

# ANNUAL REPORT

# Healthy development of children and youth

#### This is our purpose.

The Lawson Foundation is a Canadian family foundation that invests in and engages with ideas, people and organizations that contribute to the healthy development of children and youth.

While this Annual Report provides some key highlights from 2020, we invite you to visit our website for more information about our work, our grants and our impact.

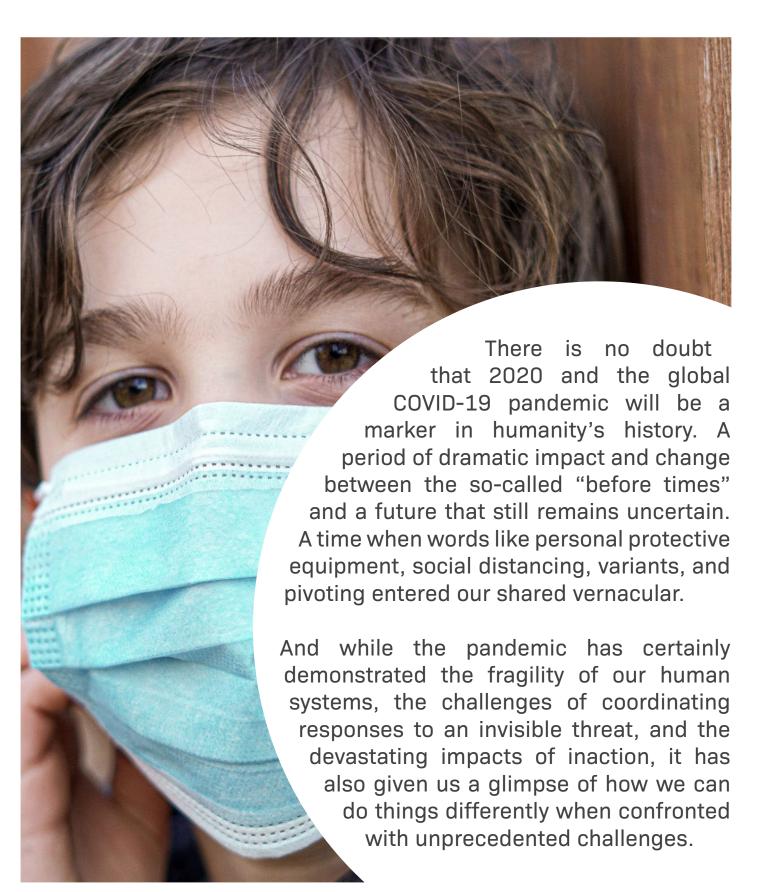
#### **Philanthropy and Reconciliation**

The Lawson Foundation is committed to supporting and advancing the work of reconciliation between Canada's Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. We see this work as continuous journey and not a destination or goal to be achieved. As we walk the path of reconciliation, we are learners and listeners first.

Our journey is grounded in the recommendations of the <u>Truth and Reconciliation</u> <u>Commission of Canada</u>. Along with a number of other philanthropic foundations and grantmakers, we have also signed the <u>Philanthropic Community's Declaration of Action</u>, signalling our commitment to ensuring that positive action on reconciliation continues through our philanthropy and related work.

# **Leadership Message**

A year like no other...



We are proud of the way the Lawson Foundation was able to respond so quickly to the new and evolving situation and leverage our financial and human resources to make a difference in communities across Canada. 2020 has also provided an opportunity for us to learn and adapt. Here are some of the things that we did differently and some of the takeaways.

We have witnessed that trust-based philanthropy works. Often the best thing for us to do as a funder is to provide unrestricted resources, reduce administrative and reporting burdens and get out of the way. That is exactly what we did in 2020. Our grantees and community partners have the skills, expertise and knowledge to drive change and respond to immediate needs in their communities. And they did that.

We and our Foundation House partners moved to virtual work. While we had some experience of working virtually at the Foundation, going entirely virtually was a new approach for us. And we are pleased that we didn't miss a beat.

Our Board moved to virtual decision-making to ensure support would go to communities as quickly as possible. If there is one word that comes to mind about the Board's work in 2020, it's nimbleness.

The Board's first major decision was to allocate all uncommitted funding to a COVID-19 response fund. This allowed us to quickly target urgent needs at the community level through a number of different approaches. You will read about this in our Report.

While our priority was clearly to respond to the pandemic, we nevertheless continued to work diligently on our key impact areas identified in our Strategic Direction. The pandemic actually strengthened our view that our areas of work are indeed crucial to our country's well-being.

 The pandemic has highlighted what we already know: outdoor play is essential for the healthy

- **development of children and youth** and we need to foster and promote it.
- People living with diabetes are among the most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus. The need to address Canada's diabetes epidemic is more urgent than ever.
- Youth voices in environmental action are critical, but they have been neglected as the world has focused on combatting the pandemic. We must make room for their voices.
- The pandemic has demonstrated the importance of having a strong charitable and nonprofit sector to serve Canadians and communities during times of crisis.

In 2020, the Board approved the second phase of our <u>Outdoor Play Strategy</u> that is supporting a new cohort of amazing organizations that are working together to build evidence and advocate for increasing opportunities for outdoor play for young children.

And given the magnitude of the challenge and our commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in Canada, the Foundation has made the bold decision to focus our <u>Child and Youth Diabetes Strategy</u> for the next decade on Northern and remote Indigenous communities. This is a huge milestone for US

So 2020 will have been a mix of rapid response to the pandemic and ambitious decisions about our continued mission to support the healthy development of children and youth.

In closing, we would like to thank our amazing staff and Board, as well as our wonderful and dedicated volunteers working on our various committees for their contribution to the mission of the Foundation. The year 2020 will have been a year like no other but we have demonstrated our ability to step up and make a difference.



Marcel Lauzière
President & CEO



Barb Lawson Miller

Board Chair

# **Automotion** Automotion Responds

- Lifted restrictions to allow flexibility for grantees to use funds to meet immediate needs.
- Grant payments continued on schedule or were accelerated if requested by a grantee.
- All reporting requirements were suspended.

# \$2.78 MILLION COVID RESPONSE FUND



Initiated a **rapid response** including pop-up granting teams (\$780,000), a Miggsie grant (\$300,000) toward a \$1 million fund in collaboration with the London Community Foundation and Westminster College Foundation, and a 5th Gen-led granting initiative (\$100,000).

Provided funding for **organizational stabilization and support** during the COVID-19 crisis for key organizations relevant to our areas of focus (\$800,000).

Directed support toward **Indigenous organizations** and communities who were disproportionally affected by the pandemic (\$800,000).

Virtual pop-up granting teams made up of board members and local advisors supported rapid-response initiatives in six provinces across the country:

British Columbia
Saskatchewan
Ontario
Québec
New Brunswick
Nova Scotia

\$780,000 was distributed to 38 organizations across Canada in two weeks.

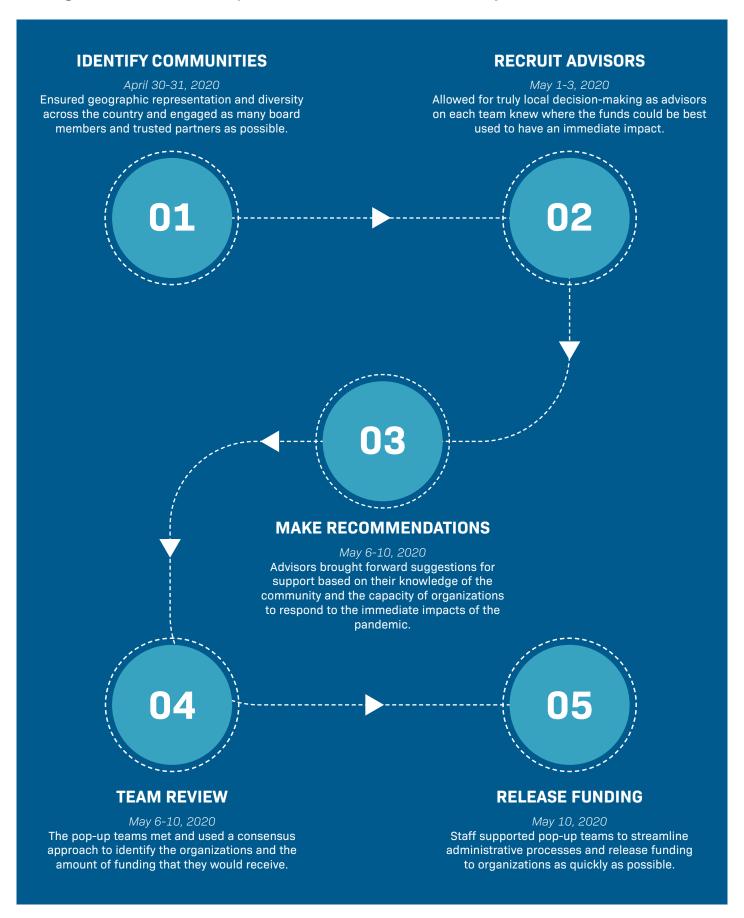
"We are very appreciative of how the Lawson Foundation has responded to this crisis.

It shows true heart and leadership and we are grateful to be part of your funding family."

**LAWSON GRANTEE** 

# Pop-Up Granting Teams

In less than two weeks, pop-up granting teams distributed \$780,000 in support of organizations in six provinces across the country. Here's how we did it:



# **Making the Pivot**

Many of our grantees had to adapt their approach to programs and services as a result of COVID-19. While many planned activities didn't take place, there were opportunities for new learning and growth despite the pandemic. Here are three examples:



#### **Misipawistik Cree Nation Youth Guardians**

Youth Action & the Environment

With a focus on engaging youth through land-based teachings, patrolling on the land, and other team-building activities, Misipawistik Cree Nation had to reassess activities based on the public health measures and protocols. Youth guardians who were originally supposed to be out on the land on moose monitoring patrols were seconded to work at the community checkpoint, helping to keep their community safe by screening incoming visitors and community members for COVID-19 symptoms.



#### **Diabetes Canada**

Child & Youth Diabetes Strategy

Diabetes Canada is one of the Foundation's trusted partners in our work on the prevention and management of diabetes. Since the pandemic started, they experienced a significant increase in traffic to their help line. Many doctors had to delay patient visits, making it harder to get information, while at the same time the media reported greater risks for people with diabetes. Diabetes Canada expanded capacity for their "1-800 Banting" help line and offered webinars to healthcare providers on the most current resources about COVID-19 and diabetes.



#### **Ontario Nonprofit Network**

Supporting the Charitable & Nonprofit Sector

ONN is a leader in supporting charities and nonprofits so they can serve individuals and communities. During the pandemic, they advocated for financial support for the sector from the Ontario government; organized resources for charities and nonprofits on the front lines; and presented webinars on financial insecurity, human resources issues, and government application processes. ONN grew to national reach, sharing resources free of charge to organizations in Ontario and in places without a provincial support organization.



### Advancing our Strategic Direction

While the Foundation was quick to respond to urgent needs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we did not lose sight of our Strategic Direction. Work continued on a number of key initiatives, including:

Launching the next phase of our Outdoor Play Strategy with a \$4.95 million investment to develop adult capacity to support outdoor play.

Focusing our **Child and Youth Diabetes Strategy** for the next decade on Northern and remote Indigenous communities.

**Refocusing the Miggsie Fund** to include support for rural areas and to develop a strategic communications strategy to raise awareness of the fund and better connect with current and potential grantees.

# **Understand Our Impact**



You can now access details and information about our granting history and the projects that we fund in a new Grants Navigator on our website.

lawson.ca/sharing-our-impact

## Collaborating for Impact

#### Go Outside and Play!

That was the key message in a <u>policy statement</u> prepared by the Lawson Foundation in response to growing concerns about the impacts of the CO-VID-19 pandemic on children across Canada. Prepared with the input of advisors from public health and the early learning and child care (ELCC) sector, the statement included guiding principles and recommendations to support the ongoing implementation of high-quality ELCC programs during and beyond the pandemic.

#### **Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund**

This Fund is an Indigenous-led effort to respond to urgent community needs while taking a long-term view on building community resilience. The Fund's goal is to provide resources for pandemic preparedness, health care support, and pressing social inclusion or well-being needs, while taking a long-term view on building community resilience in urban, rural, and remote communities. The Lawson Foundation was an early contributor alongside the Counselling, Laidlaw and McConnell foundations. The initial seed funding made it possible to launch the initiative and the fund has been growing ever since.

#### **Foundation for Black Communities**

Liban Abokor, a youth recipient of our Looking Forward Awards, as recommended by the 5th Gens, has been leading a coalition of Black leaders to establish the first-ever foundation to support Black communities in Canada. The Lawson Foundation was an early supporter and helped convene potential funders, provided funding for the seminal <u>Unfunded: Black Communities Overlooked by Canadian Philanthropy</u> report, and contributed financially to seed the endowment.

### Impact Investing

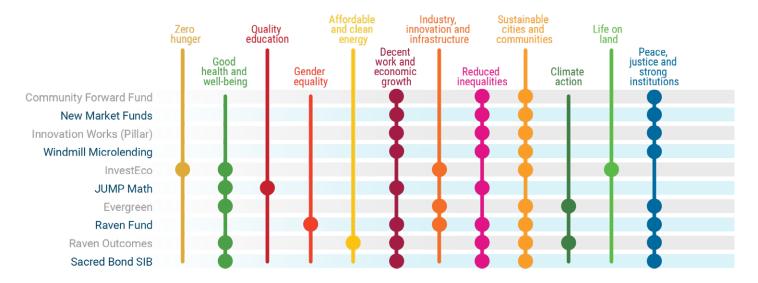
The Foundation's impact investment portfolio has ten investments. Committed capital that is as yet undeployed is invested in an ESG (Environmental/Social/Governance) fixed income fund. These investments have generally performed as expected over time, with an average overall return of 5%. Some investments have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic or other factors, which has resulted in capital being deployed slower than expected.

In 2020, one of the Foundation's impact investments matured. This was the first time that the Foundation considered whether to reinvest capital in the same investments or to explore new investment opportunities.

# How do our impact investments contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?

The SDGs are the foremost international metric for measuring, comparing and understanding the impact of different portfolios. Every investment in our portfolio contributes to one or more SDGs.





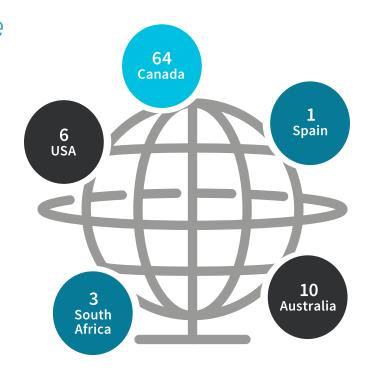
# Financial Highlights

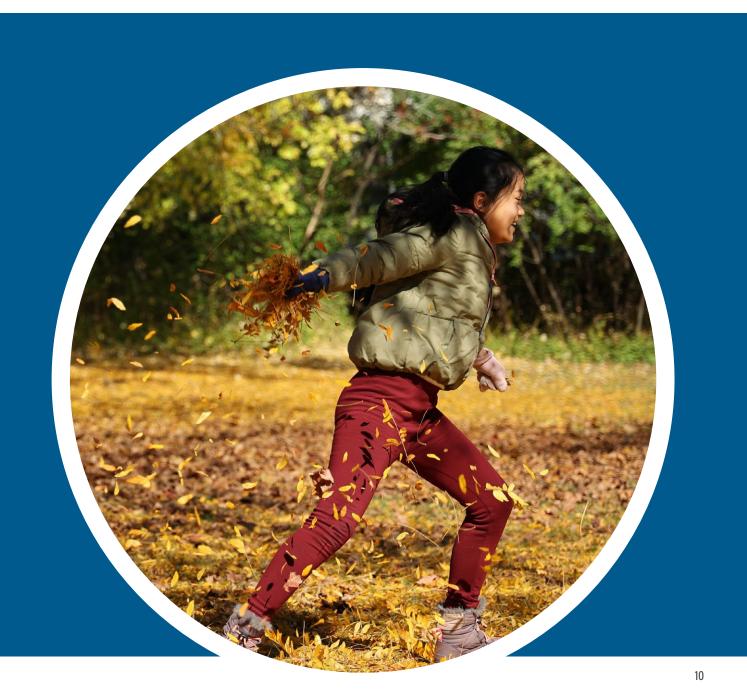
Investment in Communities	2020
Granting	\$ 5,920,954
Convening	\$ 236,767
Impact Investment Commitments	\$ 3,495,170
Total Community Investment	\$ 9,652,891

2020 Audited Financial Statements are available on the Foundation website.

# Membership at a Glance









From our Board of Directors to our Standing Committees, from our volunteers to our staff team, people are at the heart of our philanthropy. We'd like to recognize and thank the following individuals for their contributions to the Foundation in 2020.

#### **Board of Directors**

David Gardiner

Tim Gardiner

Holly Henning Wood
Director\*\*

Patrick Johnston

Robin Lawson
Director\*\*

Barb Lawson Miller

Neil Miller Director

Susie Osler Immediate Past Chair

Wynne Young Secretary-Treasurer

#### **Audit Committee**

John Callaghan (Chair)
David Gardiner
Barb Lawson Miller
Bob Paterson
Evan Wood
Wynne Young

#### **Governance Committee**

Michelle Chui\*
David Gardiner
Erin Grace
Holly Henning Wood\*
Patrick Johnston (Chair\*)
Robin Lawson\*\*
Barb Lawson Miller
Susie Osler
Sarah VanDuzer
Christina Wood
Evan Wood
Jeremy Wood\*
Wynne Young (Chair\*\*)

#### **Impact Investment Committee**

Nancy Gardiner
Patrick Johnston
Barb Lawson Miller
Neil Miller (Chair)
Chris Osler
Monica Patten
Alasdair VanDuzer
Peter VanDuzer\*
Taylor VanDuzer\*
Tony VanDuzer\*
Wynne Young

#### **Investment Committee**

Anish Chopra
Cameron Cross
Andrew Gardiner\*\*
George Gardiner
Tim Gardiner (Chair\*\*)
Barb Lawson Miller
Neil Miller
Susie Osler
John Pepperell\*
Holly Henning Wood
Wynne Young

#### **Advisors**

Child & Youth Diabetes Strategy Heather Dean Margaret (Peggy) Dunbar Robyn Houlden Donna Lillie

Miggsie Fund John Callaghan Sheila Simpson

#### **Staff**

Christine Alden Program Director

Caitlin Blacklaws

Governance & Communications Manager

Marcel Lauzière President & CEO

Amanda Mayer COO & Program Director

Karen Pischedda Program Director & Grants Management

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Program Director / Director, Social Finance

Allison Tse\*\*\*
Program Manager

Karen Shelstad

#### **Shared Foundation House Staff**

Nayan Datta Biswas Receptionist & Office Assistant

Jonathan Hutchinson Systems Administrator

Board or committee term or officer position ended in May 2020.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Board, chair or committee term or officer position started in May 2020.

<sup>\*\*\*</sup> On maternity leave as of May 2020.

