

imagine.

a world without barriers.

SPRING NEWSLETTER 2017

Rick Hansen
Foundation 

Message from Rick

We're gaining momentum!

Thank you! With your help, we are working hard to develop programs and initiatives that raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers in the built environment for people with disabilities.

My team and I continue to meet with individuals, organizations, corporations, and several federal, provincial and municipal government leaders who share a mutual interest in building an accessible and inclusive Canada. Here are a few highlights:

The first recipient of the Barrier Buster grant as part of our Access4All Canada 150 Signature Project was announced late last year (see page 2).

This May, the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) will host a three-day Youth Leadership Summit in Ottawa (see page 7). I want to encourage youth to join us as Barrier Busters and keep accessibility and inclusion in mind with everything they do.

A pilot of The RHF Accessibility Certification Program has launched in the BC Lower Mainland and Victoria, BC (see page 3).

Please stay connected with the Foundation as we continue to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

Our best work is ahead of us – thank you for being an important part of our journey!



Rick Hansen, C.C., O.B.C.
CEO, Rick Hansen Foundation

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Barrier Buster Projects!

Communities across Canada are saying ‘yes’ to making our country more accessible and inclusive! Last November, Rick surprised 1,400 students and staff at Vincent Massey Collegiate in Winnipeg, MB, with the first Barrier Buster grant of \$30,000 to make the school entrance more accessible. When the Vincent Massey project is completed, it will be the first time in 50 years someone in a wheelchair can independently enter the school’s main doors.

Barrier Buster grants (funded mainly by the Government of Canada) help break down physical barriers in communities from coast to coast, creating real and lasting impact for people with disabilities. We are also grateful to corporate sponsors Canadian Tire Corporation, Boston Pizza, Scotiabank, *Today’s Parent*, and Shaw Communications for their support with our **Access4All** activities. Thank you!

Check out our Barrier Buster projects at: www.RickHansen.com/Access4All/Projects-Showcase

So far we’ve awarded 28 Barrier Buster grants worth more than \$800,000 to communities across Canada – here are few inspiring projects:

Sydenham Street United Church (Kingston, ON)

Installing an elevator to provide greater access for 800-1,000 community members with disabilities.

Variety Village (Toronto, ON)

Replacing 11 doors with accessible ones for its 2,500 members with disabilities, plus thousands of visitors each year.

Kimbercote Farm Education Centre (Collingwood, ON)

Building a 750m accessible trail with interpretative signage and two accessible washrooms, benefiting over 2,000 visitors annually, including those with disabilities.

McMillan Elementary School (Abbotsford, BC)

Installing accessible playground equipment for five new students who use wheelchairs.

City of Kamloops (Kamloops, BC)

Converting an existing path into an accessible trail at Peterson Creek Park.



BC Job Creation Partnership Project

With the visionary support of the Government of BC and donors like you, the Foundation team is working hard to make the places where we live, work, and play accessible for everyone.

Last fall, we launched the RHF Accessibility Certification Program pilot in BC. Along with our community partner, Victoria Disability Resource Centre, we employed 16 people with disabilities and trained them as Access Assistants and Access Managers. The team is now trained and visiting buildings and public spaces in Victoria and Richmond to measure and rate their accessibility.

Access Assistants are trained using the new RHF Accessibility Certification Program curriculum. By working on-site and testing our resources, they're actively contributing to the Program's development. They're also identifying examples of best practice in universal design - when a space is designed for use regardless of a person's age, size, ability, or disability.

Photo: 2017 Access and Inclusion team.



“After completing the Accessibility Training, I feel like we [Access Assistants] are seeing and hearing through the eyes and ears of everyone. I look at the world now noticing the barriers, assessing buildings, and seeing all the easy fixes.”

— RHF Access Assistant



The Promise of Better Lives

Thanks to supporters like you, Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) research continues to hold promise for better lives!

RHF donates \$2 million annually to the Blusson Integrated Cures Partnership (BICP) to improve the lives of people with SCI.

BICP was formed by the International Collaboration On Repair Discoveries (ICORD) and the Rick Hansen Institute (RHI), partners at the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre, in Vancouver, BC. The Partnership combines strengths for greater impact on the lives of those with SCI.



ICORD focuses on ground breaking SCI research. RHI transforms research discoveries and best practices into improved treatments for people with SCI.

At the end of the Man In Motion World Tour 30 years ago, Rick Hansen dreamed of “a cure for paralysis after spinal cord injury.” BICP is helping researchers get closer to that dream, while at the same time strengthening people with SCI and their families, and reducing the enormous costs of SCI to society as a whole.

Funding from RHF supports:

- **Innovative technology**, including Canada’s first international SCI biobank, and the Global Research Platform, giving clinicians a platform to easily share key SCI information.
- **The best and brightest international researchers**, who collaborate and share key findings across the globe.
- **Empowering people with SCI** to share their priorities with researchers and actively participate in clinical studies to move research forward.



Top photo: SCI research trainee presentations at the Blusson Spinal Cord Centre. Photo courtesy ICORD.

Bottom photo: ICORD Principal Investigator Dr. John Kramer (right) and team study ways to treat nerve pain after SCI. Photo credit: Martin Dee.

Vimy 100!

2017 also marks another important event – the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Vimy Ridge. The Rick Hansen Foundation School Program team was part of this important anniversary in April.

The team was invited to show youth around the world how they can make a difference for people with mobility, vision, and hearing disabilities. They created an interactive exhibit on the future of accessibility and inclusion. Displayed in Arras, France, the city closest to the Vimy Memorial, over 9,000 Canadian educators and secondary school students (and thousands more from around the world) experienced this exhibit.

The history of war, disability, and innovation has always been intertwined. Thousands of Canadian soldiers were injured in the First World War. Treating their injuries inspired innovations with prosthetics. Veterans and their families also struggled with physical barriers at home and in their communities.

As the Honorary Colonel of the Canadian Armed Forces Joint Personnel Unit (which includes serving ill and injured military personnel and their families), Rick Hansen knows firsthand how disability affects veterans and their families today. That is why the Vimy 100 initiative is so special to Rick and the Foundation team.

Photo: Canadian National Vimy Memorial (France 2015).

Photo credit: Paul Arps.



Canadians and Accessibility

Our recent Angus Reid Institute (ARI) poll asked 1,330 Canadians about accessibility in the built environment and here's what we learned:

90% believe accessibility is a human right. However, responders see large gaps between how accessible buildings are right now and how accessible they should be.

88% believe Canada should be a world leader in ensuring universal access to public places.

95% believe that accessibility is a very important consideration when planning for new construction.

By raising awareness and developing solutions, Rick Hansen and the Foundation team encourage our communities to be more accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities. Thank you for making this work happen!

Supporters and Accessibility

We asked supporters like you about the people in your life who are managing physical challenges and what they're experiencing. Here's what you reported:

25% self-identified as having a physical challenge or disability

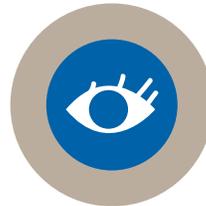
15% said you have a family member with a physical challenge or disability



80% have mobility challenges



36% have a hearing impairment or loss



33% manage a visual impairment



The large majority also have **a chronic illness.**

94% shared that your **#1 barrier is physical barriers**

Physical barriers are getting in the way of people living to their full potential. That's why your ongoing support is so crucial. You help fund innovative programs that encourage Canadians to design and build spaces for everyone! Working together, we can make **Access4All** a reality!

Youth Accessibility Champions

Determination, inspiration, courage, leadership, teamwork, and making a difference in the lives of others – these are qualities that Rick Hansen demonstrates in his life and work. They're also found in the 50 young leaders (16 with disabilities) selected for the Rick Hansen Foundation Youth Leadership Summit in Ottawa on May 20-22, 2017.

2017 is a big year! Along with Canada's 150th birthday and the 30th anniversary of the end of the Rick Hansen Man In Motion World Tour, the Foundation team is celebrating youth who have shown leadership in their school or community and passion about improving accessibility and inclusion.

The Summit, led by Rick, along with other prominent government, community, and corporate leaders, will be packed with hands-on workshops and leadership training, presentations and special events, and exclusive tours of iconic Canadian venues.

These inspired youth will then return to their communities to work on improving accessibility and inclusion. Rick and the Foundation team are excited to be influencing the leaders of the future!



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