

Live, Work & Play without Barriers

2019/20 ANNUAL REPORT



CNIB
FOUNDATION

MISSION

To change what it is to be blind through innovative programs and powerful advocacy that enable Canadians impacted by blindness to live the lives they choose.

Values: Collaboration | Empowerment | Inclusiveness | Innovation | Integrity | Passion

STRATEGIC AMBITIONS

#1 Boosting participation in the world of work

A job is so much more than just a paycheque: it's a means to self-reliance, a source of identity and pride and a gateway to a brighter future. From the moment children are old enough to dream what they'll be when they grow up, through every stage of their education and careers, we're fuelling their ambitions and championing their equal participation in the world of work.

#2 Unleashing the power of technology

Technology can level the playing field for people who are blind or partially sighted, but only when it's accessible, available and affordable. We're fighting to connect people of all ages with the cutting-edge technology they need and want and helping them build the skills to capitalize on its potential.

#3 Driving achievement and equality

Life is a beautiful, wonderful, complicated thing. Life with blindness should be no different. We're empowering people who are blind or partially sighted to lead independent, active lives and chase their dreams - and we're smashing the stigma and barriers that stand in their way.

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Believing in a limitless future



We're taking bold action to create the bright future that Canadians impacted by blindness want, expect and deserve. Together, we're working toward true equality, universal accessibility and absolute inclusion.

Through **Come to Work**, we've partnered with 30 employers to create full-time/part-time/contract work and paid internships/returnships, and we have 400 talent pool members, with a quarter of them employed. For those interested in entrepreneurship, we've created the **Venture Zone Game**, an app where players learn business skills.

We're continuing to connect participants with technology through **Phone It Forward**, a program that provides smartphones to Canadians with sight loss. This year, we also worked with **Microsoft Canada** to help facilitate beta testing of Soundscape, an app that empowers users to explore the world through a 3D audio experience.

We welcomed a quintessentially Canadian icon to champion our cause. In November, **Ben Mulroney** joined the CNIB Foundation family as our brand ambassador.

Three years ago, we opened our very first **CNIB Community Hub** in Toronto. Today, we also have dynamic spaces in Kingston, London, Montreal, Ottawa, and Sudbury.

As part of Guide Dog Awareness Month, we encouraged everyone to become **Guide Dog Champions** to raise awareness about the rights of guide dog teams and the legal responsibilities of business owners. In November, **CNIB Guide Dogs** celebrated the Class of 2019 with 25 partnerships.

In 2019, Bill C-81 - **the Accessible Canada Act** - received Royal Assent by the Governor General. The passing of this historic legislation will require the Government of Canada and organizations under federal jurisdiction to ensure public spaces, workplaces, employment services and information are accessible.

But none of this would be possible without you - our supporters, participants, volunteers, partners, and champions. **Thank you for believing in a limitless future for people with sight loss** and working with us to transform our communities into beacons of accessibility and inclusion, where everyone can live, work and play without barriers.

John M. Rafferty
President & CEO

Robert Penner
Chair, National Board of Directors

Our response to a global pandemic

When we started to understand the harsh reality of COVID-19, our team had a decision to make; to take shelter and come out when it is safe again, or rush to the front line and do everything we can to minimize the impact on the people we serve. I am proud to say, we chose the latter and **faced the challenge head on.**

As an organization with a mandate to remove barriers for Canadians impacted by blindness and provide them with the tools they need to live the lives they choose, we knew the need for our programs would be at an all-time high during this unprecedented time of isolation.

In March, we committed to calling more than **10,000 participants** to check in and ask how we could help. The response resulted in the creation of hundreds of new virtual programs for thousands of Canadians - and most of these programs are here to stay. Whether it was career support, tech training, youth groups, book clubs, coffee chats, or essential grocery/prescription shopping for those in need, we leveraged every opportunity to ensure our community stayed connected and felt supported.

Those thousands of conversations led to advocacy initiatives, including a campaign to highlight the impracticality of physical distancing for many Canadians with sight loss, which resulted in significant media coverage and social media engagement.

This is just the beginning. We'll continue to adapt to meet the evolving needs of our community.



Angela Bonfanti

Senior Vice President, Programs

Meet Mary & Kristin

When Nova Scotia's Mary Cogswell was matched with Kristin, a medical student at Dalhousie University, there was an instant connection. Since 2014, Kristin has been visiting Mary and providing sighted assistance as part of our Vision Mate program.

"Mary is awesome, she's been the best part of volunteering," explains Kristin. "She has such a great personality. It's really nice to have a friend like her."

Since COVID-19 began, Mary and Kristin call each other more often. Despite the 50-year age gap, they get on like a house on fire. Pandemic or no pandemic, their friendship is here to stay.



Championing accessibility and inclusion



The CNIB Foundation's advocacy efforts seek to drive achievement and equality for Canadians with sight loss. We're proud to work alongside Canadians who are blind or partially sighted to smash the stigma and barriers that stand in their way.

- **Bill C-81 - The Accessible Canada Act - is now law!** This historic legislation will help create a barrier-free Canada. The Government of Canada and organizations under federal jurisdiction are now required to ensure public spaces, workplaces, employment services and information are accessible.
- **Accessibility in the federal election.** We worked with Elections Canada to educate Canadians with sight loss about accessible voting options. We hosted numerous training sessions where attendees tested the accessibility features of the tools provided by Elections Canada.
- **Encouraging the federal government to fund cutting-edge technology.** We launched an advocacy campaign, **#TechNow!**, to ensure all aspects of the federal government are complemented with accessible technology and programs. As part of the campaign, Canadians sent more than 2,000 letters to federal candidates and spoke at local town halls across the country.
- **Advocating for described video.** When three Canadian broadcasters petitioned the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to exempt them from providing described video (DV) to non-Canadian programs, we launched an advocacy campaign. Our efforts resulted in an amended condition of license for Bell Media Inc., Corus Entertainment Inc. and Rogers Media Inc. These Canadian broadcasters must provide DV for primetime programming - except for U.S. programming received less than 24 hours prior to air. We continue to meet with broadcasters to improve access to described video.



Quebec Senator **Marie-Françoise Mégie** pictured with the CNIB Foundation's **Diane Bergeron** & guide dog **Lucy** during consultations for the Accessible Canada Act.

As part of Guide Dog Awareness Month, we launched an advocacy campaign on the access rights of guide dog partnerships. The message: Guide dogs belong everywhere. It's the law. Through digital billboards and transit posters, Canadians were encouraged to show their support for guide dog partnerships by visiting **GuideDogChampions.ca**.

Our staff, volunteers, ambassadors, and advocates encouraged businesses to join the campaign by displaying window decals.

**GUIDE DOGS BELONG
EVERYWHERE.
IT'S THE LAW.**



Creating an accessible Canada

- **As part of the 2020 federal government pre-budget consultations, we recommended the Government of Canada:**
 - » Strengthen Canada's workforce by investing \$3 million over three years in our Come to Work program.
 - » Invest \$40 million in a workplace accessibility fund to form the basis of a national assistive devices program.
 - » Invest \$12 million over four years to transition 13,000 Canadians with print disabilities - who are receiving CDs through Canada Post - to a direct-to-download model using refurbished smartphones.
 - » Donate smartphones to our Phone It Forward program as government-issued smartphones are replaced.
- **We are empowering businesses and organizations to ensure everyone can benefit from barrier-free communities.** CNIB Frontier Accessibility has provided customized solutions for major organizations, including RBC, Service Canada and VIA Rail. The revenue has been directed to the CNIB Foundation.
- **Going above and Beyond Print.** It was an exceptional year for our accessible publishing department, now known as Beyond Print. With 2.7 million braille pages embossed, 550,000 single title CDs burned, 575 new CNIB audio titles and more, we're gaining momentum in the Canadian publishing industry.

CNIB Guide Dogs

- **Class of 2019!** Twenty-five partnerships (14 Guide Dogs, 7 Buddy Dogs & 4 Ambassador Dogs) from across Canada graduated at ceremonies in St. John's, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. All of them were livestreamed on Facebook.
- **Expanding into Western Canada.** Eight future guide dogs are being raised in Calgary and Regina.
- **Guide Dog AdvoCamp.** Generously sponsored by Royal Canin and hosted by CNIB Lake Joe, the inaugural Guide Dog AdvoCamp provided advocacy training as well as canine health and nutrition workshops for handlers across Canada.

"Thank you for giving me my freedom and independence back."

- Tracy Garbutt, Winnipeg



Dollars for Dogs

Sponsoring a puppy was an easy decision for Mary and John Crocker.

"When we learned CNIB Guide Dogs believes everyone who would like to have a guide dog should have that opportunity, regardless of financial circumstances, we decided to become sponsors," says Mary. "It's gratifying to know exactly where our sponsorship contribution goes."

In recognition of their sponsorship, the Crockers had an opportunity to name a dog. They chose Queenie in honour of Mary's beloved childhood dog. Queenie became a Buddy Dog - she's partnered with Mason, a 9-year-old boy with sight loss in Ontario.



After spending five minutes together, Mason exclaimed: "I love Queenie!"

Whether it's feeding, grooming or walking this well-trained family pet, Queenie will give Mason an opportunity to care for a dog before he explores a guide dog partnership.

"Hearing about Mason and his bond with Queenie was so touching. It's a pleasure knowing that our gift provides joy and companionship," says Mary. "We know that Queenie will help Mason prepare for having a guide dog when he's older."



Encouraging children to shine

- **Nearly 50 children entered the Braille Creative Writing Contest!** This competition celebrates braille literacy and encourages participants to flex their creative muscles through stories and poems.
- **We provided accessible content for Canada's largest summer reading program for kids of all ages, all interests, and all abilities: the TD Summer Reading Club.** We transcribed featured books into audio and braille and produced program materials in accessible formats.



Meet Maria & Alina

When BC's Maria Zeldis heard about a children's music program, it sounded like the perfect fit for her seven-year-old daughter, Alina.



"Alina is musically inclined and loves music," says Maria. "We're always trying to find accessible and fun experiences for our daughter."

The program offers parents an opportunity to enjoy music therapy with their children.

"Not only is this program free to attend, but you're in a group with other people, so everyone has an opportunity to connect and socialize," says Maria. "I really appreciate that siblings are welcome. I want Alina to have things to do with her younger siblings."

Through this program, Alina has learned about rhythm and new instruments.

"It's a relief to be able to take Alina somewhere without worrying if other people understand blindness and know how to adapt their programs," says Maria. "This program is super inclusive, and the instructor is fantastic at making the classes accessible to everyone."

Empowering youth to thrive

- **Youth from across Canada honed their leadership skills.** As part of our SCORE (Skills, Confidence & Opportunities through Recreation & Education) program, 12 youth attended workshops to build their independence while developing pre-employment skills in a social setting.
- **We handed out scholarships.** We awarded 30 scholarships (undergraduate and Master's) in recognition of student achievements and academic aspirations.
- **The CNIB National Youth Council expanded its membership.** With 19 members from across Canada, it is the largest council we have ever had!

Meet Curtis

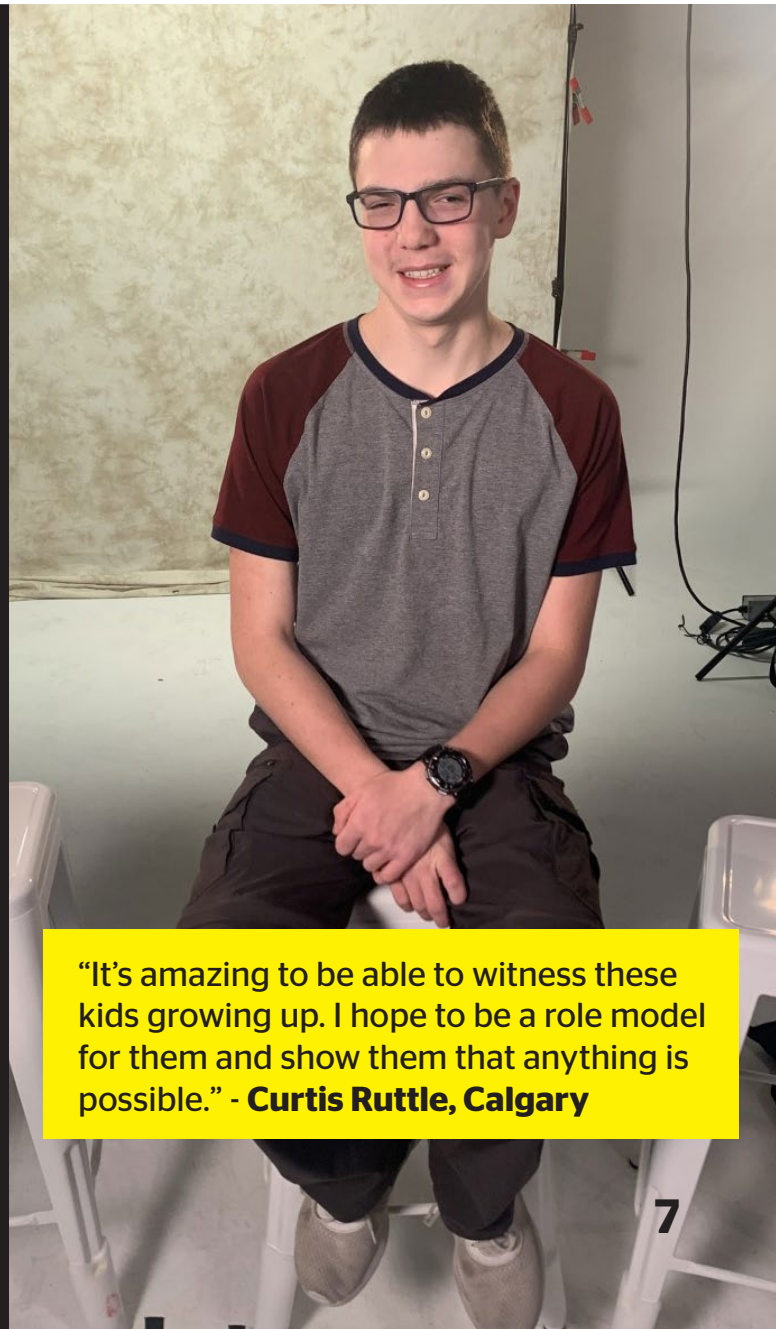
At 15, Alberta's Curtis Ruttle is the youngest person to hold a seat on the CNIB National Youth Council.

"I'm very involved in local advocacy initiatives, and this sounded like a great opportunity to give back on a national scale," says Curtis. "I want to be a part of the change for people who are blind or partially sighted."

The CNIB National Youth Council gives members the chance to influence change and raise awareness about the issues facing young Canadians with sight loss. The council also ensures our programs reflect and respond to the needs of youth participants.

"It's really a collaborative team effort," says Curtis. "This is our community, and we're here to help serve it, together."

When he is not in school, Curtis plays hockey and volunteers with the CNIB Buddy Group, a mentorship program that matches young leaders with children who are blind or partially sighted.



"It's amazing to be able to witness these kids growing up. I hope to be a role model for them and show them that anything is possible." - **Curtis Ruttle, Calgary**



Sharing the magic of summer camp

For Nancy Simonot, volunteering with CNIB Lake Joe is a family affair. The journey began when her son, Matthew, had a life-changing experience as a counsellor.

“Every day he would share these fantastic stories with us about the incredible kids and the activities they were participating in. My husband, Steve, and I knew we had to get involved.”

In the summer of 2015, Nancy’s family held a small party at their cottage on Lake Joe and asked guests to donate to the camp.

“After connecting with CNIB Lake Joe, we thought it would be great if we could host a larger event at the camp to give cottagers a glimpse into the magic of this special place,” says Nancy.

CNIB Lake Joe jumped at the opportunity and the CNIB Muskoka committee - comprised of eight volunteers - has been hosting one of the most anticipated events of the summer ever since.

“It keeps getting bigger and better. CNIB Lake Joe is such a welcoming place that everyone wants to return to and bring their friends and families,” says Nancy.

In addition to her CNIB Muskoka role, Nancy also serves on the CNIB Lake Joe Advisory Board, a volunteer position she has held for three years.

“As an advisory board member, I have a better understanding of all aspects of the camp,” says Nancy. “I have insight into the program offerings, the people we serve, the challenges we face, and I get to see how the fundraising dollars enrich the lives of Canadians with sight loss.”

When she reflects on her time with the organization, it’s all about making a difference.

“The fulfillment you get from volunteering is something you can’t get from anything else,” says Nancy. “At CNIB Lake Joe, you get to see how your efforts are helping to change people’s lives.”

Enriching lives on the shores of Lake Joe



Before visiting CNIB Lake Joe, Emma Van Dyk had never met other kids with sight loss.

“When we arrived, we were given a tour by someone with sight loss. Later, we noticed a person who was blind teaching a yoga class,” says Emma’s mom, Michelle. “We could not believe this magical place existed!”



At CNIB Lake Joe, everyone can enjoy canoeing, kayaking, waterskiing, swimming, sailing, and fishing – and receive skills training, confidence building and ongoing support from a community that understands sight loss.

After witnessing a camp counsellor with low vision lead an activity, Emma looked up at her mother with a giant smile and exclaimed ‘I have found my people’.

“CNIB Lake Joe gave my daughter the confidence to truly believe she can accomplish anything,” says Michelle. “I can’t express how much CNIB Lake Joe means to us and so many others. It is a place to reconnect and reaffirm that anything is possible.”

In 2019, CNIB Lake Joe welcomed 1,630 guests.

International Learning Retreat – CNIB Lake Joe hosted its first-ever International Learning Retreat for camp professionals serving people with sight loss. Partnering with Enchanted Hills Camp, Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired in the United States, we welcomed guests from Ontario (Camp Frenda), Manitoba (Resource Centre for Manitobans who are Deaf-Blind), Ohio (Cleveland Sight Center & Highbrook Lodge) and California (Guide Dogs for the Blind). Guests discovered new ways to enhance the camp experience and benefitted from community building, resource sharing, problem solving and idea sharing.



Boosting participation in the world of work



- **Thirty employers joined our Come to Work program.** Partner employers provide job seekers with work experience.
- **The Venture Zone Game hit the market!** Created in partnership with Totem Learning Ltd., this app offers an accessible, fun, and risk-free option to gain entrepreneurial experience.
- **Our Come to Work program received \$1 million.** This federal funding connects talent pool members with small and medium-sized enterprises.
- **We launched Connecting the Dots.** Attendees learned about current trends and innovations, networked, and checked out the latest accessible technologies.

Meet Paige

When Saskatchewan's Paige Andreas registered for an employment boot camp with the CNIB Foundation, she had no idea she would be employed by the organization that helped her 'chart her course'.

"I was struggling to find employment. I had been turned down for many jobs because people didn't understand that I just needed simple accommodations," says Paige. "When I heard about the program, I thought to myself - what do I have to lose?"

She describes the boot camp as a structured, career-oriented program that covers everything from resume building to elevator pitches and mock interviews.

"I started volunteering because it allowed me to give back to the organization," says Paige. "After two months, I was offered an internship."

As an intern, she learned about workplace culture, media interviews, and technology. Today, she's a Program Lead with the CNIB Foundation.

"I felt a huge sense of accomplishment because it meant someone saw the value in me and my work. I feel like I'm making an immediate impact on people's lives."

-Paige Andreas, Saskatchewan



Opening doors for talent with sight loss

Made possible by the RBC Foundation in support of RBC Future Launch, the CNIB Foundation's Come to Work program provided internships for seven youth.

"RBC Future Launch is committed to investing in opportunities that help young people attain work experience, grow their networks, develop skills and enhance their mental well-being," says Emily Wright, Manager, Youth Social Impact, RBC Foundation. "The Come to Work program provides that broad spectrum of support for youth living with sight loss."

Come to Work introduces employers to an innovative talent pool of job seekers who are blind or partially sighted.

"Connecting with harder to reach and vulnerable individuals is core to RBC Future Launch, but helping these individuals prepare youth for the changing world of work isn't something RBC can do alone," says Emily. "That's why we're partnering with charitable organizations across the country, including the CNIB Foundation, to help foster change that makes a real difference."

Program participants gain practical work experience, training, and transferrable skills.

"By investing in programs focused on reaching youth and preparing them for the next phase of their life, we're supporting Canada's prosperity," says Emily. "I'm excited to see what the future has in store for the Come to Work program and encourage more employers to support it."

Unleashing the power of technology

- **Our Phone It Forward program** celebrated its 1st anniversary! Your donations have helped us connect more than 450 Canadians with smartphones.
- **Joining forces with Microsoft.** We worked with Microsoft to facilitate beta testing of Soundscape, an app that empowers users to explore the world through a 3D audio experience.
- **Opening doors to more accessible technologies.** By fostering partnerships with various organizations - including Eschenbach, eSight, Humanware, and more - we are ensuring the latest technology is available to our participants.

Phoning it Forward with Louise

As a retired French teacher, Quebec's Louise Sylvain was eager to see how a smartphone could help her remain connected with the world and accomplish everyday activities. She was amazed when she learned about the built-in accessibility features of iOS devices. When she learned she was eligible for a smartphone through our Phone It Forward program, her surprise quickly turned to joy and gratitude.



After attending training sessions, she learned how to use the built-in voiceover technology to stay connected with family and friends, check the weather, prepare grocery lists, and accomplish things that may have seemed impossible only a few years before. Resourceful and curious, she has also learned how to personalize and program plenty of apps, including Google Home.

Louise says the smartphone has become a vital tool in her life - helping her become more independent and organized, less socially isolated, and, best of all, a part of the modern world. She says having a smartphone has made it easier for her to accept her sight loss - empowering her to fully participate in life.



Smashing barriers to inclusion through sport

Lynn Tughan, fundholder for the Geoffrey and Edith Wood Charitable Fund, managed by the Toronto Community Foundation, wanted to support an organization that honoured the legacy of Geoffrey Wood and his wife, Edith.

“Mr. Wood was a great businessman and philanthropist,” says Lynn. “He was very encouraging of young people and passionate about helping people who are striving to better themselves.”

Community members with sight loss often miss out on the social, emotional and physical benefits of sports and recreation.

“Knowing our gift is supporting programs that are available to people with sight loss at little or no cost and giving them an equal opportunity to participate is invaluable,” says Lynn.

As a seasoned hockey player, Lynn was interested in supporting athletic opportunities.

“Sports teach you important transferrable skills and give you that sense of community and camaraderie,” says Lynn. “When people have a disability, I know there’s a tendency to become isolated, but sports can help combat that.”

When she was invited to watch a blind hockey game, she jumped at the opportunity to get involved.

“It’s not just about donating money – it’s about investing yourself in the organization, and I think the CNIB Foundation does a fantastic job of providing donors with these opportunities,” says Lynn.

Generous supporters like Lynn Tughan and the Geoffrey and Edith Wood Charitable Fund enable us to deliver innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empower people impacted by blindness to live the lives they choose.

Raising funds for the CNIB Foundation

A century of experience has taught us that turning our bold dreams into reality takes a community. Our impact is powered by the generosity of people like you. With your support, we have the resources to follow through on our goals and empower those we serve to achieve theirs. **Thank you for making the future bright for people with sight loss.**

- **Our signature gala, Skyball, raised more than \$100,000 to support CNIB Foundation programs.** The James Bond-themed event included casino table games, live performances, auctions and entertainment.
- **More than 500 guests kicked up their boots at CNIB Muskoka: A Taste of Country in support of CNIB Lake Joe.** This country affair featured celebrity emcee Joan Kelley Walker and internationally acclaimed Juno Award Nominee Beverley Mahood and friends. The event raised nearly \$250,000 to help transform the camp into a year-round operation.
- **CNIB Night Steps, a pledged-based fundraising event, brought friends, families and pups together for walks under the stars.** These events have raised \$100,000 for community-based programs.
- **Our 50/50 raffles raised more than \$350,000 to support CNIB Foundation programs,** and the gaming team opened seven new lottery kiosks this year.
- **We hosted our first-ever Guide Dogs with Purpose Gala.** Presented by Scotiabank, attendees were treated to an evening of glamour and fun while raising more than \$75,000 for CNIB Guide Dogs. The inaugural event featured a red carpet, a photo booth, dancing and musical performances.



Skyball Gala



Joan Kelley Walker at CNIB Muskoka



Guide Dogs with Purpose Gala

Live, Work & Play without Barriers

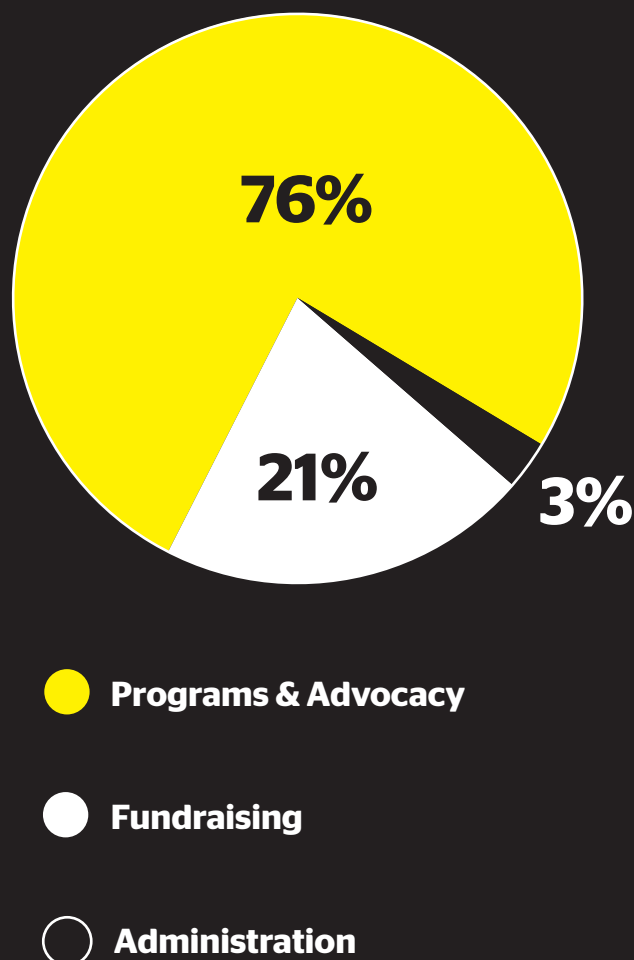


On the road with the CNIB Eye Van - To provide patient-centred care, the CNIB Eye Van (Medical Mobile Eye Care Unit) partners with the Eye Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, a section of the Ontario Medical Association and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. In partnership with 25 ophthalmologists and three staff (two nurses/ophthalmic assistants and a driver/assistant), the program serves 4,500 patients. But none of this would be possible without community support. A heartfelt thank you to our donors, community partners and service clubs for helping us ensure these high-quality, timely and essential services are available in Northern Ontario.

Your Support

As a charter member of the Imagine Canada Ethical Fundraising and Financial Accountability Code, CNIB takes pride in upholding the highest standard of ethics in the distribution of donations. Our financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and were audited by Deloitte LLP. Last year, we invested more than \$65 million in innovative programs and powerful advocacy for Canadians with sight loss.

For full financial statements audited annually by Deloitte LLP, visit: cnib.ca/financials



THANK YOU

Every year, we are astounded by the incredible support of our donors. Some of you attended or organized fundraising events while others signed up to be monthly donors, made gifts in your wills, or gave in memory of loved ones. You made it possible for thousands of Canadians with sight loss to live full, independent lives. Thank you.



Major Gifts

The CNIB Foundation thanks the following individuals, corporations, foundations, and service clubs who have made exceptional gifts of \$5,000 or more.

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Estate Gifts

We wish to honour the caring individuals who have left gifts in their wills to the CNIB Foundation. Our sincerest condolences to their families and friends.

Anonymous (8)

Estate of Aksel Iversen
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Creating a brighter future for Canadians with sight loss - Recent years have found a shift in thinking and planning - from "bequest" creation of endowments to gifts of current assets. Donors are creating endowed funds from gifts of shares, stocks, or property to fund the original capital - often, further gifts are added at the time of death. By creating an endowment in real time, donors are enjoying the benefits of knowing how their capital investment is doing while using it to encourage friends, families, and associates to make gifts in their honour.

For more information, please contact:

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FOUNDATION



Founded in 1918, the CNIB Foundation is a non-profit organization driven to change what it is to be blind today. We deliver innovative programs and powerful advocacy that empower people impacted by blindness to live their dreams and tear down barriers to inclusion. Our work as a blind foundation is powered by a network of volunteers, donors and partners from coast to coast to coast.



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