



**impacting community change**



**DUFFERIN  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

**REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY  
2025**



# REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

In just a few short years, the Dufferin Community Foundation has grown from a hopeful start-up into a meaningful force for local philanthropy. This progress has been made possible by donors whose generosity, trust, and vision are helping to shape the future of Dufferin County. At the heart of our work is a simple but powerful mission: connecting people who care with causes that matter.

In 2025, that shared commitment led to significant progress. We added more than \$1 million in invested assets, ending the year with \$5.4 million in endowed funds. It was a landmark year of granting, more than doubling disbursements to \$174,000, offering multi-year grants, and granting from the Dufferin Vision Fund for the first time.

Developing a risk registry strengthened our governance practices and supported transparency and accountability. We also welcomed 11 new public committee members whose perspectives reflect our commitment to integrity, excellence, and optimism. These milestones are about more than numbers—they represent greater possibilities for the people and places we all care about.

We are energized by the opportunities ahead as we explore new ways to support charities and non-profits. While no one can predict the challenges that future generations will face, we can ensure that they have the resources they need to find meaningful solutions, rooted in community need and ingenuity. Each act of giving, whether through bequests, family funds, or one-time donations, goes directly toward creating a resilient community now and forever.



I extend my heartfelt thanks to our Board of Directors, our volunteers, and our dedicated Executive Director, Michele Fisher, for their unwavering commitment and care. I also want to recognize our committee chairs—Steve Wood, Governance; Mark Bergen, Finance & Administration; and Shirley Boxem, Grants—for their leadership, generosity of spirit, and steadfast belief in our mission. We are deeply grateful for the relationships we share with donors, local charities, businesses, community leaders, and residents.

Together, we are turning today's generosity into tomorrow's legacy.

Debbi Goss  
Chair, Board of Directors

# INVESTING IN A STRONGER COMMUNITY

It was another strong market year for our fund investments with a return of 13.6%. During the year, our Finance & Administration Committee conducted a review of 5 different investment firms, ultimately deciding to remain with PH&N Investment Services for its performance and service.

Strong years like 2025 allow us to build a capital buffer around each fund, ensuring that our community impact will be sustainable even in less favourable economic times.

To view our full financial statements, visit <https://dufferincommunityfoundation.ca/publications-financials/>.

## GIFTS OF SECURITIES

PH&N became our partners in processing gifts of shares in the fall. The advantages were immediate: a smoother process for donors, almost no fee for us, and the ability for donors to minimize capital gains tax while investing in our community.

## AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

We believe in full transparency and accountability to our donors and the community.

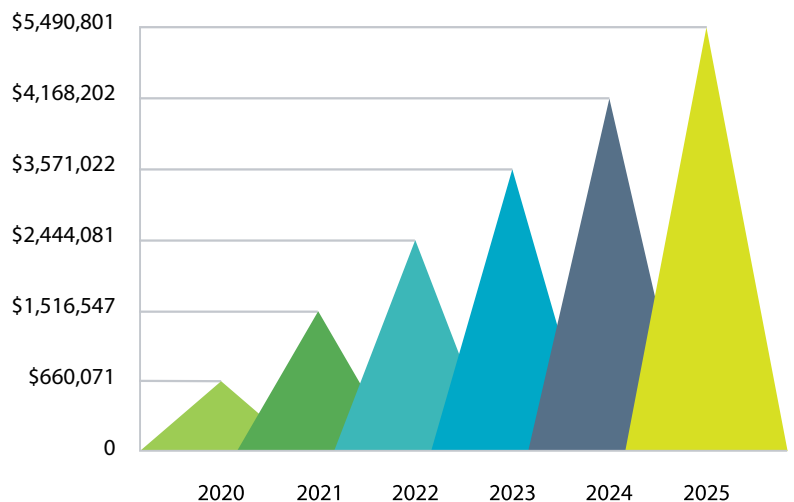
# GROWTH OF OUR ASSETS

**\$1.03 M** Donations in 2025

**\$5.4 M** Invested Assets

**13.6%** Annual Rate of Return

**7.9%** Rate of Return since Inception





# REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Quite often it begins with a wonderfully unexpected phone call. A community member is interested in starting an endowment fund or making a donation with real impact. Sometimes they simply want to know more about what we can offer them. The honour of my position is that I get to sit down with people and discover what is meaningful to them and why. Our next step is creating a personalized community legacy.

Sometimes it's not an individual, but a charity or an organization that wants to start a fund. In May 2025, Dufferin County entrusted us with \$750,000 to establish the Museum of Dufferin (MoD) Endowment Fund. The partnership between the County and the Foundation will help the MoD remain an ever-evolving cultural and historical gem for the next hundred years and more.

Soon after, we received a call from the Harbinger Foundation. They wanted to start a fund for Streams Community Hub in memory of Joan VanDuzer, their founder and a well-known philanthropic leader with a farm in Mulmur. With that, the Streams Creative Futures Fund was born. Both the MoD and Streams funds will begin granting in 2027, providing a source of revenue that they can count on every single year.

Since I joined the Foundation in 2021, we have grown tremendously, propelled by a sense of mission and momentum. In four years, our grants to local charities have increased from \$39,500 to \$174,000 – and we have only just begun.



This year we embarked on Vision 2030, a strategic planning process led by our Vice Chair Steve Wood to guide our next four years. He has challenged us to get uncomfortable and come up with Leap Goals, the kind that motivate and mobilize in service of our community.

Another great honour of my position is that I get to deliver wonderfully unexpected phone calls myself – to leaders of local charities, letting them know that they have been awarded a grant. Every dollar that we can provide makes such a difference to their life-affirming work.

Thank you to the people who care – our donors – and the causes that matter – our caring sector. Together we are building a community of inclusiveness, well-being and heart.

Michele Fisher  
Executive Director

# THE VOLUNTEERS BEHIND OUR GROWING IMPACT



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Debbi Goss, Chair  
 Steven Wood, Vice Chair  
 Mark Bergen, Treasurer<sup>1</sup>  
 Rhonda Gerrits, Secretary  
 Shirley Boxem  
 Ian Gilbart  
 Margot Hornseth  
 Michèle Maycock  
 Ex-officio: Michele Fisher,  
 Executive Director

## GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Steven Wood, Chair  
 Rhonda Gerrits  
 Bob Hunt  
 Jeff Stone

<sup>1</sup> Avery Delisle resigned in February 2025.

## FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Mark Bergen, Chair  
 Hans Bigler  
 Stephen Doney  
 Cathy Jennings  
 Rich Long  
 Derek Wiens

## GRANTS COMMITTEE

Shirley Boxem, Chair  
 Jacqui Henry  
 Margot Hornseth  
 Ernie Lynch  
 Heather Pady  
 Bert Steenburgh  
 Vicki Sword

\* Resigned during the year.

## FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Debbi Goss, Chair  
 Mahesh Bhalerao  
 Roy Bryan  
 Gord Gallagher  
 Ian Gilbart  
 Cole Heideman  
 Michèle Maycock  
 Victor Paan\*

## GRANTS REVIEW TEAM

Heidi Allen  
 Patty Clarke  
 Malalai Halimi  
 Margot Hornseth  
 Heather Pady  
 Bert Steenburgh  
 Vicki Sword



Founding members (l-r) Stephen Doney, Laura Ryan, Shirley Boxem, Gord Gallagher, MaryAnn Lowry, and Joan Waechter.

## LOSS OF LAURA RYAN, COMMUNITY CHAMPION

In December, we lost Laura Ryan, one of our Founding Board members. Laura was a strong advocate for our community, serving as Mayor of Mono and Warden of Dufferin County. She championed the environment. She supported causes like the Friends of Island Lake. She made and sold the very best pies. Our community is forever enriched by her legacy.

# PEOPLE WHO CARE

What a year of community generosity in action! Our donors contributed \$1.03 million, a 30% increase over 2024, while our year-end campaign grew by 50%. New endowment funds were created for the Museum of Dufferin and Streams Community Hub. We held a small circle event at Windrush Estate Winery and a professional advisors event with Tom Deans where we brought the Foundation's mission to life through personal storytelling. We encouraged residents to "Give Where You Live" on GivingTuesday, engaging with 32 local non-profits in the campaign. We ended the year with \$5.4 million in invested assets, well surpassing our strategic goal.



## SUSTAINING A CULTURAL TREASURE

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, we launched the Museum of Dufferin (MoD) Endowment Fund in partnership with Dufferin County. Created with a \$750,000 gift from the Museum Trust, the fund will generate operational revenue for the museum every year, helping to ensure that it remains a cultural and educational treasure for generations to come. The launch event took place at the Unity in Diversity art exhibition at the MoD.

*Pictured above are Althea Alli, Vishal Singh, Hemani Singh, Christina Casamento and Ethan Casamento from the Dufferin County Multicultural Foundation; Sonya Pritchard from Dufferin County; Jasmine Proteau from the MoD; and Debbi Goss, Shirley Boxem, Michele Fisher, Michèle Maycock, and Gord Gallagher from Dufferin Community Foundation.*

## INVESTING IN CREATIVE FUTURES FOR YOUTH

To celebrate its 9<sup>th</sup> anniversary as north Dufferin's favourite youth arts organization, Streams Community Hub launched the "Streams Creative Futures Fund" with a \$25,000 gift from the Harbinger Foundation.

"This fund is a commitment to the future," said Executive Director Juli-Anne James, "It will ensure that our impact continues long after today's paintings have dried and today's stage lights go out. It says that creativity matters and that youth in this community are worth the investment."



## TOM DEANS, WILLING WISDOM

We were honoured to host New York Times bestselling author and local resident Tom Deans on November 27<sup>th</sup> in a special afternoon for professional advisors. Sharing unique insights from his book, *Willing Wisdom*, Tom discussed the important role of philanthropy in building a shared family legacy. Having delivered more than 2,000 keynotes in 28 countries, this was his first Dufferin County presentation in 10 years.

*Author Tom Deans with RLB's Melissa Vinden at his inspirational talk.*

## MULMUR COMMUNITY FUND CAMPAIGN

Fifth generation Mulmur resident (and our founder!) Gord Gallagher made a personal appeal to friends and neighbours in December to get the Mulmur Community Fund across the finish line to the minimum \$25,000 required for granting. Within a few weeks, the close-knit community had made it happen. Watch for the first grant in 2027.



# THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

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**Your gift is not just any donation.** It is a hard-working investment into the future of Dufferin County, growing and building to meet community needs each year. Thank you so much for your continued generosity.

## **BRONZE DONORS**

(\$25 to \$2,499)

Sherry-Anne Bedminster  
John & Marlene Black  
Shirley Boxem  
Joyce Brundle  
Roy Bryan  
Cathy Campbell  
Carters Professional Corporation  
Peter Cavanagh  
Sheryl Chandler  
Patricia Clark  
Sarah Clarke  
Avery Coates  
Leslie Crawford  
Jennifer Debues  
Jacqueline & Michael Demczur  
Dragonfly Arts  
Dufferin Circle of Storytellers  
Jaime Edge  
Bill Elliott  
Marilyn Field & John Pennie  
Michele Fisher  
James Garrow  
Jennifer Gohn  
Debbi Goss & Karen Morrison\*  
Fidelity Investments Canada  
Marion Herron  
Dave Holwell  
Denyse Horner  
Margot Hornseth  
Cathy Jennings  
Pat Kalapaca  
Robert Katzman  
Betty Keating

Marci Lipman  
MaryAnn Lowry\*  
Douglas Maclachlan  
Sharon Martin\*  
Michèle Maycock  
Jamie & Ann McAlpine  
Jamie & Susan McCutcheon\*  
Jan McCutcheon  
Mary Ruth McDonald  
& Doug Schaefer  
Lori McHenry  
Jason McKittrick  
Victor Paan  
Ken & Martha Pagel  
RLB Chartered  
Professional Accountants  
Susan Sanderson  
Stephen Slemmon  
Nancy Stallmach  
Bert Steenburgh  
Terry & Judi Sullivan  
Debbie VanWyck  
Kristen Wall  
Jocelyn Willoughby  
Elaine Woodward  
Gabriele Zbinden

## **SILVER DONORS**

(\$2,500-\$7,499)

Anne Arrell  
Angela Banks  
Keith Coulter  
Gord & Sandra Gallagher\*  
Harbinger Foundation  
Rich & Carrie Long  
Ken & Gwynn McGhee\*

John & Kathleen Meek  
Fred Nix & Franca DeAngelis  
Order of the Eastern Star –  
Normac Chapter #311  
Philip Rentsch

## **GOLD DONORS**

(\$7,500)

Anonymous  
Mark Bergen & Heidi Allen  
Jim Bronson  
Dufferin County  
Gayle Henkenhaf  
Trish Keachie & Darcy O'Neill\*  
Streams Community Hub  
Steven & Julie Wood

## **DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS**

Carroll Family Fund  
Cedar Fund  
Greenwood Family Fund  
Mikoliew Mach Fund  
W. & M. Edelbrock Fund  
WoodLot Endowment Fund

## **EVENT SPONSORS**

BookLore  
Cole Heideman,  
RBC Wealth Management  
Crewson Insurance Brokers  
RLB Management  
Partnership

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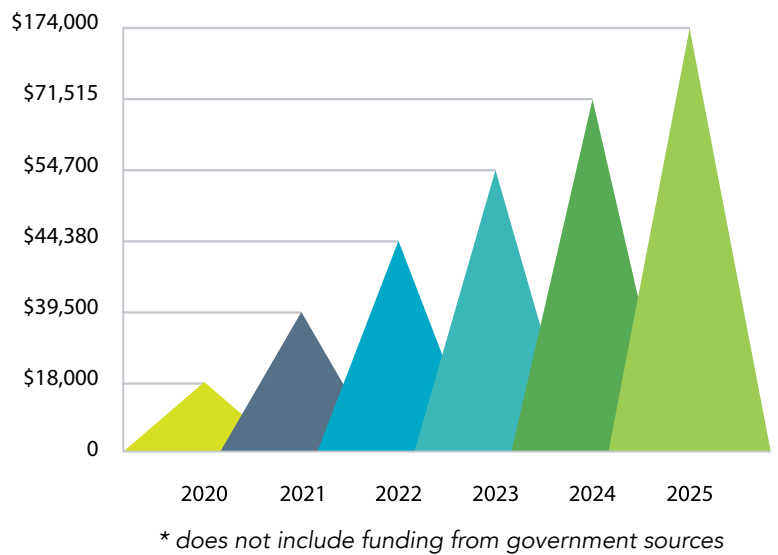
\* Founders Circle Members

# CAUSES THAT MATTER

Our grants to charities increased by an impressive 144% in 2025, with our Board approving \$174,000 to be invested into the community. First time grant streams included the Refugee Resettlement Fund and the Dufferin Vision Fund, which focused this year on cultural programs and mental health. More than 80% of the grants were from our donor-advised funds, making an impact on food security, youth arts, housing, addictions support, and more in every corner of the county.

## GROWTH OF OUR GRANTS

- \$174,000**  
Total Grants & Bursaries
- 22** Grants to  
17 Charities
- 5** Student  
Bursaries
- 10** Funds Generating  
Grants



### CEDAR FUND INVESTS IN POVERTY RELIEF

The Cedar Fund continued its commitment to tackle poverty and support the health of women and youth by giving to Choices Shelter & Support Services and Family Transition Place in equal measure. The family behind the fund, which wishes to remain anonymous, granted \$7,500 to each charity and renewed its support for the next three years. In the picture: Shirley Boxem and Ernie Lynch from our Grants Committee presented the grant to Kim Zettle and two youth from Choices.



# CAUSES THAT MATTER

## ENVIRONMENTAL DISCOVERY AND LEARNING FOR KIDS

Students at Dufferin schools got their hands in the soil and learned about local nature through two Foundation-funded programs. In the fall, 293 children at Mono-Amaranth Public School learned about endangered species and growth in animals through the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority's "Wonderful Wetlands" program. Then this spring, the Headwaters Food & Farming Alliance (HFFA) taught kids at 10 elementary schools how to grow their own food from seed using Earth Boxes..



Rebecca Landman from Headwaters Communities in Action/HFFA and Elaine Murphy and her two sons from Murphy Meadow Farms receive a grant from Shirley Boxem and Michele Fisher.



## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FUND HELPS NEWCOMERS LEARN ENGLISH

In December, we awarded \$4,000 from the Refugee Resettlement Fund to increase the number of locally delivered ESL classes through Westminster United Church and the Headwaters Refugee Sponsorship Group. What made this first-time grant especially significant was that we brought together 4 refugee sponsor groups for a consensus granting process.

Students Zuhail Toba and Farzam Shamal from Afghanistan and Selam Asrat from Eritrea with program leaders Brian and Philomena Logel, and volunteer teacher Joanna Lane-Smith.

## CELEBRATING INDEPENDENT FILM IN DUFFERIN

The Dufferin Film Festival (DFF) is bringing Canadian storytelling to the heart of the community, thanks in part to a \$5,500 Arts & Culture Grant from the Foundation. Made possible by the W. & M. Edelbrock Fund, the grant will fund short film screenings, filmmaker Q&As, and expanded workshops at the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual festival in August 2026.

Foundation Chair Debbi Goss presented the grant to DFF's Kelly McDowell at the Orangeville Opera House.



# GRANTS AT A GLANCE

We were honoured to fund the following local charities and bursary students in 2025:

## DONOR-ADVISED FUND GRANTS

Choices Shelter & Support Services	\$7,500
Dufferin Child & Family Services	\$3,500
Family Transition Place	\$7,500
Grand Valley Public Library	\$7,500
Headwaters Health Care Foundation	\$4,583
Knights of Columbus Council 8851	\$4,583
Orangeville Food Bank	\$2,500
Pine River Institute	\$18,500
St. Timothy's Parish, Orangeville	\$4,583
Streams Community Hub	\$18,000

## W. & M. EDELBROCK FUND BURSARIES

Keymar Lewis, Centre Dufferin District High School	\$3,125
Damien Bland-Bestward, Orangeville District Secondary School	\$3,125
Jayden Purcell, Westside Secondary School	\$3,125
Yamaan Awa, York University (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year)	\$3,125
Fredia Mboe, Georgian College (2 <sup>nd</sup> Year)	\$3,125

## ARTS & CULTURE GRANTS

(funded by the W. & M. Edelbrock Fund)

Dufferin Arts Council/Dufferin Film Festival	\$5,500
Streams Community Hub	\$8,250

## DUFFERIN VISION FUND GRANTS

Community Living Dufferin	\$2,500
Headwaters Communities in Action /HFFA	\$2,500
Socks 4 Souls Canada	\$2,500

## ROSEMARY MOLESWORTH MEMORIAL 3D ART FUND GRANTS

Dufferin Arts Council/Museum of Dufferin	\$14,000
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## ENVIRONMENT FUND GRANT

Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority	\$2,000
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## REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT FUND GRANT

Westminster United Church	\$4,000
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## ORGANIZATION FUND GRANT

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Dufferin & District	\$2,500
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### OUR MISSION

Connecting people who care with causes that matter.



### OUR VISION

To give every generation the resources it needs to impact community change.



### OUR VALUES

Integrity. Excellence. Optimism.

## WE ARE THE "FOREVER FUND" FOR DUFFERIN COUNTY

Dufferin Community Foundation was created in 2018 to meet community needs and build quality of life for all in Dufferin County. When you donate to us, your gift is invested into a permanent charitable fund. We use the annual income from the endowment to provide urgently needed grants to local charities, now and for every generation to come.

**TO MAKE A GIFT, PLEASE VISIT**  
[dufferincommunityfoundation.ca/our-funds](http://dufferincommunityfoundation.ca/our-funds)



#### Contact Us



**DUFFERIN  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

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#### Proud Member of



**COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA**

Design by Sheila Britton. Photos by Doug Schaefer, Michele Fisher, Sandra Gallagher, Dufferin Muslim Centre, and Streams Community Hub