

DeafBlind
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

2023

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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With your support, we are truly transforming lives.



Our Mission

Inspiring investment in the future of individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and deafblind.



Our Vision

Transforming lives, one gift at a time.

Strategic Plan 2023-2026

- 1. We will increase our capacity to manage and grow our housing and accommodation assets**
 - Identify and address immediate-term housing and accommodation needs
 - Develop Accommodation & Housing strategy to link with Growth and Development strategies
- 2. We will increase our capacity to raise funds**
 - Oversee and manage ongoing volunteer activities and donor relationships
 - Develop a long term Development strategy to increase revenue
 - Increasing Board capacity on fundraising
- 3. We will ensure continued effective stewardship and accountability**
 - Ensure stewardship of the investments and the ongoing financial health and wellbeing of the Foundation
 - Implement Board governance initiatives
 - Develop and implement internal and external communications strategies

Letter from the Chair of the Board of Directors

The past year has been one of significant growth and change for DeafBlind Ontario Foundation. We are grateful that you, our valued donors, have partnered with our efforts to invest in the futures of those who are deafblind, as well as those living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing or use non-traditional forms of communication.

As part of DBOF's fundraising strategy designed in 2022, a fundraising strategy map was created to guide our efforts through the next two years. Our priorities include strengthening our board structure and volunteer leadership, focusing on individual giving as the core driver of long-term fundraising growth, increasing donor retention and conversion with clear, donor-centered stewardship and communication, and investing in the strong infrastructure needed to grow revenue and measure success.

The board also retained a consultant in the spring of 2023 to assist with a feasibility study for a comprehensive capital campaign. The purpose of this feasibility study was to determine our readiness to launch a multi-million-dollar fundraising campaign in support of our Housing Strategy (Capital Investment and Capacity Building Fund) and our Equipment & Training needs.

Based on study findings, management and the board of directors agreed to pause on moving forward with a comprehensive campaign at this time. The study indicated a number of things we need to have in place to strengthen our position, and we have made a commitment to wait until the next strategic plan in 2027 to revisit the idea of a comprehensive campaign. Thank you to all participated and provided valuable feedback in this process.

The board has focused heavily on recruitment this year. We are pleased to start the 2024 board year with a full slate of directors, to position the Foundation well for the future and to increase board capacity on fundraising.

An Accommodation and Housing Strategy working group, linked with DeafBlind Ontario Services' Growth Strategy, continued this year to address emerging challenges and opportunities related to housing needs. Funding for future housing and mortgages as demand for service grows continues to be a priority for the Foundation, and an area of high need.

The Foundation's Investment Committee also continued to support effective stewardship and accountability of our investments. This work enables us to plan for future innovation.

Throughout this year of change and building of new, more meaningful ways to connect with donors, you have responded. Government funding for services only goes so far. Your generous donations bridge that gap, and provide funding for safe and accessible homes, specialized equipment and assistive devices that make everyday living easier, and wheelchair accessible vans to access the community.

Thanks to you, the Foundation's vision of "transforming lives, one gift at a time" will continue to ensure possibilities become realities.



Gwen Elling
Board Chair



Roxanna Spruyt
CEO

DeafBlind Ontario Foundation

Board Members

Gwen Elling, Chair
Jim Dadson
Martha Beaumont
Jennifer Moore
Martin Mazza



Malcolm Ross
Sharon McGuigan
Chris Perry
Jocelyn Willoughby

Transforming
lives, one gift
at a time.



Finding Home

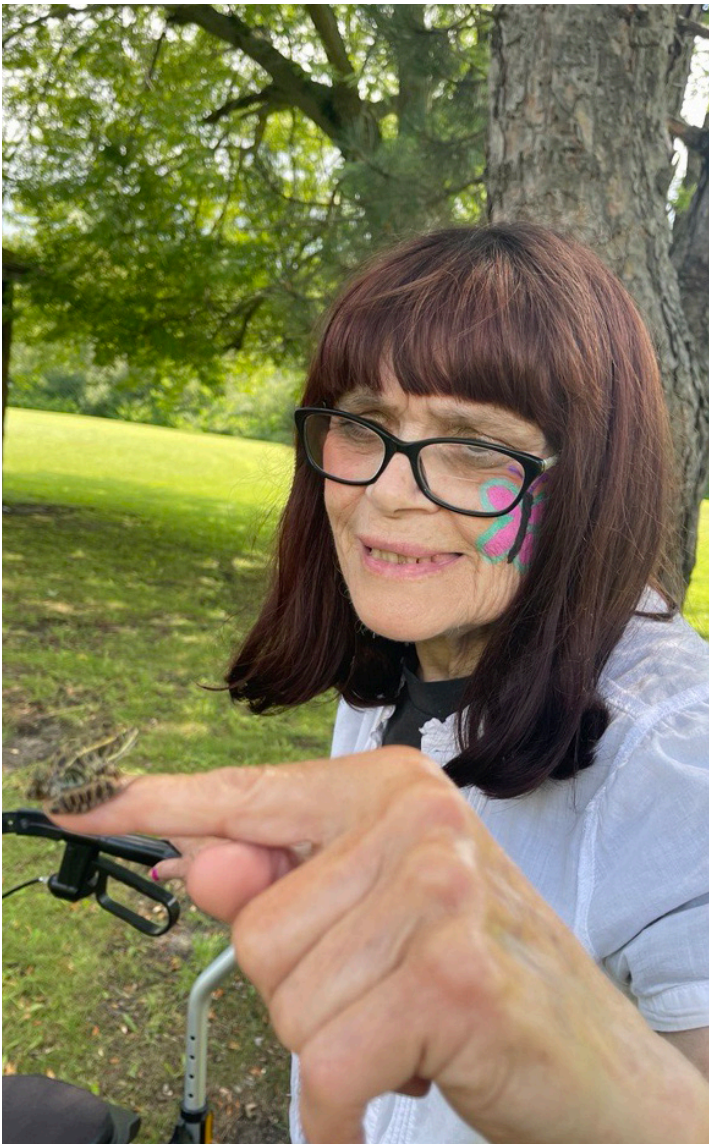


For Cathy, the grand opening of the Water Street apartments in Peterborough on March 18, 2024, has made a big impact. Water Street was a major redevelopment project that increased a 4-unit apartment style home into a 6-unit fully accessible space. The original building did not fully meet accessibility standards, hindering the independence and safety of the people who lived there. It is now home to one person who is deafblind and eight people living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing or use non-traditional forms of communication. Cathy now calls this fully accessible space home, thanks to the generosity of our donors.

As a person who has a developmental disability and is Deaf, Cathy receives support from Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) who communicate with her using American Sign Language (ASL). What Cathy enjoys most about her move

to Water Street is the newfound sense of independence that comes with having her own space. Her belongings are within arm's reach and the move is more than just a living arrangement—it's a symbol of autonomy and self-reliance. "Cathy loves everything about it as it is brand new. She loves her new bed and furniture set, her big TV and having her own bathroom!" shares Jackie, her Direct Support Professional (DSP).

New accessibility features in the home enable Cathy to safely navigate her environment as independently as possible and will allow her to comfortably age in place. These features include accessible kitchens, bathrooms, an elevator, ceiling track lift systems, and auto door openers to ensure that everyone living at Water Street have full access to their entire living environment.



**Thank you
for making a
difference.**

Cathy uses a walker and she is particularly happy about the elevator as it's just a few steps from her door! Donations received for this project have directly impacted the lives of people like Cathy, enabling them to live with dignity and autonomy.

Since settling into her new home, Cathy is very happy. She likes her moments of solitude, finding peace in the tranquility of her surroundings. Yet, she also enjoys the company of DSPs, who help her with her many interests including cooking, getting her hair done, and accompanying her on outings in the community. This winter she did a pottery class with her DSP. Cathy is thriving in her newfound independence.

Jackie notes, "Staff have noticed Cathy has become very independent with having her own apartment now," highlighting Cathy's growing confidence being on her own. "She absolutely loves to help people," adds Jackie, emphasizing Cathy's caring nature.

Cathy's transition to Water Street represents more than just a change of address—it demonstrates the transformative power of community support. Your generosity has made this transformation possible, turning Water Street into a place where people like Cathy can truly thrive and live their best lives.

Finding Joy and Independence: Meghan's Journey



Like any parents, Jacqueline and Robert's wishes for their daughter is to live a fulfilling life. Meghan is a vibrant 18-year-old who is deafblind and has cerebral palsy. She communicates using a communication tablet and will nod her head in reply to questions. She recently joined the DeafBlind Ontario Services Tremplin program in Sudbury, and with support, is finding her independence in a world that once seemed daunting.

Meghan's transition to the Tremplin program in March marked a turning point in her life. The program promotes community engagement during the day while allowing participants to return home nightly. The base for the Tremplin Program is a supported living home and it also provides families respite support throughout the year when needed.

Intervenor Services are integral to empowering the people we support to live full and active lives. Professional intervenors support people who are deafblind to gain independence, build their life skills, and actively participate in all areas of their lives. They connect the person who is deafblind to other people and their community as a communication partner. The goal for Meghan

is to transition to full-time supported living when she is ready.

Jacqueline reflects on Meghan's early years, recalling the challenges they faced as a family. Meghan screamed as a two month old infant due to medication changes to address muscle stiffness, poor feeding that required a feeding tube, and her sensory impairments. She was diagnosed at just four months old with spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy, microcephaly, seizure disorder, GERD, cortical visual impairment, and deafblindness.

While Meghan was on a waitlist for additional supports, the severity of her medical condition along with little relief for the family compounded their worries about her future. Jacqueline, who is a registered nurse, knew firsthand the challenges ahead, especially as Meghan's needs evolved. Meghan attended Jean-Paul II school where they provided the supports she needed. Jacqueline recalls that they, "...provided a good life for her in a world that I never knew existed and I wanted this life to continue in her adulthood, but also for her to become more independent in case something were to happen to us..." It was while attending the school that the family first learned of DeafBlind Ontario Services.

Meghan enjoys a range of activities that bring her joy and fulfillment. She loves music and Justin Bieber is a favourite. When Meghan was feeling distressed, his songs seemed to calm her. From watching movies, to going for walks, and participating in activities like swimming and glow-in-the-dark bowling, Meghan's life is enriched with experiences tailored to her interests and abilities.

When asked to describe her daughter, Jacqueline says that Meghan is someone who 'loves people!' and who thrives on social interaction. "Meghan is a girly-girl", says Jacqueline, "She likes to wear nice things and enjoys getting compliments."

Intervenor Services and programs like Tremplin are crucial to meeting the basic needs of the people we serve. And, with the support of donors like you, we can do so much more – including turning houses into homes, that maximize their mobility and independence; giving them the tools to accomplish amazing things.

One of the most significant milestones for Meghan has been her newfound independence. There are two people in the Tremplin Program that Meghan knows from her time at Jean-Paul II. Through sleepovers, which Jacqueline says gives Meghan a sense of pride, and social outings, she has formed meaningful connections and friendships. Meghan now has a sense of belonging and happiness that her family had always hoped for.

With your support, we are truly transforming lives.

Meghan has quickly settled into the Tremplin Program and when asked if she wants to return the next day, her answer is always a quick 'Yes!'. For Jacqueline and Robert, witnessing Meghan's happiness was a relief after years of uncertainty and stress. Jacqueline says, "It's easy for us because she's happy to go". Meghan is finding her path towards independence, one step at a time.



2023-2024

A Year of Impact

By the Numbers

Communicating thoughts, feelings and ideas is a basic human need. For those who don't communicate with words, it can be a much more difficult path to connection, belonging and living a full life. With this in mind, we have:



Your support is vital to ensuring DeafBlind Ontario Services has the essential resources it needs to provide safe and enriching supportive living homes and community support services for people who are deafblind, as well as those living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing or use non-traditional forms of communication.

Because of you, everyone we serve is living their best life, in their preferred mode of communication or language. Your commitment to the people we support helps to maximize their mobility, independence, and improve access and safety within their full living spaces.

With the right supports in place, the potential of the people we support is limitless.

Thank you for helping them live their very best lives.

Through your generous gifts, we raised \$473,760 or 59% over our fundraising goal this past year.

**THANK
YOU!**

Your generosity has brought tremendous change.

Thanks to the support of donors like you, the people we serve with sensory loss are living their best lives.

Your donations have been pivotal in funding assistive devices that unlock new levels of independence and making crucial renovations for safe and accessible housing. And, you've helped open new supported living homes for those in dire need of housing supports and services.

Devin and the Tremplin Program:

Devin's participation in the Tremplin Program, a blend of supported living and community services, highlights the success of your support. This program emphasizes community involvement during the day while allowing Devin to return to his family home at night. Devin's journey could eventually lead to a full-time supported living home when he's ready.



Maryse's Journey to Independence:

Maryse's transition from Tremplin to a full-time supported living home in Greater Sudbury marks a significant milestone. This relocation has not only brought her closer to her family but has also provided her with a supportive environment to embrace and enjoy newfound independence, because of you.

Water Street Redevelopment Project:

This apartment project in Peterborough, made possible by your donations, addresses a critical need for independent living supports. The creation of fully accessible units ensures those who now live there will be able to age in place, well into the future.



Thank You!

Your kindness has brought real change. With you, we're building a strong foundation for a future where everyone feels included and supported.

Three Pillars to Change Lives

Accessible Housing Fund

DeafBlind Ontario Services' supported living programs provide accessible, barrier-free, affordable housing, and access to supports 24/7. Our locations are specially designed to support the unique needs of individuals with sensory loss, making a house into a home.

Increasing prices of housing and new construction impact our ability to build new or renovate homes to be fully accessible. Housing that makes a difference in the lives of the people we support and encourages independent living for those with sensory loss and physical challenges.

Investments in this area are critical to ensuring we can renovate, repair, purchase, rent, and construct new homes in more communities across Ontario as demand grows. And reduce mortgage debt to ensure more funds can be directed towards specialized service.

Specialized Equipment Fund

Specialized equipment — such as elevators, ramps, assistive communication devices, therapeutic bathtubs, and more — is crucial to empowering the people we serve with mobility, movement, and community engagement.

An investment in ongoing equipment needs will play a vital role in ensuring safety, accessibility, enhanced communication, and access to all areas of their homes.

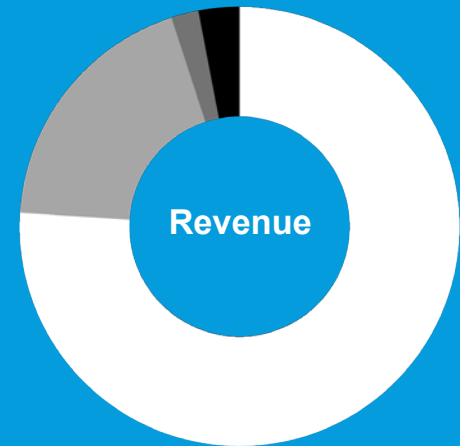
Transportation Fund

Many of the people we serve have additional physical disabilities and medical issues, resulting in transportation, mobility and accessibility challenges. Investments towards the purchase of wheelchair accessible vans provide opportunities to attend meaningful employment or volunteer opportunities, access health care services, and complete everyday errands.

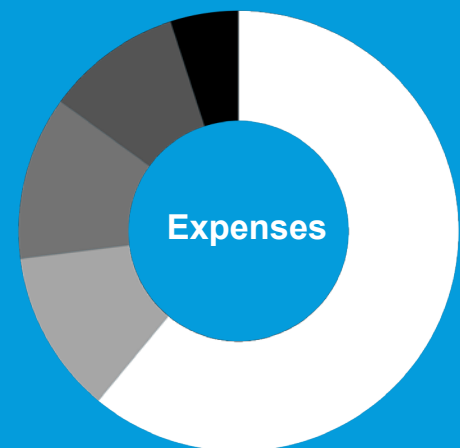
Everyone deserves the opportunity to reach for their greatest potential.

With an investment in DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, you can help more people across our province live the lives they choose, access the power of human connection, and thrive as active, engaged members of their communities.

Our Financials



- 2% Fundraising activities
- 3% Amortization of restricted capital contributions
- 19% Other
- 76% Donations



- 5% Fundraising activities
- 10% Interest
- 12% Amortization of capital assets
- 12% Operating
- 61% Contributions to DeafBlind Ontario Services

The above was summarized from the draft audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2024. The complete audited financial statements are available online deafblindontario.com.



Our Donors

Foundations

Charles Norcliffe Baker and
Thelma Scott Baker
Foundation
R.A. Beamish Foundation
Robert Campeau
Foundation
Canada Gives (Stait Family
Fund)
The Egan Family
Foundation
The Harry E Foster
Charitable Foundation
The Catherine and Maxwell
Meighen Foundation
The Oakville Foundation
for Intellectually
Handicapped People
Victor & Rhoda Shields
Charitable Foundation

Corporations

Arnold Kimmel Limited
BNI
Borden Laden Gervais
Bruce Elevator Service Ltd.
Canada Mortgage and
Housing Corporation,
Affordable Housing Centre
Cordeiro Roofing
ECOH
Gary's Service & Towing
Giant Tiger
HearingLife
IA Financial Group
Jeff Smith Plumbing-Heating
Ltd.
LiUNA LOCAL183 Executive
Board
McLellan Group Contracting
Mississauga's of Scugog

Island First Nation
Needham Promotions
Ontario Power Generation
Oticon
Petro-Canada CareMakers
Foundation
Resident Care Pharmacy
Voll's Contract Flooring
York Region
United Way Waterloo Region

Service Clubs

100 Women Who Care
Central York
East Peterborough Lions
Club
Innisfil Lions Club
Kinsmen Club of Sudbury
Knights of Columbus St.
Joseph's Council No. 6361
Charitable Welfare Trust
Knights of Columbus St.
Justin, Martyr Council 11708
Minnow Lake Lions Club
Quota International of
Peterborough
Rotary Club of Barrie-
Kempfenfelt
Royal Canadian Legion
Ontario Command
Charitable Foundation
Udora Leaskdale Lions Club
Valley East Lions Club

Individuals \$50K+

Watson, John & Josie

Individuals \$15K+

Gabay, David & Diane

Individuals \$1K - 4,999

Barber, Bryant & Jean
Brogan, Natalie & Steve
Coutu, Raymond & Nicole
Fransky, Dennis & Janet
Gagnon, Lise
Hooton, Doug & Barb
Keyes, Karen
Manahan, Susan
Mazza, Martin
Moore, Jennifer
Morris Dadson, Jim &
Anne
Paget, Greg
Perry, Christopher
Ross, Malcolm
Simpson, Lorraine
Spruyt, Roxanna
Veldhuis, Tracey
Watkinson, Brian &
Rebecca
Webster, Bruce & June
Willoughby, Jocelyn
Willsie, Mark & Susan
Wookey, Sue

Individuals \$500 - 999

Barker, Tiffany
Beaumont, Katherine
Beaumont, Martha
Boychuk, Rick
Chui Law, Emily & Arthur
Colterman, Barb
Dash Addi, Osnat
Day, Doug and Phyllis
Downer, Doug
Elling, Gwen
Filippelli, Joe

Our Donors

Flinn, Kim and Tim
Gaylord, Steven
Giesbrecht, Leslie
Gupta, Rajendra & Rashmi
Johnston, Elizabeth
Madho, Karen
McEvoy, Steven
McGuigan, Sharon
Morrison, Liam & Susan
Patterson, Kelly
Peters, Jasmine
Piggott, Annette
Quinn, Josie
Shannon, Julie
Spink, Donald & Patricia
Vanbodegom, Samantha

Individuals \$250 - 499

Needham, David &
Elizabeth
Nevett, Sarah
Parry, Richard
Parsons, Laura
Peters, Kathy
Pullan, Susan
Quinton, Marlene
Reis, Sonia
Rosas Torres, Doris
Schmalz, Michael
Siu, Rosanna
Villeneuve, Ashley
Wall, Candace
Wooding, Linda
Youm, Chun Goon

Friends with Vision

Ajemuta, Deborah
Barkwell, Judy
Beaulieu, Tim
Beaumont, Martha
Becker, Karen
Benton, George & Katie

Benton, Sue
Boychuk, Rick
Brogan, Natalie & Steve
Chisom, John
Coutu, Raymond &
Nicole
Downer, Doug
Edidi, Olabanji
Elling, Gwen
Fatijewski, Fiona
Filippelli, Joe
Flinn, Kim and Tim
Ford, Julia
Fransky, Dennis & Janet
Gagnon, Lise
Gaudet, Suzanne
Gaylord, Steven
Halman, John & Jackie
Harragher, Dorothy
Hooton, Doug & Barb
Kanwal, Kanwaldeep
Kosiw, Jim
Levy, Carl
Littell, Linda
Mackinnon, Brent
McConnell, Maggie
McEvoy, Steven
McGuigan, Sharon
Moore, Jennifer
Morris Dadson, Jim &
Anne
Parr, Jeremy
Peters, Kathy
Pietropaolo, Domenico
Porteous, Judy
Rice Menezes, Sheryl
Rocks, Stephen
Scopazzi, Peter
Somerton Dupuis, Tracy
Webster, Bruce & June
Willoughby, Jocelyn
Willsie, Mark & Susan
Youm, Chun Goon



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

- Helen Keller



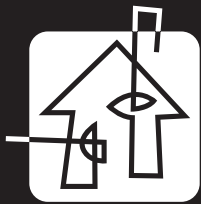
Your support
means **endless**
possibilities.

Vision for **Tomorrow**

As we look towards the future, we will use the fundraising strategy map that was developed in January to guide our way through the next two years. This tool identified priorities and related strategies for action. These priorities include strengthening our board structure and volunteer leadership, focusing on individual giving as a core driver of our long-term fundraising growth, increasing and improving donor stewardship and communications, and investing in a strong infrastructure to grow revenue and measure success.

While our work this past year on a feasibility study for a potential comprehensive campaign indicated we should pause and reflect before moving forward, we will continue to work towards this goal in future years to come. This exercise was helpful in identifying areas we need to grow, where we want to focus our fundraising efforts, and strengthening the capacity of our board of directors.

As a valued donor, we invite you to continue your partnership with us. We are committed to sharing more impact stories of the results of your support so you can see your gifts in action. And sharing our challenges as well, so we can work together to find solutions that support people who are deafblind, as well as those living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing or use non-traditional forms of communication.



DeafBlind
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

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