

## HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

History made, future intended.

### Restoring a local treasure



Image courtesy of the Hamilton Public Library, Local History & Archives

*The Westdale Theatre has been a Hamilton icon for over 80 years*

**F**ilm buffs in Hamilton have a big reason to celebrate as the restoration of the Westdale Theatre forges ahead. Opened in 1935, the theatre was at the heart of the Westdale community until it closed in 2016 and went up for sale. A small group of devoted community members called the Westdale Cinema Group purchased the building last year and is leading the rebirth with the help of many local supporters, including Hamilton Community Foundation which is assisting both through grants and a loan from its impact investing portfolio.

The Westdale Cinema Group is dedicated to bringing back the historic theatre as a multi-purpose arts facility for everyone to enjoy with programming that will include musical performances, lectures and, of course, movies.

HCF's impact has been felt on a number of fronts. A charitable loan helped with the acquisition of the building in 2017, and grants have supported the renewal in a number of areas including equipment and rebuilding its projection room.

*See Westdale/p.4*

### Gift of health

Green Shield Canada (GSC) is celebrating its 60th anniversary with a gift of six million dollars to priority projects across six Canadian communities — and has chosen Hamilton Community Foundation to facilitate the design, implementation and evaluation of the entire initiative.

GSC is Canada's only national not-for-profit health and dental benefits specialist and is also marking a 60-year history of social responsibility and charitable giving. With guidance from HCF, the company's new *Six 4 Six* community granting program will be centred in Hamilton, the Windsor Essex region, Calgary, Vancouver and the Atlantic region, partnering with local community foundations to determine priority projects within GSC's two areas of focus: oral health and mental health.

"Canadian communities face many complex challenges but also have many strengths which can be amplified. Together, we will work as community foundations do — to identify needs and priorities based on research and stakeholder input and then to grant where it will have the greatest impact," says Sheree Meredith, HCF's Vice-President of Philanthropic Services. "We are thrilled that an organization that has GSC's integrity and remarkable history has chosen us as a resource to their philanthropy, and we are excited to have a role in a truly innovative and leading strategy."

# A perfect match

**B**ob and Peggy Savage cast a wide net in their charitable giving — from the arts to education to support for women and girls and more. But it was one issue in particular that captured the attention of this philanthropic couple — our city’s natural environment.

HCF’s Environment Endowment Fund, which matches donors’ contributions, provided the perfect opportunity.

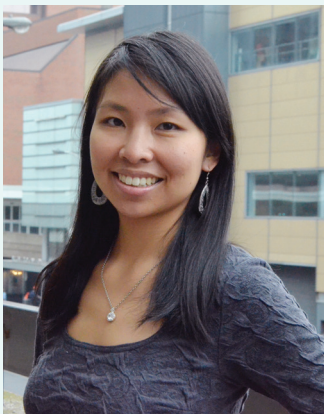


*Bob and Peggy Savage*

“It filled a gap that was not already being addressed in our giving,” says Peggy. Bob notes that doubling their impact through the match was something that had particular appeal to the couple.

Hamilton’s natural assets — its waterfalls, waterfront, and swaths of green spaces — are among its most treasured and well-established. Bob spent his entire career working in the steel industry and has a special appreciation for the challenges that Hamilton faces in ensuring that those natural assets remain intact.

This doubled impact is a perfect way for Bob and Peggy to give back to a city that the couple say “has given so much to the two of us” because a healthy natural environment is something all Hamiltonians need and enjoy.



## HCF welcomes new Manager, Corporate Services

Yulena Wan, CPA, CA is our new Manager of Corporate Services. Working in Finance & Administration, Yulena’s portfolio includes the overall finances of the Foundation, supporting systems management and operations. Yulena also works on HCF’s impact investing strategy — investments that have both a positive financial and social return.

Yulena is also active in the community. She is a member of the YWCA Canada Board of Directors and a 2018 Civic Action DiverseCity Fellow — a program that focuses on developing leaders and enhancing community collaboration, feeding her interest in creating diverse and inclusive leaders in our city to drive positive change. We’re glad to have Yulena onboard!

## Learning never ends MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO: TERRY COOKE

At the Foundation, we’re big believers in learning from other communities. This summer, generously supported by the Michael Young Foundation, a number of our board and staff and leaders from Hamilton’s anchor institutions embarked on a learning tour in Minneapolis-St. Paul. There, we exchanged ideas and gained some important insights from counterparts who have strengthened their cities in multiple ways.

This frank dialogue helps us better understand how we can deal with challenges at home — like the ones we identified in our Vital Signs report (see p.4) — challenges like Hamilton’s economic and other disparities that remain despite clear progress on a number of fronts.

Equitable development was a major theme of our tour of Minneapolis-St. Paul. We heard from leaders about how they are facing challenges like citizen engagement and revitalizing neighbourhoods while addressing displacement, gentrification and the availability of affordable housing. All of these issues are very relevant with respect to the opportunities and challenges Hamilton faces.

Our work in Hamilton is forever — and so is the process of learning and collaborating to find the best possible solutions.

## Doggone good reading buddies

**R**eluctant readers are increasing their self-confidence and achieving better grades with the help of some furry reading buddies.

*Sit! Stay! Read!* is an animal-assisted literacy program for children who have trouble reading. A 2015 study demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach in improving literacy: benefits include an increased motivation to read, more social engagement, improvements in mental health and improved reading skills averaging two grade levels.

The program is a partnership between the Hamilton-Burlington SPCA, Hamilton Public Library and McMaster University faculty and students. It connects kids with dogs who have passed a behavioural assessment and act as affectionate non-judgmental buddies who listen to the children read.

A grant from HCF adds a library branch in a neighbourhood with low literacy rates, increasing the number of children served and helping to identify those children most likely to benefit from the program.



## Diversifying leadership

Hamilton is a demographically diverse and multicultural city but, according to the latest data from the YWCA Hamilton's EXCLerator project, its diversity is not reflected in leadership positions. Women and visible minorities, for instance, are consistently under-represented in governance positions across sectors.

*DiverseCity onBoard* is an initiative working to reverse these trends. This national program helps organizations — not-for-profit and public agencies, boards and commissions — seeking to address the gap by connecting them with people from under-represented communities who are trained in governance.

Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion offers the *DiverseCity onBoard* program locally with support from the Foundation, and takes a step towards closing the diversity gap in leadership in Hamilton.

## Coming home

A national initiative to end youth homelessness is being piloted in Hamilton with a focus on Indigenous youth.



The model for *Endaayaang Knowledge Keeper* is Housing First for Youth (HF4Y), a rights-based approach that provides access to housing and age-appropriate supports for youth at risk of homelessness. Supported by an HCF grant, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre is leading the program and is one of 36 organizations across 10 communities implementing the model at a local level.

Endaayaang, which means “our home” in Ojibwa, provides 25 vulnerable youth — out of foster care, the justice system, domestic violence and other precarious situations — with stable housing solutions. It also addresses the unique needs of Indigenous youth. Family history, intergenerational, cultural and historical trauma and individual experiences are all considerations in how the program is administered. Mentorship is provided by community elders who serve as “knowledge keepers”, engaging youth to reconnect with their cultural identities.





This spring the Foundation released its latest *Hamilton Vital Signs* report — curated data that serves as a snapshot of the city in 10 aspects of community life. Check out some highlights below and read the full report online at [hamiltonvitalsigns.ca](http://hamiltonvitalsigns.ca)

- The amount of waste diverted from landfills decreased to 42% in 2017. The city's target is 65%.
- The number of teen pregnancies in Hamilton has fallen by more than half in the last 15 years.
- Visible minorities make up 19% of Hamiltonians, but in leadership positions occupy a range of 11% to almost none across sectors.
- Hamilton's unemployment rate has been among the best in the country — in November 2017, the rate was 4.2%, the second best in the country only behind Quebec City, and the lowest rate since April 2005.
- 14.8% of Hamiltonians reported experiencing some food insecurity in the last year.

Cont'd from p.1

## Westdale reborn

Providing loans for local projects and organizations that have a positive social outcome is part of HCF's impact investing strategy.

"Impact investing gives the Foundation and its donors another way to support the arts and their contribution to Hamilton's vibrancy," says Annette Aquin, Vice-President of Finance and Operations. "The Westdale Theatre offers a unique mix of heritage and community-building that will connect the neighbourhood, the university and the rest of the city."



*The comedy and tragedy masks are among the classic details uncovered as reconstruction continues*

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