

# vancouver foundation

Community Inspired Giving  
2024 | Volume 17

HOW STAR  
SOCCER PLAYER

## Christine Sinclair

IS USING  
PHILANTHROPY  
TO FIGHT  
GENDER INEQUITY

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Looking back on  
**eight decades** of  
community-driven  
impact

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Funding **Indigenous  
land reclamation** and  
self-determination

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# Welcome to the 2024 edition of *Vancouver Foundation Magazine*.

Last year, Vancouver Foundation turned 80, and we took some time to reflect on our history. We did this to better understand the throughlines of our story and all the ways they guide and shape our future. These stories serve more than a sense of nostalgia — they serve as a powerful reminder of how learning from our past can inspire efforts to create a better tomorrow.

In this issue, we highlight the donors and community partners who shaped our journey and continue to drive us forward. As we explore the theme “The Power of the Past Unlocking the Future,” we celebrate the stories of generosity, innovation and transformation that reflect the profound impact our history can have on building a brighter tomorrow.

Since our founding in 1943, Vancouver Foundation’s mission is increasingly rooted in understanding and learning. Today, we work closely with community members to ensure our efforts remain relevant and address their needs.

Drawing on the gifts and the lessons of the past, we are dedicated to driving meaningful and lasting change. We deeply appreciate the steadfast support of our community and the unwavering commitment of our partners, whose invaluable contributions make this vision possible.

We invite you to join us in reflecting on these powerful stories and to be inspired by the countless ways our collective history can unlock new opportunities for progress.

Thank you for being a vital part of this journey. Your commitment fuels our shared mission. And together, we are paving the way for a future filled with hope and promise.

Sincerely,

**Kevin McCort**  
*President & CEO*

**Susan Grossman**  
*Chair, Board of Directors*



## Land Acknowledgement

*Illustration by OVI MAILHOT*

Vancouver Foundation works on the lands of Indigenous nations throughout colonial British Columbia.

Our office is located on the unceded, ancestral and traditional territories of the x<sup>w</sup>məθk<sup>w</sup>əyəm (Musqueam), Sḵwəwú7mesh (Squamish) and Selíłwítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. We are constantly learning and growing to support the advancement of the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and formalized our commitment to this by signing the Philanthropic Community’s Declaration of Action.



# vancouver foundation

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## ON THE COVER:

Star soccer player Christine Sinclair has scored more than 190 international goals, an all-time record of any soccer player. But she's leaving a legacy that's more than a number. Page 13. Photograph by Rachel Pick.

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**Reclaiming Rights**

TOP TO BOTTOM: PHOTOGRAPHS © JAMIE POH, KENNY ZHONG; ILLUSTRATIONS © INMA HORTAS, RAY DAK LAM, ALIYA GHARE



# In the Big Leagues

By NATHAN CADDELL

Illustration by GLUEKIT

**IN 2018, THE** BC Sports Hall of Fame became home to the world's largest Indigenous sport gallery. Putting reconciliation into action is the 139 square meter (1,500 square foot) Indigenous Sport Gallery that honours some of the greatest athletes and sporting accomplishments across the country.

The gallery recently became the first part of the BC Sports Hall of Fame to go digital. It can now be accessed through a virtual tour of the Indigenous Sport Gallery, which includes online-only video pro-

Athletes featured in the Indigenous Sport Gallery include:  
**TOP ROW:**  
 Gino Odjick, Angela Chalmers, Spencer O'Brien, Carey Price, Justina Di Stasio.  
**BOTTOM ROW:**  
 Phil Mack, Tom Longboat.

files and artifacts. Familiar names featured in the gallery include legendary Onondaga marathoner Tom Longboat, Dakota Olympian runner Angela Chalmers and Phil Mack, a highly decorated rugby sevens player from the Toquaht Nation.

The Indigenous Sport Gallery not only celebrates the achievements of Indigenous athletes but also addresses some of the more challenging aspects of history. For example, one gallery wall details how participating in sports provided a rare positive experience for some children forced to attend residential schools. By taking a holistic view, the gallery honours Indigenous accomplishments and historical realities to create a deeper appreciation of sports.

## Gallery a bid for truth and reconciliation

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission issued 94 Calls to Action — 94 opportunities to advance reconciliation. One action specifically calls on organizations celebrating Canadian accomplishments in sports “to provide public education that tells the national story of Aboriginal athletes in history.”



THIS COLUMN: Exhibits around the Indigenous Sport Gallery, which spans the size of about three two-car garages.

This prompted the BC Sports Hall of Fame to temporarily close the gallery and reimagine it in service of this call to action.

“The city, the province and ISPARC (the Indigenous Sport, Physical Activity & Recreation Council) were interested in expanding it because, at the time, we were one of the only sports museums in Canada recognizing Indigenous nations’ stories,” said Michelle Kitchen, CEO of the BC Sports Hall of Fame.

### Connecting Indigenous people with Indigenous history

Making the exhibits accessible to more Indigenous people and communities is one of the gallery’s fundraising focuses. Its 100 Ravens campaign fundraises for an educational outreach program, which has given more than 67,000 Indigenous youth visitors the opportunity to see themselves represented in sports and connect with an aspect of their history.

“It is more than just a collection of exhibits,” said Ashley Tremblay, a Cree Métis woman and sports fan. “Representation in these spaces matters. It allows us to connect to our heritage from a strengths-based lens. It provides our youth with role models who have excelled despite significant challenges. It’s a testament to our strength and resilience, and it’s a powerful tool for education and reconciliation.”

The new virtual tour makes it even easier for people to experience the gallery without visiting in person, especially those living in remote communities. Collectively, the Indigenous Sport Gallery has become a vital educational resource for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

### Sustained by a forever fund

The Indigenous Sport Gallery is here to stay, and is in part sustained by an endowment fund. And because this fund is held at Vancouver Foundation, it will offer long-term revenue for the preservation of Indigenous sport history.

“For 80 years, Vancouver Foundation has partnered with hundreds of charities to create sustainable income streams, ensuring their long-term financial health and ability to fulfill their missions,” said Moses Mukasa, a director of donor services at Vancouver Foundation. “Initiatives like the Indigenous Sport Gallery represent the growing appetite for creating equity and inclusion in our communities, and it makes our team proud to be a part of their success.”

# Preserving a Brilliant Legacy

By PEGGY LAM

Photograph by JAMIE POH

**LAST YEAR, WHEN** Victor Kusaka watched the movie *Oppenheimer*, he knew he wanted to shed light on the legacy of his uncle, Shuichi Kusaka. Shuichi was an accomplished theoretical physicist at the forefront of the nuclear age. He was an authority on cosmic ray research and high energy subatomic particles, and had studied under J. Robert Oppenheimer himself.

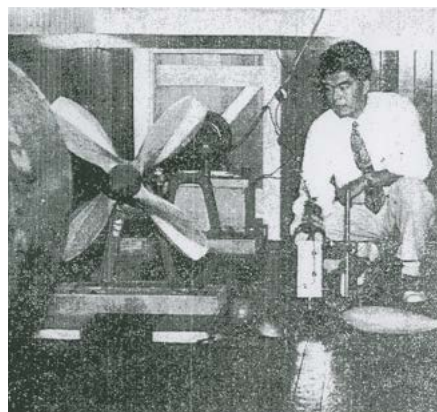
But despite his achievements, little is known about his story. This year, to honour his uncle's legacy and bring it into the spotlight, Victor and his seven siblings started the Kusaka & Iwata Family Fund at Vancouver Foundation. The fund will support the library and annual science fair at Britannia Secondary School — Shuichi's alma mater. "He's like a beacon of hope not only for his family, but also for others to reach their potential," said Victor. "His life story was too amazing to be left in the dustpan."

## **Gifted physicist taught at Princeton**

Shuichi studied math and physics at UBC, graduating in 1937 with honours. Within the same year, he became the first Japanese person to win a Governor General's Gold Medal in Canada. He



OPPOSITE PAGE: Victor Kusaka holds a portrait of his uncle and uncle's sister, Shuichi and Toyo Kusaka. Victor is in the library of Britannia Secondary School, where both Victor and Shuichi attended high school.



LEFT: Shuichi's UBC graduation photo from 1937.

TOP: Shuichi built this model wind tunnel at Smith College in Massachusetts, where he taught.

BOTTOM: Shuichi Kusaka is credited for editing and revising Albert Einstein's biography.

then completed his master of science at MIT and PhD at the University of California Berkeley under J. Robert Oppenheimer, who became known as "the father of the atomic bomb."

Arranged on a travelling fellowship by Oppenheimer, Shuichi pursued postdoctoral studies at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, New Jersey. Here, he met Albert Einstein, who asked Shuichi to revise and edit his biography. Of course, Shuichi was thrilled to help.

In 1945, Shuichi joined the U.S. Army as a path to American citizenship. He was honourably discharged several months later after being recruited by Princeton University's top-ranking physicists. He accepted a teaching position there and was soon promoted to assistant professor, while winning two prestigious doctoral fellowships.

### Overcoming discrimination and racism

Despite his academic contributions, Shuichi faced discrimination because of his Japanese heritage. During the Second World War, the U.S. government saw Japanese Americans as a threat and forcibly

removed them from their homes and kept in confinement centres.

Despite this, Shuichi was brought on in 1943 to teach at Smith College, a private women's college in Northampton, Massachusetts. His appointment prompted a day of protests and 200 workers threatened to strike. "He got flak because here was a Japanese alien teaching their daughters and they did not like that. They wanted him removed," said Victor. The college's president supported Shuichi to keep teaching, but he needed to be accompanied on campus for safety. "I'm beginning to realize how difficult were the obstacles he had to overcome... he must've been feeling quite isolated and alone at times."

### Leaving behind a legacy

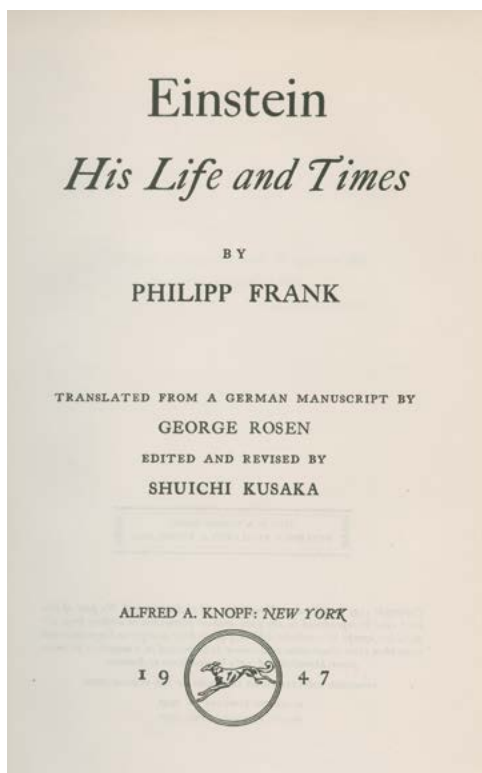
On August 31, 1947, Shuichi drowned while swimming at Beach Haven in New Jersey at age 31, marking the end of a young life and promising career.

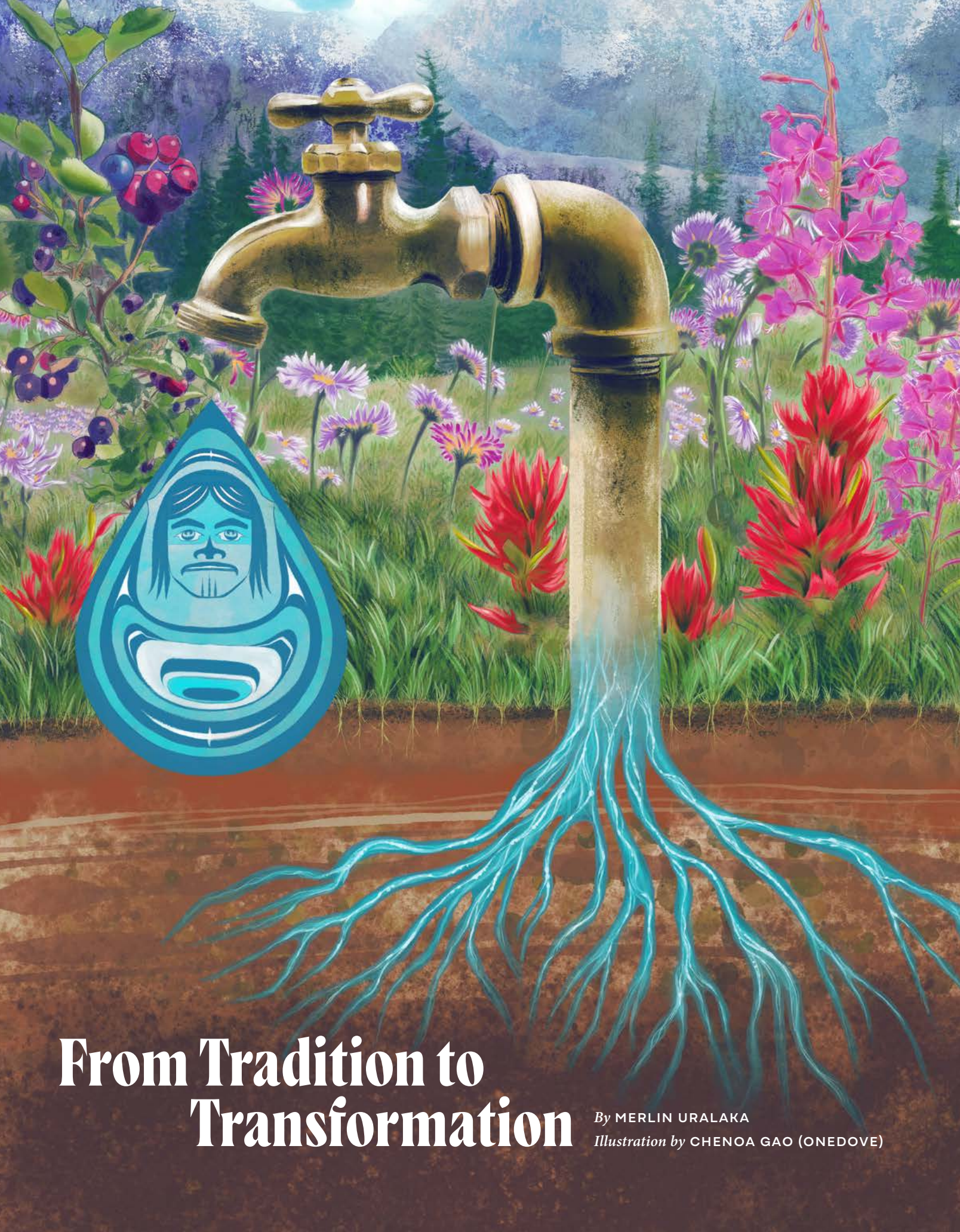
To remember Shuichi, Princeton's department of physics, along with Oppenheimer and Einstein, established a memorial fund in his name. It drew tremendous contributions from the Japanese community in Vancouver and across Canada. The scholarship continues to award students with outstanding accomplishments in physics.

Within his family, Shuichi is remembered as "the inspiration," prompting them to do their best and spend their time wisely, Victor said. "He was a beacon. He demonstrated diligence, patience, modesty, trustworthiness and courage during the most challenging times."

Victor and his family hope that by preserving Shuichi's legacy, they will inspire other young students to pursue meaningful careers in science and technology. "Perhaps this fund will enable a student from Britannia to become a Kusaka prize winner for one of Princeton University's scholarships," said Victor. "That would be amazing."

Victor said because their family witnessed nuclear annihilation during the Second World War, the Kusaka & Iwata Family Fund will always stand for a peaceful world, and one that is free of nuclear weapons. ∞





# From Tradition to Transformation

By MERLIN URALAKA

Illustration by CHENOA GAO (ONEDOVE)



**THE MADGE HOGARTH FOUNDATION** has supported Northern Canadian residents and communities for nearly half a century. Madge Hogarth was a woman of faith, and turned her generosity towards members of Northern church congregations during her lifetime.

The foundation recently reimagined its work, together with its community. Today, its new mission is to bring safe, clean drinking water to Indigenous communities in the north. More than 600 Indigenous communities in Canada report being without access to safe, clean drinking water today. “The vision is to support [the North] in meaningful ways,” said Jane Hogarth, Madge Hogarth’s granddaughter. “As we looked at the current challenges, it became clear that addressing water insecurity would have a profound impact. It aligns with our mission of enhancing the lives of those in isolated regions.”

#### Reimagining with community

Now that Madge has passed away, Jane Hogarth leads the foundation with a board of directors. The team is keen to honour Madge’s legacy of faith and generosity, and saw an opportunity to make a big impact in Northern communities.

The Madge Hogarth Foundation is set up as a donor-advised fund at Vancouver Foundation. This arrangement frees up Jane and the team to focus on strategy and making an impact, as it offloads much of the red tape, like issuing tax receipts and managing the investment, to Vancouver Foundation.

One of the Madge Hogarth Foundation team’s greatest influences in imagining how to address to injustices Indigenous communities faced was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action. This evolution puts truth and reconciliation into action through attentiveness, acknowledgment and practical changes that respond to the core needs of Indigenous communities.

Making the shift to address water insecurity has been supported by Vancouver Foundation’s expertise in granting and community engagement. “Vancouver Foundation is a groundbreaking organization,” said Jane. “Their support has enabled us to structure our grant-making process and ensured decades of seamlessness and consistency.”

To round out the team with expertise on creating water security, they partnered with **Water First** to carry out their vision. This non-profit works with Indigenous communities to develop ways to manage and maintain their water resources.



**The vision is to support [the North] in meaningful ways.**

— Jane Hogarth, Vancouver Foundation donor



#### Longer-term grants a factor in creating lasting change

The Madge Hogarth Foundation’s shift to addressing water insecurity marks a new chapter in its storied history, one that promises transformative change to the communities it has long served. One more way that Jane’s team has heightened its impact is by adopting evidence-based ways of granting for greater impact.

Research shows that charities can create more transformative outcomes when charities receive multi-year funding, especially when they are entrusted to put the money towards wherever the need is greatest. So, Jane and her team have committed to doing just that, by funding Water First’s work over many years.

“[This model] provides stability and allows organizations to plan and implement long-term solutions, reaching larger groups of people [...] and enables us to support projects that address the root causes of water insecurity, rather than just offering temporary relief,” said Jane. ∞

#### WATER FIRST’S GROWING IMPACT

Water First began in Ontario, but has since brought its education west to Indigenous youth in Squamish Nation, Lower Nicola Indian Band and the Boston Bar Indian Band.

**More than 90 Indigenous communities** have partnered with Water First to solve local water challenges.

**46 Indigenous adults** have graduated from its Drinking Water Internship Program. Many have gone on to work in the water science field or pursue higher studies.

Inspired by Jane and the team at Madge Hogarth Foundation? Start your legacy of giving back at <https://vanfdn.com/start-legacy>

# The POWER of COLLECTIVE GIVING

Community foundations leading the way

By ERIN REDDEKOPP

Illustrations by INMA HORTAS

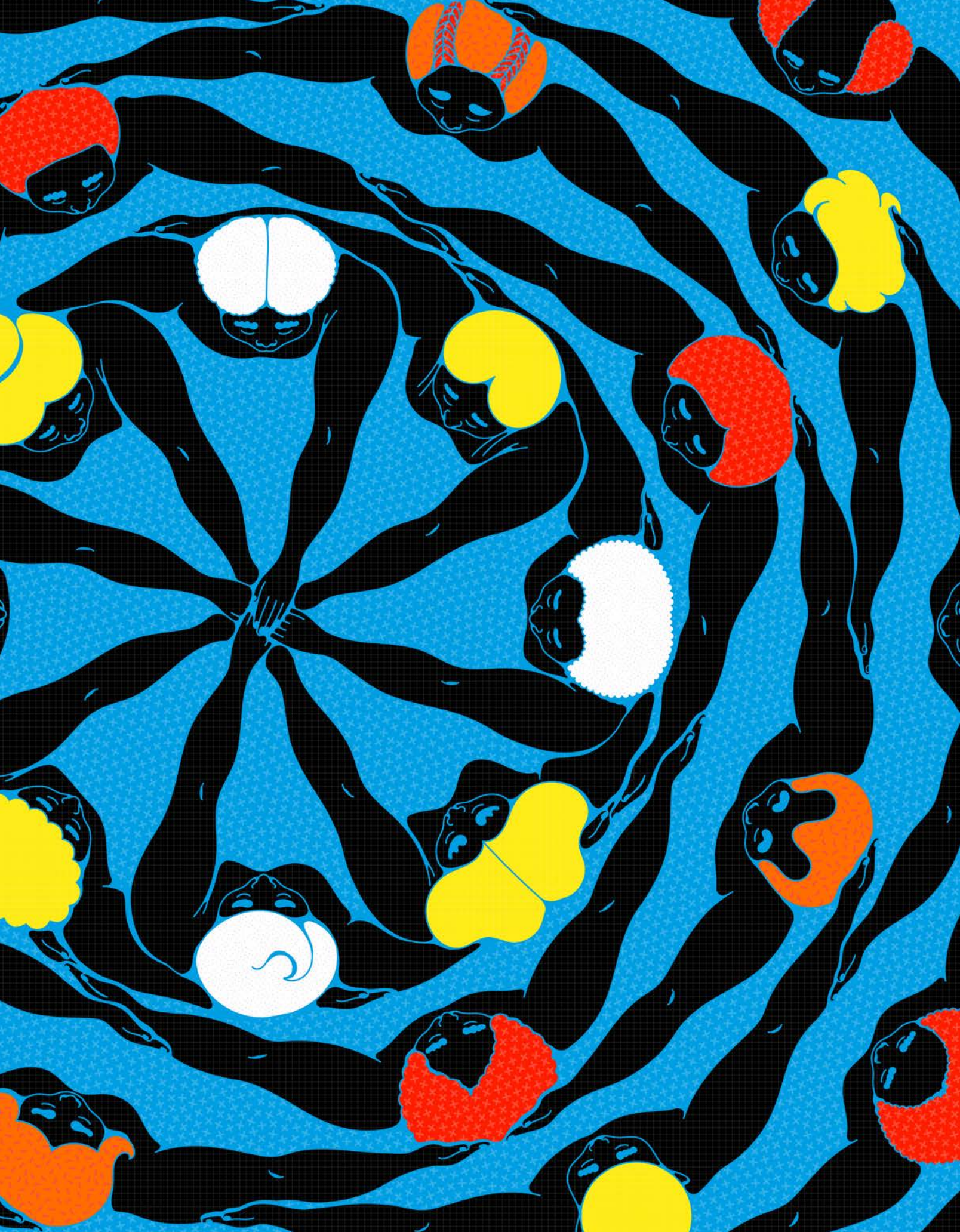
**IN A WORLD WHERE** our individual actions can seem so small compared to the vast challenges communities are facing, collective giving is a way individuals can come together to amplify their impact far beyond what we could achieve on our own. It's a concept that's grown in popularity over the past decade through organizations like GoFundMe and Kickstarter, but the model of collective giving is much older.

Operating on the simple principle that together we can accomplish far more than we can individually, collective giving combines the resources — financial contributions, time, expertise and networks — of diverse groups of people. It fosters collaboration, unity and a shared sense of purpose as people come together to address immediate needs and build sustainable solutions that create lasting change and impact in communities.

At the heart of collective giving are community foundations like Vancouver Foundation that cultivate collaboration to address challenges and develop innovative solutions to the issues facing our communities. Serving as a central hub for charitable giving in a region, community foundations work directly with community advisors who understand community needs to identify where funding is needed most. This allows donors to confidently consolidate their giving into one place.

Deeply rooted in community, these foundations focus on understanding and addressing local issues and charities across various sectors. They play a crucial role in supporting community needs both immediately and in the future by leveraging their deep community expertise and knowledge to connect donors with organizations that align with their interests and ensure funding goes where it's needed most.





The community foundation model dates back to 1914. At the time, philanthropic giving often became “trapped in time.” Many people gifted their estates to support causes close to their heart during their lifetime. But these causes would change as time passed, or cease to exist altogether, rendering the gifts unusable. Frederick H. Goff, a lawyer and then president of the Cleveland Trust Company, created what is widely considered to be the first community foundation, the Cleveland Foundation, as a place to ensure gifts could always be put to use within community.

Vancouver Foundation was born out of the same principles and its origin story reflects the power of collective giving. Ten donors, inspired by the generosity of one woman, came together and accomplished far more than any of them could have on their own.

For the past eight decades, Vancouver Foundation has continued to bring generous supporters together to become part of a larger movement that drives meaningful change. Last year, that generosity broke records, with Vancouver Foundation granting \$142.6 million to 2,496 organizations. “It truly reflects the power of collective giving,” said Craig Hikida, the vice president of donor services at Vancouver Foundation. “Very few people have the financial ability to grant millions of dollars on their own, but when their gift is combined with the contributions of other generous donors, that’s where the magic happens.”

This spirit of collective support was especially evident during the global pandemic, when the urgent need to address community challenges highlighted the profound impact of collective philanthropy. The pandemic underscored the importance of coming together, with community members and organizations uniting to provide emergency relief, support local businesses and address pressing health and social issues.

Seeing the impact of the pandemic on communities and charities, Vancouver Foundation immediately partnered with Vancity, United Way British Columbia and the City of Vancouver to launch the Community Response Fund (CRF) and received an overwhelming response. “I will always remember how quickly the community came together to give,” said Hikida. “As soon as we announced the fund, we had donors wanting to direct their granting dollars to support our COVID response, and we saw an overwhelming response in one-time gifts and new donors; it was truly inspiring.”

Thanks to the generosity of donors and the collective efforts of its volunteer community advisors, staff and partners, Vancouver Foundation mobilized \$19.9 million through the CRF to support more than 500 charities across B.C. This surge in collective giving was not just about financial contributions but also about pooling expertise, volunteer efforts and innovative solutions to navigate the evolving crisis.

This extraordinary community response serves as a powerful testament to the enduring impact of collective action and the pivotal role of community founda-

tions. As Vancouver Foundation continues to build on its legacy of unity and generosity, the lessons learned during the pandemic reinforce the potential and resilience of community philanthropy.

It is because of generous donors and community partners that Vancouver Foundation can move forward in the spirit of collaboration and shared purpose. This will remain essential as communities navigate future challenges and opportunities.

By harnessing the collective power of individuals and organizations, Vancouver Foundation can continue to drive meaningful, lasting change. The success of collective endeavours not only highlights the capacity for extraordinary impact but also sets a precedent for how individuals and communities can come together to address and overcome even the most daunting obstacles. ∞

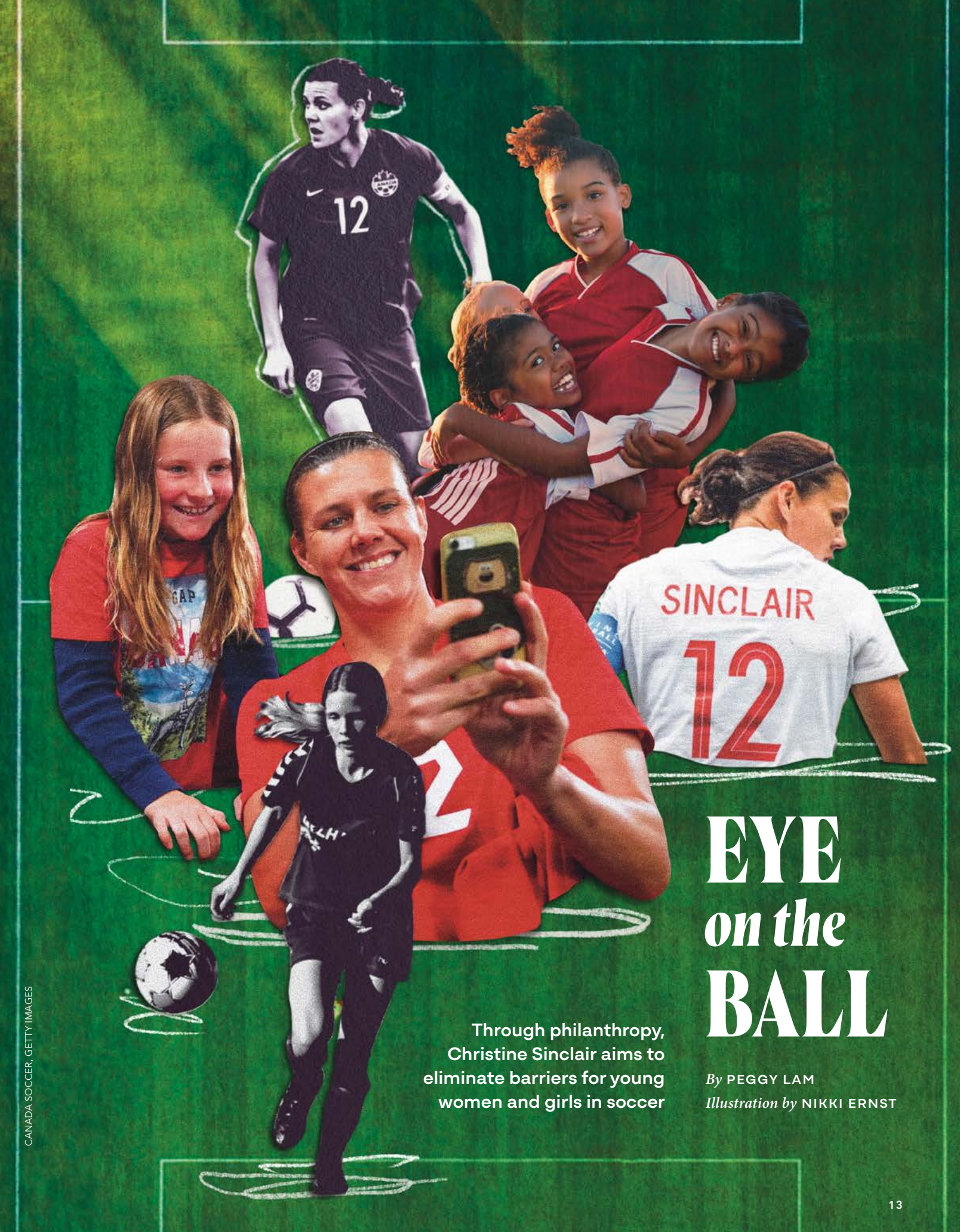
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Very few people have the financial ability to grant millions of dollars on their own, but when their gift is combined with the contributions of other generous donors, **that’s where the magic happens.**

— Craig Hikida, Vancouver Foundation’s vice president, donor services

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# EYE on the BALL

Through philanthropy,  
Christine Sinclair aims to  
eliminate barriers for young  
women and girls in soccer

By PEGGY LAM

Illustration by NIKKI ERNST

# Christine Sinclair is one of Canada's most beloved athletes. The soccer superstar earned that accolade after 20 years of play, having scored more international goals than any other player in the world — a whopping 190, in fact.

But Sinclair isn't just known for her talent and skills on the field. She's widely recognized for her fight for gender equity off the pitch — one that continues, even after retiring from national play last year.

Sinclair wants to eliminate barriers for young women and girls in soccer, so she partnered with Vancouver Foundation to establish the Christine Sinclair Foundation as a donor-advised fund, which runs the Girls with Goals scholarship dedicated to young players who need mentorship and resources to stay in the sport. With Vancouver Foundation's behind-the-scenes support, Sinclair and her team can focus on making an impact.

Sinclair understands the importance of grants and scholarships firsthand. She accepted a scholarship to the University of Portland after completing high school. "It took me through university. The four years I spent at the University of Portland were incredibly formative for my growth as a soccer player and as a person," she said.

## Why Sinclair chose philanthropy

"I started thinking more about my legacy and where I was uniquely positioned to affect change," Sinclair said. "Girls and women have made incredible strides in the last couple of decades, but there are still many obstacles and inequalities."

She started Girls with Goals to help teen girls realize their potential through soccer. "Far too many girls continue to drop out of soccer in their teen years," said Sinclair. "I want to keep as many girls as possible focused on their goals, whatever they might be, and to find ways to support them along the way."

Even Sinclair hadn't always seen herself playing soccer professionally. She found it hard to see her full potential, and it didn't help that women's sports didn't show up much in the news either. "Growing up, I never really thought being a professional athlete was a possibility for a girl until I attended some 1999 Women's World Cup matches," said Sinclair. Decades later, she's now seen as a role model for many athletes — and it's a role she doesn't take lightly.

"I fill [it] proudly along with my peers in professional sport. I'm a firm believer in 'seeing is believing' because of how much it did for me to realize my dreams are possible," she said.

Sinclair said some girls dream of playing professional soccer and representing Canada, while others might want to coach. Some might also use soccer to earn a university scholarship and develop leadership skills.

Whatever their ambitions are, Girls with Goals is designed to support them, she said. And because the Christine Sinclair



TOP: Christine Sinclair engaging with fans.

BOTTOM: Joining the Burnaby Bees was the start to Sinclair's accomplished soccer career. (Courtesy of Christine Sinclair)

OPPOSITE PAGE: Sinclair became the most successful soccer player to ever compete for Canada while playing on Canada Soccer's Women's National Team. (Courtesy of Canada Soccer)



## SINCLAIR'S STATS

6 

Women's World  
Cups played\*

3 

Olympic medals  
won (including  
one gold!)\*

14 

times named  
Player of the  
Year by Canada  
Soccer

### MORE ACCOLADES:

Canada's Walk of  
Fame Inductee

Canada Soccer  
Player of the Decade

Order of B.C.

Order of Canada

\*leading the Canadian  
women's soccer team

Foundation is set up as a donor-advised fund with Vancouver Foundation, she can sustain this support for years to come and pivot as the needs of young women and girls change.

### Pay equity is just the beginning

Many women and girls still face obstacles in soccer, like a lack of women coaches and pay inequity. "The level of compensation for women at the pro level remains a fraction of what men get," said Sinclair, adding that fighting to close the pay gap was one of the biggest obstacles she faced in the sport.


In 2021, the year they won an Olympic gold medal, Canada's women's soccer team discovered they were paid just a fifth of what the men got. Sinclair and her teammates spent years advocating for equal treatment, team funding and pay.

The team's fight included a strike and testimony in parliament. Sinclair spoke before MPs, giving a scathing review of Canada Soccer over its treatment of the women's team. She and her teammates demanded the same World Cup budget as the men's and pushed for explanations as to why their programs were being cut.

At the time, Canada Soccer said its proposed labour deal would pay both teams the same match rate, but it acknowledged that equal pay did not mean equal dollars when it came to team budgets. Last July, the women's team and Canada Soccer reached an interim pay deal. "It's taken a lot of advocacy work to get things moving in the right direction. I'm proud of where we've come from but there is more work to do to elevate women, and I hope the [Christine Sinclair] Foundation can play a role in that," Sinclair said.

### Christine Sinclair Foundation is B.C.-based, with a national impact

Sinclair was born and raised in Burnaby, B.C. She started soccer at the age of four, one of the youngest players on the Burnaby Bees team of mainly six-year-olds. This deep connection to her hometown influenced her decision to select a partner for her philanthropy; she said she wanted to pick an organization rooted in the place she calls home. "I grew up in a very tight-knit community, so that feeling of kindness and helping people out has carried throughout my life," she said.

"What Christine Sinclair is doing will create a great deal of equity and inclusion for women and girls in what has traditionally been a male-dominated field," said Kevin McCort, president and CEO of Vancouver Foundation. "Girls with Goals is a wonderful complement to what we're doing here at Vancouver Foundation too, and we're so happy to have her become part of our community." 

Follow in Christine Sinclair's footsteps and start your legacy too:  
<https://vanfdn.com/give-legacy>



# Eight Decades of Impact

Vancouver Foundation's  
legacy of harnessing today's  
gifts for tomorrow's challenges

By **STELLA IGWEAMAKA & ESTHER TUNG**  
*Illustrations by RAY DAK LAM*



**A COMMUNITY FOUNDATION** continually evolves to reflect the changing needs, values and priorities of the people it serves, and Vancouver Foundation is no exception. As Vancouver Foundation celebrated 80 years of serving community, it took a step back to ask the question, “who have we missed?”

Fully representing a place as diverse as B.C. is always a work in progress. Vancouver Foundation recognizes that a truly community-led organization must reflect the diversity of the community it serves and remain committed to equity and inclusion.

### Give today, make a difference tomorrow

When Vancouver Foundation was established in 1943, the world was a very different place. Today’s social issues either did not exist or were not yet widely recognized as urgent concerns. Climate crises, opioid crises, racial injustice — and even a global pandemic.

Many are drawn to Vancouver Foundation precisely by this pitch: that it’s impossible to predict the needs of tomorrow, but what you give today will live on and keep making a difference through the foundation’s commitment to community needs.

### Opening up more seats at the table

What began with a small and exclusive group of business leaders has today transformed into a vibrant, community-led organization that actively seeks out diverse voices and perspectives. Today, Vancouver Foundation has a unique community-advised structure that ensures that no one person can unilaterally decide where millions of dollars go every year, and that it reflects community priorities.

Vancouver Foundation’s 10 founders were some of B.C.’s most successful industrialists at the time — families that made their wealth through logging, mining and extracting resources across B.C. and Canada. It’s worth noting that B.C. was and is largely still unceded Indigenous land.

Within Vancouver Foundation’s history is also the story of secretary Alice MacKay, who gifted \$1,000 of her own money to support impoverished women in Vancouver. Her generosity inspired lumber industrialist Whitford J. VanDusen to invite his friends and peers to match with their own contributions, which led to an initial endowment of \$101,000 (more than \$1.77 million in today’s dollars.)

For a time, these founders and the board largely directed where grants went. But as Vancouver Foundation grew, the board wanted to send a strong message that the foundation’s work was deeply shaped by its community. So, in 1972, Vancouver Foundation moved to the community-advised structure it still keeps today.

Each grant program at Vancouver Foundation works with a group of community members who are experts in, or work in, the grant program’s focus. For example, they review grant applications and offer insights as to which ones are likely to be most impactful or most ready for funding, the all-Indigenous advisory group supporting the Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund includes Kim Haxton, a coach and inclusion leader who is Potawatomi and Wasauksing First Nation, and Csetkwe Fortier, a Syilx and Secwepmec artist.

### Promoting social change and reconciliation

Vancouver Foundation has embraced a more proactive role in advancing broad social changes that can build on learnings gained through individual acts of social good. “No one questions the need to extinguish a fire that’s started in your home. But if fires keep starting, we want to figure out why that’s happening and address that root cause issue too,” said Kevin McCort, president and CEO of Vancouver Foundation.

Becoming community-inspired has accelerated the foundation’s understanding of social issues, by hearing from people who are closer to the issues themselves. “One of the greatest learning opportunities has really been to participate in reconciliation as part of Vancouver Foundation, to learn about the history, values, beliefs and knowledge of Indigenous people in Canada,” said McCort.

This commitment to reconciliation and inclusion is exemplified by the creation of the \$9.6 million Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund, which supports Indigenous-led initiatives in B.C. It expands on the work of the Indigenous Priorities, Fostering Change and LEVEL grant programs in amplifying the work of Indigenous and racialized people.

Another part of expanding its impact has been advocating for more charitable funding and partnering with governments who are looking for a conduit into community. In 2022, it successfully worked with the B.C. government to launch a \$30 million Recovery and Resiliency Fund to help charities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.



Vancouver Foundation's vision  
**To create healthy,  
 vibrant, equitable and  
 inclusive communities.**

**“Our new vision is meant to recognize that it’s no accident that what we do contributes to equitable and inclusive communities — it’s on purpose.”**

— Kevin McCort, Vancouver Foundation’s president and CEO

Since then, the B.C. government has continued to trust Vancouver Foundation to direct funds where they’re needed most. In 2024, they partnered again, earmarking \$60 million through the Lighthouse Organizations and Community Prosperity Funds. The Lighthouse Organizations Fund focused on larger charities working in poverty reduction, while the Community Prosperity Fund tapped into local expertise, working with community foundations across B.C. that deeply understand their region’s needs. This evolution, built on the earlier Recovery and Resiliency Fund, which had prioritized smaller charities, and reinforced Vancouver Foundation’s commitment to supporting diverse communities across the province.

As it builds stronger relationships with all levels of government, Vancouver Foundation sees a role to influence policy as a way to advance social change as well. Vancouver Foundation focuses on policies that support charities and non-profits to do their work. Most recently, Vancouver Foundation has informed policy development that relates to funding non-qualified donees (i.e. non-profits and grassroots organizations without charitable status) and recovery supports for the non-profit sector.

**Growing a network of trust**

Trust has been at the heart of the foundation’s success. Donors’ confidence in Vancouver Foundation’s ability to steward resources wisely and address pressing issues has allowed it to grow to what it is today — a cornerstone funder of social issues and services, and the largest in the province after government funders. The team distributed \$142 million to the community last year.

Reflecting on the foundation’s 80th anniversary, former board member Chief Justice Christopher Hinkson remarked, “Looking



back, the foundation should be immensely proud of the work it’s done and of the people who have chosen to serve it.”

In turn, Vancouver Foundation has extended its trust back to its community, trusting charities and non-profits to put money where it’s needed most. After all, they’re the experts in finding solutions to the issues they face — and that’s something Vancouver Foundation truly believes in. More of its grant programs are adopting new practices that ease burden on grant-seekers, like accepting oral, interview-based applications and building more meaningful relationships with grantees instead of requiring regular progress reports.

This trust is what enabled the Cheam Indian Band to respond to new community needs during the B.C. wildfires in 2022, when more than 40,000 hectares of land burned. The Cheam Indian Band had initially requested a grant to develop their emergency and communications infrastructure, meant for things like backup batteries and creating a large Wi-Fi connectivity network. But the fires and resulting smoke were so severe that it put the lives of elders, children and those with underlying conditions at immediate risk. So, with a green light from Vancouver Foundation, they repurposed the grant to a slightly different kind of emergency infrastructure — air purifiers, so that people could breathe.

**A History of Giving  
 at Vancouver  
 Foundation**



**1945**

Donors from the broader community make their first gifts. Many of these gifts continued to make an impact decades later, and have even contributed to addressing the modern opioid crisis and supporting charities through a global pandemic.

**1963**

Local charities establish endowment funds, including the YWCA, Boy Scouts and B.C. Children’s Hospital Foundation. These funds continue to offer steady income to those charities today.

**1972**

Vancouver Foundation welcomes diverse voices into the room through the new volunteer community advisor committee, all experts in their fields, to guide granting decisions.



- 1 Alice MacKay's \$1,000 gift was saved from her earnings as a secretary.
- 2 Thousands of students like these ones across B.C. benefit from scholarships and bursaries that come from endowment funds established at Vancouver Foundation (1985).
- 3 Youth learn outdoor skills with non-profit Outward Bound (1975).
- 4 Government officials attend the opening of what is Science World today (1981).
- 5 Brock House Society goes over its renovation blueprints (1985).
- 6 New computers at United Ways across B.C. support fundraising (1984).
- 7 Elected officials meet with the leaders of Vancouver Foundation and what is S.U.C.C.E.S.S today, a non-profit supporting newcomers (1985).
- 8 Haida longhouse dedicated to elders who pass on knowledge to youth (1985).
- 9 Young musicians hone their craft with the Vancouver Music Academy (1983).

What was crucial to the pivot's success was a timely response from Vancouver Foundation, made possible as its team had been keeping in close contact with grantees who were likely to be affected by the spreading wildfires.

#### "Intergenerational promise": the next 80 years

Forever is a long time, and part of Vancouver Foundation's job is to strike that delicate balance between addressing today's needs while still saving enough for new challenges the future holds.

Walking the line has become more challenging over time, as the pace of social and environmental crises accelerates. B.C. often has more than one active state of emergency at a time, which was unheard of before 2016.

It reveals a need for proactive, preventative action — which is often work that can only happen when people aren't in active crisis. Similar to how the Cheam Indian Band repurposed its grant, Vancouver Foundation redirected its entire granting budget in 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many organizations and the communities they served, found themselves in dire straits as regular programs and fundraising paused indefinitely.

Striking this balance is what McCort called his "intergenerational promise" at Vancouver Foundation. "It's a way that I can



### Familiar founders

Have you strolled the VanDusen Botanical Garden or gone stargazing at the H.R. MacMillan Space Centre? These places are named after a Vancouver Foundation founder: Whitford Julian VanDusen and Harvey Reginald MacMillan, respectively.

make a promise to the next generation that they're in my mind — and my heart. I'm thinking about what challenges they might overcome, and we're setting ourselves up so that there are resources available for the next generation."

As Vancouver Foundation embarks on its next chapter, it does so under an updated vision: it wants to see not only healthy and vibrant, but also equitable and inclusive communities, in B.C. ∞

We're looking for experts in equity and inclusion to join us as a Community Shaper. You may review grant applications, drive strategy, or represent your community's needs in Vancouver Foundation initiatives. Apply at <https://vanfdn.com/communityshaper-signup> today.

#### 2015

Vancouver Foundation celebrates a record milestone of granting out \$1 billion to community since it was founded.

#### 2020

Vancouver Foundation launches the Community Response Fund to help charities through a new global pandemic. It also formally commits to advancing racial justice, in response to community outcry over the murder of George Floyd, and support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

#### 2023

Vancouver Foundation launches a \$9.6 million Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund to supporting Indigenous social, political, and cultural systems.

#### 2024

Donors can contribute to Indigenous self-determination through the Indigenous Priorities Focus Area, the first donor-aimed fund that Vancouver Foundation has added in 25 years.

# Reclaiming Rights

How T'eqt'aqtn'mux are taking back ownership of their traditional territory

By PEGGY LAM

*Photographs by* SHELANNE JUSTICE



**THIS YEAR, VANCOUVER FOUNDATION'S** Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund (TISF) granted \$9.6 million to 32 projects across the territories now known as B.C. Community leaders from First Nations and hereditary groups are receiving up to \$100,000 per year for three years to develop Indigenous-led initiatives that create the conditions for systemic change.

Services from these 32 initiatives are making a positive impact that reaches more than 80 communities, from Cranbrook all the way up to the Yukon border. The projects range from revitalizing culture to tackling policy change. The grantees behind these projects are working tirelessly to restore what has been lost and taken away because of colonization — paving the way forward for their self-determination.

Among the grantees is the Kanaka Bar Indian Band, also known as T'eqt'aqtn'mux. They're establishing the T'eqt'aqtn IPCA (Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area) to restore governance rights to their traditional territory, heal the damage that's been done to the land, and protect it from further industrial harm. According to the Indigenous Circle of Experts, IPCAs are places where Indigenous governments may lead on protecting and conserving ecosystems through Indigenous laws, governance and knowledge.



**OPPOSITE PAGE:** A view of the Fraser River at T'eqt'aqtn (the crossing place). The name refers to a place where the river can be crossed with just a few paddle strokes by flowing with the natural force of two eddies near each other. This unique feature is why large villages developed in the area, at one time home to thousands.

**TOP RIGHT:** The Siwash Creek significantly eroded the adjacent hillside during the atmospheric river event in 2021.

**RIGHT:** The jammy and tart thimbleberry is one of the many edible fruits you can pick on T'eqt'aqtn land.

**LEFT:** The team at T'eqt'aqtn'mux working to establish a protected conservation area for their land includes Sean O'Rourke, lands and culture manager (middle), Mary-Jo Michell, coordinator (left) and Alfred Higginbottom, stewardship manager.



## Learning the names

The Kanaka Bar Indian Band is also known as T'eqt'aqtn'mux, meaning the "crossing place people." This is also written as **ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ** in the nleʔkepmxcín language.

They've established the T'eqt'aqtn IPCA, which is given a name in the nleʔkepmxcín language: zuminstm e tmíxʷ kt **ᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄᓄ**, which means "we care for the land of T'eqt'aqtn."



Sean O'Rourke, the land manager for the T'eqt'aqtn IPCA, said the area they're protecting is roughly 320 square kilometres south of Lytton in the Fraser Canyon. It has what archeologists call "cultural depressions": sites of collapsed pit houses abandoned in the 1700s and 1800s, where people had lived for thousands of years prior. "It's a really amazing place from the cultural perspective," said O'Rourke. "We have all sorts of pictographs (paintings on rock) and petroglyphs (carvings on stone)."

The IPCA is also situated between coastal rainforest and interior B.C. desert, making it home to some of the most unique species and ecosystems in the world. The territory, filled with old-growth forests, holds 42 at-risk species and some record-breaking plant species — including a 15-metre tall Saskatoon berry bush. "By our creeks and in the ravines, you'll find Western red cedar, hemlock trees, really beautiful mossy and fern-filled areas. It looks like you could be right beside the coast," he said. "Go around another corner and it's a bunch of grass and ponderosa pine. There's just tremendous biodiversity here."

**O'ROURKE SAID T'EQT'AQTN'MUX** have been caring for the territory for millennia, and are now trying to regain the rights for self-determination. T'eqt'aqtn'mux is establishing its IPCA by working with funders to acquire properties around the community and extinguishing mining tenures, while also

TOP LEFT: A red cedar growing along the Fraser River slouches over O'Rourke, Michell, and T'eqt'aqtn'mux councillor Stacy Hulbert (middle).

TOP RIGHT: The T'eqt'aqtn IPCA will protect the largest documented Douglas fir in B.C.'s interior, which O'Rourke is leaning against.

CENTRE: T'eqt'aqtn'mux kʷukʷpiʔ (Chief) Jordan Spinks.

RIGHT: Cultural artifacts in the T'eqt'aqtn IPCA include early paintings on rocks like this, also known as pictographs.



working with the province to prevent further logging and mining. While some of these important steps may be achieved as quickly as three years, O'Rourke knows the work will continue long after. "It's like a generational project," he said. "Eventually, the long-term vision is to have full self-determination of the community and the lands around us. This IPCA is a step in that direction, but there will have to be many steps for us to get there, to where we're the decision makers of this area."

**O'ROURKE SAID THE** community has been hit with one climate crisis after the next, especially with wildfires. The nearby town of Lytton, which burned down during the 2021 heat dome event, displaced many band members who lived there. T'eqt'aqtn'mux mem-

bers were evacuated that year, on alert the following year and evacuated again the year after that. “It’s like one disaster after the next. It’s really stressful and difficult to deal with that, as well as being so busy trying to plan how to care for the land.”

The Thriving Indigenous Systems Fund will be used to build capacity to develop the T’eqt’aqtn IPCA. “The flexibility of this grant program is excellent because it helps us direct the funds towards the priorities that we have within our initiative,” said O’Rourke. With this grant, his team can hire a person dedicated to consulting widely with community members on how the IPCA should care for the land. That includes hosting workshops to engage with people on and off-reserve, including members and elders who now live in Chilliwack and Kamloops.

**JESKA SLATER, DIRECTOR** of culture and community at Vancouver Foundation, said the TISF grant was designed to honour the self-determination of the communities the foundation serves. The grant program was created to remove systemic, colonial barriers that have limited Indigenous communities and organiza-

Scan this QR code to learn more about supporting Indigenous-led projects like the T’eqt’aqtn IPCA through Vancouver Foundation.



**BELOW:**  
The stunning Upper Kanaka Bar overlooks the Fraser River, where the run-of-river Kwoiek Hydro Project is co-owned by Kanaka Bar Indian Band and Innergex.

tions from accessing reliable and flexible funding in the past. It was also developed after a year of deep listening and consultation with grantees, past applicants, Indigenous systems change experts, community members and leaders. “We want to highlight that leaders of Indigenous communities are really the ones who should identify what success looks like for them, their markers of success and how they celebrate their success,” said Slater, who created and implemented the grant program with her team.

O’Rourke said one of their biggest successes has been creating meaningful employment for T’eqt’aqtn’mux members, so they can stay in the community and raise their families. Another win has been the ability to buy back their land. “When we bought our first property, when we actually got some land back, that was amazing,” he said. The area was at the mouth of Siwash Creek, which is filled with old-growth forest. There are records of their former chiefs fishing there in the 1800s. “It was a great spot for the community, but it was preempted by settlers and has been alienated from the community ever since. So, when we were able to return that to the community, that was such a win.” ∞



# ENTER TO WIN *a dining experience at:*

## Salmon n' Bannock

A culinary journey infused with the pride of the First Nations. This intimate eatery features Indigenous fare such as wild fish, game meat and bannock.



OR



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# From the Ground Up

By STACEY MCLACHLAN

Illustration by ALIYA GHARE

**IT'S A CLASSIC EXPRESSION:** “Change begins at home.” And the success of grassroots giving across the U.S. and Canada may just be an indication of that.

Grassroots giving is about investing in community-led solutions. It operates on the principle that the best solutions to a challenge come from the communities that are facing them. These are not top-down directives, but community-driven efforts that address unique local needs with innovative and tailored approaches.

Community foundations in Hamilton, Calgary and B.C. offer grassroots granting programs, with Vancouver Foundation launching the Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program as far back as 1999. NSG has since granted more than \$12 million to projects led by everyday people looking to make their neighbourhoods a better place. Many are one-

time projects, like a spoon-carving workshop or a block party. But sometimes, one grant is the springboard for bigger or ongoing initiatives.

One group of community gardeners restored a plot that was once a memorial garden for missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls in Vancouver’s Strathcona neighbourhood. They involved the original caretakers and local families of missing women in the project to recover not only the garden, but the stories of their loved ones. Today, the project leader wrote that “the names and stories of missing women began to be heard on the bench under the sun once again.”

Calgary Foundation’s grassroots granting program encourages people to carry out “small acts of community.” The Hamilton Community Foundation angled its Strengthening Neighbourhoods program

towards preventing and reducing poverty through small grants to residents. Whether it's a grant of \$50 or \$500, the power of grassroots granting lies in its ability to drive change from the ground up.

"At its core, [grassroots granting] centres people with proximity to the issues. This is fundamentally about self-determination," said Dara Parker, a former vice president, grants & community initiatives, at Vancouver Foundation, who oversaw the program during her five-year tenure.

Grassroots granting strengthens relationships through trust, and it isn't just for philanthropic or community foundations. You become part of the movement when you give to people or organizations in a way that trusts the recipient to lead the change.

**Grassroots granting gives everyday people the chance to build meaningful relationships with their community.**

The smaller projects that are characteristic of grassroots granting can stay more nimble and complement more established or large-scale programs run by charities. It allows communities to be responsive, even as they experiment with novel solutions and ideas. Perhaps most impactful of all, are the opportunities that grassroots projects offer for everyday people to build meaningful relationships with their immediate community, and develop the skills it takes to manage and expand their initiatives.

"This is granting that's done at the most local and place-based level of granting," said Parker. "We want to support situations where people are actively coming together, coalescing around issues that are important to their community." ∞



Lettering and illustration by JULIE SOLVSTROM

Dear friends and supporters,

As Vancouver Foundation celebrated its 80th year, I had the privilege to reflect on 22 years working with this incredible organization alongside you, our valued supporters. So many of you contribute beyond your generous donations to improve communities across British Columbia: your time, skills and experiences, and I thank you for that.

As an immigrant to Canada, I've faced the challenges of starting anew, the quest to find my place, and the journey to feel like I truly belong. A big part of this journey for me was volunteering for many causes, such as food security, immigrant services, the performing arts, as well as environmental and Indigenous initiatives. These experiences have shaped my deep appreciation for the diversity, strength and support of our community.

Since I joined Vancouver Foundation in 2002, I've had the privilege of witnessing the incredible impact of your contributions and generosity. Your gifts have fueled vital programs and provided essential resources where they are needed most. Whether you've supported grassroots initiatives, education, healthcare, environmental sustainability, arts and culture or organizations run by racialized leaders you have made a monumental difference in so many lives.

Your belief in our mission and your willingness to invest in the future of communities throughout B.C. inspire us all. Your generosity not only provides immediate assistance but also lays the foundation for long-term sustainability and growth. It is through your support that we can continue to create healthy, vibrant, equitable and inclusive communities across B.C.

Sincerely,

**NICOLE JESCHELNIK, Manager, Donor Services**

Nicole grew up in East Berlin, Germany, and immigrated to Vancouver in 1999. Today, she and her husband have two children and two dogs. She loves to bake treats that carry memories from home. She is the longest-serving employee working at Vancouver Foundation.

# Launching Dreams

By ERIN REDDEKOPP

Illustration by MARLEY ALLEN-ASH



**IMAGINE THE DIFFERENCE** you can make with a legacy gift. You can support crucial initiatives, foster progress and help build vibrant communities. Your contribution reflects your personal commitment to positive change and will leave a lasting mark that will inspire others for years to come.

One Vancouver Foundation donor, whose name we've changed to Joanne for privacy, learned about giving from her mother. "She taught me if you see a need that you can help fulfill, then you do," Joanne reflected. "Whether it was money,

time or encouragement, seeing an idea flourish and knowing you played a part in it brought me a great sense of respect."

Inspired by these lessons, Joanne and her husband turned to Vancouver Foundation. Their journey began with a transformative meeting with Craig Hikida, its vice president of donor services. "We started small, and it took time to build up the fund. The day we were told we had enough to start granting [from the fund] was so exciting," said Joanne.

"The fund has grown over the years, and we have been able to help many of

the causes we care about," Joanne shared with pride. "For me, it is a joy and a privilege to be able to make even small dreams come true for the people who are doing the work that speaks to me."

A key part of their experience has been Vancouver Foundation's support. "Vancouver Foundation made it easy from the get-go," Joanne emphasized. "They have been nothing but supportive, which has added peace of mind and made the process so smooth."

Philanthropy with Vancouver Foundation isn't just about giving. It's about joining a community focused on creating meaningful change. "You are among like-minded people who see a need and strive to fill it in any way they can," she noted. "What could be better than that?"

Vancouver Foundation supports donors like Joanne by making legacy giving both accessible and impactful. From setting up a fund to witnessing its growth and impact, the foundation provides personalized support, to help donors meet their goals.

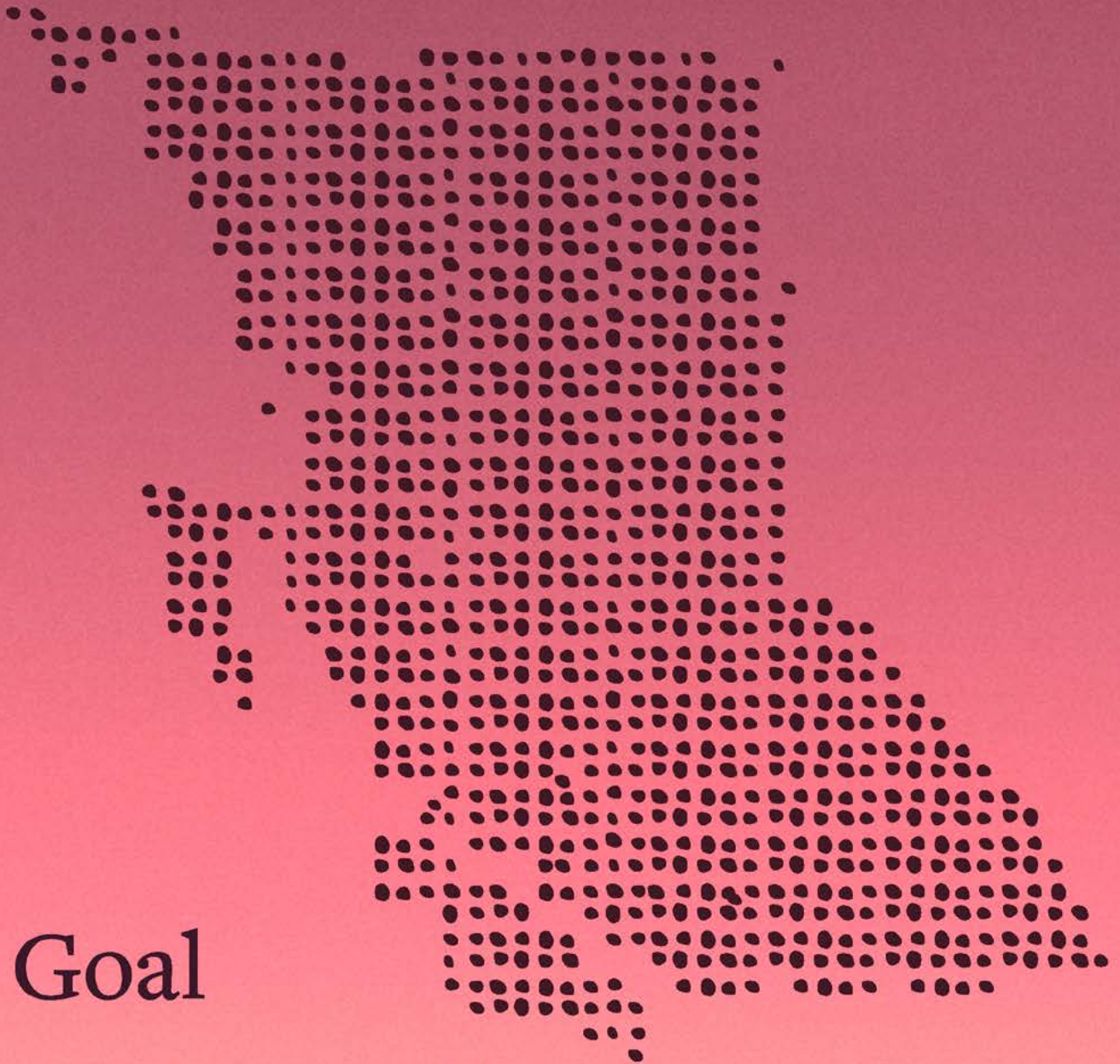
The fund Joanne and her husband established at Vancouver Foundation will allow them to leave a mark that will extend far beyond their lifetime. This approach to legacy giving fosters a connection and shared purpose, showing that philanthropy is not just about financial contributions, but creating a lasting legacy of compassion and progress.

Vancouver Foundation is committed to supporting donors through every step of their legacy journey. It makes the process simple and ensures each gift aligns with their values and goals. "We know legacy planning can be stressful, and we want to make it as simple and rewarding as possible," said Hikida. [∞](#)

If you're ready to make a difference, see how Vancouver Foundation can turn your visionary ideas into impactful realities. Learn more about leaving your legacy at <https://vanfdn.com/legacy-giving>

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## Community Foundations



# 1 Goal

BC Community Foundations play an essential role as the catalyst for change by connecting resources that make local programs and partnerships possible. Support yours and make where you live, better for all.

Find your local community foundation here:  
[vancouverfoundation.ca/bccf](http://vancouverfoundation.ca/bccf)