



# **Western**

**COMMUNITIES FOUNDATION**

## **Report of Community Giving**

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Working together to build strong  
and vibrant communities



## Message from Western Communities Foundation Director

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The best thing about us is you!

For 18 years, the Western Communities Foundation, the charitable arm of Western Financial Group, has been caring for the communities where our people live, work, and play through our four giving programs: Infrastructure and Matching Grants, Goal Achievers Community program, and our Western Inspirational Awards.

Thanks to our employees, customers, friends, family, and local organizations, we have been able to contribute more than \$3.6 million to hundreds of local projects and initiatives that our communities and our people care about.

Our communities value the support we provide and are flourishing because of your passion and dedication. Through the creation of new parks, libraries, community centres, or the acquisition of new equipment, tools, and resources, we are caring for our communities and providing local opportunities for growth, revitalization, safe spaces, and education.

We are proud of the work we are doing to make our communities better. I'm especially proud of the passion and dedication of our people at Western and our friends in the community that has made the Foundation's work possible. In the report that follows, we share stories of your work in action.

It is because of you that we have been so successful; thank you for being part of our story. I look forward to continuing to create strong and vibrant communities with you.



**Laurette LaPlante, Director**  
*Western Communities Foundation*

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Laurette LaPlante'. Below the signature is a horizontal line.

*“Our communities value the support we provide  
and are flourishing because of your contributions”*



## Western Communities Foundation Board of Directors

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Left to Right: Scott Tannas, Kenny Nicholls, Tom Dutton, Linda Tamboline, Jennifer Huard, Laurette LaPlante, Nancy Green, Don Tannas & Joe Sirianni

# The Sound of Happiness

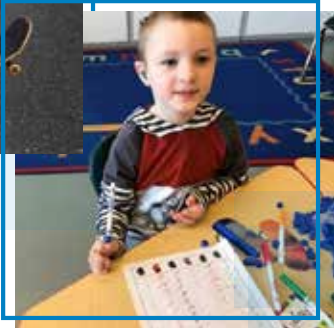
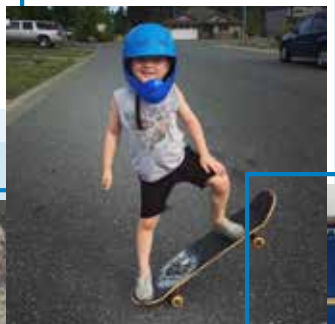
As part of the Western Communities Foundation's Goal Achiever program, our team members at Western Coast Insurance Services in B.C. raised and contributed \$2,325 to Help Fill A Dream to purchase hearing aids that improved the life of young Bentley. The impact of this support is evident in all parts of his life as expressed by his mother and we think that his smile says it all!

**Because of you,**  
we were able to contribute to over  
1,000 projects

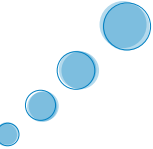


*Because of Help Fill A Dream and the Western Communities Foundation, Bentley was able to receive the proper devices for his hearing aids just in time for kindergarten! Knowing that he is receiving all the information while in class gives us a huge sense of relief; he is thriving in his first year," said Bentley's mom, Ashley. "No matter what activity he is doing, we can communicate clearly with him through his Rogers select device. We are forever grateful for the gift we received from the program. It has truly helped him not only with his hearing but with his confidence.*

Our community partners at Help Fill a Dream make it possible for kids like Bentley to just be kids. Craig Smith, Help Fill a Dream's Executive Director, explains their mission and shared excitement and appreciation for the impact we've had on Bentley's life.



**Dream**  
Hearing Aids, FM  
System and Receiver

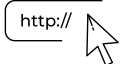


Name: Bentley  
Age: 6 yrs  
Condition: Bilateral  
Progressive Sensorineural  
Hearing Loss



*It's often the smallest things that can make the biggest difference to a child. Imagine the world that opened to Bentley upon receiving his hearing aids. He now gets to be just a normal kid; not feeling left out or hindered by a lack of hearing. We are thrilled that he is thriving in school and that these small devices have played a major role in boosting his confidence," shares Craig Smith, Help Fill a Dream's Executive Director.*

*Part of our mission is to allow kids to be kids, no matter what health or medical challenges they face, by removing any barriers that prevent them from doing so. We are only able to do this with the generous support of our community partners like the Western Communities Foundation; thank you for letting us help kids like Bentley. The passion of the team is obvious, their enthusiasm is infectious, and their thoughtfulness unequalled.*



Visit [helpfilladream.com](http://helpfilladream.com) to learn more about who they are and what we do, together.

## Joining forces to provide nutritious meals for youth

Employees at Western Financial Group's head office took on a very special project in the organization's hometown of High River, Alberta. Partnering with High River's Food for Thought, a volunteer-run organization with a mission to ensure every child has access to a healthy lunch at school, The Foundation contributed \$9,000 as part of our Matching Grant program to ensure children in its' community can focus on school and not on hungry bellies.

During the 16th Annual National Walk to Support the Cause, staff at our head office in High River, AB raised over \$18,000—half of which was presented to Food for Thought; a non-profit organization picked by the Western head office team themselves. The remaining funds support additional programs through our charity, including infrastructure grants.



*"Food for Thought helps fuel our youth in more than just a nutritious lunch. It gives these kids the start to the day they deserve," Laurette LaPlante, Foundation Director.*

The support of Food for Thought extends beyond the donation. Employees from Western Financial Group's head office roll up their sleeves every year and spend time with Food for Thought volunteers to experience the impact of this program in person. The team is always eager to lend a hand at the community kitchen and learn a lot about the dedication and value of this volunteer-run program in our local communities.



**Because of you,**  
we were able to contribute  
\$150,000 to Habitat for Humanity

<http://>



Visit [hrfoodforthought.ca](http://hrfoodforthought.ca) to learn more about who they are and what we do, together.

## It Takes a Village

The beautiful community of Souris, located in Glenwood, MB, is special for a few reasons. With a population of just 1,876, this little town makes a big impact on the community with the help of dedicated volunteers coming together to support businesses, families, and individuals in times of need by utilizing all our programs.



*“It makes me proud to be part of an organization that gives back to the people I wave to while walking my dog, that I chat with at the grocery store, or that sit down with me face-to-face to take care of their insurance needs.” Kenzie Thomson, Insurance Advisor.*

The Western Financial Group branch in Souris has been supporting the Western Communities Foundation for more than 16 years. Throughout the years, they’ve supported numerous projects—both big and small, but most notably, they helped the Souris Glenwood Fire Department raise enough funds to replace their aging rescue vehicle. This hit home for Chris Quigley, an insurance advisor who was in a minor accident in early 2019. Chris was delighted to see that the work she had done on this project was benefiting community members, like herself.

**Because of you,**  
we were able to award 1,050 Western  
Inspirational Awards to deserving students



*“There have been so many projects in our community that we are proud to say we have assisted in that we are now approached to help with almost every project that comes up!” Bonnie Radcliffe, Insurance Advisor.*

From projects spreading Christmas cheer to ones that help purchase a fire truck, there are many reasons that these residents – and Western employees – support the Western Communities Foundation in caring for our communities.

*“Giving back is in our DNA and it’s what makes Western a great place to work. We truly care about our neighbours and communities, and we want to see them thrive.” Cali Peace, Foundation Coordinator.*

## I am Able

*Our division in Ontario, Axiom Insurance, has supported Ability Online for 22 years – an organization that offers a safe space for kids, teens, young adults, professionals, and parents, with diverse ABILITIES to connect with each other. This is the story of Hailey, an Ability Online member.*

19-year-old Hailey has been a member of Ability Online for over two years now. Her physical and cognitive challenges often leave her feeling isolated from her peers. However, in a text-based online platform like Ability Online, Hailey “looks” like everyone else and has no problem fitting in.

About six months after joining the online community, Ability Online learned that this haven offered Hailey a whole new world. In the beginning, her anxiety and fear of being teased for making social mistakes forced her to be accompanied by her mother while online. Despite her initial apprehension, Hailey continued to interact with peers and was welcomed with open arms. She felt like a valued member of the community right from the beginning.



Hailey and her sister Courtney  
(photo courtesy of the Toronto Star, 2017)

With two hours of newly offered independence, Hailey now shares her “news” with her community each week. Her social skills have improved dramatically, along with her confidence and self-esteem. Hailey even initiates discussions in the online forums, posting and responding to messages from other members. She particularly enjoys the weekly Monday night “Live Chat” event where young adult members, and volunteers, gather in the chat room to socialize and catch up on the past week’s events. Hailey has not missed one Monday event. One time, she even joined from Nova Scotia while on a family vacation.

Having a non-judgmental, supportive, and peer-to-peer community can have a huge impact on young people who are socially isolated due to their disability or health challenges. Ability Online has thousands of members, like Hailey, who benefit from the security and camaraderie offered to members. Their volunteers and mentors help ensure that everyone has a positive online experience every time they “sign on”. It is evident from the messages exchanged that volunteers get as much out of the experience as members do!

**Because of you,**  
we were able to install 48 Automated  
External Defibrillators in communities

http://



Visit [abilityonline.org](http://abilityonline.org) to learn more about who they are and what we do, together.

## 2019 Western Inspirational Award Winner

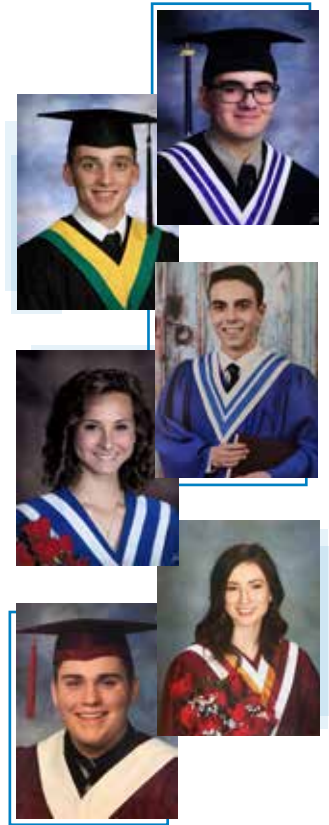
The Western Communities Foundation awards its Western Inspirational Award annually to a local student who has displayed outstanding community and/or school spirit, has demonstrated inspirational conduct and has overcome adversity. The following is a story about one of many Western Inspirational Award winners. To respect her privacy, we will keep her identity anonymous.

Rolling through life on four wheels, this recipient spends much of her time promoting equality for the disabled community through public speaking events and wheelchair basketball activities. At the young age of eight, she was finding her voice and learning to advocate for those around her.

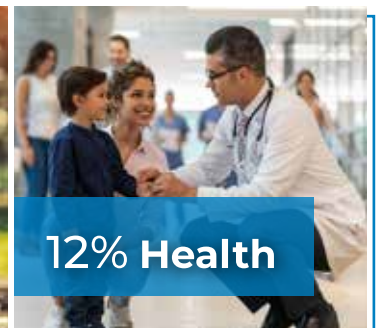
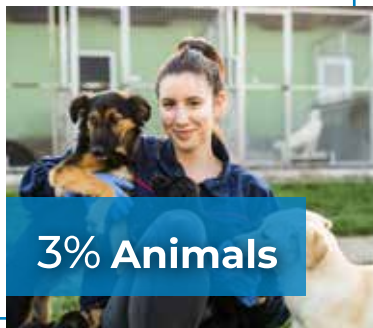
In 2017, she participated in the Rick Hansen Youth Leadership Summit where young leaders from all over Canada came together to learn how individuals can make the world a better place for everyone, despite their challenges. She also joined Rick Hansen on his "Many in Motion" Tour advocating on behalf of disabled children, where she was the youngest person to ever be awarded the Rick Hansen Difference Maker Medal!

Her passion for women's and human rights opened the doors for her to participate in her school's team leadership program and Minerva's "Learning to Lead" Leadership Conference for young women, where she developed her influencer skills by the Rotary RYLE Leadership Camp and the Leadership Camp on Vancouver Island. Her new-found skills have helped her teach students in her hometown, from grades two to 12, that asking for help (through mobility aid or otherwise) doesn't make us weak, it shows our strength and conviction.

Continuing to use her voice, she had the honour to compete provincially for public speaking at Skills Canada, where she placed first and will be able to represent British Columbia at the national competition in May 2020. We wish her all the best as we cheer from the sidelines!



## Where We Give



No matter how, or where, you choose to make your contributions to our cause, rest assured that your support is put to good use! Three ways to be part of our story:

1. Visit your local branch page on [westerngives.ca](http://westerngives.ca) to learn about what your community is doing through WCF
2. Donate to the Western Communities Foundation
3. Considering becoming a corporate sponsor or golf classic sponsor

# Thank you

for supporting our work and for helping us create a community we can all be proud of.

http://



Visit [westerngives.ca](http://westerngives.ca) to learn more about who we are and what we do, together.

## Thank you to our 2019 sponsors

### Platinum



### Silver



### Bronze



The Western Communities Foundation is proudly supported by these divisions of Western Financial Group

