



**A Spotlight
on Inclusion**

Annual Report April 1, 2020
– March 31, 2021

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following Rick Hansen's epic two-year, two-month, and two-day Man In Motion World Tour. For the past 33 years, RHF has been focused on fulfilling Rick's original two dreams: to make the world accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities and to find a cure for paralysis after spinal cord injury. While much has been done, there is still a lot of work to do. Today, RHF is focused on removing physical barriers for people with disabilities, funding research for the cure and care of people with spinal cord injuries, and raising awareness of the critical need for improved accessibility in Canada.

Our Vision

An inclusive world where people with disabilities are living to their full potential.

Our Mission

To create and deliver innovative solutions that lead to a global movement to remove barriers and enable people with disabilities to meet their full potential.



Progress is being made every day and in this Annual Report you will learn about how, together, we continue to improve the lives of the one in five people in Canada living with a disability.

Thank you for being part of the movement to build a world without barriers. Please join us as we shine a light on this past year's impact with the theme of this annual report – **A Spotlight on Inclusion.**

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A Message from our CEO & Board Chair

This past year was like no other in recent history. Globally we continue to look toward recovery after the immense challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic that exposed large cracks of inequality across the world. It is clear that the effects of the pandemic disproportionately impacted people with disabilities.

However, thanks to the support of our donors, partners, supporters and staff, we were able to continue to make progress in our mission to remove barriers and increase accessibility for people with disabilities. For this, we are sincerely grateful.

With your commitment, together we:

- Worked with disability colleagues, coalitions and all levels of government to **advocate for a higher level of accessibility and inclusion** and improved financial support through Covid-19 relief funding for people with disabilities.
- Inspired the importance of meaningful accessibility in the built environment through RHF Accessibility Certification ratings, **assisting organizations to better understand their current level of accessibility** and how it can be improved.
- Funded \$1.88 million towards **advancing critical Spinal Cord Injury research** to further the cure and care of people living with spinal cord injuries.
- **Raised awareness amongst millions of Canadians** of the importance of improved accessibility and inclusion via our #EveryoneEverywhere campaign.
- **Educated and empowered Canadian youth** on disability, accessibility and inclusion, empowering them to be difference makers through new RHF School Program interactive resources, and 475 virtual RHF Ambassador presentations across the country.

Over the past year, the RHF Board of Directors focused on ensuring the Foundation continued to have the financial stability and resources to succeed throughout the pandemic to support people in Canada with disabilities. We established two Task Forces to explore ways to support revenue generation and philanthropic revitalization. And we began the process to create a new two-year Strategic Plan to provide a road map for innovation and growth, while ensuring focus remains on our vision of creating a truly inclusive world.

Our sincerest gratitude goes to our Board colleagues and RHF team, to the Foundation's members, partners, donors, and supporters for being part of this journey as we continue our work to advance accessibility and put a *Spotlight on Inclusion*.

Sincerely,



Doramy Ehling
Chief Executive Officer,
Rick Hansen Foundation



Tamara Vrooman, O.B.C.
Chair, Board of Directors
Rick Hansen Foundation



A Message from our Founder

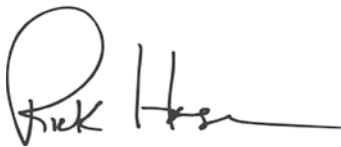
Thank you for joining us on the journey to create a world where people with disabilities can live to their full potential. This past year shone a light on how we can come together during a global crisis. It's been extremely heartening to witness the generosity and support from our community of friends, donors, and supporters during these times of uncertainty.

I am incredibly appreciative of your unwavering commitment to a world where people, regardless of ability, can equally access the spaces where we live, work, learn, and play.

For every barrier that exists for people with disabilities, there is a solution. These solutions exist because of people like you who help create a society in which all people can participate.

Yes, there is still much to do and by working together we will accomplish great things to make this world more accessible and inclusive.

Thank you for helping to build a bright future where everyone can go everywhere.



Rick Hansen
Founder,
Rick Hansen Foundation





An Inclusive Canada

Barriers limit the things people with disabilities can do, the places they can go, and the attitudes of others towards them. Disability in itself is not a barrier: the way the world is created is a barrier.

Currently one in five Canadians have a disability, and that number is growing exponentially as our population ages. We're at a critical point where we need to work together to ensure that people of all abilities can participate in the places where we live, work, learn, and play.

1 in 5

or **22%** of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over – or about 6.2 million individuals – has one or more disabilities. ¹

4.6M

adults have at least mild hearing loss in the speech frequency range and 8.4 million adults have some degree of hearing loss in the high frequency range. ²

2.7M

Canadians aged 15 and older have a mobility disability. ³

1.5M

Canadians aged 15 years and over have a vision disability. ⁴

1 in 3

or **32%** of Canadians aged 55 and older say they anticipate mobility, vision or hearing challenges arising in the next five to 10 years. ⁵

¹ Conference Board of Canada: Demographic, Employment, and Income Profile of Canadians with Disabilities Aged 15 Years and Over, 2017.

² StatsCan: Unperceived hearing loss among Canadians aged 40-79, August 2019.

³ StatsCan: Canadians with a mobility disability, 2020.

⁴ StatsCan: Canadians with A Seeing Disability, 2017.

⁵ Angus Reid: Accessibility: A source of future anxiety and a significant consideration for Canadian consumers today, 2019.

Even as the global health emergency recedes, people with disabilities face the same issues as always. They're less likely to have access to health care, education, employment, and to be able to participate in their communities. This needs to change.

Nobody deserves to be left behind. Improved accessibility and inclusion will result in a country where people of all abilities can contribute and participate. It's the sustainable, resilient, and equitable future we all want.





Our Strategy

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) funds critical spinal cord injury research, and advances accessibility and inclusion so that the 6.2 million Canadians with a disability can participate in the places where we live, work, learn, and play. Thanks to your generosity, this past year we invested in the following strategic imperatives:

\$3.78M

on removing physical accessibility barriers – one of the most fundamental barriers that people living with disabilities continue to face every single day.

\$1.88M

on funding spinal cord injury research to advance the cure, care and quality of life of people living with spinal cord injuries.

\$1.79M

on raising awareness of the critical importance of improved accessibility and inclusion and continuing to remove attitudinal barriers towards people with disabilities.

\$1.12M

on educating youth about disability, accessibility and inclusion and empowering them to be difference makers for change.

See pages 43-45 for more detailed financial breakdown.

This Annual Report puts a spotlight on the various accomplishments achieved towards these objectives and also identifies where there is still work to be done. While the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating for so many, the Foundation worked to pivot our strategies so that we can continue to create positive impact for people with disabilities.

The past year's accomplishments were possible because of the many remarkable partners, donors, supporters, volunteers, and staff who believe in this cause. We look forward to continuing to work alongside you to break down physical and attitudinal barriers for people with disabilities.

Removing Physical Accessibility Barriers

Legislation, standards and building codes on their own are not enough to ensure meaningfully accessible spaces for people with disabilities. Now more than ever, we need to incorporate market-based tools that will encourage decision-makers such as building owners and operators, industry influencers, and architects and designers to adopt an accessibility lens to all new infrastructure and continually apply innovation to enhance accessibility beyond code compliance. Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) fills this crucial gap.

RHFAC is a national measurement and recognition tool that rates the meaningful accessibility of buildings and sites based on the perspective of persons with varying disabilities. RHFAC was created to meet a critical need: ensuring people with disabilities can equitably access and use the spaces where we all live, work, learn and play, and fulfill the Foundation’s vision of creating an inclusive world where people with disabilities are living to their full potential. Since its inception, RHFAC has grown nationally, and governments and organizations alike are beginning to adopt it into policy and commit to a higher level of accessibility.



RHFAC Goals

Our goals for the RHF Accessibility Certification program in Fiscal 2021 were:

- ▶ to motivate organizations to undertake an RHFAC rating for 400 sites across Canada so they can understand their building's current level of meaningful accessibility and plan to improve;
- ▶ to train industry professionals on how to use RHFAC rating tools to measure meaningful accessibility on a consistent national basis to create more inclusive communities;
- ▶ to update the RHFAC rating system to introduce new mandatory requirements for sites to achieve a high rating of Gold;
- ▶ to support 142 organizations in BC in their accessibility improvements through the BC Accessibility Grants program;
- ▶ to sign up 250 sites to receive complimentary ratings in Ontario; and
- ▶ to grow our Accessibility Professional Network (APN) to 200 accessibility and industry professionals and host the first virtual conference to educate and collaborate on advancing access in the built environment.



There's not much point in having an automatic door opener if there isn't enough space for a wheelchair user to get out of the way of the door as it swings open. This may seem obvious, but you'd be surprised how often it is forgotten.

– Stanis Smith, Architect and RHF Board Member



RHFAC Program, Ratings & Training

COVID-19 impacted the way RHFAC was able to reach organizations, and ‘business-as-usual’ was decidedly unusual. However, while the pandemic shifted how we meet our objectives, we still saw progress in many areas.

- While we set out the year with a goal of organizations completing RHFAC ratings for 400 sites, **104 were completed**. Some organizations took business closures as an opportunity to complete an RHFAC rating while it was quiet; however, many more were focused on survival during this time. We anticipate ratings to increase in the coming year as organizations slowly begin to get back to operations. **Our goal for F2022 is to complete 200 ratings.**
- Due to COVID-19 shutting down in-person learning across the country, some institutions cancelled their scheduled RHFAC Training courses. However, others pivoted to virtual learning, **reaching 74 students, including architects, engineers, and accessibility professionals. Forty** completed the RHFAC Professional exam administered by CSA Group and **successfully obtained their RHFAC Professional designation, allowing them to conduct ratings.**



This course has honestly changed my career. It is eye-opening to realize how much difficulty the ‘typical’ or ‘conventional’ can cause for all kinds of users and exciting to see that there are so many creative and innovative (easy!) ways to make this world easier and more enjoyable for everyone. All architects should take this course regardless of their occupancy specialization. — Seanna Thomas, intern architect



- Partnered with PowerED™ by Athabasca University (AU) to develop Accessible Spaces 101, a new online course for those who wish to learn more but do not necessarily have a background in the built environment. So far, **44 people have registered for the course.**
- Released RHFAC v3.0 in May 2020 with an update to the RHFAC rating system. This new version includes new mandatory requirements for sites to achieve RHF Accessibility Certified Gold and increased weight to features essential to providing meaningful access to those with vision and hearing disabilities.
- Launched the Buildings Without Barriers Challenge for commercial property owners and managers to pledge to have their buildings rated using RHFAC. **Eleven major real estate organizations committed to the journey to become more accessible by registering 49 of their buildings to get rated.**

Three Year RHFAC Program Trend

	F2019	F2020	F2021
RHFAC Training participants	101	132	71
Newly designated RHFAC Professionals	34	37	51
Total Rated Sites	890	344	104
Rated Sites (Standard Fee)	23	112	47
Rated Sites (Complimentary)	867 (BC*)	232 (BC*)	57 (ON**)
RHFAC Gold Sites	24	26	17
RHF Accessibility Certified Sites	543	249	71
Did not achieve certification	323	69	16

* Funding received from the Government of British Columbia for 1,100 complimentary ratings.

** Funding received from the Government of Ontario for 250 complimentary ratings.

Spotlight on: RHFAC Training Course Participant, Nicole Palladino

Nicole Palladino heard about RHFAC Training from Rick Hansen himself, who had called Nicole upon finding out about her recent injury. Nicole was in Costa Rica with her boyfriend, celebrating her recent graduation from civil engineering from the University of Alberta, where she was also a varsity soccer player. The couple rode home on their rented pedal bikes, and Nicole lost control on a gravel road and fell off a cliff. She sustained a T5 spinal cord injury and now uses a wheelchair to navigate the world. This new perspective led to a passion for accessibility. Thanks to the help of an RHFAC Training tuition grant, Nicole was able to pursue this interest to apply her lived knowledge to help others.

“Having access to freely and independently enter a restaurant or store without barriers means having the ability to live my life exactly that way – independently,” Nicole said. “It means not having to ask for help. It means you’re not reminded of the obvious, that you are at a disadvantage to everyone. Accessibility in the built environment takes the edge off of what is already the short end of life’s stick.”

Nicole works as an estimator for a general contractor in her hometown of Edmonton, AB. She hopes to branch out to building design to utilize both her knowledge gained through RHFAC Training and lived experience.



Carleton University Adopts RHFAC Into Policy

In response to the need for a focused approach on the user experience and practical accessibility concerns at its campus, Ottawa's Carleton University adopted RHFAC into policy, being the first-post secondary institution in Canada to do so. **This will positively impact 3,403 students listed with Carleton University's disability office. This will also benefit 5.6% of Carleton University's workforce who identify as having a disability.** This commitment to a higher level of accessibility, which includes having faculty trained as RHFAC Professionals, ensures its campus is accessible to everyone. Through this policy, Carleton University intends to have all their new sites built to RHFAC Gold, and have all their existing ones upgraded to meet at least RHF Accessibility Certified.



We want to set a high standard and the Rick Hansen Foundation's Accessibility Certification program will do that.

– Dean Mellway, Accessibility Advisor, Carleton University.



Governments Recognize the Value of RHFAC

While COVID-19 slowed down the momentum for buildings obtaining RHFAC ratings, the Government of Ontario in partnership with RHF encouraged organizations in 15 select municipalities in the province to pursue RHFAC ratings through a complimentary ratings program. Despite the urgent demands brought forth by the pandemic, several building owners saw an opportunity to get rated as the first step to inform accessibility upgrade planning as their buildings are either closed or not experiencing the usual high traffic volumes. **Of the 250 sites approved to receive ratings, 57 have been completed with 40 sites achieving RHF Accessibility Certified and three achieving RHF Accessibility Certified Gold.**

“
The City of Brampton is a mosaic of diversity, and we are committed to removing barriers for people with disabilities so that everyone in our diverse community can participate fully. In better understanding our locations' levels of accessibility, we can continue to work towards making a City that is more inclusive and accessible for all.
– Patrick Brown, Mayor, City of Brampton



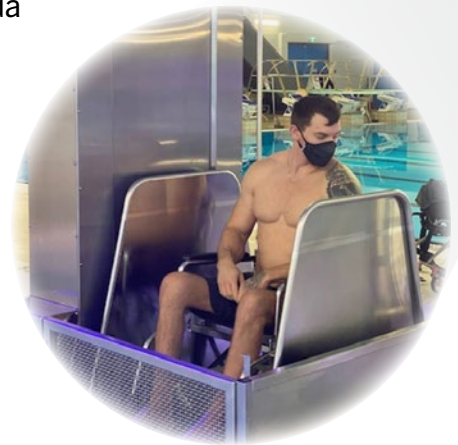
BC Accessibility Grants Program

Thanks to the financial support from the Province of British Columbia through the Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction, the RHF B.C. Accessibility Grants program offered funding of up to \$20,000 for 219 sites for accessibility improvement projects. We have reimbursed 198 of those accessibility improvements across B.C. to date and expect the final 21 projects to be completed in the coming months. Upgrades include additions such as ramps, pool lifts, automatic door openers, visual fire alarms, and hearing loops, supporting the 24.7% of those in B.C. who identify as having a disability.

Spotlight on: the Canada Games Aquatic Centre

BC Accessibility Grant Program funding enabled the Canada Games Aquatic Centre in Kamloops to purchase an accessible lift to provide access to the pool and whirlpool for people who use wheelchairs.

“Creating a better tomorrow for those living with diverse abilities, the installation of the new aqua lift will remove the barriers creating an accessible, therapeutic, inclusive and social environment ensuring no one gets left behind due to a disability,” said Debora Delyzer, executive director of People in Motion, an organization dedicated to promoting accessibility and inclusiveness in Kamloops.



Spotlight on: the Sooke Municipal Hall

Sooke prides itself on being a place “where opportunities for community involvement are abundant.” The Vancouver Island municipality made good on that description by making accessibility upgrades to its municipal hall after receiving funding through the RHF B.C. Accessibility Grant Program.

City council chambers and the building’s reception now boast a hearing loop system which enables hearing aid users to stream directly into their devices. “During property tax time, many people with hearing aids have commented on how nice it is to be able to hear and understand staff with the new loop system,” said a representative from Sooke Municipal Hall.

Spotlight on: Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility

Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility achieved a Gold rating with the RHFAC program. With a rating score of 96%, the Vancouver, B.C. office is the highest-rated building in the RHFAC program to date. When Wavefront began planning for their new offices, they contacted the Foundation to assist with design and ensure accessibility was incorporated in the early stages. Some of the building’s innovative features are surprisingly simple and include elegant solutions. Wider corridors allowed people to walk side-by-side and face one another when signing or speaking. The building was also designed to have abundant natural light and high-colour contrast for good visibility.



“As the leading provider of services that break down barriers to communication for people who are Deaf, DeafBlind, and hard of hearing, we wanted to build an inclusive environment that showcased the best in universal design for our clients, employees and community,” said Christopher Sutton, Wavefront Centre’s CEO.

#APN2021: Accelerating Access

In March 2021, RHF hosted **#APN2021: Accelerating Access**, a two-day virtual conference which brought together 53 accessibility leaders and industry professionals from around the world. Thanks to the support of our generous sponsors, 500 attendees participated in inspiring conversations with thought leaders and industry players about why accessibility is more important than ever, especially as the world moves into post-pandemic economic recovery.



A P N 2 0 2 1



Attending #APN2021 has provided me with in-depth insight into the importance of accessibility in the built environment from different perspectives. I found it quite valuable to take back to my work.

– Meirav Even-Har, National Manager, Wellness & Healthy Buildings, QuadReal Property Group



Highlights from the conference include:

92%

of delegates said they would recommend the APN conference to others

94%

of attendees gave the conference a Positive or Very Positive rating

88%

of delegates reported an Extremely Positive rating of the variety of APN topics

98%

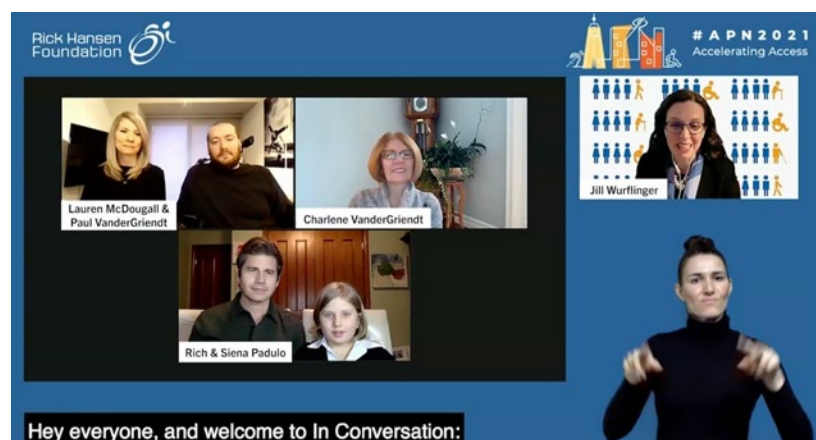
of delegates reported a Positive or Extremely Positive rating of APN speakers

“

The APN Conference is the ONLY place to find experts from every field, and every part of the world, who are willing to come together and generously share their knowledge and experience. A must-attend for anyone who wants to increase their understanding of meaningful access.

– #APN2021 attendee

”



Funding Spinal Cord Injury Research

One of Rick’s original dreams is to find a cure for paralysis caused by spinal cord injury (SCI). Through our partnership with the International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries (ICORD), Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) and the University of British Columbia (UBC) Hospital Foundation, we are making strides every day toward this goal.

ICORD/UBC

This past year \$1,350,893 was granted to ICORD/UBC to advance the following four key strategies in addition to supporting shared resources:

1. Translational Research

Translational research supports pre-clinical research studies and the continued development and operations of the first biobank for the human spinal cord and cerebrospinal fluid in Canada.

Central Cord Injury Model

Dr. Tom Oxland and his team have been working on the development of a ventral contusion injury model. This is an important step to create damage to the ventral artery that will result in ischemic damage to the gray matter. Progress in 2020 on the central cord injury model was hindered by limited laboratory access due to COVID-19. Due largely to limited pilot data, the ventral spinal cord contusion injury application in March to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) was unsuccessful. The team will attempt to resubmit this CIHR grant proposal in the coming year.



Pre-Clinical Platform

A pre-clinical platform was designed to test if treatments that have previously been shown to improve functional recovery after SCI show benefits when tested by an independent lab. The project used a cervical hemi-contusion injury with the treatment that started three hours post-injury. Hypothetically, the results have a better chance of translating to a clinical situation. While the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic halted experimentation, the project is currently back on track.

Biobank

The International SCI Biobank (ISCIB) is a research resource consisting of a collection of biospecimens to support biomedical research and to improve patient outcomes. It now holds 11 spinal cord biospecimens. The biobank supported nine international projects from Belgium, Canada, England, Sweden, and the United States, with three additional requests currently pending from Portugal and the United States as of March 31, 2021. From the specimens and data released, ISCIB has aided in the publication of 3 independent, third-party papers in peer-reviewed journals, and has received at least 12 acknowledgements in various oral and poster presentations.



2. Network Development

Network development provides new collaborative possibilities through international exchange, meetings, and sharing of information in conferences. It also provides advantages to researchers competing for international funding as well as enriching a training environment and increasing the engagement of those in the SCI community.



SCIRE

Spinal Cord Injury Research Evidence (SCIRE) is an online resource that covers several topics relevant to SCI rehabilitation and community reintegration. SCIRE Professional continues to perform well against other websites in the evidence-based genre (27,000 article downloads and 308,000 pageviews).

Meetings

The ICORD Trainee Committee hosted a virtual Trainee Symposium on November 18th and 19th, 2020. The conference was attended by 108 participants who enjoyed eight research-based presentations.

ICORD held its Annual Research Meeting on March 1st and 2nd, 2021 that was virtually attended by 170 ICORD faculty, staff, and students to learn from 14 presentations about new SCI research from ICORD labs. The Rick Hansen Plenary Lecture for 2021 was given by Dr. Alyson Fournier of McGill University who spoke about understanding the molecular mechanisms that prevent nerve fibre growth after SCI.

Seminar Series

ICORD hosted a seminar series which created opportunities for faculty and trainees to exchange research findings and identify areas for collaboration on future research.

3. Support the Best and Brightest

Supporting the best and the brightest means supporting the recruitment, development, and retention of new talent.

Since 2014, RHF has funded seed grant projects through the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre (BSCC) which leveraged more than \$20M in research grants by the end of the 2020 fiscal year. Fourteen seed grants and eight trainee travel awards for virtual online conferences were awarded 2020/21 (all travel was on hold due to the pandemic but virtual conferences were utilized to bring researchers together).

Seed grants funded by RHF were instrumental in leveraging the following competitively-funded research grants:

\$20K – \$US100K: Research doctors leveraged data from their project Physiology and energetics of ergometer rowing for people with SCI into a new Craig H. Neilsen Foundation grant to continue their research.

\$18K – US\$300K: This research project investigates the possibility providing better imaging for SCI patients.

\$20K – US\$1.65M: This seed grant-funded project led to a successful three-year US Department of Defense grant that aims to improve cardiac and associated neurological outcomes for patients with SCI.

\$20K – US\$1.6M: Seed grant funding resulted in a successful application from the Craig Neilsen Foundation and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

\$20K – US\$3.7M: Funding will be used to conduct a clinical trial evaluating a novel implantable biosensor to monitor oxygenation and hemodynamics status of the injured spinal cord. The research started with pre-clinical work funded by a 2015 ICORD seed grant. These grants also provided the basis for their successful application to the Defense Advanced Research Projects (DARPA), of which US\$9M goes to ICORD.

Awards

As part of supporting the best and the brightest, RHF is pleased to share the following news:

Dr. Brian Kwon was one of three winners of the inaugural Craig H. Neilsen Visionary Prize in September 2020, receiving US\$1 million for his excellent work in SCI.

Dr. Janice Eng was appointed a University Killam Professor, the highest honour UBC can confer on a faculty member. Eng has received international recognition for her work and achievements in SCI which includes overseeing SCIRE which benefits both people living with SCI and medical professionals. RHF has supported this project since its inception.



The funding from RHF to the SCIRE Project has been critically important to providing a web-based resource for clinicians who work in the SCI field, and for people living with SCI and their families.

– Dr. Janice Eng



Dr. Jacquelyn Cragg was awarded a CIHR Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Open Data Science. Her research aims to identify causes, risk factors, and biomarkers of neurological disease progression.

In 2020, Dr. John (Kip) Kramer was the successful applicant for a tenure-track Assistant Professor position in the Department of Anesthesiology, Pharmacology, and Therapeutics (APT) at UBC. Between April 1st, 2020, and March 31st, 2021, Dr. Kramer was the author or co-author of 11 articles published in leading journals and supervised 15 trainees, one of whom graduated from the program.

RHF provided funding to materials scientist and neural engineer Dr. Dena Shahriari to set up the BioAugmentative Interfaces Lab at ICORD and hire a PhD student. Shahriari has developed a technique to produce axon guidance scaffolds that mimic nerve shapes and dimensions to bridge nerve gaps to support nerve fibre regeneration after SCI.

4. Consumer Engagement

This strategy supports the engagement of all consumers affected by SCI to promote and participate in SCI research. ICORD previously undertook many initiatives to address the critical need for central study participants. As the lack of participants is widely recognized as a barrier to timely research, ICORD began using RHF funding for peer recruitment support at SCI BC to contact SCI BC members who meet study criteria.

PARC

More than 400 participants registered with the Yuel Family Physical Activity Research Centre (PARC) which is ICORD's most successful community engagement initiative. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, people participated in many activities including personal training, exercise classes, and got together for companionship. University of British Columbia kinesiology students gain real-world experience working with people with SCI.



Shared Resources

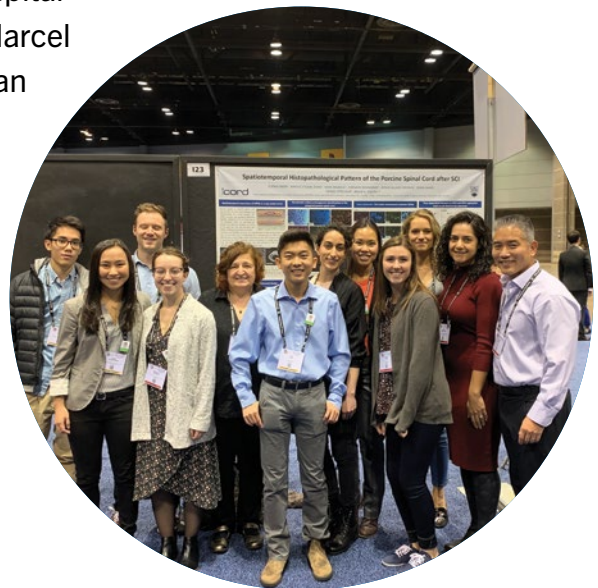
RHF funds supported scientific research equipment available to all BSCC researchers, trainees, and staff. Combined, there are approximately \$14 to \$16 million dollars in research equipment in ICORD. RHF funding for service contracts to maintain and repair equipment is critical as these funds are used to maintain key, shared, state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure. Examples of equipment directly supported by RHF include confocal microscopes, an electron microscope, two photon microscope, autoclaves, water distillers, PARC gym equipment, metabolic carts, and cage washers. These shared pieces of equipment provide a cost-effective resource for researchers who may not otherwise be able to access this equipment. Health technologies are essential in making medical advancements towards finding a cure for SCI as well as in the treatment of SCI.

UBC & VGH Hospital Foundation

RHF granted \$200,000 to the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation to support VGH's leadership in the understanding and advocacy of sexual health for people with SCI. This program is led by Dr. Stacy Elliott, an expert in sexual and fertility rehabilitation and community awareness of sexual health following SCI.

Dr. Marcel Dvorak Chair

RHF also provided funds to the VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation which are used exclusively for the Marcel Dvorak Chair in Spine Trauma to provide Dr. Brian Kwon, chair holder of Marcel Dvorak Chair, and other researchers the means to advance important discoveries that will improve the care and treatment of people living with SCI. These discoveries, which include the ability to regulate fluid pressure in the spine to increase blood supply and develop a novel sensor to measure the oxygen supply in the injured spinal cord, have distinguished Canada as a global leader in this field.



Dr. Kwon and the research team.

Raising Awareness and Changing Attitudes

Attitudinal barriers are still some of the greatest that people with disabilities face. Creating awareness of the critical importance of accessibility is key to ensuring improved access and inclusion is top of mind and a cause that Canadians want to take action to change.

According to the Angus Reid Institute, significant misperceptions of disability continue to persist¹:

- Canadians significantly under-estimate the prevalence of disability among the national population: the majority of people believe one in 25 or fewer live with a disability in Canada. In contrast: the latest Statistics Canada research shows us that one in five people live with a disability.
- 73% moderately and strongly agreeing that there continues to be a lot of prejudice and discrimination against people with disabilities.
- 50% of Canadians say “it’s understandable that employers feel it is risky to hire people with physical disabilities.”

Awareness Goals

Our awareness goals in Fiscal 2021 were:

- ▶ to raise awareness of the critical importance of improved accessibility and inclusion amongst the Canadian public;
 - ◊ Includes maintaining our website visits over last year, and increasing blog visits and social media traffic
- ▶ to advocate all levels of government to ensure persons with disabilities are not left behind when it comes to COVID-19 relief and that an accessibility lens is applied to post pandemic economic and social recovery plans; and
- ▶ to collaborate with disability organizations to ensure Canadians with disabilities are not left behind, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

¹ Angus Reid Institute, 2015, [Canadians view accessibility for people with disabilities as a human right; but see big gaps in delivering it](#)

#EveryoneEverywhere

Thanks to the continued support of our pro-bono creative ad agency TAXI Canada and our incredible National Media Partners: Corus Entertainment, OUTFRONT Media, Rogers Sports + Media, Shaw Communications, and The Globe and Mail newspaper, RHF's #EveryoneEverywhere public awareness campaign continued to reach millions of Canadians across the country over the past year with the powerful message of the critical importance of improved access and inclusion.

With more than 1.4 billion total impressions across the disability community, businesses, and the general public, the campaign has helped create a cultural shift towards improved access and inclusion. Market research released in early 2020 revealed that the campaign has raised awareness about the importance of accessibility with strong national recall of 18%. Most importantly the campaign performs well at making people more likely to encourage improvements to accessibility within buildings that they frequent.

The latest phase of the campaign airing between November 2020 and March 2021 with a “text to donate” call to action continued to be successful in raising awareness of the importance of accessibility and also inspired hundreds of people to support a world for everyone, everywhere via text. With this phase of the campaign now complete, we will continue to look for ways to evolve the campaign in the coming year and inspire Canadians to join the movement.

As part of our ongoing awareness efforts, we achieved an increase in:

133%

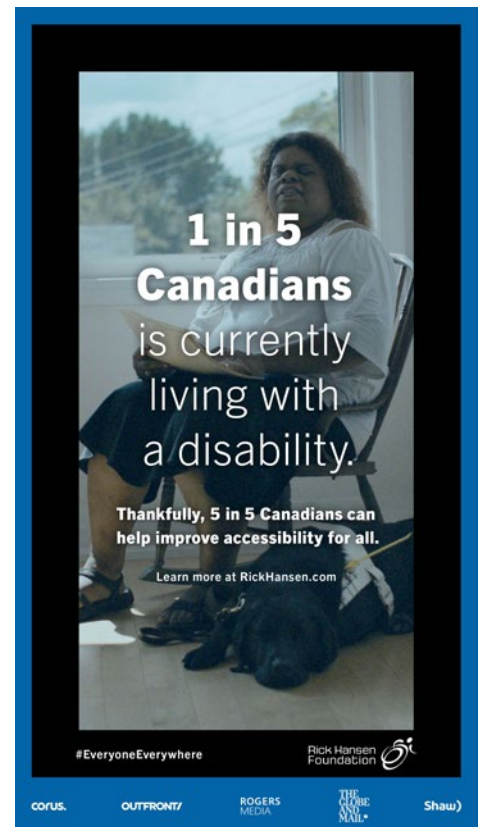
increase in
blog pageviews
vs 2% goal

14%

increase in
web visits
vs maintain goal

15%

increase in social
media traffic
vs 5% goal



Rick Hansen Outreach

RHF Founder Rick Hansen spread the message of the critical importance of improved access and inclusion for people of all abilities to national audiences through media appearances, interviews, and opinion pieces. These included:

- **The Globe and Mail** opinion piece titled “COVID-19 has shown Canada that it’s possible to be more inclusive” as well as an article titled “*Connection and Inclusion in a World Facing COVID-19*”. Both articles reminded Canadians that people with disabilities are often overlooked during times of crisis and called for extended financial support and benefits.
- Rick spoke with **CTV News anchor** Lisa Laflamme during the National Morning Show’s daily COVID update reminding Canadians to “offer compassion, love, and support during the pandemic” especially towards those with disabilities.
- In the **Canadian Chamber of Commerce’s** “The Business of Business” series Rick and Chamber CEO Perrin Beatty discussed challenges the pandemic poses for people with disabilities and what employers can do to help.

Rick was also part of a brand-new series for the **BC Sports Hall of Fame** titled “*Inspiring the Future*” featuring open conversations about how to overcome challenges in the face of adversity, specifically the challenges COVID-19 has presented to so many Canadians living with disabilities.



Rick Hansen
and Lisa
Laflamme.

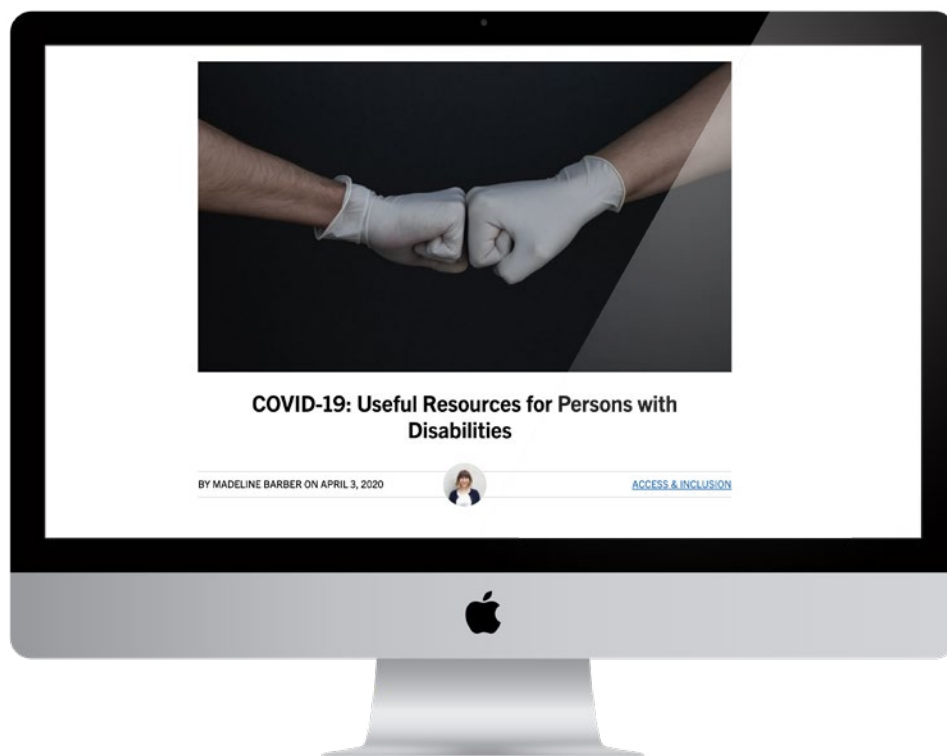
Government Advocacy

It is critical that governments take a proactive approach in policy to remove barriers for people with disabilities. This year the Foundation focused our government advocacy on informing policy decisions to ensure the significant spending on new infrastructure post pandemic is not invested in creating new barriers but instead aiming for a higher level of accessibility. Donor support enables this lengthy advocacy work required to affect long-term changes at all levels of government.

Disability Community Collaboration

The Foundation also continued to work with other disability organizations to ensure people with disabilities are included in economic and social pandemic recovery plans. Some of these initiatives included:

- Being part of the Pan Canadian Disability Coalition, a national group of 170 disability collaborators working on critical recommendations to the federal government to ensure a cross-disability lens in their response to COVID-19.
- Providing comprehensive resources, support, and COVID-19 related updates through our digital channels. These resources for people with disabilities are one of the highest viewed pages on our website with over 40,000 visits.



Empowering Youth and Championing Change

Accessibility and inclusion are not currently required components of the curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. And yet, youth are society's biggest opportunity to become accessibility champions, creating meaningful change for the next generation.

But without resources, educators are left piecemealing together lessons to support these important teachings. Born out of Rick's experience with education and his belief in the power of youth to change the world, the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program (RHFSP) offers interactive lessons and activities for students in Kindergarten to Grade 12 that focus on disability, accessibility and inclusion. With the COVID-19 pandemic changing the way education was delivered, we adapted our School Program strategy this year to distribute our resources online to ensure they were reaching educators and youth across the country.

RHF School Program Goals

To meet the needs of educators across the country during the pandemic, RHFSP quickly pivoted its resources. Goals for the 2020/2021 school year were:

- ▶ to increase focus on the delivery of interactive online resources that can be used in the classroom or at home;
- ▶ to a shift to virtual versus in-person Ambassador presentations to put a face to disability in the classroom;
- ▶ to partner with like-minded organizations to further expand our reach; and
- ▶ to expand our Difference Maker program to include nominations from youth-serving organizations.

My goal as an educator is to make people feel seen, heard, and valued. When my Grade 3 students started asking questions during the Rick Hansen Foundation Ambassador presentation at my school, I saw in them a genuine desire to know more and do more.

– Leah Fumerton, Educator, Halifax, NS

Thanks to your generous support, and the support of Co-Presenting Partners Boston Pizza Foundation Future Prospects and Scotiabank, fantastic accomplishments were achieved this past year including:

- A partnership with GHM Academy to create interactive online resources such as the Map of Rick’s Man In Motion World Tour. **In the 2020/2021 school year, RHFSP resources had 89,212 clicks on the GHM Academy website.**
- The development and launch of Little Big Lessons, a collection of engaging bite-sized activities on the big themes of access and inclusion for K-12 students learning from home. **These lessons assisted educators to pivot to delivering user-friendly online lessons to help both educators and caregivers support home-learning. During the 2020/2021 school year, these activities were downloaded 5,801 times.**



The Little Big Lessons have been a phenomenal success with students. Whether it was posting the ‘Difference Maker bingo challenge’ for the younger students or engaging older learners in the ‘first impressions and stereotypes lessons’ there are resources and supports for all ages that are eye-opening, interesting, and which facilitate thoughtfulness and fabulous discussions. – Arielle Weltman, Educator, Ontario



Nova Scotia Incorporates RHFSP into Curriculum

The Province of Nova Scotia adopted RHFSP into its curriculum, the first province to do so. Nova Scotia Education Minister Zach Churchill said adopting RHFSP content into the provincial curriculum is part of the province’s broader accessibility plan and commitment to make the province more inclusive. This means that **more than 10,000 educators are now better equipped to teach about accessibility and inclusion** in their classrooms.

RHF Ambassador Presentations

This past year, RHF Ambassador presentations were delivered virtually. By removing geographical barriers, Ambassadors provided a record number of presentations including bi-lingual Ambassadors who presented to French immersion classes across the country. Many Ambassadors embraced the virtual presentations with the barriers of travel and accessibility removed. Educators remarked how students opened up more in the online format, bringing up thoughtful questions. The engagement lasted well past the conclusion of the presentations.



Highlights from the past year include:

- Trained RHF Ambassadors to deliver their thought-provoking presentations virtually, which lead to a record-breaking 475 presentations across the country, inspiring 29,886 students with their stories of resilience and finding positivity in challenges.
- To coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Grand Erie School District hosted 12 virtual presentations. An estimated 2,500 youth were reached through presentations. The impact on youth continues as educators kept the dialogue going long after the last presentation.
- The newly developed Kindness presentation, launched in conjunction with Pink Shirt Day, was booked 134 times between February 24 and March 31, 2021 reaching an estimated 7,000 students. This powerful presentation targeting middle-school students provided an important and timely reminder of the power of inclusion.



Thanks to the presentation, it turned out to be a good week instead of a dark cloud of a week about bullying. It really opened up a big conversation.

– Lisa Homan, Educator, Chesterfield Middle School, Alberta



Spotlight On: Inspiring youth in Grand Erie

Springboarding off International Day of Persons with Disabilities, the Grand Erie District School Board booked 12 virtual RHF Ambassador presentations through the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program (RHFSP) during a two-week time frame in December 2020.

Ambassadors spoke to 83 classes, including 17 that signed up for more than one presentation. In all, RHF Ambassadors reached nearly 2,500 students, putting a face to disability and inspiring them with their stories of resilience and finding positivity in challenges.

Educator Rick Hill booked three Ambassadors to speak to his Grade 4 class at J.L. Mitchener Public School. Hill said he immediately saw the value in the presentations.

“I think it’s very educational for kids to see that there are differences among people, that we’re all human, and that we need to be respectful,” he said. “We have to be accepting of people and flexible in our thinking, too.”

One of the many benefits of virtual presentations is that they allow Ambassadors to invite their young audiences into their homes. Hill said his students were fascinated by accessibility features, such as bed assists, that empowered Ambassadors to go about their days independently.

Hayley Lapierre’s Grade 2 and 3 students at Walsh Public School were so taken by RHF Ambassadors Jackie Silver and Kelsey Culbert that both sessions went into overtime.

“Both went over because the kids were asking so many questions,” said Lapierre. “It was so good for them to be able to talk with them as opposed to just watching a video. The interactive nature of the presentations was amazing.”

Following the presentation, RHF spoke to one of Lapierre’s students, Hunter, to learn about his experiences.

“The best part was that I got to talk to people different from me to see what their lives are like,” Hunter said. “I could actually see how it feels to be in a wheelchair and the hard parts about it.”



2021 RHFSP Difference Maker of the Year Awards

The RHFSP Difference Maker of the Year Awards is an important part of the School Program and acknowledges educators and students across Canada who make a difference in improving accessibility and inclusion in their schools and communities. In the 2020/2021 school year, we distributed over 3,000 Difference Maker certificates to classrooms across the country, allowing educators to recognize the collective achievements of their students. With our Difference Makers of the Year Awards, we celebrated eight deserving students and 11 inspiring educators and youth community leaders, selected by a committee made up of previous award winners, educators and youth leaders. This was the first year that we awarded a Difference Maker of the Year in every province along with Nunavut. You can learn more about the 2021 Difference Maker of the Year award recipients on our website: RickHansen.com/Schools.

Difference Maker of the Year Award recipients in 2018, 2019, and 2020.



Ava Koldenhof, Richmond, British Columbia.



Mathew Dodwell, Harcourt, New Brunswick.



Shatanand Bacchus, York, Ontario.

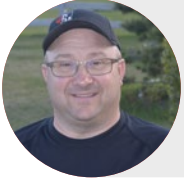
2020/21 Difference Maker



Noah Noah
Nunavut



Alexis Holmgren
Alberta



Jason Lunn
Alberta



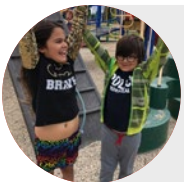
Emerson Potter
British Columbia



Michael Smith
British Columbia



Jarrett Yaworski
Manitoba



Simon Monteith
Manitoba



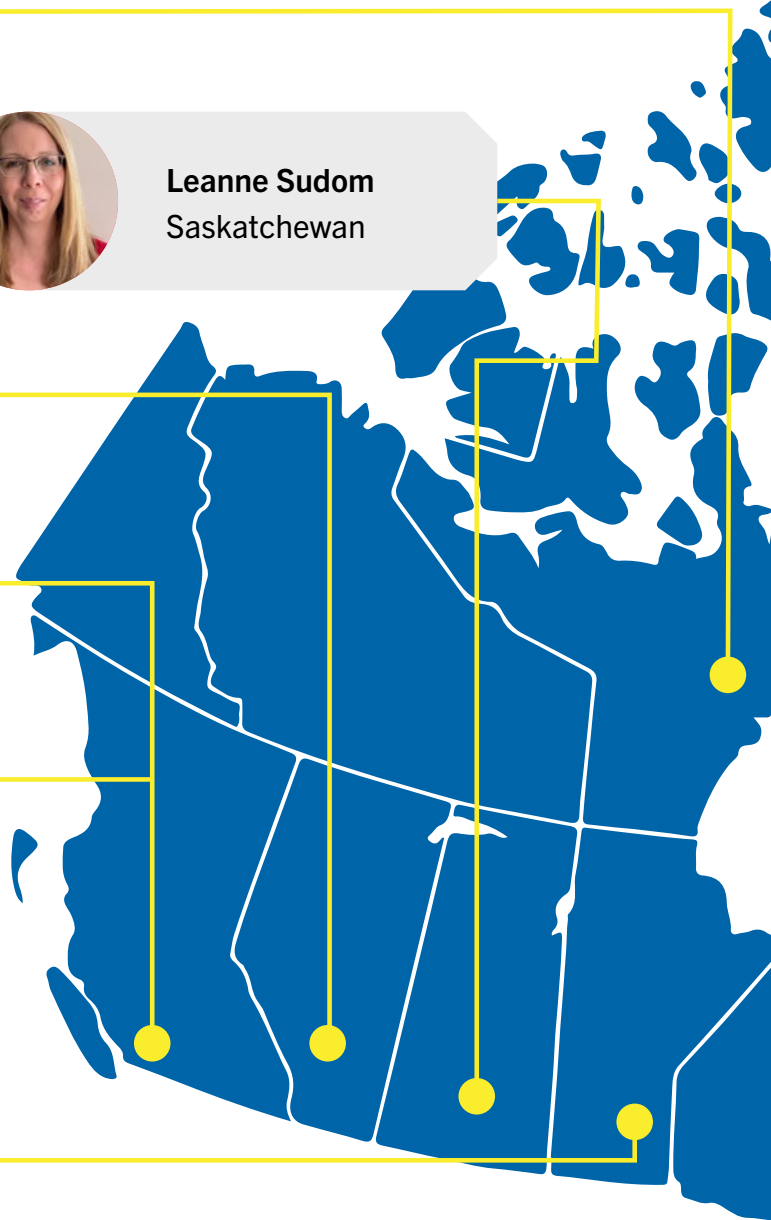
Siena Padulo
Ontario



Leanne Sudom
Saskatchewan



Stacie Carroll
Ontario



of the Year Recipients



Jessica Dinelle
Quebec



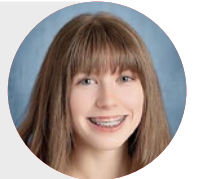
Francine Cabana
Quebec



Melissa Sommerton
Newfoundland
and Labrador



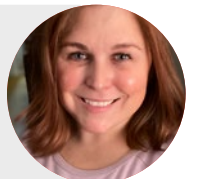
Aylssa Barrett
Newfoundland
and Labrador



Heather Blouin
Prince Edward Island



Christi Budd
Nova Scotia



Noah Eldershaw
Nova Scotia



Jada Joseph
New Brunswick



Beverly Foote
New Brunswick



Three Year RHF School Program Trend

While the number of Ambassador presentations increased this past school year, the presentations were to smaller class sizes as full school assemblies were not possible. Although the amount of youth reached decreased, the engagement amongst students was elevated because of this virtual yet intimate experience. In addition, many RHFSP resources were accessed via the GHM Academy website, which had 89,212 clicks in addition to the downloads from our website. As we pursue new ways of reaching educators and students, we look forward to learning and adapting our strategy.

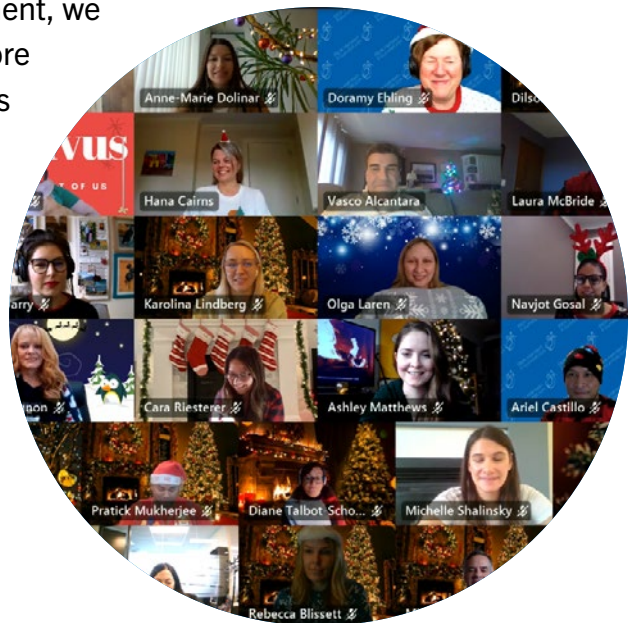
	2018/19 School Year In-Person Format	2019/20 School Year In-Person Format	2020/21 School Year Virtual Only Format
Ambassador Presentations Delivered	260	341	475
RHFSP Resource Downloads	1,117	5,328	2,370
Students Reached via Ambassador Presentations	38,000	60,000	29,886

RHF's Commitment to Inclusion

The Rick Hansen Foundation prioritizes culture in line with strategy. This focus is more important than ever before as more of us are working remotely. Our head office in Richmond, British Columbia has effectively remained closed since March 2020 but our Culture and Social Committees stepped up to the challenge of connection and came up with creative ways to virtually support the RHF team during the pandemic. The Committees created a number of online check-ins, such as a regular Coffee with the CEO and a fitness challenge based on the Canadian leg of Rick's original Man In Motion World Tour as a template for exercise. Commitment to the well-being of the staff included mental health and wellness seminars and resources.

We developed an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee this year and publicized our commitment on our website. While the core values of the Foundation encompass the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion of all people, we recognize there is more we can and should do to create a future free of prejudice and hatred – a truly intersectional and inclusive world no matter your age, sexual orientation, gender, race or ability. Ensuring that our partners include disability and accessibility as part of their Diversity, Equity and Inclusion strategies is also something we continue to advocate for as it's often not prioritized as part of an organization's value statement.

As part of RHF's continuing quest for improvement, we instigated an organization-wide review of our core values - the fundamental ethics that connect us to our work. Through this process we defined and re-committed to our shared values and the RHF mission of building an inclusive world where people with disabilities are living to their full potential. "Nothing about us without us" was a guiding principle for people that identify as having a disability, who currently make up 37% of our staff.



A Letter from the Treasurer

While the global pandemic has presented many unknowns, a constant for the Rick Hansen Foundation is remaining accountable to our generous supporters as we work towards removing barriers so people of all abilities can fully participate in society.

We are grateful to have received a \$2 million gift from long-time friends of the Foundation, George and Annabelle Gaffney, to support the Foundation's critical work. George lent his professional expertise from his years as Executive Vice President at the Royal Bank to support RHF's Board of Directors for more than 30 years. We are saddened by George's passing this spring, and we look forward to honouring our long-time friend's legacy for years to come.

As we continue to cope with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Foundation gratefully acknowledges assistance from the Canadian government in the form of the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy and the Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy.

Thanks to funding from the Government of British Columbia, RHF's BC Accessibility Grants program provided funding to 219 projects for accessibility upgrades. We also thank the Government of Ontario, which provided \$1.3 million for 250 buildings to get complimentary ratings through the RHF Accessibility Certification™ program.

I am pleased that the Foundation maintains its accreditation with Imagine Canada. This national organization sets the highest possible standards of accountability for registered charities and non-profits.

In our ongoing commitment to fiscal responsibility and transparency as we work to advance accessibility across Canada, the Board has approved a continued investment laid out in a two year Strategic Plan that sets a tone for innovation and growth as we continue to serve the people of Canada who are living with disabilities.



Eric Watt, FCPA, FCA
Treasurer, Board of Directors
Rick Hansen Foundation



Statement of Financial Position as of March 31, 2021

Assets	2021 \$	2020 \$
Current Assets		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	10,185,608	9,108,968
Accounts Receivable	600,681	189,762
Interest Receivable	86,443	140,887
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	274,300	466,295
	<u>11,147,032</u>	<u>9,905,912</u>
Investments – at fair value	6,248,122	5,167,373
Capital Assets	140,484	193,304
UBC Endowment Rights	-	60,323
Intellectual Property Rights	1,800,000	1,800,000
	<u>19,335,638</u>	<u>17,126,912</u>

Liabilities and Net Assets	2021 \$	2020 \$
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	1,309,794	861,036
Deferred Contributions	9,596,465	9,331,926
	<u>10,906,259</u>	<u>10,192,962</u>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted	2,390,571	1,895,838
Internally Restricted	5,905,240	4,904,544
Endowment	133,568	133,568
	<u>8,429,379</u>	<u>6,933,950</u>
	<u>19,335,638</u>	<u>17,126,912</u>

Please refer to our full set of audited financial statements at rickhansen.com.

Statement of Operations

for the year ended March 31, 2021

Revenue	2021 \$	2020 \$
Government and Other Grants	5,830,499	6,251,829
Sponsorships and Donations	3,361,526	2,550,882
Investment Income	1,015,333	1,237,187
Other	575,017	529,469
	<u>10,782,375</u>	<u>10,569,367</u>

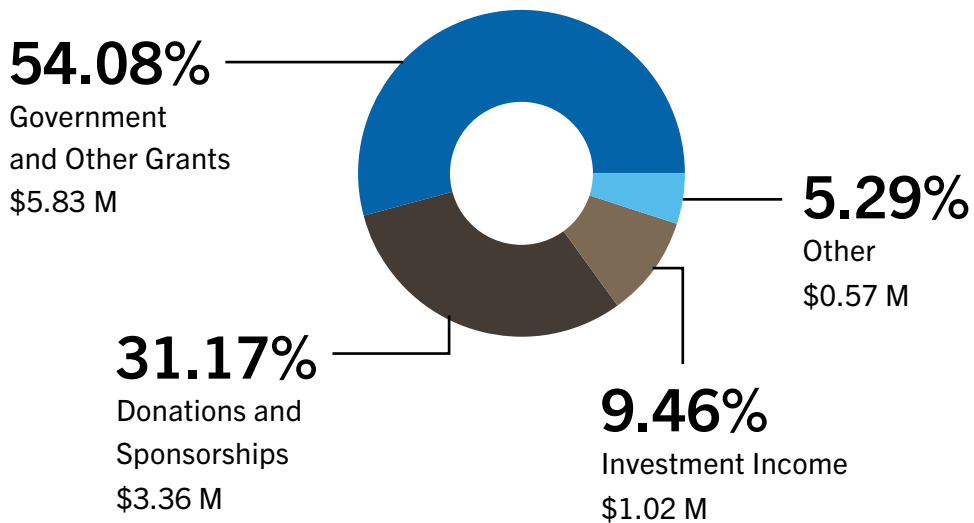
Expenses	2021 \$	2020 \$
Research	1,878,902	2,183,003
Accessibility	3,783,484	3,528,840
Education and Outreach	1,121,200	1,166,940
Awareness	1,789,253	1,987,052
Other	24,561	94,000
Total Programs	<u>8,597,400</u>	<u>8,959,835</u>
Fundraising	591,127	583,792
Management and Administration	1,050,927	1,235,465
	<u>10,239,454</u>	<u>10,779,092</u>
Surplus (Deficiency) of Revenue Over Expenses Before the Undernoted Items	542,921	(209,725)
Fair Value Changes on Investments	947,538	(517,611)
Loss on Disposal of Capital Assets	4,970	-
Surplus (Deficiency) of Revenue over Expenses for the Year	<u>1,495,429</u>	<u>(727,336)</u>

Please refer to our full set of audited financial statements at rickhansen.com.

Revenue for the year ended March 31, 2021

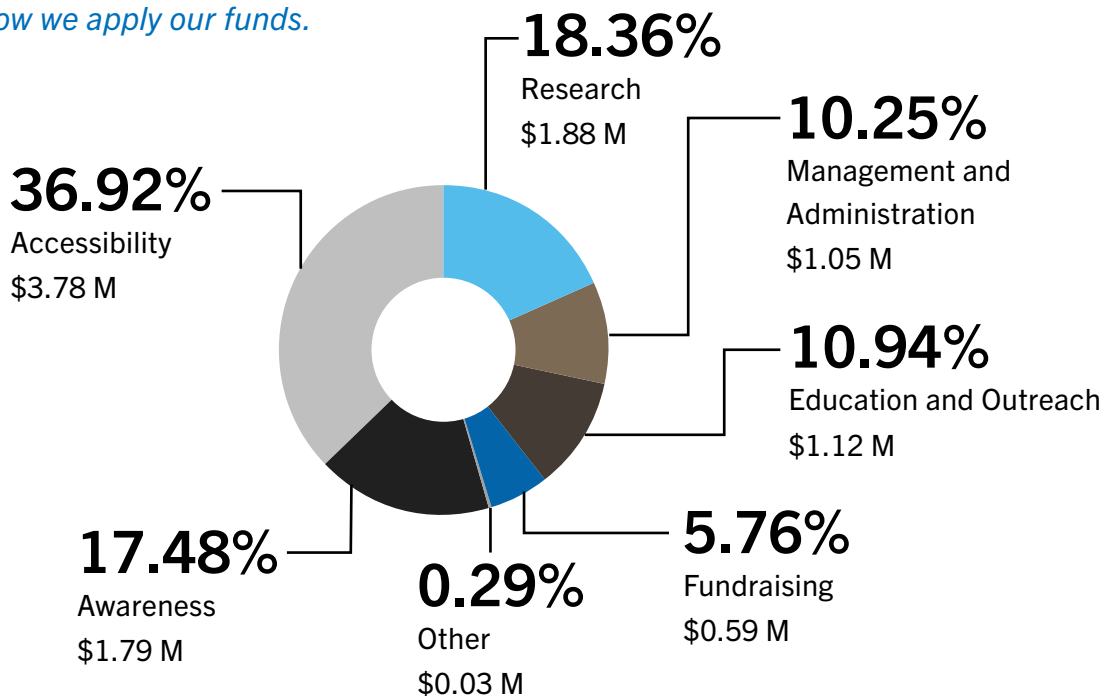
Where our funding comes from.

The Rick Hansen Foundation generates revenue from federal and provincial governments, donations and sponsorships from a wide range of individuals and organizations who support our mission and vision, and earns income on endowments and investments.



Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2021

How we apply our funds.



A Spotlight On: Our Partners and Supporters – Thank you!

We are incredibly grateful to all of the funders, donors, supporters and partners committed to removing barriers for people with disabilities and creating a Canada where everyone can go everywhere.

Thank you!

Federal Funders

Government of Canada

- Canadian Heritage
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Department of Finance Canada

Provincial & Territorial Government Funders

Government of British Columbia

- BC Neurotrauma Fund
- BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

Government of Ontario (Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility)

Government of Nova Scotia (Department of Justice Accessibility Directorate)

Government of Nunavut (Department of Family Services)

Government of Yukon (Department of Health & Social Services)

Community Partners

BC Wheelchair Basketball Society
BC Wheelchair Sports Disability Foundation
ICORD
Inclusion Yukon
Neil Squire Society
Pan Canadian Disability Coalition
Spinal Cord Injury BC
Spinal Cord Injury Canada
University of British Columbia
Vancouver Coastal Health Society

VGH & UBC Hospital Foundation

Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility

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THE GOODER FOUNDATION



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Rick Hansen Foundation Board of Directors

The RHF Board of Directors are made up of ten directors plus Treasurer, Secretary and Chair. They are appointed for a three year term and the composition is reviewed on an annual basis. To learn more about the RHF Board of Directors, please visit RickHansen.com.

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Secretary

Perry Goldsmith

Treasurer

Eric Watt, FCPA, FCA

George Gaffney

Ida Chong, FCPA, FCGA

Amanda Hansen

Lyall Knott, QC

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Annette Aquin, CPA, CA

Stanis Smith



Rick Hansen Foundation

300–3820 Cessna Drive, Richmond, B.C. Canada V7B 0A2

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