

## HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

History made, future intended.

### ABACUS at three

In 2015, Hamilton Community Foundation set out to create a pathway for more kids to graduate high school and move on to post-secondary education: college, university and the trades.

Known as ABACUS, this 10-year commitment is the primary focus of HCF's Community Fund granting and leadership. It is unique in targeting students in Grades 6, 7, 8 — a critical transition period for young people that is key to their later success. By supporting middle school students, parents, educators and other partners, ABACUS works to help kids more effectively transition to high school, begin to set goals early and imagine a future with more possibilities.

ABACUS comprises three components: granting to increase the community's capacity to meet the needs of this age group, an intensive one-on-one mentoring program called Grad Track, and support for systems change to address gaps that may present barriers to educational advancement.

At the three-year mark of ABACUS, Hamilton Community Foundation has funded a wide range of community-based programs. They include before, during and after-school activities such as mentoring, academic support, goal setting, and campus visits. Students are engaged through a wide variety of interests: the arts, sports, STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics) programs and others. Some numbers to date include 9,000 students participating, 29 initiatives funded, and 700 parents and 460 educators engaged.

### ABACUS in action

Kiwanis Boys and Girls Club's ABACUS after-school initiative illustrates the approach. Twice a week, students get homework help and have a range of academic and life skill learning experiences. Once a month, they broaden their perspectives on the future with outings to local high schools and post-secondary institutions. Some 75 middle school students are involved, along with more than 30 parents. The program reports outcomes that include:

*See ABACUS/p.4*



*Helping a friend get steady at the new Serafini Family Ice & Splash Pad*

## A new chapter



After 12 years at the Foundation, Sheree Meredith has decided that it is time to start pursuing more of her life outside of HCF, and is retiring from her full-time role as Vice-President of Philanthropic Services at the end of May. She will continue to lend her expertise to HCF and its donors, part-time, beginning in June, working on a number of specific projects to advance philanthropy.

“Sheree has made an incredible contribution to the Foundation’s success,” says President & CEO Terry Cooke, “and especially in helping donors achieve their goals in making a positive difference.

“We will miss Sheree’s leadership, but remain grateful for the profound difference she has made and look forward to a continuing friendship in the next chapter of her life.”

## A family honours its roots

The new Serafini Family Ice & Splash Pad, located at the Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre, is a gift to Hamilton that exemplifies the family’s personal and business roots in the city, as well as its lifelong love of recreation.



Lou Serafini Jr. opens new facility, with Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann and Mayor Fred Eisenberger

“Hamilton has been central to our family’s history and we’re honoured to support this new facility,” says Lou Serafini Jr. “It represents both the city’s role in our lives, and our desire to share the benefits and enjoyment of recreation with young people who may not otherwise have an opportunity to explore their potential through sport.”

That goal is also being achieved by the first three grants from the new Fensgate Recreation Fund at HCF, established to increase access to sport and recreation in the neighbourhood surrounding the new rec centre. They include a grant to help make skates and helmets available for local children and families with limited financial resources, another to support a girls’ running program operating at the nearby Prince of Wales School, and a third to subsidize participation in fee-based programs at the Bernie Morelli Rec Centre.

“The new facility can be enjoyed by families summer and winter and, coupled with the grants, is a remarkable tribute to the city,” says HCF President & CEO Terry Cooke. “We’re thrilled to play a role in helping the Serafini family achieve its philanthropic goals.”

## Taking the long view MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO: TERRY COOKE

Recently, a guest op-ed in the Globe & Mail deliberated the merits of endowments versus spending on immediate needs in our communities. It’s one of many perspectives our board discussed when it took the bold step of putting more of our assets into the community through impact investing. I’m happy to say that we’re well on the way to achieving our goal of 20 percent of our assets invested in organizations that deliver both a social/environmental and a financial return.

The editorial asks “Isn’t it better to solve our social problems today?” An important question for sure,

but one that doesn’t fully appreciate the power of endowments to address long-term and complex social challenges — like the ones being addressed by our ABACUS initiative. Endowments also provide a vehicle to support the community in good times and in the not-so-good.

Finally, we know from our own experience the desire to go on making a positive difference forever has immense appeal to many people of all ages. If only for that reason, I’m more than confident that the endowment model remains a vital piece of the philanthropic landscape.

## Grants at a Glance

## Swimming with a mission

Hamilton children with disabilities are learning to swim, thanks to a partnership between SWAM Hamilton and Special Olympics Ontario. The program uses rigorously-selected student volunteers from McMaster University to give low-cost swimming and water safety lessons to children with special needs aged 2-18.

Drowning is the second leading cause of death for children under the age of 10 in Canada, and the risk is increased for youth with sensory-motor or intellectual limitations.

SWAM Canada is a national non-profit organization that offers affordable and accessible swimming lessons. In Hamilton, it has been providing one-on-one lessons to special-needs children for a decade at the downtown YMCA facility. Demand for the program is outpacing resources and HCF’s Ontario Endowment for Children & Youth in Recreation Fund is helping to fill the gap, with more than 100 children benefitting this year. The McMaster students who volunteer as instructors also benefit, developing leadership skills and valuable experience.



## Empowering women to succeed

Soroptimist International of Hamilton-Burlington recognizes that education is one of the most effective means to bring positive change to a woman’s life and that supporting a woman’s desire to improve her own and her family’s lives benefits the entire community.

Soroptimist International works to improve the lives of women and girls in 120 countries. Locally, through their “Live Your Dream” program, Soroptimists provide financial assistance to women who are sole supporters of their families to pursue education improves their skills, potential and feelings of self-worth. Most of the women receiving assistance are survivors of sexual assault, poverty, or addiction.

It’s a need clearly identified in HCF’s 2018 Vital Signs Report: Hamilton women living in poverty face multiple barriers to improving their education and, as a result, the path to prosperity. Supported by an HCF grant, local Soroptimists are responding with plans to increase the number of awards.

## Feathered friends



Rodent chow might not be on everyone’s wish list, but it is at the top of the Owl Foundation’s needs. Pine shavings are a close second.

For over 40 years, the Owl Foundation has worked with Humane Societies, vets, SPCAs and fellow rehab organizations to care

for orphaned and injured owls (and other birds of prey as needed). Their goal is to nurse them back to health and reintroduce these magnificent birds into the wild. Owls that cannot be reintroduced into the wild are considered for placement in foster parent or breeding programs.

Food and bedding are necessities for the Owl Foundation. The supplies support the 1200 or so mice and rats that are used to feed the injured owls. Support for these feathered friends comes from the McCallum, McBride and Malloch Foundation Funds.



Cont'd from p.1

- Better school attendance and homework completion
- More participation in leadership activities and volunteer opportunities outside school
- More positive attitudes toward school and learning
- A developing interest in post-secondary education
- Parental commitment to nurturing their child's potential

"ABACUS goals are challenging, and the work is complex," says Matt Goodman, Vice-President, Grants & Community Initiatives. "But the indications are that we're on the right track. Working with students at this pivotal point is transforming the way they view their own potential. That's tremendously exciting for each student — but also for the whole community. Hamilton's competitive future depends on it."

Learn more and watch our video at [ABACUSatHCF.ca](http://ABACUSatHCF.ca)

## Vital Signs chats



Morning coffee goes great with a lot of things — including civic engagement. HCF is sparking discussion about the latest Hamilton data through our Vital Signs chats — early morning coffeehouse discussions about some of the most pressing issues in our city.

The goal of these chats is to delve more deeply into topics from our latest Vital Signs report. Our 2018 report features "research you can read," highlighting trends and patterns on a number of issues from poverty and pollution to cycling and citizen engagement. Vital Signs chats present an opportunity to further engage citizens in conversations with local experts and advocates.

In November, HCF hosted the inaugural chat that focused on the issue of cycling in Hamilton. Guests Kate Whalen (Co-chair, Cycle Hamilton) and Ryan McGreal (Editor, Raise the Hammer) provided insights on the state of cycling infrastructure in our city. Listen to the full audio on our YouTube channel and follow us on social media to find out about our next chat.

Stay tuned for a new Vital Signs section on seniors, coming soon at [www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca](http://www.hamiltonvitalsigns.ca).

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