

Philanthropy in Canada

Friday, June 19, 2026

Produced by Randall Anthony Communications with the Association of Fundraising Professionals Canada. The Globe's Editorial Department was not involved.



Canada's strength rests on its charitable pillars

A robust charitable ecosystem is essential to the government's Canada Strong vision

DILOK KLAISATAPORN VIA GETTY IMAGES

In a climate of global instability, Canada's charitable sector is positioning itself as a form of national defence, protecting the country's social fabric by fostering an internal resilience framework and bridging gaps in essential services.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals Canada (AFP Canada), which represents over 3,000 fundraising professionals, says a healthy, robust charitable ecosystem is essential to the government's "Canada Strong" vision.

"Charities have for so long served as a crucial part of our social fabric, of our country's operations, and our ability to offer myriad services to our citizens," says Amanda Fritz, co-chair of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada.

But the sector faces major challenges: The workforce is at a breaking point. Burnout, significant

“The burden on the individuals working for charities to not fail because of what it will mean for people in the community is such a weight, and I don't think it's getting the attention it should.”

Amanda Fritz

Co-Chair of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada



wage gaps compared to the private sector and emotional fatigue are pushing talented professionals away, resulting in fewer people to meet an increasing demand for essential services.

"It's people's lives and food and homes and health that are on the line," says Ms. Fritz. "The burden on the individuals working for charities to not fail because of what it will mean for people in the community is such a weight, and I don't think it's getting the attention it should."

Furthermore, a technology gap is widening. While artificial intelligence and digital tools offer enormous potential for productivity, smaller community-based charities often lack the funding and expertise to adopt them. This creates a precarious divide between large, well-resourced organizations and the smaller ones

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ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION OF FUNDRAISING PROFESSIONALS



The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) represents 26,000 fundraisers around the globe, partnering with donors and volunteers to change the world through ethical and effective fundraising. AFP helps its members raise over \$100-billion annually for a wide variety of causes by providing advocacy, research, education, mentoring and the most rigorous code of ethics in the profession.

The over 3,000 AFP members in Canada are leaders in the charitable sector – a sector that contributes more than 8 per cent to Canada's GDP annually. They raise funds for organizations large and small, in rural and remote communities as well as towns and major cities across the country. They support arts, culture, shelters, emergency services, health care, education, reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and social justice. Their fundraising efforts change lives by helping fight poverty, hunger, climate change and inequalities in Canada and around the world.

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FULL-SERVICE HOSPITAL IS CRITICAL IN COTTAGE COUNTRY

When seconds matter, donors ensure staff have the best equipment

"Many people think of the emergency department as the front door to the hospital," says Dr. Wil Smith, chief of medical staff and an anesthesiologist at the West Parry Sound Health Centre (WPSHC).

However, not everyone who comes through that door leaves for home in a few hours.

About 10 to 12 per cent of emergency department patients – many of them seasonal residents or visitors to the West Parry Sound region – will need more extensive treatment before heading home.

They may require surgery, intensive care, advanced imaging or stabilization before being transferred to a larger centre. That is why this full-service hospital is so important in a cottage-country area where the population increases by factor of 10 during the summer months.

In Ontario, almost all hospital equipment and technology must be funded by donations. The generos-



Dr. Wil Smith, chief of medical staff and anesthesiologist at the West Parry Sound Health Centre, says donations fund the best possible equipment – and that makes a difference to every patient. **SUPPLIED**

ity of donors, including many who vacation in the region, helps the WPSHC provide the highest calibre of care for all patients, including those needing emergency care.

In the emergency department, preparing for a critically ill or injured patient begins when the team learns that the ambulance is on its way.

"We aren't just prepping a room; we are prepping a system," Dr. Smith explains. "We stage the ventilator, the video laryngoscope for intubation and bedside ultrasound." The team also begins to consider transferring the patient to a trauma centre or bigger hospital. That's a decision that isn't taken lightly.

"Sending the sickest person in the hospital down a highway in an ambulance is inherently risky," he says. "But there are times when it is the only decision for the patient."

Dr. Smith vividly recalls one case involving an ATV rider whose

windpipe was severed after being 'clotheslined' by a wire across a trail.

"Because we had a video laryngoscope and a fibre-optic bronchoscope, one of our surgeons and I successfully manoeuvred a breathing tube through his severely injured airway," he said. "We were able to keep him alive, and he made it to the trauma centre. He volunteers here at the hospital now."

For Dr. Smith, donor support is about far more than equipment purchases. "Donors may not know who will benefit from their generosity – it might be a cottage neighbour, someone who lives and works here, or someone who was just driving through on Highway 400," he says.

"Regardless, when seconds matter, generous donations that give us the best possible equipment make a difference to every patient we see," says Dr. Smith.

[Learn more: wpschcf.com](http://wpschcf.com)

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SHN EMERGENCY PHYSICIAN

DR. PAUL CHAN
SCARBOROUGH FAMILY PHYSICIAN
FATHER AND DAUGHTER

The real-world impact of sustained philanthropic investment

Early-career support builds a pipeline of talent and discovery across the country

It's been over three decades since Dr. Linda Penn received a Terry Fox New Investigator Award, but she still recalls the impact that this prestigious research grant had on her career trajectory.

"It put me on the map," she says, adding that early support felt deeply personal. "It was as if Terry Fox himself was supporting my dream to be a research scientist."

Now a world-renowned cancer researcher and a board member at the Terry Fox Research Institute, Dr. Penn recalls when she received the award, she was just launching her independent research career. The funding allowed her to advance her groundbreaking research on cancer-causing genes, equip her lab and, just as importantly, provided validation by showing confidence in her as a new scientist, she says.

Backing research early and consistently is a long-established philosophy of the Terry Fox Foundation and Research Institute. What began as individual awards has, over time, grown into a broader strategy: pairing support for emerging scientists with large-scale collaborative research efforts designed to multiply impact.

Dr. Penn notes this collaboration or 'team science' is both a practical necessity and a competitive advantage for Canadian science. It promotes the sharing of samples, expertise and ideas, allowing investigators to move faster and tackle complex questions they could not address alone and enabling them to 'punch above their weight' internationally.

"When you have everyone focusing on the same problem from different perspectives, it's electric," she says. "It's really good for the young people in our labs ... they see our passion, our enthusiasm, our innovation, and they also learn how to



Early in her career Dr. Linda Penn received a Terry Fox New Investigator Award. It enabled her to equip her lab and advance her research. Today she is a world-renowned cancer researcher. SUPPLIED

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We can see what's possible. We want the cure now. And for the first time, we can see a path to getting there – one patient at a time.

Dr. Linda Penn

Cancer Researcher and Board Member, Terry Fox Research Institute

be research scientists," she explains.

These environments not only accelerate discovery but also cultivate the next generation of researchers, who learn collaboration as a core skill rather than as an afterthought.

The benefits of the team science approach are what distinguish the Terry Fox Foundation from many other cancer philanthropic organizations, she says. Long before "team science" became standard practice, the Terry Fox Foundation was investing in collaborative cancer research across Canada.

This long-standing commitment to both people and partnerships has now grown into something even larger: the Marathon of Hope Cancer Centres Network (MOHCCN). Launched in 2021, this network

unites cancer centres from across the country, allowing them to improve outcomes and quality of life for patients through precision medicine.

Dr. Penn says MOHCCN is a natural progression of decades of investment.

"If anyone was going to lead something like this, it had to be the Terry Fox Foundation and Research Institute," she says, pointing to the trust and track record that enabled collaboration with federal partners and institutions across the country.

During its first five years, MOHCCN established a coast-to-coast network of 54 institutions from all 10 provinces, and over 100 funding partners, including the Government of Canada. This collaboration led to the

development of a national strategy for the deployment of precision oncology and the creation of a Gold Cohort that includes genomic and clinical data from over 15,000 patients.

Its impact is already visible. Network data is being used to better understand individual cancers at the genetic level and tailor treatments accordingly, helping some patients with advanced cancers to live longer and better lives as treatment decisions increasingly shift from standard protocols to molecular insights. Over the next four years, the network will continue to bring personalized care to more Canadians, while also expanding the use of its Gold Cohort for researchers to make more data-driven discoveries for the benefit of patients.

"By sequencing both tumour and normal DNA from thousands of patients, researchers can pinpoint the specific mutations driving an individual's cancer and identify targeted therapies," says Dr. Penn.

This progress demonstrates how philanthropic investment can translate into real-world impact by improving diagnosis, shaping treatment decisions and accelerating the shift toward more personalized cancer care.

Dr. Penn notes sustained support remains essential, adding MOHCCN relies on continued partnership between public funding and philanthropy to expand its reach and maintain momentum. Without it, she cautions, progress could stall at a time when the potential for impact has never been greater.

"We can see what's possible. We want the cure now," adds Dr. Penn. "And for the first time, we can see a path to getting there – one patient at a time."

Learn more: terryfox.org; tfri.ca

FROM PAGE 1

RESILIENCE: STRENGTHENING THE CHARITABLE SECTOR IS NATION-BUILDING

that are often most deeply embedded in local communities.

"A country's strength is just as dependent on what is happening inside of its communities and what is being done to protect those communities as it is on its military to protect its borders" says Sofia Janmohamed, chair of the AFP Canada Communications Committee. "Charities are very quick to respond as a frontline defence when there's crisis, whether it's tied to housing or mental health supports. They bridge gaps for the most vulnerable populations."

This internal resilience was visible throughout the pandemic, but Ms. Janmohamed stresses that the sector also provides a sense of belonging and shared purpose that is integral to long-term stability.

The way Canadians give and participate is also undergoing a generational shift. While donor participation has seen a general decline over the last decade, there are signs of adaptation. In Quebec, for example, participation is rising in certain areas; and across the country, the era of the mega-gift has arrived, with massive transformational donations becoming more common.

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Sofia Janmohamed

Chair of the AFP Canada Communications Committee



The charitable sector responds to myriad needs – from providing food, housing and medical support through to responding to emergency situations. SHOOTTHEBREEZE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Volunteering is also evolving. The days of lifelong volunteer careers are fading as people become more time-strapped. Organizations are now striving to be more resilient by offering flexible and skills-based opportunities for engagement.

"I do not believe for a second that Canadians care less," says Ms. Janmohamed. "But all individuals

are experiencing incredible financial pressures. The challenge is that while we have declining participation, the demand for services has grown considerably."

The message from AFP Canada is that resilience must be a shared responsibility involving the public, corporations and the government. Sector leaders are calling for a move

away from one-time funding toward multi-year, flexible investments – particularly from corporate partners.

"Stronger communities are not separate from strong markets; they are the foundation of them," says Ms. Janmohamed. She notes that many organizations in corporate social responsibility not just as the right thing to do, but as a smart business strategy to preserve the conditions that allow markets to function.

As AFP Canada continues its advocacy, the underlying sentiment remains that the charitable sector is the infrastructure of Canadian well-being.

"Strengthening the charitable sector isn't charity; it's nation-building," says Ms. Fritz. "Canada is not built on economic indicators alone, it's also built on the well-being of its people, and the charitable sector is the infrastructure that supports that well-being every day in every community. If we want a resilient, productive and united Canada, we need to invest in the systems that make that possible."

Learn more: afpglobal.org/afp-canada

Your Success, Our Mission.



"After attending the AFP conference and seeing the wealth of resources and community support available, we knew it would be a meaningful investment in our growth. Joining AFP was a step toward strengthening both my skills and our collective impact."

Jackeline Rodriguez,
Donor Engagement Manager at Mission Action

afpcanada.org

What's next starts now

As Mackenzie Health celebrates a major milestone, donor support remains essential to shaping the next chapter of care in western York Region

When Mackenzie Health's Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital opened five years ago, it was a historic milestone, marking Canada's first fully integrated smart hospital and Ontario's first net-new hospital build in 30 years.

Prior to opening, the City of Vaughan held an unenviable title: it was the largest community in the province without its own hospital.

Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital was made possible by a \$1.3-billion provincial government investment alongside donor support through the \$250-million *The Ultimate Suits You* campaign. At the time, the campaign was the largest fundraising campaign for a community hospital in Canadian history.

"*The Ultimate Suits You* campaign was more than a fundraising milestone – it was a defining moment for this community," says Nicole McCahon, president and CEO of Mackenzie Health Foundation. "It showed what is possible when generosity, vision and community pride come together around a shared belief that families deserve exceptional care close to home."

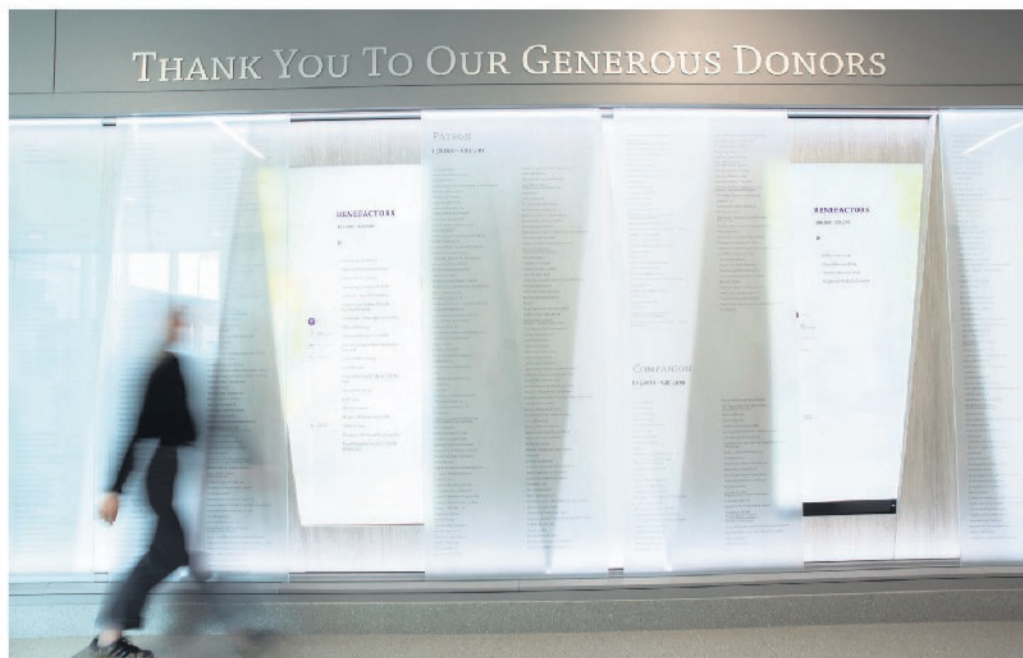
The campaign received a major boost in 2019 when the Cortellucci family made the largest single donation in Mackenzie Health Foundation's history.

"For us, this investment was about gratitude, responsibility and the belief that strong communities are built by people lifting one another up," says Pietro Cortellucci, who also sits on Mackenzie Health Foundation's board of directors, on behalf of the family.

"When we looked at this hospital project, we saw something that touches every family, regardless of background, success or circumstance," he adds. "Health care is deeply human. At some point in life, every one of us will rely on the compassion, skill and care that a hospital provides."

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital opened its doors initially in February 2021, at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, to alleviate pressures on neighbouring hospitals before its



Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital was made possible by government investment and community donations raised through Mackenzie Health Foundation's \$250-million *The Ultimate Suits You* campaign. SUPPLIED



Hospitals are living, evolving places of care. Communities grow, technology advances, equipment ages and patient needs become more complex. That is why philanthropy is critical – not as a one-time investment, but as an ongoing commitment to what care can become.

Nicole McCahon
President and CEO,
Mackenzie Health Foundation

official opening as a full-service community hospital in June 2021.

Since then, it has been serving its community amid an ever-increasing demand for care – surpassing volume projections within months of opening.

In 2020, for example, the year before Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital opened, Mackenzie Health's Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital had the sixth-busiest emergency department (ED) in Ontario. In 2025, within just four years of opening, Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital became the second-busiest ED in the province.

Today, visits to Mackenzie Health's EDs total close to 250,000 annually. Both hospitals consistently operate over capacity, with about 40 admitted patients on average waiting each day for an inpatient bed to become available, illustrating a need for continued growth to keep pace.

THE BENEFITS OF A TWO-HOSPITAL SYSTEM

Instead of just creating a second 'mirror image' hospital in the area,

the addition of Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital enabled the regional health care provider to function as an integrated two-site hospital system.

"Both hospitals provide essential core services, but it's the intentional distribution of specialized programs across our two sites that truly sets us apart," says Carmine Stumpo, president and CEO of Mackenzie Health. "By working seamlessly as one connected system, we can deepen expertise, enhance quality and safety, and deliver a more co-ordinated experience for patients across western York Region and beyond. This isn't one plus one equals two – it's one plus one equals three."

LOOKING AHEAD

As Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital celebrates its five-year anniversary, health care leaders and philanthropic partners emphasize that opening the doors was not the finish line.

To keep pace, the hospital must continuously adapt. Mr. Stumpo

shares that future clinical priorities include expanding local cardiac interventions to build a centre of excellence, introducing advanced robotic surgery and activating two entire floors of shelled interior space for future inpatient beds.

While government funding supports hospital operations and some capital, donor generosity remains essential.

"Hospitals are living, evolving places of care," says Ms. McCahon. "Communities grow, technology advances, equipment ages and patient needs become more complex. That is why philanthropy is critical – not as a one-time investment, but as an ongoing commitment to what care can become."

For the community that helped make it possible, Mackenzie Health's two-hospital system is a source of profound pride and an ongoing responsibility.

"Our donors helped bring Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital to life, but more than that, they built confidence in what this community can achieve," she adds. "As demand continues to grow, that spirit of possibility will help us expand capacity, advance innovation and strengthen care across both hospital sites. What's next starts now."

Through Mackenzie Health Foundation, the community has an opportunity to continue shaping the next chapter of care for western York Region.

"We are a growing nation, and communities like ours will continue to need more of what Mackenzie Health provides," says Mr. Cortellucci. "My message to potential donors is to take health care seriously and give back in any way you can. Every contribution matters, and when a community comes together behind a shared purpose, extraordinary things can happen."

Learn more:
mackenziehealthfoundation.ca



Five years. Thousands of lives changed. One exceptional community.

Since opening its doors in 2021, Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital – Ontario's first net-new hospital in more than 30 years and Canada's first smart hospital – has been there for patients and their families during life's most critical moments.

Built through government investment and community generosity, its opening transformed Mackenzie Health into a two-hospital system alongside Mackenzie Richmond Hill Hospital – expanding access to exceptional care close to home.

But the story doesn't end here.

As western York Region continues to grow, so does the need for new equipment, advanced technology and expanded services.

**Together, we built more than a hospital.
And together, we'll shape what's next. Give today.**



Mackenzie
Health
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mackenziehealthfoundation.ca

CCIS – 45 years of meeting every stranger with dignity

Changing lives, strengthening communities and building a more dynamic workforce



Staff attending a Calgary Catholic Immigration Society event. This year the charity celebrates its 45th anniversary, having grown from small beginnings in a church basement into the largest immigrant-serving organization in the Prairies. SUPPLIED

In the 1970s, a small group of volunteers led by Margaret Chisholm gathered in a church basement to welcome Vietnamese refugees to Calgary. They were driven by a simple conviction: that every stranger deserves to be met with dignity. On April 13, 1981, this initiative was formalized as Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS).

This year, CCIS celebrates its 45th anniversary, not just as a local charity, but as the largest immigrant-serving organization in the Prairies. It is a milestone that mirrors the journey of its current CEO, Gordana Radan, whose life has come full circle within the organization's walls.

Thirty years ago, Ms. Radan arrived in Calgary as a refugee fleeing the former Yugoslavia. Her first stop was the Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre (MCRC), the CCIS reception house that serves as a soft landing for government-assisted refugees. Today, she leads the society as CEO.

Her journey from a displaced newcomer at the MCRC to a national leader in settlement serves as a testament to the CCIS mission. The organization now has 26 locations across southern Alberta, serving over 30,000 people annually through specialized programs for youth, seniors and professionals.

Despite the growth, Ms. Radan insists that the "raw, human vulnerability" of arrival remains unchanged. She recalls watching a documentary about the MCRC while at a confer-

“We have never been driven by the availability of funding; we have been driven by where the need exists. We never forget where we came from, and we never will.”

Gordana Radan
CEO, Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre



ence in Japan decades after her own arrival. The sight of a new refugee on screen brought her to tears.

"I realized that the person on screen, whose life circumstances were entirely different from mine, felt exactly what I had felt," she says. "That emotional core, the anxiety, the hope, the guilt of leaving, is universal."

But Ms. Radan says what distinguishes one newcomer's settlement journey from another is not the initial emotional experience – that is shared – but what comes after.

"Speaking the language, having recognized credentials, having a professional network: these are the factors that shape how quickly and smoothly a person finds their footing," she says, adding these are all aspects of the organization's Canada Connects program.

Some volunteers have been with the program for more than 30 years,

staying in touch with the families they first met in the 1980s.

FINDING BELONGING

Success at CCIS is measured by more than employment statistics or housing placements. For Ms. Radan, true integration is a psychological shift. She describes a moment at an international conference in Australia

when a video of Canada played. "I started feeling an enormous sense of pride," she recalls. "I thought, 'This is no longer just a place where you live; this is your home.' Our goal is to help newcomers find that belonging."

As global conflicts continue to drive displacement, CCIS's work remains as urgent as it was in 1981. Ms. Radan credits the organization's longevity to its "beautiful people" – a staff comprised largely of immigrants and former refugees who see their own stories reflected in the clients they serve.

"We have never been driven by the availability of funding; we have been driven by where the need exists," says Ms. Radan. "We never forget where we came from, and we never will."

Reflecting on how her lived experience has impacted her leadership of CCIS, Ms. Radan says it has given her an instinctive understanding that this work is deeply human.

"That awareness also shapes our work at CCIS. It drives us to continue creating the conditions in which people can become the fullest version of themselves in a new place. When we do that well, we not only change individual lives, but we also strengthen communities, build a more dynamic workforce for our province, and contribute to a more prosperous Canada. That has been our mission for 45 years, and it remains as relevant and as urgent today as it has ever been. I am proud to have spent my career in service of it," she says.

Learn more: ccisab.ca

NEW GRANTS TO HELP CHARITIES WITH UNEXPECTED EXPENSES

Committed to safer, more inclusive and resilient communities

To mark its 25th anniversary, Western Communities Foundation (WCF) is expanding its support for communities across Canada. The milestone includes its annual National Walk for Safe Places (held in 11 communities across Canada in May) and the launch of a new \$100,000 Emergency Support Fund to provide faster, more flexible funding for charities facing urgent, unexpected challenges.

Founded in 2001, WCF – the non-profit arm of Alberta-based Western Financial Group – has granted more than \$9-million to support local communities. In addition to the new Emergency Support Fund, the foundation's programs also include

community Infrastructure Grants, the Western Inspirational Awards for graduating high school students and the Matching Grants Program.

Building safe places is the foundation's long-term commitment to helping create safer, more inclusive and resilient communities across Canada. As communities continue to face pressure from climate-related disasters, economic instability and rising demand for essential services, the foundation is strengthening that commitment with support designed to respond quickly when needs arise.

The Emergency Support Fund will provide grants of up to \$10,000 to selected registered Canadian charities experiencing unexpected crises, from disaster recovery to sudden operational emergencies.

"When a food bank loses refrigeration or a shelter needs urgent repairs, timing is everything," says Rod Cunniam, board chair of WCF. "By combining our employee-driven National Walk with this new Emergency Support Fund, we're ensuring support is available both proactively



The launch of the Emergency Support Fund represents a natural evolution of the foundation's mission, says Rod Cunniam, board chair of Western Communities Foundation. SUPPLIED

and responsively – when it's needed most."

In this inaugural year of the Emergency Support Fund, Canadians were invited to help identify charities in urgent need by nominating eligible organizations, and the selected recipients will be announced on June 30, 2026.

Learn more: westernfinancialgroup.ca/emergency-fund

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SHN's bold plan to meet demand for cardiac care

Donor support will enable the most state-of-the-art cath labs and EP labs in Ontario

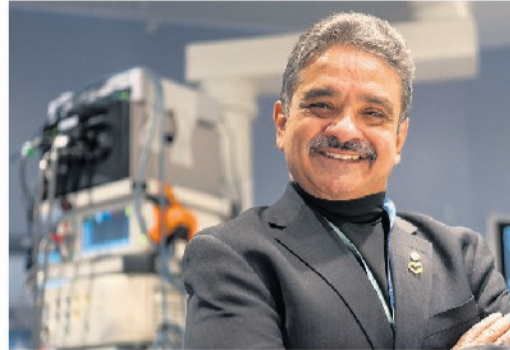
When Andres Escobar went for his daily walk in May 2025, he found himself stopping every 200 metres, gripped by a sudden, crushing tightness in his chest. Within days, the 52-year-old father was lying in a catheterization lab at Centenary Hospital in Scarborough, Ontario, watching a giant screen as doctors revealed a 99 per cent blockage in one of his heart's main arteries.

"I was stunned and felt numb," Mr. Escobar recalls. "All I could think of was my family."

Mr. Escobar's story is increasingly common in Scarborough, a community that has spent decades doing more with less when it comes to health care infrastructure. As the designated cardiac centre for the Scarborough-Durham region, Scarborough Health Network (SHN) treats 85 heart attack patients every month. Among them, nearly 50 are 'Code STEM' cases – the most severe form of heart attack where an artery is completely blocked and



From left: In a catheterization lab at Centenary Hospital in Scarborough, doctors found a 99 per cent blockage in one of the arteries in Andres Escobar's heart – he later received a life-saving stent; with demand expected to increase by 20 per cent in the next five years Dr. Amir Janmohamed, Scarborough Health Network's chief of cardiology says generous support from donors will make it possible for SHN to have the most state-of-the-art cath labs and EP labs in Ontario. SUPPLIED



every second of delay increases the risk of permanent damage or death. SHN's cardiac program also provides more than 40,000 outpatient cardiac visits annually and performs more than 5,500 catheterization

(cath) and electrophysiology (EP) procedures. Despite its premier status, SHN is fighting a battle against time and aging infrastructure. Its hospitals are among Toronto's oldest. While

downtown academic centres have historically received billions in investment, Scarborough's teams have worked in facilities where some imaging equipment dates back to the era of the iPhone 4.

"Nearly a quarter of those living in Scarborough are South Asian, and we know this community is more likely to face heart disease," says Dr. Amir Janmohamed, SHN's chief of cardiology. "Yet for so long, Scarborough has been overlooked."

To close this gap, SHN Foundation's Love, Scarborough campaign, which launched publicly in 2022, has raised more than \$200-million. Cardiac care has now become a critical fundraising priority. The network plans to build one new cath and EP lab and fully renovate three others at

Centenary Hospital. The project will make SHN one of the first in Canada to implement the GE Allia IGS 7 Pulse imaging system. This technology improves image quality while reducing radiation exposure for patients and staff by 50 per cent. Furthermore, donor support will fund RAMPART protection systems, shielding staff from 95 per cent of scattered radiation.

The need for expansion is urgent. Demand for cardiac care is projected to increase 20 per cent over the next five years. This is driven by population growth in Durham and the high prevalence of cardiovascular risk factors in Scarborough, including one of the largest dialysis programs in North America.

The upgrades will increase capacity for ablations – procedures to treat heart rhythm disorders – by 60 per cent. For patients like Mr. Escobar, who received a life-saving stent and later graduated from SHN's award-winning cardiac rehab program, the investment is the difference between a traumatic open-heart surgery and a non-invasive procedure that saw him back at work in days.

"We have done so much with so little," says Dr. Janmohamed. "Imagine what we could do if we had the resources we need. The generous support from donors will make it possible for SHN to have the most state-of-the-art cath labs and EP labs in Ontario."

Learn more: shnfoundation.ca

HIGHLIGHTING DIGITAL GIVING

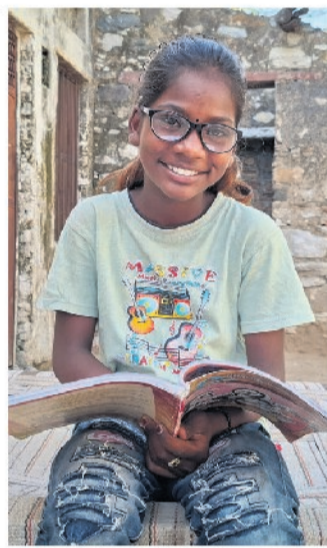
Operation Eyesight provides options aligned with donor preferences

Operation Eyesight Universal, a Calgary-based charity partnering with communities, hospitals, governments and organizations in South Asia and Africa, is highlighting digital giving as part of its donor-centred approach, which offers multiple ways to connect and contribute.

Through its community-based model, the organization has helped declare 2,021 avoidable blindness-free villages as of December 2025 through 2024 completed community eye health projects. With each project serving 40,000 to 50,000 people, more than 8.1 million people now have ongoing access to local eye health care.

Amy Dunn Moscoso, senior manager, digital giving and communications, says the priority is making giving accessible, flexible and aligned with donor preferences.

"Digital giving has been part of our work for many years," Ms. Dunn



Preeti benefits from Operation Eyesight's school eye health program in Rajasthan, India. SUPPLIED

Moscoso says. "Now we're putting greater emphasis on it as one option among many, so people can give anytime while still feeling a personal connection."

Donors can still connect by phone or email, or work with a relationship manager, while secure digital platforms offer a convenient online option.

The approach supports both convenience and long-term impact. "Monthly giving provides predictable funding for programmes built to last, including community-led eye health systems where local teams and volunteers carry the work forward," Ms. Dunn Moscoso adds.

In many communities, vision centres remain in place, supported by trained health workers as project models evolve.

Learn more: operationeyesight.com/give



A catheterization lab in a Scarborough Health Network hospital. SUPPLIED



Capitalize for KIDS

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Donate Today



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Canadians step forward for maritime medical service

Ships offer a range of free surgeries and crucial educational opportunities

In 2025, a record 122 Canadian volunteers – including medical professionals, IT specialists and tradespeople – served on board Mercy Ships, the world’s largest non-governmental floating health care provider.

The organization relies heavily on the dedication of volunteers from around the globe, says Darryl Anderson, executive director of Mercy Ships Canada.

“In a typical year, Mercy Ships will have volunteers from 70 nations bringing a wide range of skills and expertise to our operations,” he adds.

Mercy Ships plays a crucial role in global surgery development in countries where access to timely and quality surgical care remains a critical challenge. Its state-of-the-art hospital ships provide free surgeries and serve as vital education platforms to strengthen local health-care systems for the long term.

With over 50 per cent of the world’s population residing within 100 kilometres of a coast, hospital ships offer a strategic solution to reach underserved communities. Recognizing that poor infrastructure can hinder patients from accessing their floating hospitals, Mercy Ships also supports patients and their caregivers with the logistics of travelling from their homes to the vessel.

The impact of Mercy Ships is transformative in regions grappling with a shortage of doctors, specialists and essential medical equipment, coupled with financial and geographical barriers to care. The organization’s two fully equipped floating medical facilities adhere to stringent safety standards similar to leading health-care centres in developed countries, ensuring patients receive the highest quality treatment.

Beyond immediate care, Mercy Ships prioritizes empowering local health-care professionals through education and training programs, fostering sustainable improvements that extend far beyond the ships’ departures.

Currently, the organization operates two vessels: Global Mercy is currently stationed in Freetown, Sierra Leone, until June 2026; and Africa Mercy, which is currently undergoing maintenance in Durban, South Africa, after serving communities in Madagascar until recently. It will return to Madagascar when maintenance is completed.

Both ships offer a range of free surgeries, including maxillofacial reconstructions, burn contracture releases, pediatric orthopedic corrections, cleft lip and palate



Mercy Ships has two hospital ships, Global Mercy and Africa Mercy. These ships are currently serving the people of Sierra Leone and Madagascar. MERCY SHIPS

meeting Mercy Ships’ commitment to equality and respect, says Mr. Anderson.

“We treat every patient equally despite gender, race or age,” he adds. “Everyone should have access to medical care no matter where they live.”

Mr. Anderson emphasizes the organization’s collaborative approach.

“Mercy Ships International makes decisions about where to go on a twofold approach. First, we consider requests from governments to come in, so we don’t go anywhere where we’re not invited,” he says. “We actually sign a protocol agreement with different governments, deciding what type of work the organization will be doing when we go. And so we work really closely with national governments to address the surgical requests that they have for the country.”

Since 1978, Mercy Ships has performed more than 122,000 life-changing surgical procedures, more than 556,900 dental procedures and trained more than 55,500 health care professionals in their areas of expertise.

With the addition of the Africa Mercy II, the organization aims to further reduce the isolation caused by treatable conditions.

“Lack of proper medical attention affects more than someone’s health; it means disconnection,” says Mr. Anderson. “Having a severe health condition can ostracize people from their communities. Our mission is to bring them back.”

[Learn more: mercyships.ca](https://www.mercyships.ca)

“Having a severe health condition can ostracize people from their communities. Our mission is to bring them back.”

Darryl Anderson
Executive Director, Mercy Ships Canada

repairs, ophthalmology and dental services. They also provide crucial educational opportunities for the nations’ health care professionals.

A new ship, Africa Mercy II, is under construction in Guangzhou, China. Once commissioned in 2029, the 174-metre vessel will join its sister ship, the Global Mercy, in providing specialized medical care across sub-Saharan Africa, while Africa Mercy will be retired from service.

Africa Mercy II will feature 12 decks, six operating rooms and 191 patient beds, including intensive care and isolation units. Beyond its clinical space, the ship is designed as a floating university, equipped with enhanced training facilities to mentor local doctors and nurses – a core pillar of the organization’s sustainability mission.

The new ship is a major philanthropic partnership with the MSC Group and MSC Foundation and is an important step towards

DEAFBLIND INDIVIDUALS CAN EXPERIENCE PROFOUND ISOLATION

Philanthropy helps create opportunities beyond basic support

Deafblindness is often described as a disability of access – access to communication, information, relationships, employment and community participation, says Cathy Proll, CEO of Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada (Sensity), adding that without the right supports in place, individuals who are deafblind can experience profound isolation.

Ms. Proll says through intervenor services (specialized one-to-one support for people who are deafblind), family supports, accessible housing, life skills opportunities and community programming, Sensity works to reduce isolation and help people who are deafblind live full and meaningful lives.

Many people who are deafblind

also live with additional complexities related to mobility, communication or cognitive development, which can create further barriers in everyday life, explains Ms. Proll, adding families can spend years trying to navigate systems, advocate for supports and find others who truly understand.

Philanthropy plays a critical role in helping Sensity create opportunities that go beyond basic supports. “Flexible donor support allows us to invest in programs, spaces and initiatives that foster connection, independence, dignity and belonging for individuals who are deafblind and their families,” says Ms. Proll.

Sensity is currently advancing several important initiatives across

Ontario, including the development of new affordable and accessible housing and the expansion of regional services to better support communities across the province.

In November 2026, Sensity will also co-host a national parent confer-

ence in Niagara-on-the-Lake that will bring together parents and caregivers of individuals who are deafblind from across Canada for learning, support and community building.

[Learn more: sensity.ca](https://www.sensity.ca)



The Deafblind and Sensory Support Network of Canada (Sensity) is actively highlighting the work of the organization in June, International Deafblind Awareness Month. Here, specialized one-to-one support helps a deafblind person complete a project. SUPPLIED

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Perspectives on children's palliative care from Canuck Place's new medical director

Advancing pediatric palliative care locally, nationally and internationally

When Dr. Jared Rubenstein sat at the dinner table as a child, the conversation rarely veered toward the mundane. His father, a critical care physician, and his mother, a social worker, spoke openly about the "hard conversations" and the profound weight of supporting families at the end of life.

"Those conversations always felt normal, important and worthwhile," says Dr. Rubenstein.

It's a perspective that has shaped his career and one he now brings to his role as the newly appointed medical director of Canuck Place Children's Hospice.

He succeeds Dr. Hal Siden, who, after 25 years as medical director, will transition into the role of scientific director for the Canuck Place Research Initiative.

Dr. Rubenstein was previously at Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine, where he co-founded the Pediatric Hospice



Dr. Jared Rubenstein is the newly appointed medical director of Canuck Place Children's Hospice. Canuck Place is B.C. and the Yukon's pediatric palliative care provider. SUPPLIED

and Palliative Medicine Fellowship. The difference between pediatric palliative care in the United States and at Canuck Place is "everything," he says.

"There are so few true pediatric hospices, and there are none that provide the robust wraparound support that Canuck Place provides to families, meeting them in all

avenues and areas of their lives," adds Dr. Rubenstein.

His appointment comes at a pivotal time for Canuck Place, which currently cares for more than 946 children and families across British Columbia and Yukon through in-home, in-hospital and virtual care as well as in-hospice care in Vancouver and Abbotsford. Dr. Rubenstein describes children's palliative care as walking alongside families from diagnosis through end of life and into bereavement addressing physical, emotional, spiritual and psychosocial needs through an interprofessional team that delivers personalized, values-aligned care.

He views his work as a form of "reclaiming cultural wisdom." He believes modern medicine has shifted death and grief into hospitals and away from community, eroding cultural wisdom about supporting loss and contributing to inadequate care when palliative

expertise is absent.

"Grief is best supported when it's shared," says Dr. Rubenstein. "In not talking about it, it models that we shouldn't talk about it, and kind of contributes to a private shame. So much of our work is really just opening that door."

Known for his unconventional approach to medical education, Dr. Rubenstein has garnered international attention for using animation and satire to break down clinical barriers. His YouTube channel features short vignettes designed to challenge myths about palliative care.

One of his most enduring metaphors likens a pediatric palliative care team to the fire department.

"We're the fire department, not the fire," he explains. "We aren't the bad thing. We are the service that helps with the hard things."

Denise Prail, CEO of Canuck Place, says that Dr. Rubenstein's global leadership will continue to advance pediatric palliative care locally, nationally and internationally. In addition to his role at the hospice, he serves as a clinical associate professor at UBC and as head of the Division of Palliative Medicine at BC Children's Hospital.

Ms. Prail added that the strength of Canuck Place's care model and its ability to attract global leaders like Dr. Rubenstein is made possible in large part through donor support.

"Over 60 per cent of Canuck Place's care annually is funded by the generosity of donors, allowing us to grow our programs and support more children and families, where and when they need us most."

While the role at Canuck Place involves navigating what he calls "impossible moments," Dr. Rubenstein remains focused on personalized care that respects a family's values without adding pressure during an already overwhelming time.

"It's about supporting (families) and bringing out who they are," he says. "And making sure they don't have to feel alone in the finite time they have together."

DONATED ART WILL HAVE LONG-TERM IMPACT

Contemporary artworks gifted to the National Gallery of Canada

In a move that shows the broad scope of Canadian philanthropy, the National Gallery of Canada (NGC) announced a new donation recently from Vancouver philanthropist Bob Rennie and his family.

The gift of 24 contemporary artworks by four globally recognized artists – Americans Kerry James Marshall and Christopher Williams, and Canadians Brian Jungen and Jin-me Yoon – brings the total number of works gifted by the Rennie family since 2012 to 284, cementing Mr. Rennie's status as a Distinguished Patron of the NGC Foundation.

"This is a landmark and deeply inspiring gift for the National Gallery of Canada and for the country," says Jean-François Bélisle, director and CEO of the NGC. "Bob



The National Gallery of Canada is home to more than 90,000 works. ANDREI ANTIPOV VIA GETTY IMAGES

Rennie's clarity of vision and long-standing commitment to artists at pivotal moments in their careers have helped shape one of the most significant collections of contemporary art in Canada," he says, noting the gift will strengthen and expand the collection in ways that will resonate for generations.

The donation includes Kerry James Marshall's *Wake* (2003), a profound installation addressing the transatlantic slave trade, and Jin-me Yoon's *Souvenirs of the Self*, a series that challenges stereotypes of Canadian identity.

By entrusting these pieces to a public institution, Mr. Rennie emphasized the custodial responsibility of collectors.

"Any work leaving the Rennie Collection must go to a better

home and with a better custodian than ours," he said.

"As we continue to contribute to our nation through the National Gallery of Canada, I would like to remind us all that the two works by Kerry James Marshall document an important period in history and a narrative that must not be forgotten. These are voices that must be preserved for future generations. They show us when the seeds of slavery were planted, bearing the fruit of the racism that continues to this day," says Mr. Rennie.

Founded in 1880, NGC is home to more than 90,000 works. The National Gallery of Canada Foundation supports the NGC in fulfilling its mandate.

[Learn more: ngcfoundation.ca](https://www.ngcfoundation.ca)

[Learn more: canuckplace.org](https://www.canuckplace.org)



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Closing the gap with Measurement-Based Care

Capitalize for Kids aims to lay the groundwork for MBC to become a standard of care in child and youth mental health across Canada

Canada faces a critical gap between children and youth experiencing mental health conditions and the limited mental health resources available, says Dr. Peter Szatmari, co-director of the Cundill Centre for Child and Youth Depression at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto, adding that only 20 per cent receive the help they need.

"This means the mental health system needs to be extraordinarily efficient and effective. The limited resources that are available must be deployed in the most efficient way possible, and they must have a big impact on the mental health challenges that young kids face," says Dr. Szatmari. "But the system is neither efficient nor highly effective at this point in time."

Capitalize for Kids, a charity focused on amplifying and accelerating the work of community child and youth mental health providers in Canada, is dedicated to closing this gap by strengthening community-based services with new models of care, increased access and updated technology.

The centrepiece of its strategy is the Measurement-Based Care (MBC) Accelerator Project, a model that integrates regular data collection into clinical practice and has been shown to significantly improve clinical outcomes, including faster symptom reduction, and lower dropout rates, says Jason Pun, the organization's chief impact officer.

MBC is the use of reliable evidence-informed measurement tools to chart the outcome of delivered treatments. As an example, a child or adolescent fills out a questionnaire at their first appointment and then, during the course of treatment, that questionnaire is re-administered before each session to establish whether there is improvement or not.

By repeatedly measuring symptoms, clinicians can quickly determine whether a child is improving or needs a change in approach. This reduces the reliance on "wait and see" practices and enables earlier, more targeted interventions, says Dr. Szatmari. Capitalize for Kids' vision is to lay the groundwork for MBC to become a standard of care in child and youth mental health across Canada so all young people can benefit from more targeted and effective treatment leading to better outcomes.

Dr. Szatmari, who is also a member of Capitalize for Kids board of directors, says the collaboration



Capitalize for Kids helps more than 200,000 kids and families access vital mental health services each year. SUPPLIED

“Kids need our help more than ever, and community mental health agencies are struggling to keep up with demand. We make it possible for therapists to treat more kids while we improve the system, helping over 200,000 kids and families access vital mental health services each year.”

Angela Simo Brown
President and CEO,
Capitalize for Kids

between the charity and CAMH is a great partnership where an academic health sciences centre supports community mental health agencies to close the care gap for children and adolescents through the adoption of MBC.

Mr. Pun says by aggregating anonymized outcome data, MBC is expected to help agencies and policymakers understand how the youth they are serving are progressing, and compare the effectiveness of programs and interventions across agencies, using this evidence to optimize care pathways, reduce waitlists and reallocate youth more quickly when treatments are not working, thereby freeing capacity and improving system performance.

Beyond system efficiency, MBC also benefits youth and families, says Dr. Szatmari, explaining children and parents appreciate seeing visual evidence of progress develop shared accountability and learn to connect symptom fluctuations with life events (such as school stress), which supports ongoing

self-management of mental health.

Launched in June 2025, the Capitalize for Kids MBC Accelerator was developed through extensive and frequent meetings with agencies from across the province, says Mr. Pun. The project launched with seven Ontario child and youth mental health agencies and is expected to grow to 20 in the next year.

However, MBC Accelerator is just one of 15 youth mental health system improvement projects currently being developed by the Capitalize for Kids team. Other initiatives include advancing AI-enabled administrative tools such

as an AI report writer, a project being implemented with Toronto-based George Hull Centre to reduce the time clinicians spend on documentation so they can spend more time with youth and families.

"Kids need our help more than ever, and community mental health agencies are struggling to keep up with demand. We make it possible for therapists to treat more kids while we improve the system, helping over 200,000 kids and families access vital mental health services each year," says Angela Simo Brown, president and CEO of Capitalize for Kids.

Learn more: capitalizforkids.org

JIM PATTISON ACUTE CARE TOWER OPENS

The new \$1.5-billion facility launches a new era of care in British Columbia

In the early 1860s, a province-wide campaign raised \$3,396 to build a modest wooden hospital – the Royal Columbian – on the hills of New Westminster, British Columbia. It had one doctor and beds for 30 patients.

Last month, Royal Columbian Hospital opened the doors to the new Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower (JPACT), a \$1.5-billion, 700,000-square-foot clinical facility that doubles the size of the hospital campus, bringing state-of-the-art medical care to the fast-growing region.

Some of JPACT's highlights include more than doubling the size of the hospital's emergency department, one of the busiest in the province with nearly 88,000 visits each year; 75 modern treatment rooms, four trauma bays and a dedicated medical imaging suite; and the increase of critical care capacity from 40 to 84 beds, including a new Cardiac Intensive Care Unit.

Prominent philanthropist and businessman Jim Pattison and his foundation kicked off the redevelopment with a historic \$30-million gift.

"The Pattison family stepping forward the way they did helped us reach our \$150-million fundraising goal," says Jeff Norris, president and CEO of the Royal Columbian Hospital

Foundation. "It brought a lot of attention to the project and helped us create a level of credibility that this is a project that deserves philanthropic support," he says, adding it inspired many other gifts, large and small.

Ahead of the opening of the tower, 50 donors whose contributions are seen in named spaces – such as operating rooms – visited the facility to celebrate their commitment, says Mr. Norris.

Royal Columbian handles the most complex mix of services in the province. It is one of just two level-one trauma centres in B.C. and the only facility equipped to simultaneously care for high-acuity premature newborns and mothers with complex health issues. Because of this specialized mix, it routinely draws patients from across the province.

As acute care services transition into the new tower, construction will begin almost immediately on the vacated buildings to expand regional diagnostic services.

"I don't think people fully realize how long Royal Columbian's been in the community," says Mr. Norris. "We are grateful to the donors and grateful for the staff. The facility is bringing the best of health care to B.C."

Learn more: rchfoundation.com



The new Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower at Royal Columbian Hospital opened for patients last month, bringing quicker access to specialized, life-saving treatment to people in the Lower Mainland and throughout British Columbia. JARED WALLISER



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Championing Indigenous philanthropy

Future Generations Foundation calls for help to close the resource gap for First Nations-led work

Systemic barriers and government-led reconciliation that often fluctuate with political cycles make it hard for Indigenous communities to access funding. In contrast, the philanthropic sector has the longevity, flexibility and capacity to

foster deep healing for change. Yet, less than 1 per cent of all philanthropic giving in Canada is directed toward Indigenous causes.

Indigenous philanthropy goes beyond transactional top-down giving in support of horizontal

relationships rooted in trust and reciprocity. It supports the redistribution of wealth and Indigenous self-determination.

The Future Generations Foundation (FG Foundation), the largest First Nations-led funder in Canada,

leads by example and shows what's possible when First Nations disperse funds in support of First Nations-led solutions.

FG Foundation awards over \$18-million annually to First Nations individuals and communities across the country for education and employment training, culture and language revitalization projects, and healing initiatives.

Naomi Racette, executive director of the FG Foundation, attributes its successful grant making over the last 10 years to stewarding funds in alignment with First Nations governance and values and letting communities lead as they know their priorities.

"By listening to the needs of beneficiaries, our funding has helped many projects that perhaps would not have had access to other funding sources. Among the thousands of success stories woven together over a decade, a few include: helping revive the Haisla language, supporting an Elder attend a salmon run for the first time at the age of

90, ensuring a community sweat has the rocks and wood to host their own healing ceremony, and enabling a remote Northern community to obtain driver training for 50 people. These are just a handful of the stories that are having a rippling, positive effect for lasting transformative change," says Ms. Racette.

"Even with our significant amount of annual funding, we are forced to deny hundreds and thousands of applications year after year for valuable projects, initiatives or dreams due to resource constraints," says Ms. Racette.

"Healing will take generations, but the solutions are here, so long as we let First Nations lead. We want more people to join us in this mission and help close the resource gap, allowing more philanthropic dollars to flow to communities in support of First Nations-led work," says Ms. Racette.

Learn more: fgfoundation.ca



One of Future Generations Foundation's beneficiaries – Aunties on the Road – provides First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth between the ages of 12 and 30 with free reproductive and sexual health counselling and supports. Seen here are Gina Loutfiit (former member), Elaine Kicknoway, Jacklyn Tompalski and Tagwanibisan Armitage-Smith. FUTURE GENERATIONS FOUNDATION

LANDMARKS JOIN LIGHTS FOR LUPUS CAMPAIGN

Supporting advancements in research and treatments

Several of British Columbia's most recognizable landmarks – including BC Place, Science World and the Fittsimmans Bridge in Whistler – glowed with a purple hue on May 10 as part of a worldwide campaign to shine a light on lupus, an often-unseen illness.

The annual illumination of landmarks in Canada is led by Lupus Canada and supported by the BC Lupus Society, actively encouraging members of the public to raise awareness about lupus during May, Lupus Awareness Month, and on May 10, World Lupus Day.

Lupus organizations around the world encourage people to wear purple and to light storefronts and landmarks in purple to make lupus visible, says Ivana Cecic, executive director of BC Lupus Society. The under-recognized chronic

autoimmune disease affects approximately five million people worldwide, says Ms. Cecic, adding symptoms vary widely, making diagnosis difficult, and patients often endure a diagnostic odyssey before finally getting answers.

Without early diagnosis, lupus can cause serious complications, including organ damage, she explains. "This disease can cause premature mortality, and there is no cure."

The BC Lupus Society began as a grassroots movement nearly 50 years ago when a group of rheumatologists and patients came together with the vision that no one should face a lupus diagnosis alone.

Ms. Cecic says the mission of the nonprofit society is to support advances in research and treatments, to create public awareness, and to provide education and support to



The lights are on at BC Place – the purple lights that is. The colourful lighting is part of a campaign to promote awareness of lupus. SUPPLIED

people affected by lupus. The vision is that early diagnosis and optimal treatment will be available to everyone with lupus; that the public at

large will be aware of lupus; and to ensure community-based support networks and services.

A key success of the society has

been to create a safe environment where people affected by lupus can ask questions and meet with others undergoing similar experiences.

The society hosts: an annual symposium bringing patients, researchers and the public together for learning and connection; regularly scheduled patient support groups; and a platform of online resources, inviting patients to share their stories. The society is also strengthening its impact on the community by growing partnerships with clinical researchers and increasing access to support for people living with lupus, says Ms. Cecic.

The nonprofit depends on donations to advance its mission and long-term goals, she adds.

Learn more: bclupus.org

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Creating networks of belonging

L'Arche is strengthening the voices of people with intellectual disabilities

When people with intellectual disabilities take their place at the table, they contribute to a more just, compassionate and vibrant society for everyone, says Louis Pilotte, executive director and national leader of L'Arche Canada.

"People with disabilities are not a cost but an investment that transforms lives and societies," he says, adding L'Arche is committed to building a more inclusive society alongside people with intellectual disabilities.

L'Arche is an international charity that is active in 38 countries and has been in Canada for more than 60 years, welcoming people with intellectual disabilities into communities Mr. Pilotte describes as "networks of belonging."

Communities typically consist of clusters of two to five houses or apartments, each with a mix of four to seven people with intellectual disabilities and live-in team members. They also include day programs, workshops and a wide network of friends and families.

The organization welcomes adults to the accommodation it provides for life. Residents value having a secure, lifelong place where they belong, in contrast



May Banting and her interpreter Sherry Kavumkal. L'ARCHE CANADA

to models of autonomy that can result in isolation and loneliness, says Mr. Pilotte. However, there are long waiting lists for people wanting to live in the residences,

he says, noting limited turnover and funding constraints are part of the challenge.

In addition to their homes and day programs, a major focus of

L'Arche's work is strengthening the voices of people with intellectual disabilities and training them to advocate for their rights, he adds.

Mr. Pilotte believes discrimination of people with intellectual disabilities is based on the perception that they don't have the capacity to speak for themselves.

"Our role is to train them to be able to develop their own thinking and advocate for themselves," he says.

One person who is making her voice heard is May Banting, a member and spokesperson for L'Arche Halifax, where she has lived for more than 10 years. She is actively involved in community life and in advocating for the rights of people with intellectual disabilities.

In 2024, Ms. Banting represented L'Arche on the international stage at the Conference of States Parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (COSP17) in New York. Ms. Banting delivered L'Arche International's official statement, strongly affirming the importance of people with disabilities being heard, recognized and fully included in society.

Since its beginning, philanthropy has always had an important role in supporting L'Arche.

Learn more: larche.ca

BIRDSONG AND BIODIVERSITY AT ESPACE POUR LA VIE

Ornithology initiative takes flight at Montreal's Jardin botanique

This spring, as the first migratory birds returned to Montreal's skies, a new initiative took flight as Espace pour la vie announced A Haven for Birds, an initiative that will strengthen ornithology expertise at the Jardin botanique and accelerate the rollout of programs for families, schools, beginner birdwatchers and enthusiasts.

Protecting biodiversity and the environment is at the heart of the mission of Espace pour la vie, which groups the Biodôme, the Biosphère, the Insectarium, the Jardin botanique and the Planétarium. Together, these Montreal museums form the largest natural-science complex in Canada and welcome more than 2.5 million visitors every year.

A donation from Mark Zoccolillo, via the Fondation Espace pour la vie, with the collaboration of Les Amis du Jardin botanique, enabled the A Haven for Birds project.

"We often travel far to distance ourselves from everyday concerns, but with birds, simply stepping out-

“ Thanks to this exceptional donation, A Haven for Birds can take flight and durably transform Montrealers' relationship with nature. This is the true power of philanthropy: it gives scale to the ideas that matter most.

François Caron Melançon
Director, Fondation Espace pour la vie

side our front door can evoke the same feeling," says Mr. Zoccolillo.

"Their beauty and songs connect us directly to the natural world – a reminder that we, too, are creatures of nature. With its central urban location and accessibility for all, the Jardin botanique is an ideal place to bring people closer to this remarkable wildlife and contribute to its conservation," he adds.

Already recognized for its rich bird life where more than 200 species have been recorded, the Jardin botanique is among the most favourable environments in Montreal for birdwatching.

Since its founding in 1931, the Jardin has shaped a variety of natural habitats including woodlands, wetlands and tree collections that now support birdlife. Over time, A Haven for Birds will build on existing initiatives while gradually introducing new tools and experiences for the public, including identification resources, educational activities, guided tours and citizen engagement projects.



A tree swallow seen using a nesting box during the announcement of the A Haven for Birds initiative. SUPPLIED

These activities include a water-colour and nature journaling workshop inspired by the site's bird species, birds of prey presentations, opportunities to meet biodiversity specialists, and guided walks to explore the Jardin's habitats and better understand the behaviours of the birds that inhabit them.

François Caron Melançon, director, Fondation Espace pour la vie, says people like Mr. Zoccolillo are

at the heart of the Fondation's mission: building bridges between Espace pour la vie's mission and those who choose to support and amplify it.

"Thanks to this exceptional donation, A Haven for Birds can take flight and durably transform Montrealers' relationship with nature. This is the true power of philanthropy: it gives scale to the ideas that matter most," he adds.

Learn more: espacepourlavie.ca/en/botanical-garden

Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower

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EMERGENCY

ROYAL COLUMBIAN Hospital Foundation
Built on a legacy of care and generosity

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A new era of care has arrived at Royal Columbian Hospital with the opening of the Jim Pattison Acute Care Tower — made possible through the extraordinary dedication of care teams, planners, builders, and donors like you.



rchfoundation.com

THE GENEROSITY GAP

Relatively small group of wealthy donors funds charitable ecosystem

Canada's philanthropic sector is undergoing a structural evolution, marked by a record surge in online donations.

According to the 2026 edition of *The Giving Report* published by CanadaHelps, the country's largest online donation and fundraising platform, online donations through its platform hit a milestone \$529-million in 2025, representing a 10 per cent increase over the previous year.

However, the data also reveals a "generosity gap" as Canada's charitable ecosystem becomes increasingly top-heavy and reliant on a relatively small group of affluent benefactors.

The report highlights a shift in how wealth is transferred to the social sector. Less than 0.5 per cent of donors — amounting to just 3,894 individuals — accounted for more than 16 per cent of all giving by donating securities.

The donation of securities has surged through the CanadaHelps platform, with the number of donors growing 200 per cent since 2020, and the total value of those gifts increasing by 361 per cent. Concurrently, the number of donors making large cash gifts of \$10,000 or more doubled.

But everyday philanthropy is dropping off. Donations under \$100 decreased by 17 per cent over the same period, indicating that inflation and the rising cost of living are squeezing middle- and lower-income Canadians out of the giving pool.

"While the growth in online donations is a milestone, it masks a concerning trend: our charitable ecosystem is becoming increasingly top-heavy," says Duke Chang, president and CEO of CanadaHelps. "As giving

concentrates among a smaller group of wealthy donors, we risk losing the broad, community-wide participation that has historically sustained the work of charities."

The evolution is also changing the geography of Canadian giving. Traditional urban fundraising hubs are slowing down; online giving growth in Toronto and Montreal lagged notably behind the national average.

Atlantic Canada has emerged as the country's digital fundraising leader. Driven by an apparent desire to support local and regional causes, online giving in Nova Scotia has outpaced the national growth average by 58 percentage points since 2019, followed closely by Newfoundland and Labrador and Prince Edward Island.

This strong local focus made community-based organizations the single largest cause area on CanadaHelps.org, with total donations nearly tripling since 2019 to reach \$121.8-million. Environmental and animal causes also saw strong double-digit growth.

The influx of targeted dollars comes at a time when more than two-thirds of Canadian charities report being overwhelmed by an unprecedented demand for services, acute staffing shortages and persistent financial uncertainty.

Nevertheless, the report notes that despite the pressure they face, 88 per cent of organizations report that they are continuing to fully or mostly meet their core mission goals, highlighting the resilience of a sector that continues to deliver essential services even as demand grows.

Learn more: canadahelps.org

The charitable sector's campaign for better government recognition

A secretariat would involve the sector in the co-design of policies that impact its operations

Canada's charitable sector contributes an estimated \$225-billion to the national economy, yet it is often treated by the federal government as a policy footnote rather than a primary driver of social stability.

Now, facing a perfect storm of rising demand, declining volunteerism and a drop-off in donors, advocacy groups say the sector's relegation to the periphery of government is no longer sustainable.

The Association of Fundraising Professionals Canada (AFP Canada) is intensifying its campaign for a permanent home in government: a federal secretariat for the charitable sector.

"Policy in Canada has really been built around a market lens – industries that generate profit or exports," says Sofia Janmohamed, chair of the AFP Canada Communications Committee. "Charities have traditionally been positioned outside of this market frame. Their value, like social cohesion or food security, can be invisible in traditional economic metrics, making it easier to overlook them compared

to sectors with concentrated advocacy power."

The proposed secretariat would serve as a single point of accountability. Currently, charities must navigate a patchwork of various ministries, none of which hold ultimate responsibility for the sector's health. AFP Canada argues this lack of a unified voice prevents the sector from being involved in the co-design of policies that directly affect its operations.

Creating a single point of accountability would in itself be transformative, says Ms. Janmohamed.

"It would enable co-ordinated policy attention that supports the full sector rather than across departments. It would give the sector a seat at the table to bring an earlier voice to policy design that impacts the sector, and it would allow for better data sharing, strategy development and long-term planning," she adds.

Amanda Fritz, co-chair of the AFP Foundation for Philanthropy – Canada, describes the current relationship between Ottawa and charities as challenging. She notes that while



The Association of Fundraising Professionals is pushing for a federal secretariat, a permanent home in government. MIHAJLO MARIC VIA GETTY IMAGES

the government relies on nonprofits for many essential services – from medical research to homeless shelters – the long-term, flexible funding required to sustain them is

not always available. "Without the necessary funding, the institutions the government is relying on will continue to weaken and, in many cases, shut down,"

says Ms. Fritz.

She notes that the establishment of a secretariat is long overdue.

"For as long as I've been working in the sector, this is something that we have been pushing for in different ways. I did my master's at Carleton University seven years ago, and this was the case study we did, but we are still not much closer to making it happen," adds Ms. Fritz.

She says policy decisions are not being informed by the sector's on-the-ground realities, and it has no path to raise the alarm when those decisions are not in the best interests of charities.

"We simply have to make noise on our own as opposed to having an intentional partnership with government where we have input into the decision-making process," she says.

For the proponents of the secretariat, the push is about more than bureaucracy; it's about a shift from the sidelines to a formal, intentional partnership that recognizes charities as an essential pillar of a strong Canada.

DIFFERENCE MAKER: BHARAT RUDRA'S JOURNEY AS A VOLUNTEER

From the ashes of a telecom collapse, a lifelong legacy of volunteerism is born

For over 20 years, Bharat Rudra has shared his expertise and leadership through impactful volunteerism. Earlier this year, the Government of Canada recognized that enduring commitment by naming Mr. Rudra the recipient of the 2025 Thérèse Casgrain Lifelong Achievement award.

As co-founder and volunteer president of The Indus Entrepreneur (TIE) Ottawa, he helped displaced professionals become entrepreneurs after Ottawa's telecom collapse. Under his guidance, TIE Ottawa mentored over 1,000



The Government of Canada recognized Bharat Rudra's commitment to volunteering by naming him the recipient of the 2025 Thérèse Casgrain Lifelong Achievement award. BHARAT RUDRA/ALGONQUIN COLLEGE

entrepreneurs, seeded ventures and catalyzed innovation.

In announcing the award, Canada's Minister of Jobs and Families, Patty Hajdu, says volunteers across the country are building stronger, more caring communities.

"Whether they are boosting economic opportunities in the North, or ensuring children, families and seniors have the support they need, this year's recipients are a testament to that impact," she says.

Mr. Rudra, who currently serves as a board governor at Algonquin College, was one of

19 award recipients chosen from 268 nominations. Each winner receives a grant of up to \$10,000 to be directed to a non-profit of their choice.

Mr. Rudra's impact on the National Capital Region is both economic and cultural. Beyond the boardroom, he sought to bridge the identity gap for first-generation Indo-Canadian youth. He launched SURTAAL, the city's first Punjabi radio show, and Nach Pae Yaar, Ottawa's inaugural Bhangra dance team.

His philanthropic efforts continued as a co-founder of Dhadkan (Heartbeat), where he helped raise

more than \$10-million for the Ottawa Heart Institute.

"Every initiative he has pioneered has reflected his belief in collective action," reads Mr. Rudra's citation, noting that his legacy is measured not just in institutions built but in the confidence instilled in the next generation of immigrants and youth.

The awards serve as a reminder of the scale of Canada's volunteerism. According to federal data, approximately 73 per cent of Canadians aged 15 and older engaged in some form of formal or informal volunteering in 2023.

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