

# Communities in Motion

Annual Report April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022





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. RHF is a registered Canadian charity that is focused on fulfilling Rick's original two dreams: making the world accessible and inclusive for people with disabilities and finding a cure for paralysis after spinal cord injury.

While much has been accomplished during the past 34 years, it is clear that people with disabilities continue to face significant challenges. They're less likely to have access to education, employment, and the opportunity to participate in their communities due to physical and attitudinal barriers. This needs to change.

RHF's mission and values are focused on ensuring people with disabilities affecting their mobility, vision, and hearing are not left behind. Greatly improved accessibility will result in a Canada where everyone can contribute and participate. It's the sustainable, resilient, and equitable future we are working towards.

## ***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 liberate the potential of people with disabilities.

Progress is being made every day as, together, we break down barriers to true inclusion for the 1 in 5 Canadians with a disability. We invite you to learn more about the impact of this critical work in this 2022 Annual Report: **Communities in Motion**.

Thank you for being part of the growing movement to build a world without barriers.

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# A Message from our Board Chair & CEO

Thanks to the unwavering support from our partners, donors, supporters, volunteers, and staff, we continued to make progress to build the inclusive and accessible Canada where everyone can go everywhere. We are grateful for your dedication to achieving our shared vision of an inclusive world, where our citizens are equally valued and included in the places where we live, work, learn, and play.

Over the past year, we have achieved so much in our quest to engage communities across the country and support their efforts to increase access and inclusion. We have engaged communities such as the City of Surrey, which has committed to building all future civic facilities to the RHFAC Gold level. And, we continue our discussions with governments at every level about the pressing need to include accessibility certification as a requirement or incentive for new infrastructure projects. Likewise, we have strengthened important links to the post-secondary community to partner on significant research projects, and to support the sector's commitment to making their campuses accessible and inclusive.

Within the pages of this annual report, you will also learn about the significant government funding we have received in support of the expansion of our Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program, and the creation of our new Accessibility Advisory Services. You will also read about our execution on projects previously reported to you, such as the completion of our RHFAC Ontario Rating program that saw 250 buildings rated using RHFAC throughout Ontario.

This year we took a bold step to identify gaps in the care continuum post spinal cord injury in the Province of BC. Backed by the support of dynamic steering and advisory committees our conversations have sought to identify gaps in the post-SCI care strategy and develop recommendations to address these with solutions that can be beneficial to the community and the health care system for many years to come. Both the steering committee and the advisory committee consist of key members of the SCI community, both in the medical field, as well as lived experience to ensure all areas of the SCI journey are highlighted and acknowledged. The goal of this work is to ensure the best outcome for the patient journey, and to establish a more formalized approach towards innovation and research for all communities in BC.

With regard to the governance structure of the organization, our Board welcomed four new Directors: Rob Guenette, Ryan Peterson, Rod Graham, and Lisa Coltart, who bring deep expertise in the areas of communications, digital and IT applications, innovations in the built environment, and non-profit governance.

We also said goodbye to two long term directors, Lyall Knott and Perry Goldsmith, whose commitment to the Founder’s vision and the Foundation’s development over these many years leaves an indelible mark on all of us. The passing of Director George Gaffney was difficult for all who knew him. His kindness, integrity, generosity and deep belief in our work was foundational to our mission. He will not be forgotten, but forever missed.

We hope you will enjoy learning more about the significant accomplishments we have achieved together over the 2021-22 year in the pages that follow. Thank you for being part of this exciting journey to an inclusive and accessible future.

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

My vision of an inclusive and accessible world stems from my belief that by removing attitudinal and physical barriers, people with disabilities can live life to the fullest by having the opportunity to participate in and contribute to society.

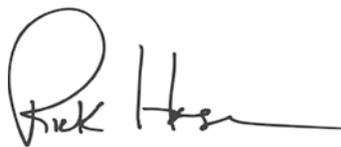
As we look forward to life beyond COVID-19, an opportunity has presented itself. Economic recovery plans include investing in infrastructure; meaning there are now more opportunities to conceive of, design and build genuinely inclusive and barrier-free structures right from the start.

I also continue to dream of a cure for paralysis caused by spinal cord injury (SCI). I'm excited by the work of Mend the Gap, made up of global leaders in the spinal cord injury community, including the ICORD team at UBC. They are addressing the challenge of repairing the spinal cord after injury with great promise. I also wish to acknowledge the members of the SCI Care Strategy Initiative. They are committed to making advancements in post-SCI injury care for British Columbians so they can achieve the best possible health outcomes.

I find hope in the emerging generation of leaders, advocates, and innovators who are driving social change at an accelerated pace. Our School Program continues to expand its reach and influence on youth, educators, and community leaders across the country. These champions for accessibility and inclusion are the Difference Makers the world needs.

The progress we're making for people with disabilities would not happen without you. Thank you for your ongoing partnership on this journey.

Sincerely,



**Rick Hansen, C.C., O.B.C.**  
Founder,  
Rick Hansen Foundation



## Communities in Motion

Attitudinal and physical barriers limit the things people with disabilities can do, the places they can go, and the attitudes of others towards them. Disability is not a barrier; how the world is built is a barrier.

Society needs to change the way it views disability. We need to continue working with the 1 in 5 Canadians who have disabilities so they have equal opportunities for participation in our communities.

One of the most significant barriers for people with mobility, hearing, or vision disabilities is those that exist where we live, work, learn, and play. They prevent 6.2 million Canadians from being able to participate in our offices, schools, community centres, retail stores, along with many other spaces.

The Rick Hansen Foundation helps create practical and innovative solutions to addressing barriers. We focus those solutions through our two noteworthy initiatives: The Rick Hansen Foundation School Program (RHFSP), which empowers young people to become accessibility and inclusion champions, and the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ program (RHFAC), which improves accessibility in the built environment.

In addition to building momentum to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove physical barriers, we remain committed to providing funding and support for spinal cord injury research and care. We believe in the power of advancing equity through health-based ecosystems that help to build a world in which everyone can thrive.

Now is the time to accelerate our efforts to create a Canada where everyone belongs.

**Thank you for helping to propel this movement of Many in Motion.**





1 in 5 Canadians or **22%** of the Canadian population aged 15 years and over – or about 6.2 million individuals – has one or more disabilities.<sup>1</sup>



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.<sup>2</sup>



Canadians aged 15 and older have a mobility disability.<sup>3</sup>



Canadians aged 15 years and over have a vision disability.<sup>4</sup>



1 in 3 Canadians or **32%** of Canadians aged 55 and older say they anticipate mobility, vision or hearing challenges arising in the next five to 10 years.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> StatsCan: Canadian Survey on Disability, Nov. 2018.

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

<sup>3</sup> StatsCan: Canadians with a Mobility Disability, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> StatsCan: Canadians with a Seeing Disability, 2017.

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

# Strategy in Motion

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) funds critical spinal cord injury (SCI) research, and advances accessibility and inclusion so that Canadians with a disability can participate in the places where we live, work, learn, and play.

We developed an agile two-year Strategic Plan to provide clear focus on our mission and goals of removing barriers for people with disabilities while also uncovering opportunities for growth and improving performance within the Foundation.

**The four key areas of focus of the RHF 2021-2023 Strategic Plan include:**

1. **Creating Meaningful Accessibility.** By strengthening the value proposition of RHFAC we will position the program for successful growth with more key sectors and organizations participating in accessibility ratings and meeting demand for a higher level of accessibility.
2. **Empowering Canadians to Create Inclusive Communities.** Educate Canadians and communicate clear pathways to empower them to be part of the movement to make their communities more inclusive and accessible through awareness initiatives.
3. **Financial Sustainability.** Revitalize and strengthen our philanthropic fundraising and diversify revenue streams to ensure our key programs are fully funded on an annual basis, our business model is functionally streamlined, and we have sufficient capacity to sustain and grow operations.
4. **Investing in Care and Cure for Spinal Cord Injury.** We continue our commitment to funding initiatives that advance Spinal Cord Injury research.

**We have the ability to make this change happen in our lifetime. With continued determination, leadership and focus, together, we will get there faster.**

Thanks to your generosity, this past year we invested in the following strategic imperatives:

**\$2.78M**

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

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**\$2.08M**

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

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**\$1.82M**

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

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**\$1.18M**

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

See pages 51-53 for more detailed financial breakdown.

In the following pages, you will also learn how much has been accomplished in the past year as well as how much more we need to do to further our efforts in this critical time. COVID-19 continues to affect RHF in so many ways, from navigating the unpredictability of building closures to ensuring seamless operation in a virtual workspace.

Thanks to the incredible commitment from our generous partners and supporters, the Foundation has the capacity to demonstrate flexibility, creative problem-solving, and recognize the power of the digital landscape. We look forward to continuing to work alongside you to break down physical and attitudinal barriers for people with disabilities.

# Accessibility in Motion

Now more than ever, we need to encourage decision makers such as building owners, operators, industry influencers, architects and designers to view their spaces through an accessibility lens to truly understand what people with disabilities experience.

Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (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. 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.

Legislation, standards, and building codes vary between provinces, presenting inconsistent and conflicting guidelines to meaningful accessibility.

RHFAC is meant to be used as a complement to help to fill the critical gaps that exist between codes and the real needs of users to give site owners and operators the opportunity to apply innovation to enhance accessibility beyond code compliance.

**According to an Angus Reid Institute public opinion poll, 92% of Canadians believe that taxpayer funded projects should be held to the highest accessibility standards.<sup>1</sup>**

RHFAC supports organizations and industry professionals to go beyond code compliance and explore ways to increase the accessibility of their buildings for the widest possible range of users.

**Accessibility and inclusion are not a fad; in fact, they're growing in importance. It's time to make Canada ready for ALL of us.**



<sup>1</sup> Angus Reid Institute, Platform Inaccessibility? Canadians living with disabilities say key issues are being overlooked in Election 44. September, 2021.

**The following list highlights our goals for RHFAC in Fiscal 2021-22:**

- ✓ to **motivate** organizations to undertake an RHFAC rating for 200 sites across Canada so they can understand their building's current level of meaningful accessibility;
- ✓ to **continue delivery** of RHFAC Training to industry professionals despite ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- ✓ to **advocate** all levels of government and motivate organizations to improve their physical accessibility by adopting RHFAC in their policies and incentives as well as participating in RHFAC ratings;
- ✓ to **focus** business development efforts on four target industry sectors;
- ✓ to **provide** organizations with knowledge to make accessibility improvements for 250 sites through the Complimentary RHFAC Ratings in Ontario program; and
- ✓ to **optimize and position** RHFAC for accelerated growth.



*Two RHFAC Professionals conduct a rating.*

## RHFAC Program Accomplishments & Learning

While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the way RHFAC did business, we shifted our processes and, as a result, saw progress in many areas. Building rapport and relationships with clients – virtually – made a difference during this period. We also learned clients appreciated regular check-ins along with flexibility in schedules.

We also increased the dissemination of knowledge about accessibility and Universal Design practices for building owners and managers through RHFAC ratings and certifications from coast to coast. We continued to train students by shifting RHFAC Training courses to online learning as it made education accessible to an increased number of students who could not previously travel to the city or province in-person training was offered. However, we learned that virtual field training component was not as effective as students expressed a preference for hands-on training. We will explore more innovative ways to offer field training during our upcoming curriculum review.

More RHFAC Professionals received their designation and are integrating learnings from RHFAC Training into their respective fields. We continued to promote the idea of ingraining accessibility into the early stages of professional design and construction culture.

### Overall achievements in F22:

- **299 sites across Canada** undertook RHFAC ratings, exceeding our goal. More than 80% have listed their sites publicly on the RHFAC Registry.
- **143 individuals took RHFAC Training** enhancing their knowledge of accessibility and learned about the RHFAC methodology.
- **57 individuals passed the exam to achieve their RHFAC Professional designation** and can now conduct ratings using RHFAC methodology to measure meaningful accessibility of sites.
- **48 individuals** expanded their practical understanding of accessibility by taking the Accessible Spaces 101 course, a self-paced study offered through PowerEd™ by Athabasca University.

- In May 2021, the **City of Surrey, B.C.**, became the first municipality to adopt RHFAC into policy with plans to build all future buildings and retrofits to RHFAC Gold, the first city to commit to accessibility on such a significant scale. Surrey has a population of an estimated 580,360 of which about 15% (87,000) of residents have one or more disabilities.
- **Carleton University** in Ottawa, Ont., committed to rate all campus buildings as part of a three-year plan. Carleton University has internal staff trained as RHFAC Professionals to conduct the ratings, aiming for 40 during the next two years. This will positively impact 4,100 students who are registered with Carleton University's disability office, along with 5.6% of its workforce.
- **250 sites in 16 municipalities in Ontario** completed their complimentary ratings. Many used their learnings to upgrade features such as installation of automatic door openers, visual fire alarms, tactile attention indicators at top of stairs, and hearing loops at reception or service counters.
- Through the **Buildings Without Barriers Challenge** hosted in partnership with BOMA Canada, more commercial property owners and managers learned about and subsequently embraced the idea of accessibility in their sites. Thirteen organizations had 63 sites rated through the Challenge, ensuring countless more building users such as employees and visitors, can safely navigate the built environment.
- RHF developed **Accessibility Advisory Services** to support businesses on their accessibility journey as we learned some organizations were interested in direction prior to embarking on their RHFAC ratings, or they expressed a desire to access disability awareness training for staff. Accessibility Advisory Services was developed to meet these needs as well as provide a source of revenue as a social enterprise to support RHF programs. Initiatives include supporting multi-site and large-scale public and private organizations with large portfolios and individualized training modules with accessibility planning for their entire building network. We supported 25 projects through Accessibility Advisory Services in 2022. Services included working with public and private organizations to manage ratings of large building portfolios, accessible design review of pre-construction projects to achieve RHFAC Gold, development of accessibility design manuals, and delivering disability and accessibility awareness training to staff.

## Three Year RHFAC Program Trends

	F2020	F2021	F2022
RHFAC Training participants	132	71	143
Newly designated RHFAC Professionals	37	51	57
Total Rated Sites	344	104	299
RHFAC Gold Sites	26	17	27
RHF Accessibility Certified Sites	249	71	256
Did not achieve certification	69	16	16

## Cadillac Fairview Wins Building Without Barriers Challenge Commitment Award

Cadillac Fairview (CF) Corporation Limited made a commitment to accessibility in 2018.

The Toronto-based company embarked on a cross-country journey to increase accessibility in its centres using the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC).

Its efforts earned CF the inaugural Rick Hansen Foundation’s Building Without Barriers Challenge Commitment Award on October 21, 2021, at the Building Owners and Managers Association of Canada (BOMA Canada)’s National Awards Gala.



*Photo credit: Cadillac Fairview.*

In addition to achieving RHFAC ratings at CF buildings country-wide, CF also unveiled a new CF host Service area to the London community at CF Masonville Place which features barrier-free design in addition to a wealth of accessibility aspects.

Triovest Realty Advisors’ 5050 Satellite Drive building took home the Building Without Barriers Innovation Award for receiving the most innovation points for its certification.

## Surrey, BC Commits to Gold

The City of Surrey is an accessibility leader. Since 2017, Surrey has rated 43 sites with RHFAC, achieving 25 RHF Accessibility Certified and five RHFAC Gold – the most of any municipality in Canada. When Surrey started its accessibility journey, the main challenge was that many washrooms lacked even the most straightforward accessibility considerations, such as automatic door openers.

*Imagine planning a fun family outing on a hot day, and getting to the water park to find that you or your child can't use the bathroom?*

– Tara Roberts, City of Surrey Manager, Support Services and Accessibility



In May 2021, Surrey took the next step on their journey and became the first municipality in Canada to commit to building all future facilities and retrofitting existing ones to RHFAC Gold.

“The certification was a stepping stone for us,” said Roberts. “As soon as we completed that first project, we thought, what else can we do better? How can we better serve our citizens, our staff, and everyone who interacts with us?”

## The 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 BC Accessibility Grants program offered funding of up to \$20,000 for 228 sites for accessibility improvement projects.

All of these accessibility improvement projects were completed and reimbursed as of September 30, 2021 and the program is now closed. Upgrades include additions such as ramps, pool lifts, automatic door openers, visual fire alarms, and hearing loops.

## The Complimentary RHFAC Ratings in Ontario Program

In January 2020, the Government of Ontario’s Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility (MSAA) announced an investment of \$1.3 million for organizations to participate in the RHFAC program. As part of the Government of Ontario’s Advancing Accessibility initiative, the goal for program participants is to better understand their current level of accessibility and gain knowledge on how to improve.

Organizations in 16 municipalities selected based on their population and geographic diversity were encouraged to apply for complimentary ratings. Sites eligible for ratings included pre-construction projects and existing sites in commercial spaces (retail shops, offices, industrial sites) and institutional spaces (schools, community and recreation centres, and libraries). As of March 31, 2022, all 250 sites completed their RHFAC ratings and received their rating results.

**100%**

of participants said their knowledge and understanding of accessibility improved after participating in this program; and

**94%**

of respondents have already made or plan to make access improvements.



*A lot of times buildings are constructed and decisions are made by people who haven’t had experience with disabilities. The ratings program really gave us the ability to see what kind of barriers there are. It was a really positive thing for our organization, and I would heartedly encourage any other municipalities to engage in it, even if they don’t think that a building might qualify. It’s also just great to put something out there and get a roadmap. We put 17 sites out and only 7 of ours got certified. But that’s okay because for the other 10, we know what we have to do now.*

– Danielle Derochie, Legislative Compliance Coordinator, City of Sudbury

## Toronto Hospital a First to Achieve RHFAC Gold

Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital in Toronto has made accessibility an important part of their culture, committing to constant improvement on their accessibility journey. The site became the first hospital in Canada to achieve a gold rating in the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ (RHFAC) program.

“It’s an honour to receive any kind of certification from the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) as they are known for their accessibility,” Meenu Sikand, Executive Lead, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, at Holland Bloorview, said. “Our hospital has always worked with kids with disabilities and there was always this belief that we were accessible and we didn’t have a way to demonstrate it. I wanted something that would give us a baseline and confirm what we believed about our accessibility.”

When the Ontario government made the announcement in 2020 that provided funding for 250 sites in Ontario to get rated with RHFAC, Sikand saw it as a great opportunity for Holland Bloorview to understand where they were in terms of access. They scored 82% in their rating, achieving RHFAC Gold.

Accessibility is a very important part of Holland Bloorview’s strategy. A majority of the hospital’s clients have multiple disabilities, and accessibility is an important part of “providing excellent care and service delivery to [their] clients.”

“We want to create an inclusive environment for our clients, families, and staff where they can be their authentic selves. That is our commitment to accessibility and inclusion and to everyone who walks through our doors,” Sikand noted. “We want to be a model employer in accessibility and strive for a great level of care. We want to be able to provide accommodations when needed and also prevent the need for accommodations by focusing on accessibility in everything we do.”



Photo credit: Holland Bloorview.

## The Sectoral Initiatives Program

In September 2021, The Government of Canada announced three-year funding of \$7.5M to RHF to educate and upskill professionals to raise the meaningful accessibility of buildings and sites across Canada via the RHFAC program.

Funded through Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), this \$7.5M program is intended to “support employers, employee and employer associations, community groups and communities in developing and implementing strategies for dealing with labour force adjustments and meeting human resource requirements.”

The Sectoral Initiatives Program funding will enable the Foundation to expand the RHFAC Training program nationally, enhance RHFAC Professional Training, ingrain accessibility into design culture, and support economic recovery.



*Rick Hansen and The Honourable Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development, and Disability Inclusion of Canada.*

## Accessibility Professional Network

The Accessibility Professional Network (APN), hosted by RHF, brings together RHFAC Professionals, accessibility specialists, experts in the built environment, students passionate about accessibility, and many others to create a society accessible for all. To meet the needs of this network of more than 200 members, RHF offered eight educational webinars from April 2021 to March 2022. The primary focus of some of these webinars was on pandemic-related topics to support our members so they could ensure that the accessibility needs of their clients are met. One of our most popular webinars was Goals and Principles of Universal Design with 281 attendees.

In addition to webinars, APN members have access to an online job board, exclusive access to industry events, and more. The network also fosters collaboration and networking opportunities among members across the country and globally as the APN welcomed international members this year.

An example of network collaboration: RHFAC Professional Chris Stigas recently teamed up with a fellow APN member and worked together to present a design and build proposal for an organization planning to build a new ski lodge for children with disabilities.

*The organization was blown away by what we brought to the table as a team. Between our combined experience of architecture and design, our training in accessibility through the RHF Accessibility Certification™ program, and my lived experience as a wheelchair user, it was a game-changer. And, yes, we got the job. Belonging to the APN brings you a pool of like-minded professionals on which to draw. It really separates you from the competition.* – Chris Stigas, APN Member & RHFAC Professional



## Valued Partners

### The Valuable 500

In March 2022, RHF was selected for the world’s first global directory of disability inclusion specialists. The Valuable Directory is hosted by The Valuable 500, a global business collective of 500 CEOs and their companies, innovating together to address disability inclusion and drive systemic change to be more inclusive of people with disabilities. As one of only 77 successful organizations to be accepted into the Directory, our appointment emphasizes our ongoing dedication to ending disability exclusion, and we look forward to working with The Valuable 500 to achieve this.



### BOMA Canada

Additionally, RHF partnered with the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA) Canada to offer the Rick Hansen Accessibility Challenge Award for the third consecutive year. This annual award is given to a BOMA Canada member whose site has the highest RHFAC rating. In 2021, the honour went to Ryerson University (now called Toronto Metropolitan University) for the Daphne Cockwell Health Sciences Complex in Toronto.



BOMA Canada also supported RHF’s Buildings Without Barriers Challenge. BOMA members were encouraged to learn more about their commercial properties levels of meaningful accessibility through rating and certifying the spaces they manage. The awards were presented at BOMA’s annual awards gala in October 2021.

### Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s (CMHC) launched its new MLI Select product in March 2022. MLI Select is a new multi-unit mortgage loan insurance product that incentivizes the preservation and creation of rental supply while also addressing the need for accessible, affordable, and climate compatible housing across the country.



MLI Select uses a point system to rate a rental housing provider’s commitment to accessibility, affordability, and climate compatibility, or a combination of the three. The RHFAC program is identified as one of the pathways available for both existing. This will help promote the creation of much-needed accessible housing across the country.

## Accessibility - Forward Motion

Our focus will remain on positioning RHFAC for accelerated growth in the coming year. Accomplishing this means strengthening our outreach efforts nationally and internationally so we can continue connecting government, organizations, and businesses with RHFAC as they strive to incorporate DE&I measures into their existing frameworks.

As demand for RHFAC’s innovative measuring tool that provides a consistent and meaningful level of accessibility, it is also essential to offer industry professionals the opportunity to educate themselves through RHFAC Training. Through expanding delivery of RHFAC Training courses, we will continue to support a standardized profession and ingrain accessibility into build culture by making it a core consideration from the earliest stages of project design.

RHFAC Training will also be offered in French to open more doors to those with disabilities living in Quebec and other French-speaking areas.

While we feel RHFAC should be a key part of every toolkit owned by every architect, urban planner, designer, and builder, we also recognize a growing demand for knowledge from people working in other sectors. This is why we aim to boost awareness of our Accessible Spaces 101 course, which gives participants a solid foundation of information about accessibility and inclusion. As we firmly believe the learning process is never-ending, we continue to strive to offer new professional development content for RHFAC Professionals through the Accessibility Professional Network (APN).



*Christopher Sutton, CEO of Wavefront Centre for Communication Accessibility and team meet in their RHFAC Gold office.*

## Awareness in Motion

Attitudinal barriers are behaviors, perceptions, and assumptions that discriminate against people with disabilities. Attitudes account for some of the greatest barriers faced by people with disabilities on a daily basis, and these barriers are often present due to a lack of education and understanding.

**This is why building awareness is of the utmost importance. An inclusive Canada will exist when all citizens treat disability as a social responsibility where everyone has the same rights.**

**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 Statistics Canada research shows us that one in five people live with a disability.**

Our awareness goals in Fiscal 2022 included:

- 
 Raise awareness of the critical importance of improved accessibility and inclusion and the potential of people with disabilities amongst the Canadian public.
- 
 Advocate all levels of government to ensure that an accessibility lens is applied to post-pandemic economic and social recovery plans.
- 
 Collaborate with disability organizations to ensure Canadians with disabilities are not left behind, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

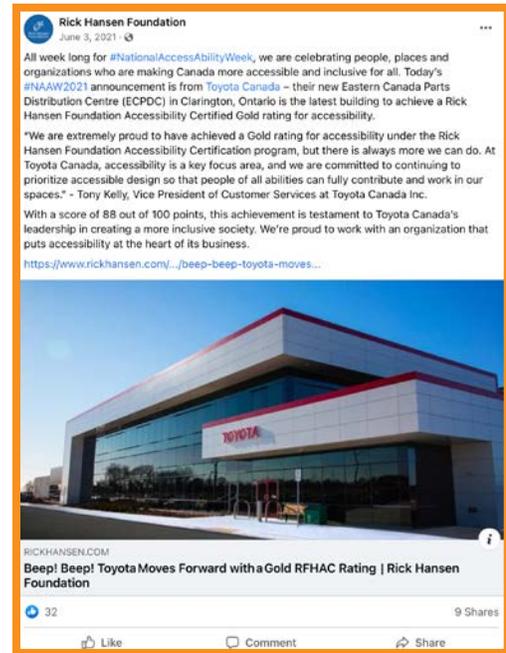
As part of raising awareness, we continued to develop content that is relevant and of interest to Canadians, including:

- Hosting a free, **virtual panel titled The Power of Inclusive Language** on December 3, 2021, International Day of Persons with Disabilities. An amazing line-up of speakers presented ideas about communicating thoughtfully and with intention to promote equity and advance social progress for people with disabilities. The webinar was a resounding success with 768 registrants and through a post-event survey, 94% of attendees indicated that they will ensure inclusive language will be a part of their workplace and personal lives, moving forward.



- Engaging Canadians by regularly publishing stories on the **RickHansen.com blog**. We cover a range of topics, including stories of an educational nature, community spotlights on people with disabilities, and celebration stories about accessibility and inclusion. One of the stories that achieved a level of high engagement, placing it in our top-five, was “2021 Election: Canada’s National Political Party Platforms & People with Disabilities.” Our blog pageviews have increased by 130 percent over the past five years.
- Continuing to grow our **social media channels** to engage with existing and new audiences. We continued to see an increase in followers on LinkedIn (15%) and Instagram (6.5%) as well as engagement on all platforms.

- Gaining exposure through valuable free exposure of our **stories in the media, reaching a circulation total of 192M.** These editorial stories included celebration features about Ingenium Canada and Toyota Canada and their RHFAC Gold certifications. We also had opinion pieces published in Construction Canada by RHF Board Director Stanis Smith and in the Calgary Herald and Edmonton Journal by RHF VP Access & Inclusion Brad McCannell.



*The panel format was a fantastic way to highlight how different people with the same disability may have different views and experiences, but using inclusive language can have a positive impact on all! – @lydia\_wood15 via Twitter*

### Five Year Awareness Trends

	F2018	F2019	F2020	F2021	F2022
Website visits	129,560	142,398	190,834	217,904	199,135
Website total pageviews	302,299	308,041	355,492	380,556	351,079
Total social media followers	59,293	60,284	61,995	62,325	62,662

## Proprietary Research

The process of collecting, analyzing, and using research data is an integral part of removing the negative stigma around disability and accessibility while strengthening the business case for accessibility. Proprietary research informs our mission and affects our ability to inspire change, engage the public, and attract donors.

RHF worked with the Angus Reid Institute in 2021 on two new national public opinion polls on disability, accessibility, and inclusion. The data was compiled in reports called “Platform Inaccessibility? Canadians living with disabilities say key issues are being overlooked in Election 44” and “Corporate Canada Gets Mixed Report Card from Canadians Living with Disabilities”, illustrates how people in Canada continue to face barriers to employment. It also revealed that Canadians are more likely to support organizations that have specific Diversity, Equity & Inclusion policies that focus on disability.

Some of the key highlights are as follows:

**91%**

say it’s unacceptable that people with physical disabilities are underemployed because of workplace barriers.

**78%**

believe an organization’s equity, diversity, and inclusion policies should include disability.

**40%**

of people with disabilities say corporations fall short when it comes to hiring those with disabilities. This increases to 55% for 18- to 34-year olds with a disability.

**62%**

say they would be more likely to give their business to a company if they knew that they had specific policies to support people living with disabilities.

**92%**

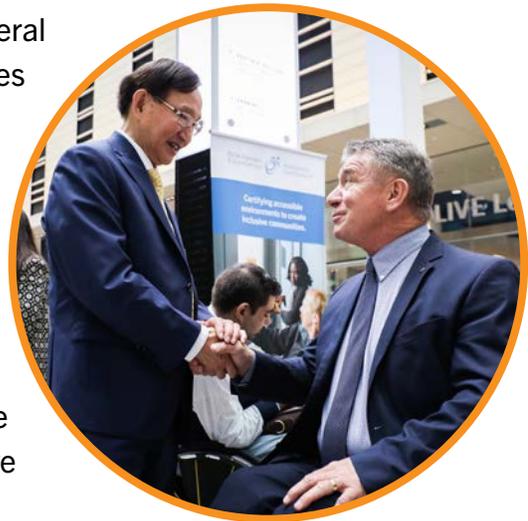
agree that taxpayer-funded projects should be held to the highest accessibility standards, however, despite broad-based support for higher levels of accessibility and inclusivity, it’s clear that many barriers continue to persist and that there remains much room for improvement across Canada.

## Rick Hansen Outreach

To continue to support the important work of RHF, our Founder, Rick Hansen carried 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.

Over the past year, Rick’s work included engaging with Canadians in the following ways:

- Penned an opinion piece for The Globe and Mail newspaper published June 21, 2021, titled “Building Back Better Should Mean Building Up Accessibility.” The article is a rallying cry to Canadians, emphasizing the importance of accelerating our journey towards accessibility as part of post-pandemic recovery.
- Appeared on Real Talk with Ryan Jespersen podcast to speak about accessibility awareness and RHFAC Training through PowerED™ at Athabasca University.
- Engaged the national building industry through a virtual address to attendees at the BOMEX awards gala.
- Held a joint press conference with the federal government to announce Sectoral Initiatives Program funding of \$7.5M to allow RHF to expand RHFAC Training across the country.
- Supported the Complimentary RHFAC Rating Program in Ontario by filming a conversation with Minister Raymond Cho to acknowledge the ongoing support of the Province of Ontario and the work to remove barriers at 250 sites in the province.



*Rick Hansen and Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility, Ontario.*

## Government Advocacy

Governments must take a proactive approach in policy to remove barriers for people with disabilities. This year, the Foundation continued to focus our government advocacy on informing policy decisions to ensure the significant spending on new infrastructure post-pandemic is invested in creating a higher level of accessibility across the country. Donor support enables this lengthy advocacy work that is required to affect long-term changes at all levels of government.

This past year, we focused on securing accessibility champions at all levels of government. Provincially we focused on key areas such as Social Development and Poverty Reduction; Seniors and Accessibility; Infrastructure, Real Property, Housing, Employment, Health, and Education. At the federal level, RHF nurtured strong relationships with Ministry of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion, as well as with officials at the Department of Infrastructure. In June 2021, RHF submitted a report as part of the National Infrastructure Assessment Process.

Provincially and territorially, the Governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Ontario, Nova Scotia, Nunavut, and Yukon have remained priorities in RHF’s outreach, with meetings held with key government officials. Working with municipal governments has also continued to be of high importance. We have engaged with various municipalities across the country to promote adoption of RHF Accessibility Certification program.



*Rick Hansen, Doramy Ehling, Connie Savage and Kelly Perrais, of RHF, meet with Minister Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Job and Economic Recovery and Wendy Mignes, Director, Economics and Corporate Initiatives for Tourism, Art, and Culture (previously with JERI).*

## BC Advances Accessibility Legislation

In June 2021, the BC Government passed Bill C6, the Accessible British Columbia Act requiring the government's 750+ public sector organizations to establish an accessibility committee, devise an accessibility plan, and build tools to receive public feedback on the accessibility. This law will outline the rules government and organizations must follow to remove barriers for approximately 546,760 residents over the age of 15 who have a disability. Some examples of barrier-free environments include: employment, service delivery, built environment, information and communications, transportation, health, education, and procurement.

Leading up to the passing of the Bill, RHF played an active role on Minister Nicholas Simon's Advisory Committee in drafting the legislation. This new Act enshrines the government's commitment to promote accessibility within infrastructure, transportation, education and employment, province-wide. A governance committee to support the mandate was subsequently struck. This same committee also provided feedback over the course of the pandemic on COVID-19 and its implications on people with disabilities.

## Disability Community Collaboration

The Foundation continued to work with other disability organizations to ensure people with disabilities are included in economic and social pandemic recovery plans. RHF is part of the Pan Canadian Disability Coalition which includes more than 20 disability organizations across Canada with a mission to ensure that attitudes, policies, services, and programs in all areas of Canadian society are barrier free and welcome participation by everyone living with a disability in Canada.



*Blind Beginnings Youth Field Trip.*

In advance of the 2021 Federal Election, the Pan Canadian Disability Coalition held an all-party forum on disability rights to give Canada's major political parties the opportunity to share their vision and platform for the nearly 6.2 million Canadians with disabilities. The debate was offered in English and French, and featured ASL, LSQ, and CART services. The debate was hosted by reporter and commentator, Craig Oliver, who is the current chief political commentator for CTV and host of "Challenges & Change with Craig Oliver" on AMI.

# Spinal Cord Injury Research in Motion

One of Rick's original dreams is to find a cure for paralysis caused by spinal cord injury (SCI). We are making strides every day toward this goal through our partnerships including those with:

- The International Collaboration on Repair Discoveries (ICORD), Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), University of British Columbia (UBC); and
- The Vancouver General Hospital (VGH) and UBC Hospital Foundation.

Below is a summary of the advancements made in SCI research over the past year.

## ICORD/UBC

The funds granted to ICORD/UBC were used 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.

#### Pre-Clinical Platform

A pre-clinical platform, originally designed and funded through the Blusson Integrated Cures Partnership (BICP), tests treatments that protect the acutely injured spinal cord from secondary damage aside from stabilization of the spine and control of blood pressure. Researchers have studied FDA-approved drugs and their effect on functional recovery, discovering that nine single drug regimens did not have any impact. However, it was found that the combination of three (glibenclamide, tamoxifen, and inosine) did result in significant improvements in several functional forelimb tests. This combination was further tested with several papers outlining the results of these projects, thanks to BICP funding.

## Injury Model

The BICP team made prototypes of a ventral contusion injury model tested in cadaveric rodent and mechanical models. Dr. Tom Oxland and his team are continuing to develop a central cord syndrome model to enable in vivo testing to advance the search for treatments and cures for SCI. The team reported good progress in 2021; the spinal cord injury mechanism of dislocation is producing a pattern of damage which is reminiscent of central cord injury when performed at low speeds. Findings show the dislocations are damaging the central grey matter of the spinal cord while maintaining an intact rim of white matter. The team is in the process of reviewing data on these behavioural differences.

## Biobank

The International SCI Biobank (ISCIB) is a research resource consisting of a collection of biospecimens to support biomedical research and improve patient outcomes. ISCIB is available to researchers globally, provided that their proposed research has undergone ethical review and is aimed to improve the overall understanding of SCI and the spine. As of March 31, 2022, ISCIB supported 18 international projects – triple the previous year’s number.

ISCIB holds 13 spinal cords and is expanding its recruitment and collections to chronic SCI and acute SCI centres across Canada. In early 2022, ISCIB expanded its digital inventory by including the storage and release of clinical magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) from each spinal cord donor. In September 2021, ISCIB launched its official website and Twitter page, coinciding with its presentation at the International Spinal Cord Society 2021 Annual Scientific Meeting.



*Photo credit: Martin Dee*

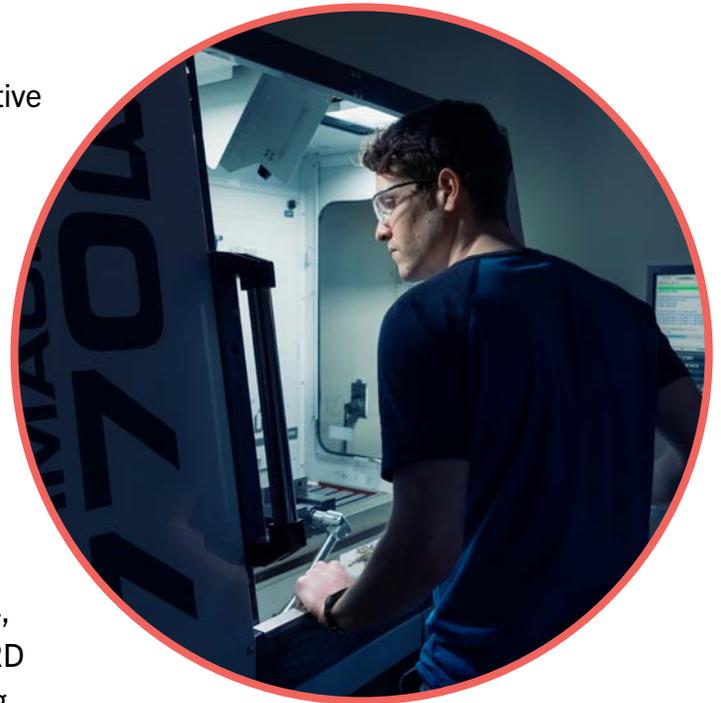
## 2. Network Development

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.

### Meetings

ICORD Training Committee hosted the virtual Trainee Symposium on September 23 and 24, 2021. This annual event is organized by ICORD trainees and offers them excellent networking experience and an understanding of the background work of organizing a conference. The 2021 edition was held virtually with 115 participants and featured eight student research talks, four plenary lectures, and 33 poster presentations. Jim Ryan, an RHF Ambassador, gave a pre-recorded talk on the challenges of living with SCI.

ICORD held its 18th annual research meeting March 10 and 11, 2022, with 195 participants. It was the second consecutive time the meeting was held virtually and featured two plenary lectures, twelve talks, and 57 poster presentations about new SCI research in ICORD labs. Dr. Samuel Stupp gave the Rick Hansen Plenary Lecture for 2022 from Northwestern University. His lecture, titled Supramolecular motion in bioactive scaffolds for spinal cord injury, was a fascinating talk about peptides that self-assemble and are designed for movement.



*Photo credit: Martin Dee*

## Seminar Series

Created to share research findings and identify areas for collaboration in future research, the virtual seminar series supported knowledge translation to benefit people with SCI. As with the previous year, in-person seminars were not held. One of the highlights was a virtual seminar presented by Dr. Ashley Dalrymple from Carnegie Mellon University. She spoke about neural engineering and experiences she has encountered in translating research discoveries.

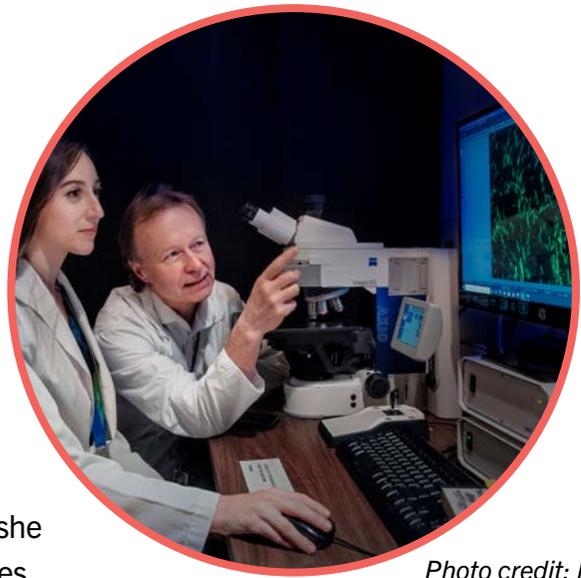


Photo credit: Martin Dee

The ICORD Trainee Committee continued to host ICORD Trainee Seminar Series virtually. This monthly series featured talks by two trainees from different labs and networking opportunities.

## SCIRE

The Spinal Cord Injury Research Evidence (SCIRE) is a free online resource that covers a comprehensive set of topics pertaining to SCI rehabilitation and community reintegration. The information provided through SCIRE is compiled into clear and concise language to inform health professionals and the SCIRE community.

This is the second year RHF has directly supported SCIRE to ensure the knowledge of best rehabilitation practices is easy to process for a wide range of shareholders.

*The Rick Hansen Foundation (via ICORD) has been critical in supporting the Spinal Cord Injury Research Evidence Project (SCIRE Project). This project has enabled us to develop international partners. For example, we are collaborating now with Indira Lanig, a physician with Craig Hospital and President of the American Paraplegia Society to develop primary care modules that will support people with SCI and their caregivers on what key areas they should ask their doctor to check each time they visit them. We have recently worked with the Greek Spinal Cord Association, and they have translated SCIRE documents into Greek. – Dr. Janice Eng*

### 3. Support the Best and Brightest

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

- In 2021, Dr. John Kramer was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in the Department of Anesthesiology, Pharmacology, and Therapeutics at UBC. His goal is to strengthen existing and build new collaborations among pain researchers across the province as well as amongst UBC imaging experts to better understand factors underlying the development of chronic pain.
- Drs. Mypinder Sekhon and Kayla Fewster joined ICORD as Investigators in 2021-2022, and Dr. Tim Bhatnager joined ICORD as an Associative Member.

*We benefit hugely from all aspects of the Rick Hansen Foundation funding. My students are able to travel to conferences that would otherwise not be possible. All members of my group are able to practice presenting to diverse audiences and get fantastic feedback at the monthly seminars. The annual research meeting catalyzes numerous interactions and potential collaborations for us. The shared tech support saves time and money in some of the most frequent analyses that many groups in ICORD have to perform. – Dr. Peter Cipton*

Since 2014, RHF funded 84 seed grant projects through the BCSS, which have leveraged more than \$29M in competitively-funded research grants by the end of the 2022 fiscal year. Twelve seed grants were awarded between April to October 2021. Eighteen trainee travel awards covered virtual conference registration costs in fiscal 2022.

This year, seed grants were instrumental in the success of the following grant applications:

**\$20K – \$368K:** Drs. Cornelia Laule, Brian Kwon, Wayne Moore and Piotr Kozlowski leveraged results from a 2017 seed grant, *Histological validation of quantitative MRI in human spinal cord injury*, for a Craig H. Nielsen Foundation grant.

**\$20K – \$420K:** Dr. Christopher West, with collaborators Drs. Gordon Mitchell, Malihe-Sadat Pourmasjedi- Meibod, leveraged preliminary data from a 2018 seed grant, Effect of acute intermittent hypoxia on cardiovascular function in a rodent model of spinal cord injury, for an International Spinal Research Trust grant.

**\$20K – \$5.3M:** Drs. Christopher West and Brian Kwon continue to leverage their 2015 seed grant for another United States Department of Defense Translational Research Award (\$2M) and DoD Spinal Cord Injury Research Program funding (\$499K) in 2021.

### New Initiatives and Awards

- 

ICORD researchers Drs. Wolfram Tetzlaff (project co-director), Brian Kwon, Dena Shahriari, Michael Berger, Corree Laule, Babak Shadgan, and Stephanie Willerth were among an international group of researchers led by UBC who received \$24 million from Canada's New Frontiers in Research Fund 2020 Transformation Stream to investigate using biomaterials—and soft gels in particular—to heal the injury. The name of the project is Mend the Gap.
- 

Drs. Andrei Krassioukov and Rahul Sachdeva received \$410,000 in funding over three years from Wings for Life for their project Transcutaneous spinal cord stimulation for autonomic recovery after spinal cord injury: therapeutic potential and underlying mechanisms. This project will allow researchers to investigate the underlying mechanisms and enable wider clinical use of spinal cord stimulation in improving the quality of life of individuals with SCI.
- 

Drs. Bill Miller and David Whitehurst and their colleagues were awarded a US\$197,000 Psychosocial Research Pilot Grant from the Craig H. Nielsen Foundation for their project, Co-developing a novel intervention to promote wellbeing of family caregivers of individuals with spinal cord injury. The team plans to develop and evaluate an eHealth tool (iCare Program) to improve the physical and psychological well-being of family caregivers of individuals with SCI.

-  Dr. Veronica Hirsch Reinshagen received the 2021 Vancouver Coastal Health Research Institute Mentored Clinician Scientist Award for Histological and clinical correlates of advanced MRI in acute traumatic spinal cord injuries.
-  Dr. Corree Laule was named a Senior Fellow of the International Society for Magnetic Resonance in Medicine and appointed Vice Chair, Research, for the UBC Department of Radiology.
-  Dr. Janice Eng was named Co-Director for the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility.
-  Dr. Shannon Kolind was one of 20 early-career researchers from across the country to receive a \$100,000 Brain Canada Future Leaders in Canadian Brain Research grant. The funding is designed to fund the boldest and brightest ideas at the most critical juncture of a researcher's career.
-  Dr. Andrei Krassioukov won the UBC Faculty of Medicine Award for Excellence in Mentoring Early Career Faculty.

Several ICORD researchers were successful in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research's Fall 2021 competition:

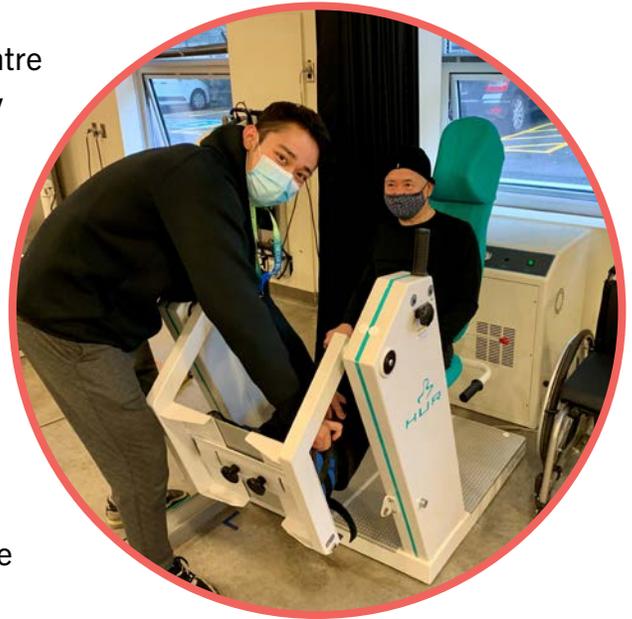
- Dr. Tom Oxland: Subject-specific biomechanical modelling in adult spinal deformity patients: a surgical planning and failure prediction toolkit. Co-investigators include John Street and David Wilson. \$795,600 for five years.
- Drs. Mypinder Sekhon & Ryan Hoiland: Impact of blood transfusion on cerebral blood flow regulation in experimental and pathological brain hypoxia in humans. Co-investigators include Philip Ainslie and Cheryl Wellington. \$321,300 for four years.
- Dr. Wolfram Tetzlaff: Metabolic treatment for chronic spinal cord injury. \$1,185,750 for five years.
- Dr. David Granville: Novel mechanisms and therapeutic approach for aging-related pruritus. Co-investigators include Yunyuan Li, Layla Nabai, and Matt Ramer. \$100,000 for one year.

## 4. Consumer Engagement

RHF and ICORD previously undertook many initiatives to address the critical need for study participants. As the lack of participants is widely recognized as a barrier to timely research, RHF funding was used to support peer recruitment at SCI BC to contact SCI BC members who meet study criteria. This partnership continues to have a positive impact on meeting research demand for participation.

### PARC

The Yuel Family Physical Activity Research Centre (PARC) is ICORD's most successful community engagement initiative. The goal of PARC is to advance best strategies to provide people with complete or partial paralysis due to spinal cord dysfunction with opportunities to be physical active and engage in exercise. More than 500 participants are registered with PARC, with approximately 120 attending the facility each week to partake in individual and group exercise. UBC's School of Kinesiology students gain real-world experience working with people with SCI.



*Demonstrating exercising equipment at the Physical Activity Research Centre (PARC) at ICORD.*

### Shared Resources

RHF funds supported scientific research equipment available to all ICORD researchers, trainees, and staff. Combined, there are approximately \$14 to \$16 million dollars in research equipment at 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 microscopes, autoclaves, water distillers, PARC gym equipment, metabolic carts, and cage washers. The shared equipment provides a cost-effective resource for researchers who may not otherwise be able to access this equipment. Health technologies are essential in making medical advancements toward finding a cure for SCI as well as in the treatment of SCI.

## Inspiring Advancements in SCI Research

The Rick Hansen Foundation is facilitating the development of a critical new spinal cord injury (SCI) care strategy in British Columbia. Called the B.C. SCI Care Strategy Initiative, its goal is to advance the quality and accessibility of health care for people with SCI in B.C.

The effects of SCI are both catastrophic and complex. It includes permanent disability, lifelong health complications, unemployment, poverty, isolation, and mental health challenges. More than 12,000 people in the province have SCIs that touch every aspect of their lives. With approximately 500 new SCI cases every year in B.C., a relatively high incidence compared to the rest of the country, it is imperative that timely and integrated access to care is vastly improved to meet this need.

The proposed Phases for the B.C. SCI Care Strategy Initiative are:

- **Phase 1:** Situation assessment and outline solution design
- **Phase 2:** Business case development
- **Phase 3:** Mobilization of resources and initiation of action

The SCI Care Strategy Initiative was formed on a foundation of a steering committee comprised of leaders in B.C.'s health care field, an advisory committee consisting of people with lived experience, and community outreach engagement. Information gathering and meetings with senior health administrators, researchers and people with lived experience in the community have commenced.



*Demonstrating exercising equipment at the Physical Activity Research Centre (PARC) at ICORD.*

# Youth In Motion

Accessibility and inclusion are not currently required components of the curriculum for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students. And yet, youth have the power to create meaningful change for the next generation by becoming accessibility champions. But without resources, educators are left piecemealing together lessons to support these important teachings.

Of the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program (RHFSP) Year-End Survey respondents that used our resources in the 2022 school year:

## 95%

found the school program resources to be beneficial.

## 98%

intend to use the RHFSP resources again.

## 100%

are likely to recommend the RHFSP resources to fellow educators.

**Knowledge removes barriers to accessibility and inclusion for children and youth with mobility, vision, and hearing disabilities by opening the hearts and minds of their peers and educators.**

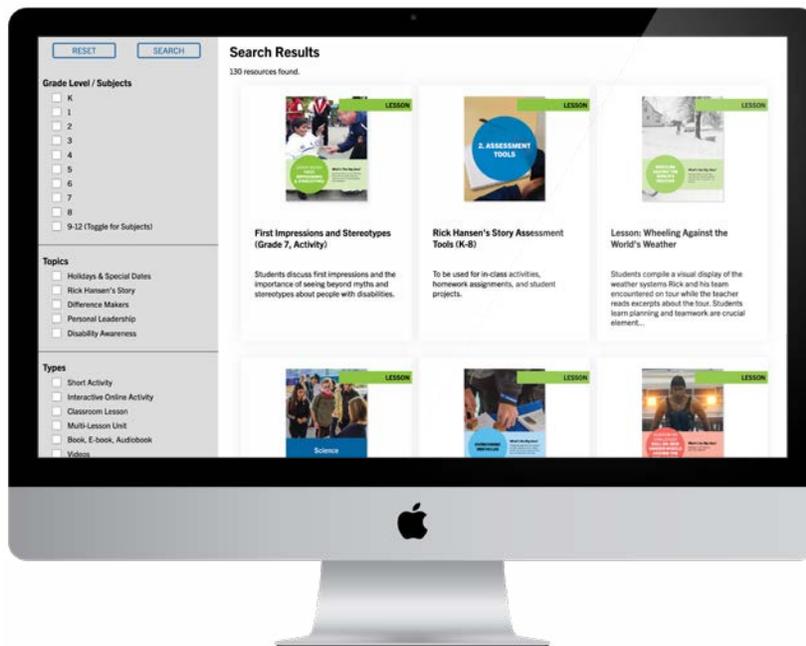
**Our goals for the RHF School Program in Fiscal 2022 were:**

-  Reach more youth to help them understand the critical need for accessibility and inclusion to enable them to become champions for positive change.
-  Empower youth to take action and become active leaders in the creation of a more inclusive and accessible world.
-  Strive to capture the hearts and minds of youth to enable them to be part of the movement of removing barriers for people with disabilities.
-  Better engage our audiences by strengthening their relationship with the Rick Hansen Foundation.

## Accomplishments and Learnings

After successfully pivoting to provide educators and students with online resources during the pandemic, this past year we continued to build on our offerings to improve the way our resources are delivered to better engage our community. Thanks to your generous support, and the support of Co-Presenting Partners, Boston Pizza Future Prospects Foundation and Scotiabank, we achieved the following:

- Launched an improved and accessible, digital resource library. We greatly improved the user experience with the addition of a robust internal search engine, organizing our resources in an intuitive manner, and removing the need for registration so educators can obtain resources with a simple click of a button. The upgrades have been well-received, as evidenced by the numbers. As of March 31, 2022, the new library logged 2,808 resource downloads since November 2021, outperforming the previous version’s downloads over a period of eight months in just four months.



- Strengthened our engagement beyond schools, connecting with three national organizations, three provincial governments, and 15 youth-serving organizations to reach more youth than ever before. This means that young people outside the traditional classroom also have the opportunity to learn about our important messages of accessibility and inclusion for all.

*My biggest takeaway from the Milton Library workshop series is the lesson we learned about underestimating people. People tend to be quite judgmental when it comes to people with disabilities. They underestimate them and treat them differently from everyone else. Educating myself and others on the issues will bring forth change when it comes to equality in the disabled community. – Milton Library series participating student*

- The Milton Public Library assisted students in Ontario in meeting their 40 community volunteer hours – a graduation requirement – by hosting a Difference Maker series of Ambassador presentations. The four virtual workshops engaged 90 secondary students throughout July 2021, shifting perceptions and sparking the interest of young people who reported that the series opened their minds to the importance of breaking down both attitudinal and physical barriers.
- Brought together RHF Ambassadors with vision, hearing, and mobility disabilities and perspectives to present as a panel to secondary school students. This approach was successful in terms of engagement, our Pink Shirt Day anti-bullying webinar reached 2,300 secondary students.
  - This is a great example of how well we shifted focus from quantity to impact we had fewer presentations but reached more students due to a concentrated effort around increasing engagement with fewer resources. Two school boards hosted presentations, reaching 20,000 students.
- To expand our reach into French classrooms, we developed customized lessons for French immersion classrooms, recognizing their needs are different from those of French first schools.



*Elena Hung and her siblings.  
Photo credit: Skylite Images  
Photo Studio.*

## Virtual Presentations from Ambassadors with Disabilities

RHF Ambassadors are a group of people with disabilities affecting their hearing, vision and/or mobility who connect with youth, some of whom may not have ever knowingly met somebody with a disability. Despite the uncertainty presented by the pandemic, it presented us with a silver lining as we pivoted to deliver Ambassador presentations virtually. Moving from the physical classroom and gymnasium to the digital environment resulted in the removal of geographical and physical barriers, allowing Ambassadors the flexibility to reach youth no matter where they are located.

This past school year, we introduced themed presentations that included Halloween, Inclusion Matters, Kindness, Difference Maker, and AccessAbility. Complimentary pre-and-post presentation activities were provided to generate further thoughtful discussions. The activities created a lasting impression as students explored the themes of compassion and empathy as experienced through a personal connection.



**Over the 2021/22 school year we hosted 170 presentations, reaching a total of 59,303 children and youth.**

For the second year, the Grand Erie District School Board held a series of RHF Ambassador presentations around International Day of Persons with Disabilities. The presentations were hosted by 90 different educators who participated in one of 12 presentations. Twenty-five educators participated in more than one presentation. The series reached 2,190 students.



*RHF Ambassador Sharon Brandt.*

## Outreach and Engagement

The RHF School Program continued to expand outreach to engage the next generation about the potential of people with disabilities. The following are some of the highlights of these efforts over the past school year:

- We hosted two Pink Shirt Day presentations to mark the global anti-bullying initiative held annually February 23, 2022. Both panels spoke to the idea that diversity and inclusion are key components of a healthy society. The presentations reached 4,400 students.

*The Panel was beyond phenomenal. Incredible. Can't wait for the next ones.*

– Susan Brown, Senior Policy Advisor, Safe and Healthy Schools Branch, Indigenous Education and Well Being Division, Ontario Ministry of Education

- RHF had the opportunity to host a side panel event at the United Nations Global Disability Summit on February 16, 2022. The conversation, moderated by RHF's Teri Thorson, featured six engaging youth, all of whom have a disability. Many of the youth are part of the RHFSP's Youth Leadership Committee.



*RHFSP's Youth Leadership Committee participate in a virtual panel as part of the UN's Global Disability Summit.*

*I appreciate you including me in the Global Disability Summit 2022. It was so interesting to hear about other people's experiences. I really think it is important for able-bodied people to recognize that there needs to be more inclusion of people living with a disability/disabilities. This kind of platform really helps in breaking down those barriers- especially in an educational environment.*

– Isabel van Rossum, community member

- Our partnership with ShareEdBC, a resource-sharing platform for educators in B.C. and the Yukon, resulted in the expanded distribution of 74 French language resources for students and their educators across Canada. We also created a new animated video that follows two youths on an accessible adventure throughout their community. The inclusion of ASL, LSQ, captions and audio-described versions demonstrates digital accessibility and the importance of inclusive communications. The video will be launched at the start of the 2022/23 school year.
- The Ontario Ministry of Education featured the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program as part of their Bullying Prevention Program. A dedicated web page and personalized email reached 7,000 Ontario schools with a video, resources, and RHF Ambassador presentations. The Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board booked two Ambassador presentations for April 5, 2022, that were delivered to most of its 99 classrooms, reaching 29,000 students.
- RHFSP formed a Youth Leadership Committee to provide a platform to bring the energetic voices of young Canadians together. The Committee comprises alumni from the Canada 150 Youth Leadership Summit, an event hosted by RHF in Ottawa during 2017, that connected 50 young leaders from across the country for workshops, leadership training, and other special events. The Committee meets regularly to discuss ways to promote accessibility and inclusion through group projects and benefit from mentorship and training in areas of advocacy, training and project management.



## Voices in Motion: Youth with Disabilities Discuss Inclusive Learning Environments

The best people to ask about the state of accessibility and inclusion in the Canadian school system are those with firsthand experience – the students themselves.

On February 16, 2022, the Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) moderated a side panel event at the United Nations Global Disability Summit titled The Perspective of Youth with Disabilities in Education. The conversation featured six youth, all of whom have a disability.

Each participant brought a unique perspective to their experience as a student with a disability. A sample of learnings we took away from the panel include:

Being a youth with a disability in the classroom means self-advocating. Acknowledging their needs goes a long way to inclusion. All panelists agreed that it takes a consistent effort to be included, and it's something many people may not even consider.

*For me, and for a lot of us, it takes an applied effort – and thinking a few steps ahead to be included in all the various classroom activities. It also means being supported and acknowledged by your peers. – Mihai Covaser*

Advocacy drives change. Encourage the sharing of stories in the classroom to help raise awareness about the potential of people with disabilities, and remove stigmas.

Panelist Alexis Holmgren agreed. “Sharing my lived experience provides education to help people better understand what it’s like. This introduces a real human lens to the conversation, and allows many of the misconceptions to be dismissed and attitudes to change as we are seen as people.”

Classmates can be more supportive of their peers with disabilities by listening to people’s experiences.

Said Mihai: “If you have a question, just ask. Keep asking those questions and I’ll let you know if there’s something you can do for me to make things easier. It’s just a matter of being open and being okay with asking those questions and having those conversations.”

## Celebrating Those Who Make a Difference

Difference Maker awards acknowledge educators and students across Canada who make a difference in improving accessibility and inclusion in their schools and communities.

In 2022, the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program (RHFSP) recognized six students and ten educators and community leaders as Difference Maker of the Year award recipients. These exceptional individuals have made positive contributions to inclusion and accessibility for people with physical disabilities from coast to coast during the 2021/22 school year and are leading the way to create a world for everyone, everywhere. We are pleased to introduce you to four of the deserving recipients from this year.

### **Megan Donesley, Student, British Columbia**

Inspired by Rick Hansen, Megan is making a difference by using her lived experience to highlight which areas of her community are accessible based on her ability to get around. Megan is working with the Regional District of the South Okanagan to promote accessibility and determine which areas require improved accessibility.



### **Saheed Alawiye, Student, Alberta**

Saheed, a member of the Calgary Adapted Hub powered by Jumpstart Community Advisory Committee, provides guidance, insight and advocacy for adaptive and inclusive sports and recreation programs for children and youth with disabilities. He helps address barriers to participation and identifies program gaps from a user perspective.



**Archie Allison, Community Youth Leader, Ontario**

Archie is a youth leader and coach who has dedicated nearly 40 years of his life to inclusion and accessibility advocacy. When the pandemic interrupted many accessibility initiatives, Archie was determined to keep students engaged through interactive, online learning. He continues to inspire students to create their own accessible and inclusive communities.



**Véronique Messier, Quebec**

As the first physical education teacher at École Madeleine-Bergeron, Véronique motivates students and encourages participation by adapting lessons to be inclusive and accessible. She is involved in wheelchair basketball with the Bulldogs de Québec and spends time on Saturdays training with the older students at the school. Véronique teaches students the potential of people with disabilities.



**Three Year RHFSP Program Trends**

	2019/20 School Year	2020/21 School Year	2021/22 School Year
RHF Ambassador Presentations	213	483	170
RHFSP Resource Downloads	5,770	4,382	4,200
Students Reached via Ambassador Presentations	34,292	29,886	59,303

## Youth - Forward Motion

As we look forward to the new school year, we do so by underscoring RHFSP's key priorities. All areas of focus share roots in our mission of educating young people about the importance of accessibility and disability inclusion – lessons they will take with them throughout their lives in the places and with the people they encounter along the way.

Thanks to your support, we continue to provide practical and educational resources for our educators and youth leaders. It is top of mind, especially considering there is no other program that fulfils this requirement.

While the past two school years will be remembered for their various changes and challenges, the RHF School Program team is proud to have addressed the immediate needs of educators and their students. The circumstances provided us with valuable insight into how we can continue to offer and improve upon our digital offerings.

Our success is defined by the minds and hearts we open to the idea that everyone deserves to be included in society. Not only will we increase the breadth of our School Program resources, but we will also establish more communication channels so we can better connect with our educators and youth leaders to further develop the inclusion and accessibility champions of tomorrow.



*Tai Young and their friend. Photo credit: Skylite Images Photo Studio.*

## Scotiabank – An Ally Towards an Inclusive Future

Scotiabank is no stranger to the Rick Hansen Foundation, having been a supporter since 2002 and a Presenting Partner of the RHF School Program for the past five years. We are proud to collaborate with values-aligned organizations like Scotiabank to educate thousands of youth across the country with important lessons about accessibility, disability, and inclusion.

“We are proud to support the Rick Hansen Foundation School Program to help youth reach their infinite potential,” says Meigan Terry, Senior Vice President and Chief Social Impact, Sustainability and Communications Officer at Scotiabank. “We recognize the power in providing access to the necessary skills and resources needed to support their success.”

With Scotiabank’s unwavering commitment this past year, the RHF School Program has been able to continue to create engaging resources for educators and their students. Scotiabank’s contributions over the years has been vital to the School Program, playing a significant part in enabling us to thrive.

Scotiabank shares RHF’s belief that disability must be included in conversations around DE&I. As young people are our future leaders, RHF and Scotiabank continue to work together to empower our next generation and champion change towards a truly inclusive Canada.

# Scotiabank®



## A Letter from the Treasurer

As the world moves into post-pandemic recovery management, we are cognizant of the unwavering and generous support of our donors, partners, and stakeholders during this time of change. Global economic uncertainty brings complex and uncharted challenges, yet our supporters have made it clear that people with disabilities will not be left behind as we move forward.

Thanks to the Government of Canada through its Employment and Social Development Canada funding through the Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program, the Foundation secured \$7.5M in funding for increasing accessibility and inclusion. This financial boost will help educate and upskill existing employees and train more RHFAC professionals to meet the growing demand for enhanced accessibility.

We are pleased to report that the 250 complimentary RHFAC ratings funded by the Government of Ontario, which we previously delayed due to the pandemic, have now been completed. Through those ratings, participating organizations gained a deeper understanding of accessibility and inclusivity.

In closing, we reconfirm the Board's continued commitment to fiscal accountability and transparency. In support of this commitment, we are proud to maintain our accreditation by Imagine Canada, which sets high standards for registered charities and non-profits in these and other governance areas.



**Eric Watt, FCPA, FCA, ICD.D**  
Treasurer, Board of Directors  
Rick Hansen Foundation



# Statement of Financial Position

## as of March 31, 2022

Assets	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	7,989,423	10,185,608
Accounts Receivable	2,839,266	600,681
Interest Receivable	-	86,443
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	216,486	274,300
	<u>11,045,175</u>	<u>11,147,032</u>
<b>Investments held at fair value</b>	6,744,884	6,248,122
<b>Tangible Capital Assets</b>	156,516	140,484
<b>Intellectual Property Rights</b>	1,800,000	1,800,000
	<u>19,746,575</u>	<u>19,335,638</u>

Liabilities and Net Assets	2022 \$	2021 \$
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	603,186	1,309,794
Deferred Contributions	8,928,938	9,596,465
	<u>9,532,124</u>	<u>10,906,259</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	3,708,627	2,390,571
Internally Restricted	6,372,256	5,905,240
Endowment	133,568	133,568
	<u>10,214,451</u>	<u>8,429,379</u>
	<u>19,746,575</u>	<u>19,335,638</u>

Please refer to our full set of audited financial statements at [rickhansen.com](http://rickhansen.com).

## Statement of Operations for the year ended March 31, 2022

Revenue	2022 \$	2021 \$
Government and Other Grants	6,929,987	5,830,499
Sponsorships and Donations	3,450,324	3,361,526
Investment Income	339,744	1,015,333
Other	457,845	575,017
	<u>11,177,900</u>	<u>10,782,375</u>

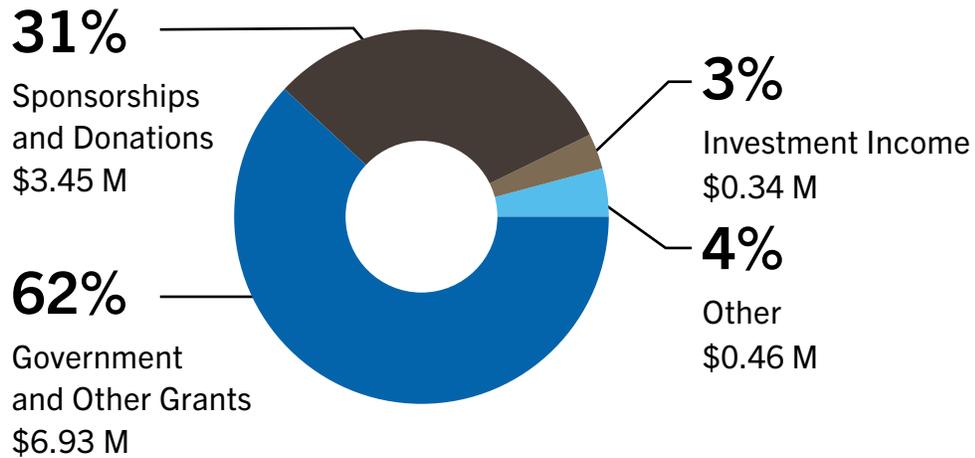
Expenses	2022 \$	2021 \$
Accessibility	2,783,582	3,783,484
Awareness	2,086,050	1,789,253
Research	1,822,992	1,878,902
Education and Outreach	1,180,870	1,121,200
Other	48,145	24,561
Total Programs	<u>7,921,639</u>	<u>8,597,400</u>
Fundraising	561,892	591,127
Management and Administration	1,168,090	1,050,927
	<u>9,651,621</u>	<u>10,239,454</u>
<b>Surplus of Revenue Over Expenses Before the Undernoted Items</b>	<b>1,526,279</b>	<b>542,921</b>
Fair Value Changes on Investments	259,316	947,538
Gain (loss) on Disposal of Tangible Capital Assets	(523)	4,970
Surplus of Revenue over Expenses for the Year	<u>1,785,072</u>	<u>1,495,429</u>

Please refer to our full set of audited financial statements at [rickhansen.com](http://rickhansen.com).

## Revenue for the year ended March 31, 2022

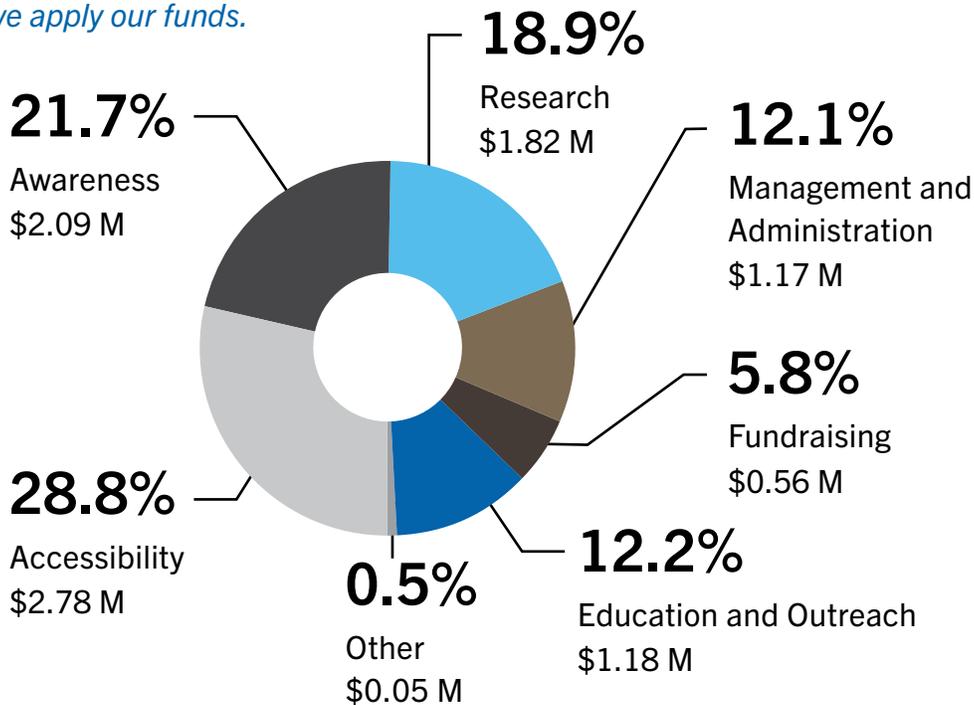
*Where our funding comes from.*

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, 2022

*How we apply our funds.*



# 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
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
  - Employment and Social Development Canada

#### Provincial & Territorial Government Funders

- Government of British Columbia
- BC Neurotrauma Fund
  - BC Ministry of Education
- Government of Nunavut
- Government of Ontario
- Ministry of Education
- Government of Yukon

#### Community Partners

- BC Wheelchair Basketball Society
- BC Wheelchair Sports
- Disability Foundation
- ICORD
- Inclusion Yukon
- Neil Squire Society
- North Shore Disability Resource Centre
- 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

#### Corporate Partners

- Boston Pizza
- Foundation Future Prospects
- Boston Pizza International Inc.
- Canadian Tire Corporation
- Scotiabank
- TAXI Canada

#### Media Partners

- Corus Entertainment
- OUTFRONT Media
- Shaw Communications
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#### Corporate Donors

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 in memory of son  
 Richard Andrew George  
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 Doramy Ehling  
 France Gagnon  
 Alannah Johnston  
 Karolina Lindberg  
 Jamie Matsumoto  
 Laura McBride  
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 Sarah McCarthy  
 Sandra Pimpao  
 Michael Reid  
 Karen Sallovitz  
 Brad Scott  
 Heidi Shuter  
 Marika Van  
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 Frank and Charlene  
 VanderGriendt  
 Una Zhang

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Community Fundraiser  
 in honour of Lori  
 McDermid  
 Entuitive Corporation

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Certification Advisory  
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Benjamin Shinewald  
Darryl Condon  
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Mathur Variem  
Nancy Bestic  
Philippe Bernier  
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Élise Doucet  
Jordan Lowe  
Payton Given  
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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](http://RickHansen.com).

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Annette Aquin, CPA, CA

Ida Chong, FCPA, FCGA

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Lisa Coltart, CPA, CA

Rod Graham

Rob Guénette

Amanda Hansen

Kimberly Kuntz

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Ryan Peterson

Suki Sekhon

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**Rick Hansen Foundation**

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