



Community Report

MISSION

The Community Foundation of Central Alberta is a community catalyst committed to building a legacy which strengthens the quality of life in Red Deer and the surrounding areas.

2024-
2025

Letter from Leadership

AS WE REFLECT ON THE PAST YEAR, ONE CENTRAL THEME HAS GUIDED OUR WORK AT THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: SUSTAINABILITY FOR CHARITIES, FOR COMMUNITIES, AND FOR CENTRAL ALBERTA AS A WHOLE.

Erin Peden &
Krista Nymark
Vandenbrink



This year, we focused on equipping local charities and their leadership teams with the knowledge and tools to strengthen their financial futures through endowments. We were thrilled to witness several charitable agencies take meaningful steps toward building their own endowment funds, recognizing how these funds reduce reliance on unpredictable grant opportunities and safeguard against mission drift. These organizations are not only planning for tomorrow, but they are also engaging their supporters today by encouraging their donors to give in a way that creates lasting impact. Like a savings account for their cause, these endowments offer donors the opportunity to 'plan for tomorrow' while still supporting the present.

As part of our 35th anniversary celebrations, we travelled across rural Central Alberta to visit the communities that make this region so special. In each place, we were reminded of the strength that comes from neighbours helping neighbours. We were also reminded of the very real and growing challenges facing our region including rural isolation, limited access to transportation for medical appointments, and a severe shortage of affordable housing. These visits were not just commemorative, they were informative. They sharpened our understanding of what our communities need and reaffirmed why local, responsive philanthropy matters.

On a personal note, one of the most meaningful moments for me this year was seeing the Rotary Club of Red Deer reignite their commitment to the Rotary Career Opportunity Awards.

Since 1997, their endowment with the Community Foundation has provided over \$737,000 in bursaries to local students pursuing post-secondary education in Alberta. This year, the club took another bold step forward, choosing to grow that endowment to ensure even more students get the hand up they need to access education in an increasingly expensive landscape.

On June 11, 2025, I sat beside Krista Nymark VandenBrink as she chaired her last board meeting. While we will continue to rely on the breadth and depth of Krista's Foundation knowledge as she remains on the Board in the role of past-chair for the next two years, I want to take a moment to publicly thank her for her incredible commitment to this movement. As a leader, Krista prioritizes empathy, listening, stewardship, and the development of the team – which, in my humble opinion – is why our Board of Directors and administration team continue to perform as highly as possible. Thank you, Krista, for your beautiful demonstration of servant leadership.

This year has been a powerful reminder of the enduring strength that comes from long-term thinking and collaborative action. Whether you are a donor, a community partner, a grant recipient, or a volunteer, thank you. Your belief in the future of Central Alberta inspires everything we do.

ERIN PEDEN,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



VISION

The Community Foundation of Central Alberta will continue to be financially sound (self-sustaining & growing) and will be widely known for its relevance and leadership in the pursuit of a healthy community.

WHAT WE DO

We invest the donations we receive to be held forever in an endowment. Each year we disburse the income we make on that investment to charitable organizations and projects.

Currently, we have over \$20million in pooled assets. The larger our pool grows, the more funding we can make available to respond to the needs within our communities.

And because we never touch the principal, there will always be granting dollars available.

We are the community's saving account

BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2024-25

Krista Nymark VandenBrink: Chair,
Danielle Graham: Vice-Chair,
Stacey Poier: Treasurer,
Lori Dufresne, Austin Janes,
Maureen Janke, Dan McPherson,
Martin Palindat, Greg Shea,
Tanya Schur, Dax Williams

New name, new look

same commitment to building community wealth

In June 2024, after careful consideration and just in time for our 35th anniversary, the Red Deer & District Community Foundation became the Community Foundation of Central Alberta.

Why the change? We understand that accurate representation is essential, especially when it comes to building trust and understanding within the areas that we serve.

Our new name aligns more closely with our true reach, and better reflects who we serve, while still prioritizing our identity as a Community Foundation.

We remain dedicated to our mission of strengthening the quality of life in Central Alberta. In fact, this new name will allow us to continue our work with agencies and donors in Red Deer, while allowing us to enhance our connections with rural communities even further.

We are thrilled about this update, and we believe that this change will bring clarity to our role for donors, agencies, and community members throughout Central Alberta.



The CFCAB logo includes a circle to represent the circle of giving, the sustainability of endowed philanthropy, and unity between communities.



Highlights at a Glance

Total Assets:

20.9 million

as of December 31, 2024

Total Funds:

180+

Total Grants:

1.3 million

Total Securities Received:

1.2 million

Community Tour

Delivered over \$40,000 to ten communities

Film Screening

Partnered with local agencies to host Pride vs Prejudice screening

Philanthropy Event

Partnering in Philanthropy saw over 20 agencies showcased

Needs Showcased

Launched a Giving Hub to highlight community needs

Grants

Women & Girls Grant awarded \$8,680

Grants

Volunteer Central Legacy Grant awarded to two agencies

Grants

16 agencies received Microgrants in 2024

Grants

Aspire Bus replacement funded at \$22,954.42

Smart Giving

"The Community Foundation ensures safe investments, supports strong and healthy communities, and provides expertise in philanthropy."

Rick Tallas, RDRN Board Chair

RED DEER RIVER NATURALISTS ENDOWMENT FUND FOR NATURE

The Red Deer River Naturalists (RDRN) received a donation of \$500,000 from a generous and forward-thinking donor. As per the wishes of the donor, this marketable securities donation was allocated to the Red Deer River Naturalists Fund for Nature, an endowment fund held with the Community Foundation of Central Alberta.

"This remarkable donation demonstrates the way that philanthropy can be used as a smart financial strategy for both donors and charities," said Erin Peden, CFCAB Executive Director.



KERRY WOOD NATURE CENTRE PRESCHOOL BUILDING

In an inspiring act of generosity, a \$500,000 donation of securities was made to fund a new preschool building at the Kerry Wood Nature Centre. The transfer of these securities was facilitated by the Community Foundation of Central Alberta, showcasing the power of philanthropy in enhancing educational opportunities. This donation serves as a reminder that investing in our children's future is an investment in our community as a whole.



"The Community Foundation was instrumental in facilitating this gift from our donor. We do not have the financial infrastructure to convert shares to cash. The Community Foundation stepped in and charted the path forward for us."

Todd Nivens, Executive Director of the Waskasoo Environmental Education Society (WEES)



Scholarships

"We have seen remarkable dedication from donors who truly understand the long-term impact of educational access."

Erin Peden, CFCAB Executive Director

\$165,000

Awarded to local students in 2024

2024 SCHOLARSHIPS

The Community Foundation of Central Alberta has made a significant impact in the lives of local students by awarding over \$165,000 in financial awards in 2024. This support comes at a crucial time when rising education costs pose significant challenges for many families. By providing these scholarships, the Foundation helps to alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with pursuing higher education, allowing students to focus on their academic and career goals.

"We have seen remarkable dedication from donors who truly understand the long-term impact of educational access," said Erin Peden, CFCAB Executive Director.

"From powerful memorial scholarships that are creating beautiful legacies, to family scholarships that support students in specific communities, these financial awards ensure that more students can access education and create a brighter future for themselves and their communities."

Erin Peden, CFCAB Executive Director

Read more here:



"We were interested in the ability to invest in something that would continue beyond our lifetimes."

Eileen Ford, co-founder of the Ford Family Scholarship

FORD FAMILY SCHOLARSHIP FOR PENHOLD CROSSING STUDENTS

Ten years ago, a community-minded family established a scholarship fund that would change the lives of many students in their community, and now we are celebrating the impact of the first decade of that fund.

The scholarship was initiated by the Ford family's belief that education is the basis of success, change, and the chance for a better life.

\$245,000

Awarded to students over 10 years by Ford Family Scholarship

Read more here:



Planning for the Future

Investing in endowments to cultivate a sustainable funding source

SYLVAN LAKE SENIORS OPEN ENDOWMENT FUND

In 2024, a group of forward-thinking citizens opened the Sylvan Lake Seniors Association Endowment Fund, a new fund focused on building a long-term funding structure to support the important work of the Sylvan Lake Seniors Association.

The Sylvan Lake Seniors Association is committed to growing the fund to eventually develop a predictable stream of revenue. This will help to ensure the longevity of their mission to “provide for the recreation, social well-being, and artistic expression of seniors of Sylvan Lake and area and to contribute to the education and social well-being of the community.”

BEQUEST SUPPORTS THE FUTURE OF MUSIC

A bequest of \$50,000 was donated to the Red Deer Symphony Orchestra (RDSO), marking a significant contribution to the future sustainability of the organization. With long-term sustainability in mind, the RDSO Board of Directors made the prudent decision to allocate this donation to the Lapalme Legacy Fund, an RDSO endowment fund held at the Community Foundation of Central Alberta.

By directing funds into the endowment, the Symphony will benefit from interest income that will help sustain its operations and programs over time. This approach not only provides immediate benefits but also secures long-term growth and stability for the organization.

Read more here: 

“This endowment provides the opportunity for true organizational sustainability by establishing a baseline of regular operational funding each year.

Matthew Whitfield,
RDSO Executive Director



Read more here: 

Connecting with Community

CFCAB distributed 25 grants to ten Central Alberta communities

The Community Foundation celebrated a significant milestone by taking its 35th anniversary celebrations directly to the communities it serves. The Community Tour saw the Foundation hit the road throughout Central Alberta, visiting eight local communities with coffee, treats, and most importantly, open ears ready to listen. These stops provided invaluable opportunities to connect with residents and understand their unique perspectives on what makes their communities special and what challenges they face.

On this tour, one thing stood out: a profound sense of care among residents who are working to ensure that their communities are thriving places where everyone feels they belong.

Read more here: 



The Community Foundation reinforced its commitment to these communities by awarding 25 grants totaling \$41,650 to organizations across ten communities during the tour. This direct investment, combined with the insights gained from community conversations, will help inform the Foundation's ongoing efforts to support meaningful change throughout Central Alberta.

\$41,650

Awarded to 25 agencies

Grantmakers Among Us

" I think we all realized that the work of the Community Foundation is incredibly rewarding, but also incredibly hard work because these are very hard decisions."

Dan McPherson CFCAB Board Director



Read more here:

CFCAB BOARD AWARDS GRANT

In a hands-on exercise to welcome newly elected members to the CFCAB Board of Directors, the group chose to award a grant of \$5,000 to the Olds Municipal Library for its innovative Library of Things. This unique community asset allows patrons to borrow items such as tools, games, instruments, small appliances, recreation equipment, arts and crafts supplies, and more.

The process of selecting the grant recipient gave new Board Members an in-depth understanding of the granting process. New members pitched a local agency to the group, and the group engaged in a collaborative process where the merits of all the pitches were discussed, using the pillars in the Community Foundation's Strategic Plan as guideposts.

SYLVAN LAKE

This year, four agencies were awarded grants from the Sylvan Lake Community Endowment Fund, for a total of \$13,600 given to agencies working to support Sylvan Lake residents. The grant recipients for 2024 were:

- Bethany Care Foundation
- Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter
- Shalom Counselling Centre of Alberta
- Sylvan Lake Community Partners Association

Read more here:

YOUTH IN PHILANTHROPY

St. Martin de Porres School has participated in Youth in Philanthropy since 2018, and has donated over \$20,000 to local charities. Incredible work!

In 2025, Mattie McCullough Elementary School also embraced the challenge of becoming young philanthropists.

Read more here:





Total Disbursements
for 2024:
\$1.3 million

Grants by the Numbers



991
thousand



Flow
Through



104
thousand



Designated



168
thousand



Scholarships



22
thousand



Donor
Advised



37
thousand



Field of
Interest



60
thousand



Community
Grants



Community Foundation
of Central Alberta

HOW CAN YOU HELP TO BUILD A COMMUNITY WHERE EVERYONE BELONGS?

2024 Audited Financial
Statements available here:



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