FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How does The Longest Night challenge work?
To take The Longest Night challenge, participants commit to sleeping in their car for one night to raise awareness about the many ways homelessness affects local communities in Peel, Toronto and York Region. Each participant also asks their friends, family and neighbours for pledges to support United Way Greater Toronto and the United Way-funded agencies providing resources to people who face homelessness.

How should I collect donations for my Longest Night challenge?
You can quickly set up a fundraising page on Canada Helps using the guide that was included in this Longest Night resource package (Longest Night Personal Fundraising Set Up.pdf).

How does the Longest Night fightpoverty?
By hosting a Longest Night challenge in support of United Way Greater Toronto, and sharing your experience on social media, you are helping to increase awareness about the #UNIGNORABLE issue of homelessness, while also supporting United Way's mission to fi ght local poverty in all its forms.

Because of you, families and individuals struggling with poverty will have access to the most basic needs in life - food security, emergency shelter and transitional housing supports. United Way will also continue to work with community leaders and government to make sure there are policies in place that lift people from poverty and build their independence.

Why sleep in your car?
Participants are challenged to sleep in their cars for one night to give them a better understanding of the complexity of poverty.

In our communities, homelessness can look very different for different people. Some facing homelessness may sleep in shelters or on the street, but there are many more people who resort to sleeping on friends' couches or who turn to their cars for shelter. This trend is referred to as "hidden homelessness" as it is much harder to spot, and it is a practice that has become common across Peel and York Region.

Is it safe to sleep in your car?
Yes, provided you follow the following safety tips:

- Park your vehicle somewhere safe that is on your own property (i.e. driveway.) If you live in an apartment building or condo, advise your building manager to make sure it's ok to sleep in your vehicle in the parking lot for one night.
- Be aware of the dangers of being exposed to extreme cold, and monitor yourself for signs of frostbite or hypothermia.
- Set the parking brake on your vehicle.
- Do not continue with the challenge if you feel unsafe.
- Do not leave your vehicle running.
- Do not light candles in your vehicle.
- Do not use a portable heater.
- Remain aware of your surroundings.
- Ensure your cell phone is fully charged
- Dress according to weather conditions
- Bring a flashlight
- Bring sufficient blankets and pillows
- Bring a light snack

Who will benefit from the money raised by this challenge?
Donations to United Way Greater Toronto help to support our work to fight poverty in all its forms in Peel, Toronto and York Region. As part of this work, we support numerous local agencies who provide shelter, food and resources to people facing homelessness to help them live better lives. Once you create a sponsorship page for your event on Canada Helps, all funds raised will be sent to United Way Greater Toronto.

How can people who are not sleeping in their car support The Longest Night?
Everyone can take part by sponsoring a participant. They can also help create awareness by talking to friends and family members about homelessness in our community. Join the conversation online at twitter.com/UWGreaterTO, instagram.com/UWGreaterTO/ and facebook.com/UWGreaterTO/ using #LongestNight.

They can also ask their local representatives at the federal, provincial and municipal level to support legislation that prioritizes addressing the root causes of homelessness in our communities.