

LEGACY

Supporting the greater good

While the generosity of donors over the decades supports all our work, the Community Fund — HCF's original fund — is the fuel for responding to Hamilton's most pressing needs and our leadership initiatives addressing pervasive issues.

Over the years, the Community Fund has helped the Foundation to reduce poverty and support civic inclusion and vibrant neighbourhoods. It funds ABACUS, a leadership initiative supporting students in the pivotal but underserved middle-school years. And today, while the fund continues to address "big picture" issues like better educational outcomes, affordable housing and increased capacity for organizations serving equity-deserving communities and Indigenous people, it is also ready to respond immediately as it did during the pandemic and its aftermath, first providing emergency funding and then recovery support to frontline charities.



Today, a number of issues are visible in ways that are without precedent in recent history — lack of affordable

housing, the threat of increasing racism and marginalization and the impact economic threats will have on our city.

Social challenges — the known as well as what is unforeseen — will always demand attention and resources. By pooling their resources for Hamilton's greater good, generations of Community Fund donors help the Foundation to face these challenges today and in the future. As long-time Community Fund donor Dr. Juliet Daniel said in HCF's annual report, "Life and society are constantly changing. The Community Fund provides the capacity to respond to those changes and capitalize on emerging opportunities to help."

Visit hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/communityfund to learn more.

Co-ordinating efforts to support housing



When the City of Hamilton recently announced \$8.2 million in funding to local non-profits to build more than 800 affordable housing units, it was also a milestone for HCF who works with the City to provide a co-ordinated response to the housing crisis.

Affordable housing is a primary focus of HCF's local impact investing, supporting housing providers to build and preserve affordable home ownership opportunities, affordable rental housing and supportive housing options. It has provided loans to a number of the projects announced by the City in January, representing 130 units of deeply-affordable or supportive housing scheduled to welcome families and individuals by 2027.

These investments are all part of HCF's SCAFFOLD strategy to support affordable housing efforts, a key part of our strategic plan. SCAFFOLD determines where our philanthropic resources will have the most impact and the best roles we can play in affordable housing. For instance, behind the scenes, HCF supports implementing the City's Housing Sustainability and Investment Roadmap through multi-year funding for its Housing Secretariat. HCF's President & CEO Rudi Wallace and Chief Operations Officer/Chief Financial Officer Yulena Wan are members of its advisory committee. We also work with Hamilton is Home, the alliance of community housing providers who share their experiences to make housing investments more effective.



Our favourite things

A note from Andrea Butters,
Vice-President, Philanthropic Services

A new study reports that parents have a favourite child — usually the one that is most agreeable. My three children would not want to read this! But this got me thinking about why things

like food, music or parks become our favourites. Many of us also have our favourite charity. It could be one where we have volunteered, where a family member has accessed services or related to a cause that is important to us.

At HCF, I see people supporting their favourite charities through ongoing donations and operating grants, often built on trusting relationships over many years. Increasingly, I am also noticing people reflecting on who they give to and whether there are other organizations they want to support. This often comes from the growing awareness of the inequitable and problematic practices of philanthropy, such as the fact that Black-led organizations in Canada receive only 0.03 percent of total philanthropic funding, and the role of philanthropy

in colonization. I commend these thoughtful reflections, particularly significant as we mark the 10th anniversary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the importance of supporting Indigenous-led organizations.

Another way people are expanding their reach and showing their care for all Hamiltonians is by giving to HCF's Community Fund. Last year, the Community Fund granted more than \$1.7 million in Hamilton. By pooling resources, the Community Fund helps fuel efforts to address the challenges in affordable housing, education, equity and more. Our last annual report shows how this fund supports organizations that serve communities, such as those that are Indigenous-led and Black-led and/or partnered.

We can support our favourite charities while also supporting community needs that are often under-funded. In this way, charitable giving is both personally meaningful and serves the greater good.

ABACUS: Creating a generational impact

In 2015, Hamilton Community Foundation launched ABACUS, a commitment to increase the likelihood that young people facing multiple barriers will graduate high school and access post-secondary by focusing on the pivotal middle-school years and supporting the transition period into high school.

A decade later, we have learned a lot about what works to help students succeed and have committed to another 10 years of support. With this funding, HCF will reach a cohort of Hamilton students who were in kindergarten when the COVID pandemic began and see them through to graduation.

Last year, ABACUS program partners participated in an in-depth evaluation with external evaluators. Among its findings:

- ABACUS programs act as a magnet for students to attend school when absenteeism is a growing challenge.

- Indigenous programming helps create a sense of community so that Indigenous students have a safe space to gather, create friendships, share their different world view without censure, and gain strength from a sense of Indigenous identity.

It also found that ABACUS programs were successful in meeting key objectives, including creating connection to a trusted adult, a sense of belonging and motivation to succeed academically. The next decade will build on the lessons learned to refine ABACUS.

"ABACUS has already changed students' lives for the better," says President & CEO Rudi Wallace. "With this continued commitment, we hope to make a generational impact."

Students participate in ABACUS-funded program.



Grants at a Glance

Shelter Movers staff and volunteers celebrate their 700th move.



All the right moves

Three things often prevent those experiencing intimate partner violence from transitioning to a better, safer life: logistics, costs and the prospect of losing belongings.

Enter Shelter Movers, a one-of-a-kind, volunteer-powered organization that provides free moving and storage services to those fleeing abuse.

"Our services help them clear these hurdles," says chapter director, Courtney Waterfall.

Customized support may include private security or police presence, movers, storage units, vehicle rentals,

language interpreters, pet fostering and more. An intake process helps determine the level of risk and scope of the move. Community partners provide referrals and in-kind donations of products and services.

The Southwestern Ontario chapter has helped almost 600 individuals and families since it was formed in 2020. Funding from HCF will increase the number of moves in Hamilton in 2025 — a much-needed expansion, given intimate partner violence in the city is at an all-time high.

Aging naturally

The benefits of being out in nature are well documented — lower blood pressure, lower risk of heart disease and better mental health. As we age, these benefits become even more imperative. A recent HCF grant to Green Venture helps make sure older adults can enjoy this access.

The new outdoor program provides all-terrain wheelchairs for older adults with restricted mobility who often face risks of social isolation. The goal is to decrease barriers to accessing outdoor spaces and spending time in nature.

Giving seniors opportunities to socialize while spending time outside can improve their quality of life, promote physical and mental wellbeing, decrease their feelings of isolation and increase their engagement with their community. The program will be strengthened by partnerships with seniors' residences and organizations that serve older adults.

Salad days

Healthcare providers at Compass Community Health have been writing



a different kind of prescription since 2022. A recent grant from HCF is helping the popular program expand to serve people on a growing waiting list.

FVRx — which stands for fruit and vegetable prescription — provides fresh, locally sourced produce, plus recipes and preparation tips, every other week for a year to low-income patients who have diabetes and other chronic diseases. Patients can pick up their produce or arrange for delivery. The program — the first of its kind in Hamilton — is run in partnership with Hamilton's MRKTBOX, an online grocery store which sources the produce.

As food prices go up in Hamilton and across Canada, the program gives Compass Community Health a tool to mitigate food insecurity. HCF support will help fund 30 clients to receive a produce bag biweekly for a total of 780 bags.

In 2023, participant Vanessa Iker told CBC that she has "more energy and less pain" since filling her food prescription every other week. "When I open my fridge, it's full," she says.

News in brief

- HCF recently announced 64 grants totalling \$811,411 from the Edith H. Turner Foundation Fund to local charities. These grants support a wide variety of programming including access to nature, safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth, music education for seniors, baby essentials, and subsidized moving services for families escaping intimate partner violence.
- We're back this year with all-new episodes of Vital Signs. Recent topics include sex workers' rights, disability justice and how institutions can rebuild trust with communities. Watch these and past episodes at cable14now.com.
- A recent impact investment in Stoney Creek Community Homes will support converting an existing Stoney Creek townhouse site to apartment rentals, increasing the number of housing units from 81 to 130, including 53 affordable units.
- In March, we celebrated Sharon Charters, Manager, Grants for her nomination for a YWCA Women of Distinction Award. Congratulations to all the nominees and winners!



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