

**DeafBlind**  
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

Celebrating 5 Years

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025



# What We Do



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## 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.





**We're Celebrating  
5 years of Impact!**

Transforming Lives Since **March 2020**



Building upon the strategic plan, the Board and employees remain dedicated to advancing the following strategic principles and objectives to fulfill the Foundation's mission and achieve its vision.

**We will increase our capacity to manage and grow our housing and accommodation assets.**

We continue our work with the Accommodation & Housing strategy that aligns with both our Growth and Development plans. In September 2024, the Board approved the purchase of a new location in Peterborough to replace a rented location that was no longer serving the ongoing accessibility needs of those living there. We continue to coordinate our priorities with this strategy and complete ongoing reviews of current housing and identification of future needs.

**We will increase our capacity to raise funds.**

Guided by our 2023 Blue Sky Philanthropy Fundraising Assessment and Recommendations report, we continue to execute, evaluate, and revise our long-term revenue strategy, including increasing Board fundraising capacity, managing volunteer and donor relationships, and monitoring community and organizational linkages. This ongoing review of our strategy map is crucial to these efforts, as is enhancing our Media Relations Strategy to reflect our impact and broaden our reach.

**We will ensure continued effective stewardship and accountability.**

Strategies informed by our Fundraising Assessment and Recommendations report highlight the importance of implementing our internal and external communications strategies and Board governance initiatives. We remain focused on effective board recruitment to fill vacancies and strengthen the board's capacity for leadership and strong governance. The Investment Committee continues to provide stewardship of investments to ensure the ongoing financial health and wellbeing of the Foundation.

Finally, the Foundation will adopt DeafBlind Ontario Services' new Core Values and Foundational Principles, ensuring alignment and a strong foundation for our work.





## Letter from the Board Chair & CEO



Gwen Elling  
Board Chair



Roxanna Spruyt  
CEO

Over the past year, DeafBlind Ontario Foundation has continued to transform. We are incredibly grateful to you, our donors, who have partnered with us 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. At the heart of everything we do is a commitment to the individual, ensuring their voice, choices, and experiences guide our actions. Thanks to the generosity of donors like you, we not only met, but surpassed, our fundraising goals.

As we celebrate our growth in impact and team, we also want to express our sincere gratitude to our outgoing Director of Major Gifts, Corporate and Community for her many years of dedicated service and unwavering commitment. Building on her foundational work, we are excited to announce the evolution of this role. This is a strategic move aligning with our Fundraising Assessment and Recommendations report, prepared by Blue Sky Philanthropy in 2023. This transformation will ensure focused engagement with our valued donors, and we are thrilled to welcome our new Manager of Major Gifts who will lead our fundraising efforts to new heights.

This year, the employees of DeafBlind Ontario Services & Foundation defined the foundational principles and values that will guide our work moving forward. Principles such as Person-Centered Dedication and Infinite Possibilities reflect our core belief that every person,

regardless of their ability, possesses infinite possibilities. Our core values – Pursuit of Excellence, Collective Success, Fearless Empowerment, and Accountability in Action – embody our commitment to unlocking that potential and supporting individuals in living their best lives.

Aligned with our strategic principles, objectives, and Fundraising Assessment and Recommendations report, we continued our focus on effective board recruitment to fill vacancies and strengthen the board's capacity for leadership, fundraising and strong governance.

As part of the Foundation's Accommodation and Housing Strategy in September 2024, the Board approved the purchase of a new location in Peterborough to replace a rented location that was no longer serving the ongoing accessibility needs of those living there.

Your generous donations bridge the gap to provide funding for the priority needs of DeafBlind Ontario Services and the individuals it serves. You make possible the access to resources such as specialized equipment, wheelchair accessible vans, accessible housing and assistive devices, as well as recreational and social programs that improve quality of life and offer enriching experiences.

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

## Board Members

Gwen Elling – Chair  
Martha Beaumont  
Jim Dadson  
Stacy Hushion  
Candace Kingyens

Sharon McGuigan  
Jennifer Moore  
Saide Sayah  
Jocelyn Willoughby



## Ontario Volunteer Service Awards

5 years - Jennifer Moore

20 years - Martha Beaumont





## Lance: Finding Connection and Independence

Lance's life has been shaped by extraordinary challenges. Born with 40% vision, he lost his sight completely after a series of operations caused by complications from having had Rubella. Lance had his first eye surgery at just 9 months old. Today, at 45 years old, Lance is deafblind, a condition that profoundly impacts his ability to communicate and connect with the world. He has also developed diabetes, which affects his mobility and requires him to use a wheelchair.

At 21 years old, Lance moved into a DeafBlind Ontario Services supported living home, where

he began receiving 24/7 personalized support. Professional intervenors, who act as a bridge between the person who is deafblind and the world around them, provide Lance with the visual and auditory information he needs to navigate his environment. This support has been vital in building his independence and creating meaningful social connections.

DeafBlind Ontario Services, one of the largest service providers in Ontario for people with sensory loss, has been instrumental in Lance's journey, providing tailored services to meet his unique needs, language, and goals.



Steven, Lance's father, played an important role in shaping the services his son benefits from today. As one of the founding members of DeafBlind Ontario Services, Steven and a group of dedicated parents came together to address the lack of resources available for individuals aging out of the school system when they reached the age of 21. Their advocacy efforts led to the creation of housing and support systems that have since transformed countless lives, including Lance's.

DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, established on March 31, 2020, continues to build on these advocacy efforts, raising funds to sustain the highest priority needs of individuals with sensory loss. The Foundation's commitment to accessible housing, assistive devices, and transportation solutions empowers individuals like Lance to live more independently and confidently.

Steven describes his son Lance as someone who truly enjoys life, "He loves being outdoors, feeling the wind on his face, and even in cold weather, he refuses to wear hats or gloves!" Steven laughs as he shares, "When taking a drive in the van, Lance likes to put the window down and wave his hand outside, which makes people think he's waving at them." Steven also shared that

despite Lance's limited hearing, music is a source of comfort for him, and he enjoys the connection that sounds bring when he wears his headphones.

Friendships have played a special role in Lance's life. Two classmates from his time at W. Ross MacDonald School, and who happened to live at the same supported living home, understood Lance's needs. Steven explains, "They often took his hand to guide him to the van during outings, knowing that Lance could not see."

Initially, Lance used hand-over-hand sign language, a form of tactile sign language. Over time and through reinforcement of signs followed by an action, Lance's understanding

of sign language has grown. His father recalls the moment Lance learned to sign words like "drink," an important milestone that allowed him to express his needs effectively.

With the tailored support Lance receives, he has developed greater independence, embraced meaningful connections, and finds joy in daily life. Steven shares, "Lance loves coming home to see me, but the life he's built and the sense of belonging he feels in his own home make it a place where he truly thrives."

**"The sense of belonging he feels in his own home makes it a place where he truly thrives."**

**Steven**





# Needham Promotions: A Corporate Champion



For Ashleigh Eldridge, giving back is a big part of her life and business. As the owner and driving force behind Needham Promotions, Ashleigh has been a committed supporter of DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, demonstrating how local businesses can make a meaningful impact in their communities.

When asked what inspired her to support the Foundation, Ashleigh explained, “Part of any meaningful life and successful business is giving back. DeafBlind Ontario Services has also been very supportive of my business, and in return, I choose their Foundation to support through volunteer hours, sponsorships, and donations.” This mutual support has created a thriving partnership.

Supporting DeafBlind Ontario Foundation holds special significance for Ashleigh. As she points out, “The Foundation is local in my community and directly positively impacts the people they serve and their quality of life. They help people lead fulfilling lives.”

Her commitment is both professional and personal, driven by a deep empathy for those the Foundation supports. “It’s hard to imagine the loss of one’s senses, and the need for support is tremendous,” she adds. By raising funds to address priority needs such as specialized equipment, assistive devices, and accessible housing, the Foundation ensures individuals receive the resources necessary for a better quality of life.

Ashleigh’s involvement extends beyond financial contributions. For many years, she helped plan and promote DeafBlind Ontario Foundation’s in-person

fundraising events which offered participants the opportunity to gain a deeper appreciation of the people served 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. “I have some amazing memories from those events,” Ashleigh recalls.

One particularly poignant memory involves Ashleigh’s aunt, who attended a historic fundraising event called Indulge Your Senses. “My aunt was visiting from England and was able to join us. She was genuinely touched by the impact that DeafBlind Ontario Foundation has with the people they serve, and she had an amazingly fun night. My aunt recently passed away, and in her last few months, she often mentioned how much that experience meant to her,” Ashleigh shares.

Ashleigh’s dedication was also evident during the Come to Your Senses challenge, a pledge-based fundraising event. She participated in five back-to-back gym classes in one day, raising funds and awareness through social media. Ashleigh was pleasantly surprised that she inspired donations from people she had never met! The experience highlighted how personal passion can drive meaningful action and create community connections.

Reflecting on her partnership with the Foundation, Ashleigh notes, “When working with DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, you step up your game to meet their professionalism and enthusiasm. They are wonderful people who are a pleasure to work with. It’s a true partnership where both parties benefit.”

Ashleigh’s message to other businesses is clear: “Get involved! DeafBlind Ontario Foundation is a deserving local charity making a real difference in people’s lives. Your volunteerism and financial donations will be noticed and appreciated while having a great impact on the lives of people served.”





**“Get involved! DeafBlind Ontario Foundation is a deserving local charity making a real difference in people’s lives.” - Ashleigh, Needham Promotions**





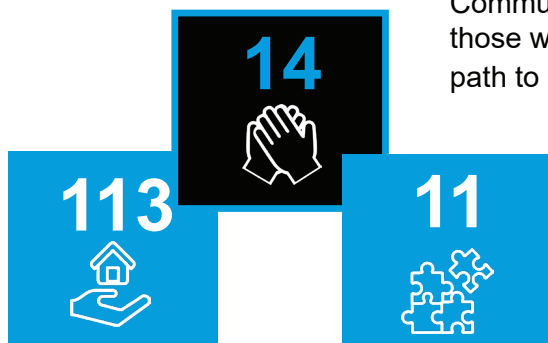
# A Year of **Impact** 2024-2025



Over the past 5 fiscal years, the Foundation's impact, made possible by your support, has translated into significant achievements.

## **Transforming Lives Since March 2020**

### 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.

**113** people who receive specialized services in supported living homes and Tremplin programs (and our waitlist is ever-growing).

**14** individuals who receive specialized expertise and services through a DeafBlind Ontario Services partnership with their supporting agency.

**11** adults in the supported independent living program.

Your support is crucial in enabling DeafBlind Ontario Services to provide essential resources, demonstrating our Person-Centered Dedication through safe and enriching supportive living homes and community support services. This ensures that individuals who are deafblind and those with developmental disabilities who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or use non-traditional communication, receive support that is as unique as they are, honoring their voices, choices and experiences.

Because of you, the individuals we serve are empowered to live their best lives, communicating in their preferred mode of communication or language. Your dedication directly contributes to maximizing their mobility, independence, and safety in their homes.

**The support you provide unlocks infinite possibilities for the people we serve. Thank you for making a profound difference in their lives.**

Through your generous gifts, we raised \$724,859 this past year.  
**Thank you!**



# Together, we are creating a future full of possibilities.

Thanks to your generosity, incredible change is happening for the people we serve with sensory loss. Your support has transformed lives by providing funds for assistive devices that empower independence, wheelchair-accessible vans to strengthen community connections, and safe, accessible supported living homes for those who need them most. With your continued partnership, we can build a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

## Welcome Meghan!

Thanks to your generous support, Meghan, an 18-year-old who is deafblind and has cerebral palsy, has taken a significant step toward independence.

Meghan communicates using a tablet and nods in response to questions—skills she continues to develop with the help of programs made possible by you.

Meghan joined the Tremplin program in Sudbury, a blend of supported living and community services, where she now receives tailored support to thrive in her daily life. Your contributions ensure that individuals like Meghan have access to opportunities that empower them to achieve their full potential.



## A Changed Life

Keith, who is Deaf and has a developmental disability, is able to thrive in DeafBlind Ontario Services' Supported Independent Living (SIL) Program. This program provides the tailored assistance Keith needs to live semi-independently with minimal support, while remaining deeply connected to his community.

With the help of his Communication Support Professionals (CSPs), Keith enjoys an active and fulfilling life. He participates in social events, explores museums, and expresses himself through art. Keith's passion for American Sign Language (ASL) drives him to teach others and raise awareness, advocating for the Deaf community. Your support helps individuals like Keith lead independent lives filled with connection, creativity, and purpose. Thank you for making this possible.

## Building a Home and Building Independence.

Everyone deserves a place to feel safe. With housing costs and construction expenses continuing to rise, your generosity is more important than ever. Your support has made it possible for us to take another critical step toward ensuring accessible housing for people with sensory loss and physical challenges. Through the Accessible Housing Fund, we are addressing the growing need for safe, affordable, and accessible housing tailored to the unique needs of those we support.

Thanks to your generosity, our latest residential project in Peterborough is becoming a reality. The purchase of this home and the renovations currently underway will transform it into a welcoming space. Once completed, the home will provide safe, accessible, and comfortable living for four individuals.



**Thank You!** Your support is essential for empowering the people we serve to live with dignity, independence, and a sense of belonging. Together, we create opportunities that transform lives.



# Three Pillars to Change Lives

## Accessible Housing Fund – Foundational Support for Independence

Safe, affordable, and barrier-free housing is essential for independence and well-being for people with sensory loss. DeafBlind Ontario Services’ supported living programs offer more than a place to live — they create spaces where individuals thrive with 24/7 support tailored to their needs.

Rising housing and construction costs affect our ability to expand and maintain these specialized homes. Your investment helps us renovate and repair aging infrastructure, build and purchase fully accessible homes, reach more communities across Ontario, and reduce mortgage debt — freeing funds for essential services. Accessible housing is the first step toward a life of independence and connection.

## Specialized Equipment Fund – Enhancing Daily Life and Safety

Specialized equipment supports communication, mobility, and independence. From therapeutic bathtubs and ramps to assistive devices and home elevators, this equipment bridges the gap between isolation and engagement.

Gifts to this fund improve home safety, accessibility, communication, and dignity in daily life. With the right tools, individuals can fully participate in their homes and communities.

## Highest Priority Needs — Where Help is Needed Most

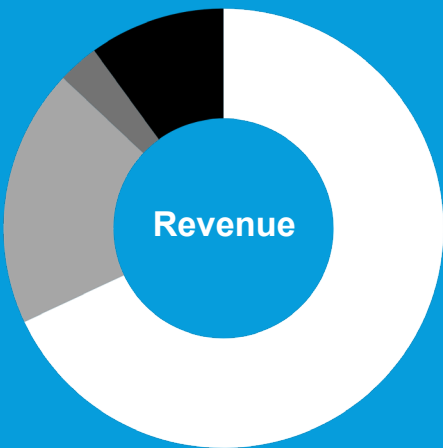
Sometimes the greatest impact comes from responding quickly and flexibly to our most urgent needs. A gift to our Highest Priority Needs gives us the ability to direct support where it is needed most — whether that’s responding to emergencies, covering critical gaps in funding, or accelerating a new program or initiative that meets the evolving needs of the people we support.

These unrestricted gifts allow us to be nimble and proactive, ensuring that no opportunity to improve lives is missed simply because funding isn’t yet in place.

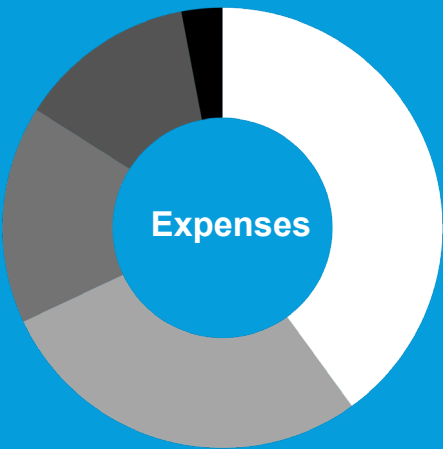
## Highest Priority Needs — Where Help is Needed Most

When you invest in the DeafBlind Ontario Foundation, you help more people live the lives they choose — connected, confident, and included in the communities they call home.

# Our Financials



- 3% Amortization of restricted capital contributions
- 10% Fundraising activities
- 19% Other
- 68% Donations



- 3% Fundraising activities
- 13% Interest & Other
- 16% Amortization of capital assets
- 28% Operating
- 40% Contributions to DeafBlind Ontario Services

The above was summarized from the draft audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2025. The complete audited financial statements are available online [deafblindontario.com](https://deafblindontario.com).



# Vision for Tomorrow

As we envision the future, specifically in preparation for our 2027-2030 strategic directions, DeafBlind Ontario Foundation will place a strong emphasis on strengthening our relationships with our valued donors and partners. We will build upon the foundation laid by our current initiatives and the insights gained over the past few years, with a focus on creative and meaningful engagement.

Our efforts will be guided by the foundational principles and values defined by the employees of DeafBlind Ontario Services and DeafBlind Ontario Foundation. These principles and values will continue to shape our approach, ensuring that our efforts are grounded in our core mission and driven by a commitment to ethical and effective practices.

To achieve our goals and prepare for the 2027-2030 strategic plan, we will continue to leverage the recommendations of our fundraising assessment report to strategically focus

our fundraising initiatives and deepen engagement with valued donors and partners. While individual giving remains central, we will also diversify funding streams by seeking new grants, developing corporate and community partnerships, and exploring innovative funding models while demonstrating the impact of contributions through regular updates.

A major focus over the next year will include strengthening our capacity and continuing to address the future housing needs of those we support by providing safe, accessible, and affordable living spaces.

We invite our valued donors and partners to continue their partnership with DeafBlind Ontario Foundation. Your support is essential to our success, and we are committed to keeping you informed, involved, and inspired by the work we do together as we continue transforming

lives, empowering individuals, and building a more inclusive future.







## Our Donors

### Foundations

Canada Gives (Stait Family Fund)  
 Charles Norcliffe Baker and Thelma Scott Baker  
 Foundation  
 Hodgson Family Foundation  
 London Health Sciences Centre Foundation  
 Luke Four Foundation  
 Peterborough Foundation  
 R.A. Beamish Foundation  
 Sifton Family Foundation  
 The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
 The Harry E Foster Charitable Foundation  
 The Oakes Foundation  
 The Oakville Foundation for Intellectually  
 Handicapped People  
 The Robert Campeau Family Foundation  
 The Victor & Rhoda Shields Charitable Foundation  
 United Way Waterloo Region  
 Unity Values Foundation

Aviva Canada  
 BNI Business Elite  
 Conseil scolaire catholique Nouvelon  
 Crate Designs Furniture  
 Export Development Canada  
 Gary's Service & Towing  
 Jeff Smith Plumbing-Heating Ltd.  
 Magna International  
 Market Brewing Company  
 Morrison CPA Professional Corporation  
 National Mah Jongg League Inc.  
 Needham Promotions Inc.  
 Neighbourhood Network  
 Pam Bechard, Royal LePage RCR Realty  
 Resident Care Pharmacy  
 River Rock Laundry Inc.  
 Silver Linings Healthcare  
 Snyder Construction  
 The Bargains Group

### Corporations

### Service Clubs

100 Women Who Care Ottawa  
 Dorchester and District Lions Club  
 Hyde Park & District Lions Club  
 Innisfil Lions Club  
 Kinsmen Club of Sudbury  
 Lambeth Lions Club

Lions Club of Russell  
 Lions Homes for Deaf People  
 London Central Lions Club  
 London East Lions Club  
 Mountain Township & District Lions  
 Club

The Royal Canadian Legion Ontario  
 Command Charitable Foundation  
 Thorndale Lions Club  
 Udora Leaskdale Lions Club  
 Valley East Lions Club

### Individuals \$50K+

Watson, John & Josie

Morris-Dadson, Jim & Anne  
 Molnar, Ken & Susan

### Individuals \$5K+



## Individuals \$1K - \$4,999

Barber, Bryant & Jean  
 Beaumont, Martha  
 Brogan, Natalie & Steve  
 Bylykbashi, Kim  
 Coutu, Raymond & Nicole  
 Dash Addi, Osnat  
 Elling, Gwen  
 Filippelli, Joe  
 Fransky, Dennis & Janet  
 Gagnon, Lise  
 Giesbrecht, Leslie  
 Heier-Siemens, Kathryn  
 Hooton, Doug & Barb  
 Hushion, Stacy  
 Keyes, Karen  
 McGuigan, Sharon

Momtahan, Parham & Kathy  
 Moore, Jennifer  
 Paget, Greg  
 Simpson, Lorraine  
 Spruyt, Roxanna  
 Vanbodegom, Samantha  
 Veldhuis, Tracey  
 Watkinson, Brian & Rebecca  
 Webster, Bruce & June  
 Willoughby, Jocelyn  
 Willsie, Mark & Susan  
 Wookey, Sue

## Individuals \$500 - \$999

Austrom, Brian  
 Barker, Tiffany  
 Barkwell, Judy  
 Beaumont, Katherine  
 Boychuk, Rick  
 Brouillet, Terry & Danielle  
 Chiu, Emily & Arthur Law  
 Downer, Doug  
 Downey, Barb  
 Flinn, Kim and Tim  
 Fuglsang, Sandra  
 Gaylord, Steven  
 Madho, Karen

Malott, David & Trixie Kretschmer  
 McEvoy, Steven  
 Merrifield, Theresa  
 Morrison, Liam & Susan  
 Patterson, Kelly  
 Peters, Kathy  
 Pigeon-Way, Crystal  
 Piggott, Annette  
 Quinn, Josie  
 Rice Menezes, Sheryl  
 Shannon, Julie  
 Villeneuve, Ashley  
 Violette, Kassandra

## Individuals \$250 - \$499

Ajemuta, Deborah  
 Albrecht, Amanda  
 Allford, Shannon  
 Arasaratnam, Ahalya  
 Eldridge, Ashleigh  
 Avis, Janet  
 Becker, Ewald and Karen  
 Benton, Sue  
 Bierhals, Andrea  
 Brewster, Lori  
 Bright, Cheryl  
 Crombie, Audrey  
 Cruz, Fernando  
 Daoust, Kevin  
 Dunn McIntyre, Chelsea  
 Edidi, Olabanji

Fatijewski, Fiona  
 Halman, John & Jackie  
 Heck, Carl & Joyce  
 Holden, Amy  
 Katarni, Aakanksha  
 Knox, Doug & Eileen  
 Kosiw, Jim  
 Kuchma, Rhonda  
 Levy, Carl  
 Littell, Linda  
 Lockrey, Pat  
 Mackinnon, Brent  
 Manahan, Susan  
 McConnell, Maggie  
 Mesko, Amanda  
 Nevett, Sarah

Parry, Richard  
 Parsons, Laura  
 Quinton, Marlene  
 Reid, Amber  
 Shaw, Shanon  
 Silwal, Helen  
 Siu, Rosanna  
 Stashans, Kristina  
 Stevenson, Amy  
 Tannock, Kathryn  
 Udovenko, Nataliya  
 Urquhart, Ian  
 Wall, Candace  
 Youm, Chun Goon  
 Mackinnon, Brent

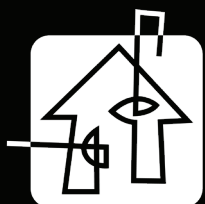
## Friends With Vision Monthly Giving Program

Ajemuta, Deborah  
 Barkwell, Judy  
 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  
 Heier-Siemens, Kathryn  
 Hooton, Doug & Barb  
 Katarni, Aakanksha  
 Kosiw, Jim  
 Levy, Carl  
 Littell, Linda  
 Mackinnon, Brent  
 Malott, David & Trixie Kretschmer  
 McConnell, Maggie  
 McEvoy, Steven

McGuigan, Sharon  
 Moore, Jennifer  
 Morris-Dadson, Jim & Anne  
 Pandit, Manan  
 Parr, Jeremy  
 Peters, Kathy  
 Pietropaolo, Domenico  
 Porteous, Judy  
 Rice Menezes, Sheryl  
 Scopazzi, Peter  
 Somerton Dupuis, Tracy  
 Webster, Bruce & June  
 Willoughby, Jocelyn  
 Willsie, Mark & Susan  
 Youm, Chun Goon





**DeafBlind**  
ONTARIO FOUNDATION

17665 Leslie Street, Unit 15  
Newmarket, ON L3Y 3E3

1.855.340.DBOS (3267)  
[deafblindontario.com](http://deafblindontario.com)

