charity.

That puts a lot of pressure on the people in the pews to dig deep, but ShareLife executive director Arthur Peters is confident Catholics will respond in kind once again this year.

“The Catholic community, when asked, has always been generous,” said Peters. “When asked and given the opportunity to support the work of the Church, they have been generous. We’re hoping this year they’ll recognize the increased needs and challenges we face.”

ShareLife funds more than 40 member agencies that support the needs of the community. Programs focus on children and youth, families, single and teen parents, elderly, people with special needs, immigrants and refugees, while also helping fund the education of seminarians and the formation of permanent deacons.

The annual campaign kicked off March 6, Ash Wednesday, and this year’s goal from the parish campaign is \$13.8 million, said Peters. It will be a challenge, but he thinks it is attainable.

“People see the needs and know our agencies are doing great work,” he said.

Among those agencies are [Catholic Family Services](#) of Peel-Dufferin, [Catholic Crosscultural Services](#) and the [Vita Centre](#). Each of these agencies relied on funding from the United Way in the past but will now have those needs met by ShareLife.

For Catholic Crosscultural Services — which provides services to assist in the settlement and integration of immigrants and refugees in the Greater Toronto Area — ShareLife is a “very critical” partner, said executive director Agnes Thomas. In particular, ShareLife funding supports women and children with life skills and employment supports.

“These are people who may not necessarily be meeting the criteria set out by government funding,” said Thomas. “Any non-government funding, like ShareLife, helps us support any of these programs that are geared toward people who are vulnerable but do not meet the standard criteria.”

While ShareLife funding only makes up a small part of Catholic Crosscultural Services’ budget, said Thomas, it allows them to meet needs that otherwise wouldn’t be met.

To meet its goal, ShareLife is always coming up with new ways to raise funds. A number of new strategies have been implemented this year to make it easier for people to donate, including allowing donors to make a donation through their bank accounts, just like they would pay a household bill.

ShareLife is also making its literature available in many more languages than it has in the past. Direct mail packages have been translated into a number of languages, including Chinese, Korean, Tamil, Hungarian, Polish and French.

“If you want people to give, you’ve got to talk to them in their language,” said Peters.

On top of the parish campaign, ShareLife is also targeting the business community through its corporate campaign. The goal is \$1 million, after raising \$955,000 last year.

There are three ShareLife Sundays this year, where collections will be taken in parishes for the campaign: March 31, May 5 and June 2

For information on how to donate, see [sharelife.org](#).

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