



Annual report 2022



We are here to support our community.

*— **Teresa Sokolowski,***

Hearts of Blue committee member

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 2022 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 a great new experience where our team evolved and adapted. Our committee worked hard to find and support charities in need. We completed in-person drop-offs when possible and had items delivered when necessary. Some of us experienced facility tours when we dropped off donations, seeing the help and support that charitable organizations provide to communities firsthand. I heard from our committee members who dropped off donations that they are so pleased to see the gratitude and happiness that Hearts of Blue brings to these organizations.

The Hearts of Blue team was able to assist 55 charities in 2022. Many of these organizations have still not recovered from COVID-19's challenges and are struggling to keep helping their community members, so our donations made a huge difference for them.

The continued support we receive from you all makes the committee's dream become reality for these organizations. We need to keep this going. Please consider supporting Hearts of Blue in any of the ways listed in the report.

Thank you for your support in 2022!



Joan Tandy

*Manager, pharmaceutical products
and pricing administration*
Pharmacy and
Clinical Drug Services
Alberta Blue Cross

2022 committee

Amanda Croot

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2018

Anita Quach

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since April 2022

Ashley Bolduc

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2008

Brian Geislinger

Committee member and executive sponsor

With Hearts of Blue since its creation in 1998

Carolyn Arsenault

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2021

Gabriella Aparicio

Committee member and secretary

With Hearts of Blue since 2016

Holly Blum

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since March 2022

Joan Tandy

Committee member and chair

With Hearts of Blue since 2018

Kristy Kozun

Committee member and vice-chair

With Hearts of Blue since 2017

Laurie Bayrak

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2013

Mariam Aoude

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2022

Megan Krienke

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since November 2021

Mirella Nardi

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2013

Nirmal Singh

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2006

Teresa Sokolowski

Committee member and treasurer

With Hearts of Blue since 2022

Terry Skidnuk

Committee member

With Hearts of Blue since 2021

About us

Who we are

Hearts of Blue is an employee-run charity, meaning that we are operated and funded by Alberta Blue Cross team members. 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 and is an essential part of our community involvement 25 years later.

In 2022, Hearts of Blue contributed more than \$51,272 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, food, toys or even kitchen supplies. Volunteers do everything from dropping off donations to serving dinners and planting gardens.

We operate with 4 main objectives in mind.

To encourage team members to become involved in the communities in which they live.

To strengthen the team spirit of Alberta Blue Cross team members.

To live the values of a caring company.

To raise the profile of Alberta Blue Cross in the community.

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. All donations are tax deductible and 100 per cent of the money you give goes towards the charities that Hearts of Blue supports. Employee donations are matched on an annual basis with a donation from the ABC Benefits Corporation Foundation. We hope you will consider donating.

3 ways to donate



**Biweekly
payroll deductions**
[Complete the online form](#)



One-time donation
[Complete the online form](#)



Employee Giving Campaign
Direct donations to Hearts of Blue
for up to \$100 matched

Other ways to support Hearts of Blue



**Volunteer during work
hours for *Days of Giving***
Watch *News to Use* for
upcoming events



**Join the
Hearts of Blue committee**
[Email Hearts of Blue](#)



Donate items
Watch *News to Use*
for collection drives

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Nurturing neighbours

To me, Hearts of Blue is more of a feeling than a thing. It fills my heart knowing that I am giving back, whether donating items or volunteering my time, to organizations who could use a hand. Before each donation, I am excited and after each donation, I am left feeling many emotions: happiness, love, pride and satisfaction.

— **Amanda Croot**, Hearts of Blue committee member

Alcove Addiction Recovery Centre for Women

The Alcove Addiction Recovery Centre for Women strives to promote the economic self-sufficiency and happiness of a challenged portion of their community. Through this treatment program, women have the opportunity and support to break the cycle of addiction and abuse in their families and for future generations.



January: **Amanda Croot** delivered a variety of art supplies including sketch pads, pencils, blank and predesigned canvases, paint, paint brushes, markers, needle point kits, paint palettes and more to the Alcove Addiction Recovery Centre for Women in Calgary.

From the bottom of our Alcove hearts—what amazing gifts for the women of Alcove Addiction Recovery Centre. Currently we have 16 women in residential treatment and they were over the moon to have received the gifts of arts and crafts so they can have access to creative outlets and the ability to express themselves in artful ways. We thank Alberta Blue Cross for this wonderful gesture.

— Alcove staff



Buffalo Sage Wellness House

Buffalo Sage Wellness House is a division of the Native Counselling Services of Alberta. They provide a home-like healing environment inside a 28-bed community residential facility to support conditionally-released and federally-sentenced Indigenous female offenders.

October: On October 21, **Megan Krienke** dropped off a donation of 22 towel sets to Buffalo Sage Wellness House.

I want to personally thank you for your donation. I don't know if you knew, but they didn't have towels. They had a few they shared amongst each other and you have provided them with so much. I am so grateful for you and everyone who took part in supporting this.

— **Katie**, Native Counselling Services of Alberta

Made by Momma

Made by Momma provides healthy meals, baked goods, baby essentials, children's items, supportive in-home visits and other services to families facing adversity or crisis. They work to allow mothers time for rest and recovery.

September: On September 9, **Anita Quach** delivered diapers, baby wipes, baby formula and baby food to Made by Momma in Calgary.



Peace River Regional Women's Shelter

Peace River Regional Women's Shelter is a 24-bed emergency shelter for women and children fleeing abuse. They also take in women who are homeless, battling addiction and struggling with mental health issues.

September: Peace River Regional Women's Shelter's fridge had just broken down. **Mirella Nardi**, retired Alberta Blue Cross team member and active Hearts of Blue committee member, had the pleasure of working with Sandra from Peace River Regional Women's Shelter to purchase a replacement fridge.

Without support from people like you, we have a hard time keeping our doors open. We truly are grateful for your support.
— Sandra, Peace River Regional Women's Shelter

Pregnancy Care Centre

The Pregnancy Care Centre provides support and compassion in a safe space for those experiencing unexpected pregnancies.

July: On July 11, **Laurie Bayrak** delivered baby wipes, new sleepers and clothing, formula, breast pumps, crib sheets, towels and washcloths, as well as baby care packages with soap, shampoo and cream, to the Pregnancy Care Centre.





RESET Society of Calgary

The RESET Society of Calgary provides programming and support for women and girls aged 16 and older who have experienced sexual exploitation. Through their recovery-oriented programming, mental and physical health care services, employment skills development and countless other programs, RESET works to let women and girls know there is a way out.

November: On November 22, **Holly Blum** delivered various items for a Christmas hamper including laundry products, shampoo and body wash, blankets and sheets, earbuds, do-it-yourself art kits, insulated coffee tumblers, slippers and chocolates.

Women's Centre of Calgary

The Women's Centre provides a safe and supportive space for women in Calgary seeking assistance with poverty, hunger, family breakdown, unemployment, domestic violence and life transitions. Their mission is to be every woman's place for support, connection and community.

December: On December 19, **Anita Quach** dropped off a variety of games and toys for the holiday toy room and women's essentials for the Women's Gift Program at the Women's Centre of Calgary.



Filling bellies

It's important to be involved in your community. For me, it provides a sense of accomplishment and connection. Finding out more about the organizations in your community and the services they provide is important, as you never know when you may need to offer help to someone that is looking for that kind of service.

— **Joan Tandy**, Hearts of Blue committee member

Calgary Food Bank

The Calgary Food Bank is Calgary's main charitable and most accessible food hub that provides emergency food support to families, individuals and organizations in need.

December: On December 5, **Amanda Croot** and **Brooklyn LaBrosse** donated 400 pounds of items to the Calgary Food Bank. The donation included cereals, soups, pasta, assorted breakfast items, canned fruits and veggies, diapers and more.

Coaldale Food Bank

Coaldale is a town near Lethbridge in southern Alberta. The Coaldale Food Bank supports community members in need.

April: **Alex Fong** and **Darlene Kolesar** visited Prairie Wide Financial in Coaldale and donated food from the local Coaldale food market to the Coaldale Food Bank.

Our team is proud to work closely with Alberta Blue Cross. Today, we were able to donate \$1,000 worth of food to our local Coaldale Food Bank—just in time for Easter.

— **Dennis Walton**, elite advisor, Prairie Wide Financial



Veterans Food Bank of Calgary

The Veterans Food Bank of Calgary supplies food and essential items to veterans in Calgary and the surrounding area. Their mission is to help forgotten veterans in need by offering services and assistance that allow veterans to have independence.

December: On December 2, **Amanda Croot** dropped off milk, cheese, butter, tissue, paper towel, toilet paper, laundry soap, dish soap, dishwasher tabs and cleaning products to the Veterans Food Bank of Calgary. The donation also included gift cards to Tim Hortons and Mark's to allow the veterans to get something special for themselves.

Edmonton Meals on Wheels

Edmonton Meals on Wheels delivers meal and food services to the homes of many people. By feeding body and soul, Edmonton Meals on Wheels nourishes community and builds trusting relationships.

March: In early March, **Joan Tandy** and **Gabriella Aparicio** dropped off a donation of 3 bag sealers to Edmonton Meals on Wheels to help with everyday food services.

The bag sealers we had on hand are aging and only partly functional. These sealers are used regularly each day for everything from sandwiches to baked goods and other snacks, and when one or more are out of action, our production schedule is hindered. As you can imagine, with the huge increase in demand over the pandemic, we really couldn't afford to work around unpredictable delays at any step of the production line.

—Tim Hanson, community engagement and fund development manager, Edmonton Meals on Wheels



Building foundations

It's not just about a donation, it's about connecting and trying to help in other ways. It's the feeling you have when you make the donation and the impact it has on people.

— **Mirella Nardi**, Hearts of Blue committee member

A Safe Place

A Safe Place is operated by the Strathcona Shelter Society and provides shelter, safety and support for women and children who have suffered from domestic violence and sexual assault. A Safe Place's New Beginnings program provides departing clients with household goods to help them get started in their own safe home.

August: On August 29, **Carolyn Arsenault** delivered cutting boards, toasters, towels and laundry baskets to the New Beginnings program, as well as fitted crib sheets and stuffed animals.

Centre of Hope

Centre of Hope is a faith-based agency supporting those experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness by helping them toward self-sufficiency. As Fort McMurray's only daytime drop-in centre, they work to make a positive difference in their community.

December: On December 17, **Mirella Nardi** delivered an upright freezer to the Centre of Hope in Fort McMurray.

Thank you again for this wonderful donation. It will impact our ability to freeze donated food items and to purchase healthier frozen foods for our patrons. The freezer is filled with bread and bagels, which is fantastic, as we didn't have the ability to keep bread products prior to owning this freezer.

— Tracy Shulko, Centre of Hope



Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

The Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers works with newcomers to Canada to provide these individuals and families with the items they need to get started at no cost.

June: On June 23, **Holly Blum** dropped off various kitchen items including utensils, pots and pans, plates, glasses and cups, as well as blankets, toiletries, socks and underwear, to the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.

Some of them cried in disbelief because they were not expecting that all these free items are here to help them start their new life.

— Dalia Abdellatif, Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

Fort Saskatchewan Furniture Bank

The Fort Saskatchewan Furniture Bank provides gently used furniture and household goods to the local area to help furnish homes. They help people transitioning out of homelessness, escaping abusive situations, refugees and those who suffered from natural disasters.

August: **Carolyn Arsenault** delivered kitchen towels, dish racks, shower curtains, coffee makers, toasters and other basic home items to the Fort Saskatchewan Furniture Bank.



Jessie's House

Jessie's House provides family violence outreach, case management and court support for people fleeing abuse. This emergency shelter assists all in need including men, women, children, teens and the LGBTQ2+ community.

March: When **Ashley Bolduc** and **Kristy Kozun** visited Jessie's House, they were greeted by Louise and Sharon who took them on a tour of the house. Ashley and Kristy dropped off gift cards to help individuals and families fleeing abuse have the means to set up their new homes.



Kids Kottage Foundation

Kids Kottage Foundation is a prevention and intervention shelter for infants and children in situations of family stress in Edmonton and area. Their mission is to keep children and infants safe while also providing families with resources for the future.

March: Hearts of Blue made donations to Kids Kottage Foundation in memory of Sara Haupf, a former advisor with one of Alberta Blue Cross's large group customers. After Sara's sudden passing, her family requested charitable donations be made in lieu of sending flowers, so **Gabriella Aparicio** delivered sensory toys, water tables and toys, arts and crafts bead kits and LEGO sets.



Lloydminster Interval Home

The Lloydminster Interval Home provides shelter where women, children and youth in need can feel safe and supported. With a youth centre and thrift stores, the Lloydminster Interval Home supports those impacted by domestic violence and trauma.

December: **Mirella Nardi** dropped off bed bug mattress and pillowcase protectors, towels and comforters to the Lloydminster Interval Home.



Strathmore Overnight Shelter

Pastor Elizabeth Karp and volunteers run the Strathmore Overnight Shelter with the goal of offering people a place to stay. The Strathmore Overnight Shelter provides dorms, hot meals, showers, laundry facilities, clothing, crisis counselling and referrals to help people in their time of need.

April: On April 11, **Amanda Croot** delivered laundry detergent, fabric softener, coffee and grocery gift cards to the Strathmore Overnight Shelter.

I was privileged to be taken on a tour of the facility, and I was in complete amazement of all that this woman does to ensure as many people can be helped as possible.

— **Amanda Croot**, Hearts of Blue committee member

Sunrise House

Sunrise House is a temporary shelter open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to youth aged 12 to 17 who have become homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless. By providing youth with food, clothing and personal care items, Sunrise House creates a safe and supportive environment.

December: On December 1, **Karen Ryan** dropped off pyjamas, socks, underwear and gift cards to Sunrise House in Grande Prairie.

Supporting generations

It's involvement that creates and sustains a community, Whether it's volunteering with your local community league, helping at your kids' school or supporting a non-profit organization, the need is great and our collective contributions make a world of difference to the lives of those around us.

— **Brian Geislinger**, Hearts of Blue committee member

Be YOUTH Centre

The Be YOUTH Centre provides free programming to Medicine Hat youth aged 11 to 17 years old. Through special interest activities and experiences, they create a fun and safe environment for youth to connect and feel empowered.

December: **Mirella Nardi** donated LEGO, craft supplies, games, batteries, a waffle maker, measuring spoons and other items to the Be Youth Centre to support their goal of improving the lives of youth in Medicine Hat and surrounding area.



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Medicine Hat and District

The Big Brothers Big Sisters mentoring program provides boys and girls and young men and women with a role model. Through regular outings, the mentor and mentee develop relationships built on trust and common interests.

November: Craft supplies are a great way to break the ice and encourage bonding between mentors and kids at Big Brothers Big Sisters of Medicine Hat and District. **Amanda Croot** delivered craft and colouring kits, science kits, LEGO sets, construction paper, crayons, markers, pencil crayons, paints, glue to create slime and more.

Boys and Girls Club

The Boys and Girls Club wishes for all children and youth to reach their dreams while becoming healthy and successful. Focused on belonging, respect, encouragement and support, collaboration and advocacy, the Boys and Girls Club provides safe, supportive places for children and youth.

November: **Mirella Nardi** donated a ping pong table, pool cues, bean bag chairs and arts and crafts supplies for the children and youth at the Boys and Girls Club.

École Providence School

École Providence is a northern Alberta school providing education from early childhood to grade 8 with a strong focus on community and building connection.

December: To support École Providence School's wellness program, Hearts of Blue helped fund teen hygiene packages for 25 students in need from grades 5 to 8. **Jil Tanguay** coordinated the donation.

Today was the day we were able to deliver our teen hygiene bags to our grades 5 to 8 students. The students were delighted to see all the products. We truly appreciate the generosity shown by Alberta Blue Cross. Thank you so much from the bottom of our hearts!
— Melissa Brochu, school wellness worker, Holy Family Catholic Regional Division



Kids Up Front Calgary

Kids Up Front Calgary provides kids with enriching experiences around arts, culture and sports. They work to create joy and promote inclusion while encouraging kids to be a part of their communities.

June: On May 31, **Anita Quach** delivered laptops, selfcare products, toys, games and colouring books for Kids Up Front's Handle with Care program. The items were given to kids in Calgary and throughout southern Alberta.

Old Strathcona Youth Society

The Old Strathcona Youth Society works to provide youth around Whyte Avenue with a safe place to gather, grow, be supported and meet people. As a resource for youth, this organization offers non-judgmental, flexible, street-level information to protect youth.

April: On April 23, **Megan Krienke** visited the Old Strathcona Youth Society to drop off 35 backpacks and 16 pairs of sweatpants.



Pacekids

Pacekids helps children thrive through therapy, education and play. They serve children with diverse needs including autism, cerebral palsy, global development delay, down syndrome and beyond in the Calgary area.

July: **Anita Quach** dropped off books, iPads and iPad supplies to Pacekids to support their empowering programs.



Santas Anonymous

With the help of thousands of donors and volunteers, Santas Anonymous collects and delivers toys to more than 20,000 children each year. Santas Anonymous' mission is to see every child receive a present on Christmas.

December: On December 15, Hearts of Blue collected a carload of toys and raised \$1,897.76 for Santas Anonymous. **Ashley Bolduc** and **Kayla Sommer** visited the toy warehouse to drop off the donations.

St. Catherine Catholic Elementary and Junior High School

St. Catherine Catholic Elementary and Junior High School is an Edmonton school that works to develop the intellectual, spiritual, social and emotional growth of their students. Around 35 per cent of the families at St. Catherine School are refugee families and most of the remaining are immigrant families.

June: St. Catherine School often works to gather winter jackets, snow pants and hats during the winter, but they struggle to get mittens. **Mariam Aoude** dropped off kids' pants, underpants, reusable water bottles, gloves and mittens to St. Catherine Catholic Elementary and Junior High School.



Youth Unlimited Edmonton

Youth Unlimited Edmonton consists of compassionate youth specialists who provide holistic care, mentoring relationships, safe communities and opportunities to give back. Regardless of background, they help youth discover their unlimited potential.

August: On August 26, **Holly Blum** delivered various food items, crafts and art supplies to Youth Unlimited Edmonton. Many of the teens visiting the centre live in unsafe homes, and donations provide food, activity and a safe space.

Many of the kids who come in have not eaten that day or even in a couple of days, so they are able to come in and make a meal.

— Gary Higgs, program director, Youth Unlimited Edmonton



Strengthening ties

Our communities are here to support us; being involved in your communities creates a sense of wellbeing and safety for our families.

— **Gabriella Aparicio**, Hearts of Blue committee member

Children's Link

Children's Link offers resources, information, connections and hope to families and professionals in the disability community. With more than 1,000 community resources, support groups, workshops and more, Children's Link provides a safe, accepting environment for people to learn, share and connect.

May: On May 25, **Amanda Croot** and **Sean Gallup**, along with Dennis Walton from Prairie-Wide Insurance Services Ltd., made a delivery to Children's Link. The donation included a television and a laptop to be used in their resource room by the families they provide services to.



Families First Society

Fort Saskatchewan's Families First Society supports families through programs assisting early childhood development and family support. Families First Society is community-focused and creates a safe, nurturing environment while providing resources with the help of their partners.

March: **Carolyn Arsenault** brought a donation of diapers and formula to Families First Society to support families in need.



Inn from the Cold Calgary

Inn from the Cold helps vulnerable families find stability in crises that often lead to homelessness through homeless prevention and diversion, emergency family shelter and supportive housing programming.

June: **Mirella Nardi** delivered sewing machines and sewing kits to Inn from the Cold Calgary's Indigenous Engagement program.

Risa and I would like to express our gratitude to Mirella for the generous donations of sewing machines to the Indigenous Engagement program. This donation will allow families to sew their own ribbon skirts or ribbon shirts. Ribbon skirts and ribbon shirts can support connection to cultural identity for Indigenous families. It is also a way to express and celebrate the rich and diverse Indigenous culture and heritage.

— **Tiffany**, Indigenous engagement manager, Inn from the Cold





Neighbourlink Parkland

Neighbourlink Parkland helps individuals and families in need of basic items who are unable to access government assistance and other resources. They work to support their community's personal, emotional and spiritual needs through kindness and compassion.

December: Hearts of Blue purchased hand and feet warmers, shampoo and conditioner, deodorants, facial tissues, toilet paper, dish soap, detergent, hygiene products, socks, toothpaste, toothbrushes and food items for Neighbourlink Parkland. On January 5, 2023, **Shaun** and **Kristy Kozun** delivered the truckload of donations.

Next Chapter Society

Next Chapter Society supports children and parents that are rebuilding a family structure after a divorce or separation. Through programs, community partners and resources, Next Chapter Society helps Albertans navigate their family's transformation.

April: To support program facilitation and professional training, **Laurie Bayrak** worked with Next Chapter Society to buy a new laptop computer for the families in need.



Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre

The Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre provides free programs and services to families with young children. They offer family coaching, home visitation, parent respite programs and parent education work groups.

February: On February 25, **Mirella Nardi** donated baby formula and diapers to the Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre.



Parkland Turning Points Society

The Parkland Turning Points Society works to stop family violence and abuse to create healthier communities through education and treatment programs. They provide educational and counselling services for men, women, children and families.

November: On November 29, **Kristy Kozun** delivered a new laptop and paper shredder to the Parkland Turning Points Society in Stony Plain. Sandi Olsen, executive director of Parkland Turning Points Society, was grateful for the donation.



Working together

Hearts of Blue allows me to connect with charities in my community, learn more about their work and give back in a meaningful way. It is so great to see the staff and volunteers, learn their story and hear their passion. It truly is contagious.

— **Anita Quach**, Hearts of Blue committee member

Cornerstone Counselling

Cornerstone Counselling serves the Edmonton and area community by providing counselling, psychoeducational workshops and psychotherapy training. Helping people as young as 4 years old to seniors, Cornerstone Counselling is committed to helping people improve their wellness.

June: At the end of June, **Kristy Kozun** dropped off therapy toys, games and arts and crafts supplies to Cornerstone Counselling. With many old toys, Cornerstone Counselling was happy to accept new items.

Thank you again so much for the delivery of the donated toys today. We are so blessed by this gift! Many of our toys were donated to us years ago and while we are so grateful, they have become very worn out after years of use. This gift means our young clients have amazing new toys to use. Tanisha is thrilled, and I know our other counselors who offer play therapy will be as well.

— **Deidre Martens**, stakeholder relations coordinator, Cornerstone Counselling

Hope Mission

Hope Mission is a not-for-profit that serves, strengthens and uplifts communities by caring for the impoverished and homeless people in Alberta.

December: On December 20, **Mariam Aoude** delivered hygiene supplies, shampoos, conditioners, bath soap, deodorants, toothbrushes and toothpaste, as well as men and women's boots, shirts, pants and socks, to Hope Mission.



Leduc and District Victim Services

The Leduc and District Victim Services is a registered non-profit that serves victims of crime and trauma within Leduc, Leduc County, Beaumont, Devon, Breton, Thorsby and the Edmonton International Airport area. They support victims navigating the criminal justice system and offer immediate crisis response.



November: To offer victims a meal and help them purchase personal items, **Joan Tandy** dropped off gift cards from Subway, Tim Hortons, Sobeys and Walmart to Leduc and District Victim Services.

We are so happy to receive this donation. When a victim comes in after hours with nothing, we need to be able to provide them with something to get through the night. Being able to give them a meal or a place to buy groceries or clothing helps them while they are dealing with so much.

—Stephanie Ricci, executive director, Leduc and District Victim Services

McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association

McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association started as a group home in the inner city of Edmonton created by Grant MacEwan College (now MacEwan University) graduates desiring to evoke change. McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association is now a multi-regional body that supports young Albertans.

May: Hearts of Blue collected sporting equipment of all kinds for youth at the McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association to enjoy. **Amanda Croot** made the delivery.

I just want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for considering us for this. The individuals we support are often not thought of when it comes to donations.
—Jennifer McBride, McMan Youth, Family and Community Services Association.



Sik Ooh Kotoki Friendship Society

Sik Ooh Kotoki Friendship Society is a resource for the urban Indigenous community in the Lethbridge region and provides service to off-reserve Indigenous peoples who need a support system. They continuously work to strengthen Indigenous cultural distinctiveness and improve the quality of life for the urban Indigenous community.

December: **Alex Fong** donated a bike to Sik Ooh Kotoki Friendship Society to support the elders' fitness journey.

Operation Friendship Seniors Society

Operation Friendship Seniors Society provides seniors from Edmonton's inner city with community-based preventative social services. Their mission is to improve the quality of life for seniors and provide support without judgement.

April: On April 13, volunteers from Hearts of Blue helped serve a dinner with Operation Friendship Seniors Society. This tasty dinner included ham, scalloped potatoes, mixed vegetables, a bun and apple pie.

October: With 9 volunteers and funding for food, Hearts of Blue supported a delicious dinner at Operation Friendship Seniors Society including roast beef with gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, a bun with butter and dessert. Hearts of Blue also donated 100 pairs of women's socks and 116 pairs of men's socks for the Socktober campaign.

December: 11 volunteers from Hearts of Blue supported the last Operation Friendship Dinner of 2022. Volunteers came out to work in the kitchen, serve dinner, wash dishes and help clean up following the dinner. With festive music, dancing and smiles—it was a great experience.





Pack a Care Kit Association

Originally a college assignment, Ariel Delainey founded Pack a Care Kit Association to help those less fortunate have access to hygiene products. Ariel puts together thousands of kits a month and serves Edmonton, Spruce Grove, Stony Plain and the communities of Lac Ste. Anne County, Parkland County and Wetaskiwin County.

October: On October 12, **Gabriella Aparicio** delivered women's hygiene products, men's and women's toiletries, hand and foot warmers, granola bars, fruit snacks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, bars of soap, shampoo and conditioner to Pack a Care Kit Association.

Pilgrims Hospice Society

Pilgrims Hospice Society works to support those diagnosed with a progressive, life-threatening illness and their loved ones by providing compassionate family-centred care.

June: A group of volunteers and Hearts of Blue committee members planted flowers in the Pilgrims Hospice courtyard. The volunteers greatly enjoyed their time, and Hearts of Blue also donated \$200 to Pilgrims Hospice Society.

So many of the residents, clients, family members, staff and volunteers enjoy being out in the courtyard. The flowers add so much peace, comfort and beauty. Thanks so much, Alberta Blue Cross.

—Loreen Chapman, volunteer, Pilgrims Hospice Society



Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples

Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples is one of the oldest churches in Edmonton and is designated Edmonton's First Nations, Métis and Inuit parish. Accepting and caring for strangers is the church's mission.

December: Ron and Father Mark from Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples estimated needing more than 600 hampers in 2022 and were happy to receive **Joan Tandy's** delivery of an assortment of food items to be distributed to those in need.



Making memories

Here are some of the Hearts of Blue 2022 committee's favourite memories from over the years.

I have many favourite memories with Hearts of Blue. One is of our team volunteering at Brown Bagging for Calgary's Kids. We've volunteered there twice, donating our time making sandwiches for kids who wouldn't otherwise have a lunch. Even though it's fast-paced, hard work, it's always been a pleasure to spend time with fellow co-workers (who always make it a fun experience) and give back to our community at the same time.

— **Amanda Croot**

I love seeing the smiles on the faces of those receiving the donation and knowing how much value it adds to those in need. It's invaluable.

— **Mariam Aoude**

I donated to the holiday toy room in December 2022 for the Women's Centre of Calgary. I spoke with one of the staff organizing the toys and she mentioned, out of all the toys that we donated, my donation included one of the only inclusive Barbies. It was so heartwarming to see her face light up with a toy that she knew would be so meaningful for a young child.

— **Anita Quach**

Seeing the impact of our donations and how much they mean to the charities that we help is what I enjoy most.

— **Megan Krienke**

My donation to the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers put tears in my eyes and touched my heart. They provide so much for newcomers that enter Canada with nothing. You think about how terrifying it would be to be in new surroundings with nothing and then you hear about how grateful people are to have that support.

— **Holly Blum**

I love serving dinners at Operation Friendship Seniors Society. The individuals receiving the dinners are always so grateful. Seeing their smiles and knowing they are going home with full bellies is enough to keep me coming back to help. We always have a fun and enthusiastic Hearts of Blue crew.

— **Kristy Kozun**

The first time I met the lovely angels that work at Kids with Cancer sticks with me. It's heartbreaking hearing what these little souls go through. The journey they endure is incredible, yet they still greet you with a smile. I used to help in the evening babysitting and I honestly couldn't tell which child was sick.

— Mirella Nardi

Just before Christmas 2022, a group of us went out to Operation Friendship Seniors Society to serve a Christmas meal. It's something we do often, but for some reason this night was different. Everyone was so happy to be there and it was all smiles. Our team was dancing to Christmas music and joking around with everyone. We stayed late and pitched in to help with clean up after. I could tell the staff were so appreciative of the extra help.

— Ashley Bolduc

My favourite memories with Hearts of Blue are the volunteering opportunities that encourage me to be actively engaged in the community. Over the years, Hearts of Blue has provided many opportunities, from preparing meals with Meals on Wheels and The Mustard Seed to building homes for Habitat for Humanity and helping build a playground in an inner-city neighbourhood.

— Brian Geislinger

My favorite memory is the first donation I made in person. It was to the Fort Saskatchewan Furniture Bank. The volunteer told me more about their organization and her pride in the assistance they provide to the community. When we started to unload the donations, she did a happy dance to see shower curtain rings in the boxes because they badly needed them. It shows that sometimes the littlest things can make someone's day.

— Carolyn Arsenault



**Thank you for the
incredible support
we received in 2022!**


Hearts of Blue



Hearts of Blue



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