



2021 ANNUAL REPORT





We are
honoured
to support our
community's
needs wherever
they arise and
however we can help.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Dear Alberta Blue Cross® team members,

On behalf of the Hearts of Blue committee, I am pleased to present the 2021 Hearts of Blue annual report.

Thanks to our team members, Hearts of Blue was able to support various charitable organizations throughout Alberta as they help those in need. This is only possible with the continual support and involvement from our team members.

This year was different than previous years—in-person events were not happening, so no volunteering could happen. However, our committee was still working full time to provide help to charities in need. Many of these donations were completed virtually through emails and phone calls. Eventually, we were able to start dropping off donations and seeing the organizations we support, and it helped remind us why we all do this. Nothing makes us feel more excited or fulfilled than when we see the look of happiness in someone's face when we drop off donations, or when someone is explaining what their organization does and who it helps.

The Hearts of Blue team was able to assist 45 charities in 2021. Many of these organizations were trying to recover from the difficulties they faced in 2020 and start helping their community members more, so the donations we were able to provide made a huge difference for them.

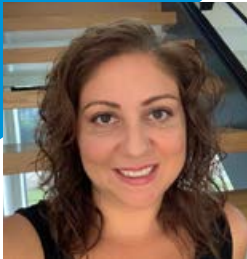
The support we receive from all of you make the committee's dreams become reality for these organizations. To keep it going, please consider supporting Hearts of Blue in any of the ways listed in the report.

Thank you for the outpouring of support we have received in 2021!

Joan Tandy

MANAGER, PHARMACEUTICAL PRODUCT & PRICING ADMINISTRATION
PHARMACY & CLINICAL DRUG SERVICES
ALBERTA BLUE CROSS

2021 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Gabriella Aparicio
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



Carolyn Arsenault
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



Laurie Bayrak
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



Ashley Bolduc
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



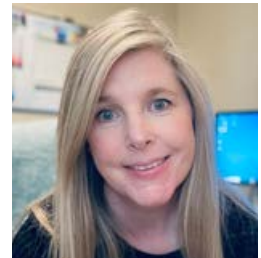
Amanda Croot
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



Joan Tandy
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE CHAIR



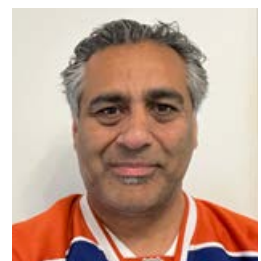
Brian Geislinger
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



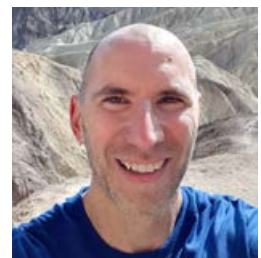
Kristy Kozun
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER
AND TREASURER



Mirella Nardi
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 VOLUNTEER



Nirmal Singh
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER



Terry Skidnuk
HEARTS OF BLUE
2021 COMMITTEE MEMBER

ABOUT US

Who we are

Hearts of Blue is an employee-run charity, meaning that we are operated and funded by Alberta Blue Cross employees. We support registered charities across Alberta through volunteering, financial donations and gifts of essential items.

We were founded in 1998 as a one-time event to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Alberta Blue Cross. However, the idea of establishing an employee-run charity proved to be so popular that it continued past that and is an essential part of our community involvement—even now, over 20 years later.

In 2021, Hearts of Blue contributed more than \$42,436 to charities across Alberta.

We are honoured to support our community's needs wherever they arise and however we can help—whether that means donating clothes, kitchen equipment, bus passes or even yoga equipment. Since the onset of COVID-19, we've faced some new challenges and new community needs. But like every year, we met those challenges. Volunteers did everything from creating food hampers and planting gardens to assembling Christmas kits and shopping for winter gear.

We operate with four main objectives in mind

1. To encourage team members to become involved in the communities in which they live.
2. To strengthen the team spirit of Alberta Blue Cross team members.
3. To live the values of a caring company.
4. To raise the profile of Alberta Blue Cross in the community.



WE NEED
YOUR
SUPPORT!

Support Hearts of Blue

We rely on the generosity of our Alberta Blue Cross team members to fund our efforts. Without you, we wouldn't be able to help the many worthy organizations we support each year. With many charities still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, Hearts of Blue needs your support now more than ever. All donations are tax deductible, and one hundred per cent of the money you give goes towards the charities that Hearts of Blue supports. We hope you will consider donating.

Three ways to donate

1

Biweekly payroll deductions of any denomination—all it takes is five seconds to [complete the online form](#).

2

One-time donations can be deducted from your paycheck—a [quick email to Payroll](#) is all that's required.

3

During the United Way campaign, people who donate to United Way can direct their donations to Hearts of Blue.

Other ways to support Hearts of Blue



Volunteer with an organization during work hours as part of a Days of Giving event. Watch *News to Use* for upcoming opportunities.



Join the Hearts of Blue committee. Email [Hearts of Blue](#) for more information.



Donate items during one of our collection drives. Specific collection drives and details will be announced via *News to Use*.

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It takes a village

We want children to grow up strong, healthy and empowered. At Hearts of Blue, we support a number of youth-focused charities to give kids and teens the tools they need to succeed—whether that's food, clothing, school supplies or a safe space.



ABC Head Start

ABC Head Start is a registered charity that is committed to supporting children and their families in Edmonton. They provide families with assistance and education on many topics and support more than 850 children a year.

DECEMBER: ABC Head Start was in dire need of some essential items as the winter season started. To help them out, **Mirella Nardi** made a donation on behalf of Hearts of Blue that included children's safety scissors, washable markers, snow suits, running shoes, boots and winter toques.

Adopt-A-Teen

The Adopt-A-Teen program is offered through the Christmas Bureau. Thousands of Edmonton youth come from low-income families and struggle to make ends meet. Through the Adopt-A-Teen program, they are able to purchase a special gift for themselves or their families at Christmas.

DECEMBER: On behalf of Hearts of Blue, Megan Kreinke made a donation to the Christmas Bureau's Adopt-A-Teen program, which provides Edmonton youth aged 13 to 17 with a \$50 gift card to Walmart.

“As a family, we were happy when my kids got their gift cards. We went to Walmart and my daughter bought a sewing machine kit. My son bought things to exercise. And then as a family we bought meat, ice cream and other groceries for Christmas Eve. I want to thank you for all your support and for giving us a smile and happiness. Many blessings!”

CLIENT FAMILY, ADOPT-A-TEEN PROGRAM

“Your gift is so much greater than just one present on one day at Christmas. Your one act of kindness offers hope to those in need ... you are truly making a difference in the lives of so many deserving teens and their families in our community. Thank you again for your support! You have brought joy into the lives and homes of those less fortunate this holiday season.”

DARLENE KOWALCHUK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CHRISTMAS BUREAU OF EDMONTON

Basically Babies >

Basically Babies is a registered charity in Edmonton committed to providing layettes to families in extreme need with newborns. They offer the gift of a complete first year's wardrobe for these infants in the form of a beautiful colour-coordinated basket filled with clothing, outerwear, blankets, toys, storybooks, sleepers, undershirts, footwear and other baby essentials.

MARCH: In early 2021, Basically Babies was in urgent need of help after they lost two thirds of their operating budget and had a newly donated storage trailer stolen from their northwest Edmonton lot. **Mirella Nardi** shopped for hours on behalf of Hearts of Blue and was able to donate some much-needed items, including snowsuits, pants, shirts, undershirts, hats, mittens, receiving blankets, bibs, outfits, sleepers and socks.



“Your philanthropic spirit, especially at this time, means so very much to us.

The current pandemic situation has been a challenging time, for sure, but we are so grateful for the assistance of donors like you. Combined with the experience, expertise and skills of our team, Your support has allowed us to continue delivering layettes to all qualified families with tiny newborns. We remain committed to serving the neediest of families with newborns at this very difficult time.”

SHANNON STEWART, PRESIDENT, BASICALLY BABIES

Boys and Girls Club (BGC) Wetaskiwin

BGC Wetaskiwin is a leading provider of programs to children, youth and their families. More than 1,200 people access their programs each year in their three service locations, located in Wetaskiwin, Ponoka and surrounding communities.

DECEMBER: Every kid needs a safe space to have fun, so **Terry Skidnuk** worked to procure a tabletop hockey game for the drop-in space at BGC Wetaskiwin.



Chinook Sexual Assault Centre

The Chinook Sexual Assault Centre in Lethbridge is devoted to giving children and youth who have experienced sexual, emotional and physical abuse or severe neglect a safe space to share their stories and receive the support and resources they need throughout the entire disclosure, investigation and judicial process.

OCTOBER: Hearts of Blue donated some essential items to the centre, including toys for the children to play with. **Alex Fong** and **Darlene Kolesar** delivered a kitchen playset, dolls, slime kit, toy cars, a double step stool and colouring books.

“Today, we want to thank Alberta Blue Cross for their donation to the Chinook Child and Youth Advocacy Centre. These gifts will help us create a welcoming and child-friendly space that will help alleviate a child’s or youth’s fear and anxiety.

A huge thank you to this incredible team for their donation.”

STATEMENT ON FACEBOOK

Edmonton Northwest Early Learning and Child Care Centre

The Edmonton Northwest Early Learning and Child Care Centre provides quality care for children aged 12 months to six years. They provide education, child care and inclusive developmental supports to children and their families within the greater Edmonton area.

JUNE: Hearts of Blue donated a washing machine to the centre, earning us a shout out in their Community Options newsletter.

“We are so grateful for the Hearts of Blue team for their incredibly generous and kind donation of a washing machine to our Edmonton Northwest Early Learning and Child Care Centre. This is so important to keeping our centre clean for the children. We thank you so much!”

COMMUNITY OPTIONS NEWSLETTER

KidSport

KidSport provides financial assistance to help cover the cost of sport registration and equipment so that all kids aged 18 and under can play a season of sports.

DECEMBER: Thanks to Hearts of Blue, the Red Deer branch of KidSport was able to purchase three laptops and three laptop bags to help with administration items related to applications, emails and reporting.



Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch

The Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch is a specialized trauma-informed, evidence-based treatment centre focused on helping children who have been sexually abused, as well as their families. Their program is for girls and boys from eight to 12 years old and girls between the ages of 13 and 16.

DECEMBER: On behalf of Hearts of Blue, **Mirella Nardi** donated clothing hampers and two shredders to Little Warriors Be Brave Ranch. The shredders aid in the healing process of children who have experienced sexual assault as all the pictures, stories and thoughts are shredded.





Lloydminster Community Youth Centre (LCYC)

The LCYC has been a long-time fixture in that community and gives youth a safe place to attend and be themselves. The centre receives up to 6,000 visits each year and strives to provide a safe, welcoming, fun space where all youth are welcome to attend.

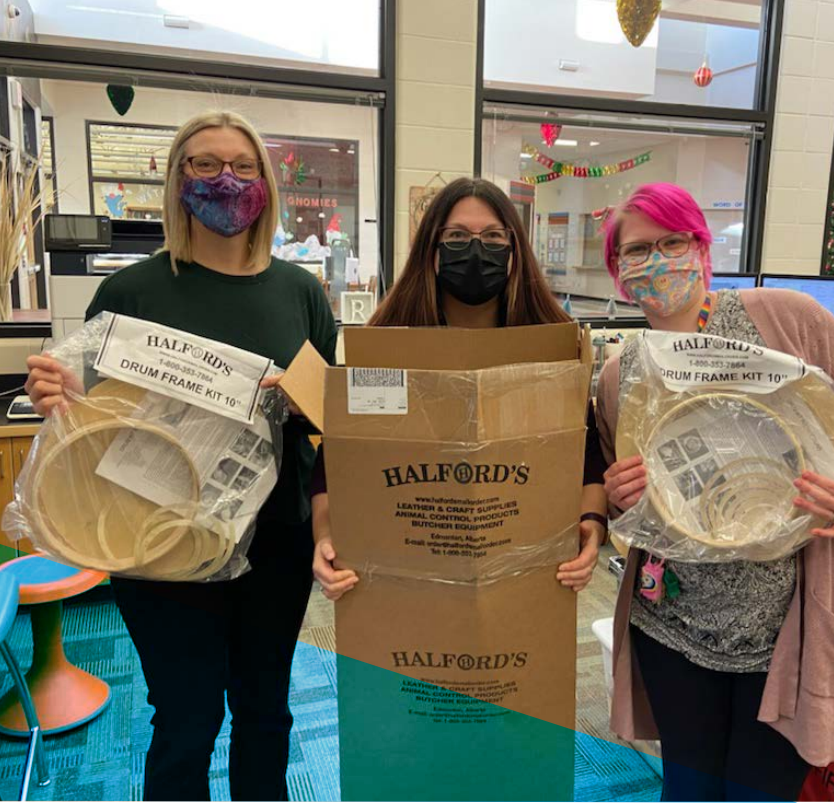
DECEMBER: Hearts of Blue supported the LCYC by purchasing \$951.16 in new kitchen equipment. The LCYC serves more than 5,000 hot meals a year, which their youth visitors depend on every day. Over time, many of the LCYC's kitchen items and small appliances have worn out or become inefficient for the amount of food preparation that occurs on a weekly basis. This donation helps the LCYC keep up on their visitors' needs.



I am thrilled to share that the new appliances and tools for our youth centre's kitchen are already being put to great use. Throughout the year, the kitchen provides over 5,000 meals to youth who attend ...

We are incredibly grateful for this gift from Hearts of Blue and are already reaping the benefits!"

LEANNE WILDEMAN,
RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
MANAGER, LCYC



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy

St. Francis of Assisi is a junior and senior Catholic high school located in Slave Lake. The mission of their school is to establish relationships that enable each student to develop the beliefs, attitudes and skills necessary to inspire passion and feel success.

DECEMBER: To help celebrate Indigenous identity, Hearts of Blue donated drum kits to St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Academy in Slave Lake. This donation allows the school staff to acknowledge the importance and strength of Indigenous culture. These traditional drum kits allow students and the community to learn more about Indigenous culture and way of life. A community elder will teach the participants about the importance of drums to Cree culture, how traditional drums are made, how they celebrate Indigenous heritage and why that strength is important to acknowledge and be proud of.

The Sylvan Lake Community Partners Association

The Infant Toddler Supermarket program offered by the Sylvan Lake Community Partners Association helps those in need of daily supplies for babies and young children. Among other products, the complimentary program provides items like baby formula, baby food, diapers and wipes, clothing and even furniture. In the last year, this program helped 125 families in need.

NOVEMBER: On behalf of Hearts of Blue, **Joan Tandy** dropped off a donation of diapers, formula and other infant supplies to the Infant Toddler Supermarket program run by the Sylvan Lake Community Partners Association.



Tools for School

Tools for School is a registered charity that provides children in need with tools for attending school, which helps the children learn successfully and participate in school activities.

DECEMBER: Mirella Nardi donated backpacks to Tools for School on behalf of Hearts of Blue. Without this program, children have been known to not attend school because they don't have the proper resources.



Zebra Child Protection Centre

The Zebra Child Protection Centre serves children and youth who have been impacted by abuse, supporting them through the justice and healing process with a continuum of multi-disciplinary resources.

DECEMBER: Gabriella Aparicio shopped for donations to Hope's Toy Closet at the Zebra Child Protection Centre. Hope's Toy Closet is a very special place where the bravery of children and youth is celebrated with a new toy or quilt.



Full bellies, full hearts

Food is a basic human right. With more than one in 10 Alberta households experiencing food insecurity, we're proud to support programs and organizations that make sure the people in our communities have enough to eat.



Brooks Food Bank Foundation

The Brooks Food Bank Foundation provides emergency food assistance and referral services for residents of the city of Brooks and the County of Newell. Over the last two years, the food bank has provided more than 1,075 hampers to households in need.

DECEMBER: Hearts of Blue donated to the Brooks Food Bank Foundation. The Alberta Treasury Branch (ATB) matched each dollar of our donation by 20 per cent through their ATB Cares program, which helped our donation go even further.

Edmonton's Food Bank

Through their mantra of “relieving hunger today, preventing hunger tomorrow,” Edmonton’s Food Bank provides food for more than 25,000 people each month. They also offer programs that reduce food waste, teach budgeting skills and provide school snacks to vulnerable children.

APRIL: A group of Alberta Blue Cross team members volunteered at Edmonton’s Food Bank. The team was split into two groups and were tasked with filling up boxes with food and snacks as indicated on labels. The labels show you how many adults, children and infants are in the household, as well as any dietary restrictions.

“It was an amazing evening as we were able to socialize, see other blues and do some volunteer work for such a worthy cause.”

MIRELLA NARDI, HEARTS OF BLUE VOLUNTEER



Edmonton Meals on Wheels

Edmonton Meals on Wheels is a local non-profit that provides home-delivered meals and food services to a diverse mix of people. They use food as a means of breaking social isolation, nourishing our community and building trusting relationships.

MARCH: Hearts of Blue provided Meals on Wheels with some much-needed equipment. Chef Terry was excited to receive the stainless-steel steam tables that would allow them to prepare larger batches of healthy steamed veggies much more quickly.



The Root Cellar Food and Wellness Hub

The Root Cellar (formerly known as the Medicine Hat Food Bank) helps ensure that an adequate and accessible food support system is available to individuals and families in Medicine Hat and area.

NOVEMBER: Hearts of Blue donated some essential items to the Root Cellar Food and Wellness Hub in Medicine Hat. Previously called the Medicine Hat & District Food Bank, they changed their name to the Root Cellar to better reflect that they aren't just a food bank: they want to make lives better by addressing the root issues that cause people to need their services in the first place.





Safety lies within

Whether fleeing abuse
or seeking medical care,
everyone needs a safe place to
stay away from home. We support
organizations that offer shelter and services
for those who need a helping hand during
difficult times.



Alcove Addiction Recovery for Women

Alcove Addiction Recovery for Women offers a specialized recovery process for women that need support to develop healthier and sober lives. They offer emotional, mental, spiritual and physical guidance to the women under their care through their residential recovery program.

DECEMBER: Hearts of Blue donated a plush, comfy comforter and pillows for the residents of Alcove. These items are already being put to good use by the women and children staying at the Alcove Addiction Recovery centre.

“Thank you again for the generous gifts, and please know that the women of Alcove so greatly appreciate your act of kindness.”

PAULA ARNOLD, COMMUNICATIONS AND FUND DEVELOPMENT ADVISOR,
ALCOVE ADDICTION RECOVERY FOR WOMEN



Calgary WINS

The Calgary Women in Need Society (WINS) helps women and their families transitioning from shelter or homelessness to the community. They provide support to single mothers and their children, women leaving abusive or dysfunctional relationships in need of support and elderly women living in poverty or isolation.

JUNE: Amanda Croot made a delivery to Calgary WINS on behalf of Hearts of Blue. The donation included a variety of items for women and children, such as diapers and toiletries. Calgary WINS has seen an increase in need because of the prolonged strains brought about by COVID-19, so they were very thankful for this donation.



Camrose Women's Shelter

Since 1985, the Camrose Women's Shelter has been providing shelter and services for women and children fleeing abuse. This is an emergency shelter that provides a safe, supportive place for women and children who are fleeing domestic violence, experiencing a crisis or experiencing homelessness.

DECEMBER: On behalf of Hearts of Blue, **Joan Tandy** worked with the Camrose Women's Shelter to purchase a new, large chest freezer. The Camrose Women's Shelter has recently moved to a new property, where they can expand the services they offer to the women and families who live in the area. This new chest freezer opens new possibilities to them, including hosting future workshops focused on cooking and food management.



Connections with organizations in the area bring the gift of food in the form of butchered meat, frozen soups and baked goods. Often, we do not have the freezer space to accept and distribute these donations. Now we have that space!

Thank you so much to your organization for supporting the work we do.

It's not just a freezer, it's a tool to build community, food relationships and commitments to healthy lifestyles."

LESLIE L., OUTREACH COORDINATOR, CAMROSE WOMEN'S SHELTER



Peace River Regional Women's Shelter

The Peace River Regional Women's Shelter provides emergency temporary housing for women and children who are fleeing abuse or experiencing homelessness. They offer a safe and secure environment with access to housing, financial assistance, basic necessities, supports and referrals.

OCTOBER: Hearts of Blue donated three televisions to the Peace River Regional Women's Shelter. These televisions were used for families who were in isolation due to a COVID-19 outbreak at the shelter.

Ronald McDonald House

Ronald McDonald House supports families seeking vital medical treatment for their seriously ill or injured child. Their warm, compassionate houses provide a home away from home for families who need to travel for medical reasons, easing the financial strain of such a trip.

NOVEMBER: Hearts of Blue made a delivery to the new Ronald McDonald House in Medicine Hat. The donation included baby clothes, gift cards, journals, colouring books, markers and pencil crayons for both children and adults. COVID-19 has made what is already a very trying time in a family's life even more stressful, as residents are finding their stays starting sooner or lasting longer. These much-needed items will be well received by everyone who finds themselves at Ronald McDonald House.





Waypoints Community Services Association

Serving the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo since 1982, Waypoints Community Services is working to end domestic-family violence, sexual assault, abuse and homelessness in the Fort McMurray region. They advocate for the protection of each person's basic human right to have a safe home and to be a part of the community without fearing for one's own safety.

NOVEMBER: Carolyn Arsenault from Hearts of Blue donated a variety of essential items to the Waypoints Community Services Association, including diapers, wipes, socks and underwear.

“ We are so grateful for the support, and please pass on how grateful our shelter team was to receive these donations!”

NAMENAME, ORGANIZATION

WIN House

WIN House in Edmonton provides a safe place and emergency services for women and children fleeing gender-based abuse. WIN House is a safe haven for victims, where they can connect with individuals and get equipped with the support and hope they need to overcome abusive situations.

DECEMBER: Mirella Nardi donated air mattresses and pumps, kettles, small coffee makers and toiletries for teenage boys to WIN House. From March 2020 to March 2021, WIN House had 486 people in shelter, so this donation is very much appreciated.

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light green button-down shirt with a lace-like pattern on the collar, is looking down at a smartphone held in both hands. She has a slight smile. The background is a blurred library or bookstore with bookshelves. The image is overlaid with a large green diagonal shape on the right and a blue diagonal shape on the left.

Wellness is for all

Everyone deserves to live their best life, especially those living with illness or special needs. Hearts of Blue is proud to support organizations that help people achieve physical, mental, emotional and financial wellness.



“

The Fitbits will be an amazing enhancement for the participants

at the McKernan Centre and House—just in time for spring! Thank you to all the folks at Alberta Blue Cross and Joan for joining us at the centre to present them.”

KELLY ANN HAMSHAW, PROGRAM MANAGER, ADAPT ABILITIES

AdaptAbilities

AdaptAbilities is an Edmonton-based, not-for-profit organization that helps individuals with special needs develop the life skills they need to grow, succeed and belong, thereby creating success for life.

APRIL: Joan Tandy dropped off a Hearts of Blue donation of 10 Fitbit Inspire 2s at the McKernan Community League for an AdaptAbilities-supported program.

Angel Whispers

Angel Whispers is a non-denominational service for parents who have lost a baby shortly after birth; during pregnancy; or through miscarriage, stillbirth, molar or ectopic pregnancy. Angel Whispers exists to ensure no family has to suffer in silence.

AUGUST: Hearts of Blue donated feather wings that are given to grieving parents as a keepsake. These wings are included in the care packages that Angel Whispers sends out to parents across the world grieving the loss of a baby.

Blankets of Love

Blankets of Love Foundation for Mental Health is a national charitable organization that provides quilts to patients that are in hospital for mental health issues. Since its inception in 1996, they have provided more than 4,500 Blankets of Love to patients in need to patients in Edmonton, Ponoka, Calgary and Saskatoon hospitals.

OCTOBER: Hearts of Blue provided funds to Blankets of Love so their quilters could purchase backing and batting. These materials will help their long-arm quilters finish quilt tops.



Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted Therapy

Located just 30 minutes east of Edmonton, Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted Therapy sits on a 40-acre ranch and offers a holistic approach to healing. Children, youth and adults can explore a wide variety of both traditional and unique therapies to find healing, balance, joy and personal growth.

NOVEMBER: Hearts of Blue purchased four benches and a picnic table for Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted Therapy. These benches will help even more people enjoy the natural beauty of the ranch. To date, Dreamcatcher Nature Assisted Therapy has successfully helped people with brain injuries, emotional issues, behavioural concerns, mental health diagnoses, addictions and more.



Your generous donation will allow people the comfort of sitting in the woods on the benches, listening to the birds singing, or enjoying a picnic at the picnic table out on the magical forest trail, enjoying nature at its best."

WES INABA, PRESIDENT,
DREAMCATCHER
CHARITY





Edmonton Epilepsy Association

The Edmonton Epilepsy Association promotes the well-being of people with epilepsy through increased public awareness and education around the personal and social issues these individuals experience. The objective of the Edmonton Epilepsy Association is to promote an improved quality of life for people with epilepsy, their families and caregivers.

APRIL: Hearts of Blue dropped off a donation of bus tickets to the Edmonton Epilepsy Association, which will help their clients get around safely. Epilepsy is one of the most common chronic neurological disorders, affecting one per cent of the general population. Based on that estimate, approximately 15,000 people in Edmonton and Northern Alberta are living with epilepsy.



EmployAbilities

EmployAbilities provides skill development, education and employment services to adults and youth with medical conditions, mental health challenges, permanent injuries, disabilities and employment barriers.



Thank you again for your generous help, and I'm looking forward to building a great relationship with you."

CHANDRA, "LEARN 2 EARN" PROGRAM
COORDINATOR, EMPLOYABILITIES

DECEMBER: This past winter, Hearts of Blue donated gift cards to EmployAbilities, who had an immediate need for the gift cards to help some youth who had no income or food to eat.

Hospice Society of Camrose

The Hospice Society of Camrose and District is a non-residential hospice offering programs and supports to those living in east-central Alberta. Their goal is to empower and encourage community members as they navigate the experiences of life-limiting illnesses, end-of-life care, bereavement and grief.

AUGUST: Hearts of Blue purchased 60 books for the Hospice Society to help support individuals nearing the end of life. These books will provide a great comfort to those individuals and their families as they navigate a difficult time.

The Peace Area Riding for the Disabled Society (PARDS)

PARDS has operated in Grande Prairie since 1984. Their goal is to make positive change in the lives of those living with disabilities through horses. Their therapeutic riding program provides a long list of both physical and psychological benefits to the riders.

AUGUST: Holly, an 18-year-old Fjord-cross, is one of PARDS's therapeutic horses. This breed has a larger and chunkier body type than a typical horse, and PARDS struggled to both find a saddle to properly fit Holly and cover the saddle fee. With our Hearts of Blue donation, PARDS was able to get a custom-fit saddle for Holly, which will benefit her and her many riders.



“ I'm extremely excited I was able to assist one of our local, not-for-profits—especially since their programming is very dear to me.”

KAREN RYAN, SERVICE REPRESENTATIVE, GROUP SALES, GRANDE PRAIRIE

Pilgrims Hospice >

Pilgrims Hospice Society provides supportive and compassionate family-centred care to enhance the quality and dignity of life for those diagnosed with a progressive, life-threatening illness, as well as support those who are grieving.

JUNE: Members of the Hearts of Blue committee planted flowers at the new Pilgrims Hospice facility. As 2021 was the first year in their new facility, the team wanted to help them create a colourful, welcoming space for residents to enjoy the outdoors. We were also proud to donate \$300 towards landscaping supplies for their outdoor space.

DECEMBER: Ashley Bolduc dropped off a donation to the Pilgrims Hospice and received a tour of their new facility. The donation included a VR headset and carrying case, which will be used for their day programs as well as for younger patients staying at the hospice. It will also be helpful for patients with dementia, as being able to focus on something on the VR headset will help calm people down when they are feeling anxious or confused.





Supporting community support

While Hearts of Blue helps a variety of organizations across the province, we can't always be on the frontlines. That's why we support community-focused charities, whose staff and volunteers perform the hands-on work our vulnerable populations need.



▲ Autism Asperger's Friendship Society of Calgary (AAFS)

AAFS provides respite care in a social and recreational environment for children, youth and adults on the spectrum of autism, including (but not limited to) autism, Asperger's, pervasive developmental disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and non-verbal learning disorder.

APRIL: Amanda Croot made a delivery to AAFS on behalf of Hearts of Blue that included many kitchen cookware items. These items will be used in a new cooking program that was recently introduced, which is styled on home delivery meals. Menus are set and participants receive the needed ingredients in a box with all the cooking utensils at their cooking station.

Bear Clan Patrol

Bear Clan Patrol came about as a result of the ongoing need for Aboriginal people to assume traditional responsibility to provide security to their community. The concept behind the patrol is community people working with the community to provide personal security in the inner city in a non-threatening, non-violent and supportive way.

DECEMBER: Gabriella Aparicio donated some much-needed items to the Bear Clan Patrol, including gloves, Kleenex packs, thermal socks, insole foot warmers, hand warmers, women's underwear, men's underwear, emergency mylar thermal blankets and granola bars.

Bissell Centre ▲

Bissell Centre supports the Edmonton low-income and houseless community with outreach programs. They're an inclusive, client-centred organization that recognizes the dignity and strength of individuals and families and offers the support they need to overcome poverty.

JUNE: When a heat wave hit Edmonton last summer, Bissell Centre put out an urgent request for bottled water and other hot weather supplies as they were running low. The Hearts of Blue team acted quickly and took a vehicle full of water and dropped it off at Bissell Centre the day after the call went out.



Bow Valley Christmas Spirit Campaign

The Bow Valley Christmas Spirit Campaign supplies hampers of groceries and toys to those in the Bow Valley struggling financially during the Christmas season.

DECEMBER: Hearts of Blue purchased toys for children aged 17 and under, which will go in the family hampers supplied by the Bow Valley Christmas Spirit Campaign in Canmore. Need for these hampers has increased by 26 per cent, so this donation was very much appreciated.



Calgary Reads

Calgary Reads works with partners in economically disadvantaged communities to deliver books to families most in need. They believe all children deserve to experience the benefits that come from reading. They also donate books to many other charities within the community, such as YWCA Calgary, The Alex, CUPS Calgary and Children's Cottage Society.

OCTOBER: Amanda Croot made a delivery to Calgary Reads that included books for children ranging in age up to eight years old. Some of these books may end up in the Little Red Reading House, where families can come by to pick a book, get cozy in one of their reading nooks and have an enjoyable experience.



Calgary Seniors Resource Society

The Calgary Seniors Resource Society is an organization that delivers core services for disadvantaged seniors in the city, including programs like volunteer-escorted transportation, volunteer friendly visiting and professional social work outreach.

JUNE: Amanda Croot and the Calgary Hearts of Blue team made a delivery to the Calgary Seniors Resource Society's new housing facility, KINDred Seniors Housing. The donation included a variety of items, such as medical devices, mobility supports, toiletries and household appliances.

KINDred Seniors Housing provides transitional and permanent housing for older adults who are challenged with ongoing or episodic homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. It also acts as a hub where expert, practical, financial, emotional and social supports can be accessed onsite through a case management, recovery-based and community engagement approach.



The CHEW Project

The CHEW Project started in 2014 to help 2SLGBTQ youth and adults facing barriers related to mental health, poverty, homelessness and many other factors. The CHEW Project provides basic needs, mental health support, social services, harm reduction, cultural connections and social activities.

DECEMBER: Mirella Nardi donated razors, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, batteries, socks, toothpaste and toothbrushes to the CHEW Project on behalf of Hearts of Blue. These items are essential for many of their clients and visitors.





Highbanks Society

The Highbanks Society provides housing and support to unsupported young mothers, who are especially vulnerable to the cycle of poverty and homelessness. Their established housing model addresses the need for long-term, safe and affordable housing. They seek to provide stability and eliminate any barriers to growth for pregnant or parenting women between 16 to 24 years of age.



NOVEMBER: Amanda Croot and Brooklyn LaBrosse from the Calgary Hearts of Blue team made a delivery to the Highbanks Society in the weeks leading up to Christmas. The donation included a variety of items, but mainly focused on providing each young mother and child their own Christmas, which many have never experienced. The donation included 14 complete kits of everything they would need to have Christmas: trees, lights, ornaments, wreaths, crafts and stockings, on which Amanda personally wrote each mother's and child's names in glitter glue.



Hope Mission ▾

Hope Mission is a not-for-profit social care agency that provides basic and emergency care and counsel and referral services for men, women and youth. Each day, Hope Mission provides more than 1,000 meals and shelter for over 500 people.

OCTOBER: In early October, a fire destroyed Hope Mission's warehouse where most of their winter supplies were housed. With winter quickly approaching, they were badly in need of warm winter clothing. **Gabriella**

Aparicio, Joan Tandy and Kristy Kozun from Hearts of Blue went shopping and purchased warm clothing such as winter jackets, socks, toques, mitts, sweaters and pants.



The Mustard Seed

The Mustard Seed is a safe and supportive place where people experiencing problems associated with poverty and homelessness can have their physical needs met. Their vision is to eliminate homelessness and reduce poverty where they serve.

JUNE: The prolonged heat wave that hit Edmonton last year made it difficult for The Mustard Seed to provide their clients with basic needs like water. They hand out anywhere from 1,500 to 2,000 bottles of water to people in need every day, so Hearts of Blue helped them out by donating \$155 in bottled water, which was distributed to their four community shelters in Old Strathcona, Belvedere, Jasper Place and Eastwood, as well as their 96th Street drop-in centre and the Christian Care Centre, which acts as their soup kitchen.



Operation Friendship Seniors Society (OFSS) ▲

OFSS offers services without judgement to improve the quality of life for seniors in need over 55 years of age. Their programs focus on providing both physical and social needs, such as housing, recreation and grocery shopping.

OCTOBER: OFSS put out a call for donations of warm winter socks for their Socktober campaign. Their goal was to collect 10,000 pairs—they more than doubled that number with 22,176 pairs of socks donated. **Ashley Bolduc** from Hearts of Blue dropped off 540 pairs of men's and women's socks and 52 pairs of men's underwear on behalf of Alberta Blue Cross.



< Salvation Army in Grande Prairie

The Salvation Army in Grande Prairie provides support to the area through community and family services, including a food bank, community kitchen, Christmas donations and emergency disaster services.

JUNE: Hearts of Blue was able to support the Grande Prairie Salvation Army with a new gas burner grill, which they needed to continue providing meals to their community.

Please thank your committee and employees for the wonderful donation.

We just installed the grill and used it to prepare more than 120 meals for the hungry."

SALVATION ARMY GRANDE PRAIRIE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Santas Anonymous

Santas Anonymous was started in 1955 to provide toys for families and children in need at Christmas. Now, Santas Anonymous collects, sorts, packages and delivers toys to more than 20,000 children every year.

DECEMBER: Our annual Santas Anonymous drive is always a success, and 2021 was no different. Thanks to the generosity of our team members, **Ashley Bolduc** was able to deliver raised funds of \$2,366 to Santas Anonymous, which put toys under the Christmas tree for more than 60 children.

Last year was a roller coaster for me. I wasn't sure if I would make it, but because of my two kids, I am still strong. I had already told my daughter, 'I'm sorry but you won't receive gifts on Christmas. Mommy promises you that next Christmas, I will double your gifts.' She told me, 'As long we are together on Christmas day, I'm happy.' But I could see the sadness in her eyes. I know she is still a kid and expecting gifts for Christmas. She is always asking me if Santa Claus is real because she's still hoping for gifts from Santa.

Then I received a message that I was approved for toys. I'm very happy because out of nowhere, someone will help fulfill my kids' wishes on Christmas day. I am very thankful that there is an organization helping families like us in this situation.

When I received the gifts, my daughter got very excited! She said, 'Santa IS real!' I told her, 'Yes, Santa is real. There are lots of Santa Clauses—Santas are the good people who help others.'

Thank you so much. You made a lot of families very happy today."

LETTER FROM A MOTHER WHO RECEIVED A SANTAS ANONYMOUS DONATION



Thank you for the
outpouring of support we
have received in 2021!



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