

LEGACY

Telling the stories of affordable housing

A new HCF initiative aims to increase community access to the facts about Hamilton's affordable housing crisis: causes, impacts, progress and solutions.

Launching as a one-year pilot, the Foundation will fund a *Hamilton Spectator* reporter to increase the depth and breadth of the paper's homelessness and housing coverage. All articles will be free and available online to the public, regardless of whether they are a Spec subscriber.

Philanthropic funding of public-interest journalism is a strategy that has become well-established in North America over the last two decades. Funders include some 40 private and community foundations across Canada. Editorial independence — acting solely in the interests of readers — is a central tenet to these partnerships. As noted in the disclaimer on all HCF-funded articles, the Foundation has no influence on content, an understanding critical to the credibility and trust in the work produced.

“We hope this reporting will spark community discussion, understanding and advocacy on homelessness and housing,” says HCF President & CEO Rudi Wallace. “Based on other funders’ experiences, we believe that sharing trustworthy information through quality journalism will help Hamiltonians align and make progress on this critical issue.”

The pilot is part of SCAFFOLD, HCF's 10-year, \$50 million commitment to affordable housing, and represents the latest in a long history of collaboration with Hamilton's daily paper. This has included the Spec's involvement with HCF's original anti-poverty work right up to ongoing support for our Vital Signs program which measures community health.

“Partnering with HCF gave us great comfort because we share a common goal,” says Cheryl Stepan, the Spec's editor-in-chief. “It is a well-respected philanthropic organization committed to making the community stronger, in part by generating awareness around important issues. It values and respects the role of journalism in a healthy democracy.”

Responsibility for impact

Impact comes in many forms. We've featured many stories in Legacy about HCF's impact investing – investments intended to create positive impact beyond financial returns.

However, HCF is also committed to investing with purpose in its public market portfolio. The Foundation's responsible investing strategy involves monitoring environmental, social and governance (ESG) aspects of all its public holdings. This includes an exclusion policy which currently filters out tobacco, illegal weapons and predatory lending from HCF's public investments.

Responsible investing also involves HCF using its shareholder voice for positive change. HCF is a member of the Shareholder Association for Research and Education (SHARE), an organization mobilizing investor leadership for a sustainable, inclusive and productive economy. Through SHARE, HCF has developed a more proactive approach that involves shareholder engagement on important issues.

Last year, HCF filed a shareholder proposal at The Bank of Nova Scotia (“Scotiabank”) requesting that they perform a racial equity audit of its employment and commercial operations, in alignment with peer banks. HCF and SHARE also worked on a shareholder proposal requesting that EQ Bank report on its policies and practices regarding Indigenous community relations, following the company's commitments to advance Indigenous reconciliation. These kinds of requests help to align more of our investments with our values and mission.

Learn more at
hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca/investing

CA Klassen
Vice-President, Grants & Community Initiatives

Standing with communities against hate

I'm CA Klassen, Vice-President of Grants & Community Initiatives. In this role, I work to offer leadership that attends to evidence and also listens deeply with the heart. When we listen right now, we find that folks are worried about developments like increasing hate crimes and the rise of right-wing extremist groups.

This past summer, I was grateful to the CBC for its coverage of white supremacist groups training for violence in Hamilton parks and gyms. I had already witnessed these groups in my neighbourhood, and I

Planning with purpose

Ruth Head understood the importance of giving back to her community when she first established a fund in 2016. Her recent life insurance policy donation to HCF launches a new chapter of generosity and impact.

The Ruth and Peter Head Fund supports several charitable organizations that reflect the couple's passions. Recipients include McQuesten Community Planning Team, MacNab Presbyterian Church and Royal Botanical Gardens — where a memorial bench now offers a place to rest along the Grindstone Marsh Trail.

The remainder of Ruth's policy will be directed to the Community Fund, HCF's unrestricted funding source that fuels leadership work in areas like affordable housing, education and equity across Hamilton.

"My mom and dad envisioned giving back to the community they cherished," says Marilyn Rathwell, Ruth and Peter's daughter. "Even as we grieve our

know such groups can thrive when no one is looking. Their ideologies would deny me, as a trans person, the right to exist in public (or at all). Both personally and professionally, I stand with all communities against hate, and work towards justice.

In my role, alongside HCF leadership and our board, we are accountable to a broad group of communities impacted by racism and hate. And it's this commitment that is at the centre of HCF's way of working, values and mission.

loss, it has been meaningful to have this fund become part of our parents' lasting legacy."

The donation of life insurance highlights the diverse ways donors can give to HCF to achieve their philanthropic goals. It also demonstrates how donors can support their favourite causes and charities while also supporting Hamilton's most pressing and evolving needs.



Pictured above:
Ruth and Peter Head

Grants at a Glance

Rooting for the future

A new kind of forest is being planted at Mountsberg Conservation Area.

Conservation Halton and Indigenous partners, with support from HCF, are transforming five acres of degraded land into a climate-adapted edible food forest — 3,000 trees and shrubs chosen to feed both body and spirit.

The work will begin from the ground up, with rehabilitating soil and preparing the site for planting. In spring 2026, the first trees and shrubs will go in,

followed by watering, mulching and maintenance to ensure the young forest thrives. Ultimately, the site will offer a sustainable source of locally adapted seed, traditional food and medicine-bearing species, and climate-focused outdoor education for school groups and visitors.

"We chose this approach because it combines scientific research with traditional Indigenous knowledge," says Sarah Macdonald of Conservation Halton Foundation. "These are climate-resilient trees and shrubs of cultural, ecological and edible value."

Hospital to home

For people with multiple chronic conditions, frequent emergency visits can feel inevitable, especially when compounded by food insecurity, unstable housing or lack of transportation.

Hospital to Home (H2H), a program at Hamilton Health Sciences, is changing that. Each year, it connects 300 patients, most of whom are over age 65 and living on less than \$30,000, to vital supports like nutritious food, housing, transportation, in-home nursing, financial aid and help with appointments and forms.

Hospital social workers identify participants, while health professionals develop individualized plans — often during a home visit — and community health navigators provide day-to-day support. The aim is to build a bridge to better health in as little as three months. The impact is clear: participants have almost half as many emergency visits, 58 percent fewer hospital admissions and 63 percent fewer readmissions within 30 days.

"Patients are active collaborators in shaping their care plans," says H2H Development Officer Sara Charters. "Staff recognize them as experts in their own lives and needs."

The art of belonging

Hamilton Artists Inc. has turned incidents of transphobic graffiti on its Cannon Street project wall into motivation for a new peer mentorship program that will give Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ artists space to experiment, collaborate and grow.



The program, supported in part by a grant from HCF, will unfold in three phases: building relationships with local advocacy and arts organizations, running a six-month paid mentorship program for five artists, and a public presentation of the artists' work. The project will also develop a list of community resources for Two Spirit and LGBTQIA+ individuals that will be posted at The Inc. and online.

"We want to dismantle a growing sense of isolation and create new relationships and paid artistic opportunities for an equity-deserving group," says Executive Director Derek Jenkins. "We're moving forward to make sure our communities know we stand behind them."

Welcome aboard!

We are thrilled to welcome three new members to the HCF team:

Sarah Matsushita is HCF's new Vice-President, Community Relations. She brings extensive experience in communications, advocacy and network building. Her work is grounded in equity and reconciliation, as demonstrated throughout her career in public policy, women's rights and community organizations in Canada, Thailand and Japan. In her role, Sarah leads all the Foundation's communications and is looking forward to connecting across the community.

Jenny Foster is HCF's new Director, Philanthropic Services. Jenny was inspired at an early age by her grandmother and has devoted her life to the community. She has held fundraising roles across a variety of sectors including human rights, education, food security, social services and politics. In her new role at HCF, Jenny works with current and new donors and professional advisors and contributes to the team's strategy.

Andrea Mejia is HCF's new Director, Social Finance Investments with more than 10 years of experience in financial institutions, including in underwriting, credit risk management, internal controls and audit. Andrea manages HCF's day-to-day operations of the social finance investments, including the impact investment and responsible investment portfolios.



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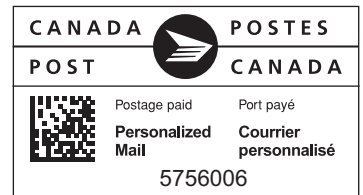
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