COMMUNITY NEWS + INFORMATION
FROM THE VICTORIA FOUNDATION

pulse

SUMMER 2025 EDITION

Masters of the Mobile Food Bank

How Fateh Care Charity won the hearts of the community

EDUCATION
Empowering future leaders through scholarships and support

CULTURE & BELONGING
VIDEA's regalia library reclaims identity and celebrates inclusion

ENVIRONMENT
Protecting whales, preserving waters

Vital Signs 2024 Highlights

A Message from our CEO

Last year, in the annual Vital Signs citizen survey, we asked, "Can you imagine Greater Victoria for the next generation?" The results were a resounding "yes." Community members said they could envision a region where their grandchildren have easy access to good jobs that meet their needs, fresh food, a healthy environment, and an engaged community eager to support them.

Now, this edition of Pulse takes our question a step further. These pages will share remarkable stories about how our community isn't just imagining the future but creating it. Among many stories, we spotlight a newcomer family passionate about feeding the community with a mobile food bank, heroic whale disentanglements, innovative reconciliation initiatives, and efforts to bring people together by growing culturally relevant food crops. You will also read about the doors being opened for community members to invest in social purpose initiatives.

Our community is truly driven to overcome today's challenges, to ensure our grandchildren and future generations can thrive in the Greater Victoria we envision. These stories further show how the Victoria Foundation is building its capacity with the community to address root causes through our granting, while exploring new ways to coordinate and invest.

We hope this new edition of Pulse will enlighten you and inspire an even greater impact. Imagining the future is just the beginning, and we are well on our way to making these goals a reality.

Ms. Richardson

Sandra Richardson
Victoria Foundation CEO

The capital region is home to a rich diversity of Indigenous peoples and cultures. Based on the 2021 Census, there were an estimated 19,460 individuals in the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) who identified as First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuk (Inuit). We acknowledge with respect the Lekwungen-speaking people of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations on whose traditional lands our offices are located.

VICTORIA FOUNDATION

CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE
WITH CAUSES THAT MATTER®

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ABOUT THE VICTORIA FOUNDATION

OUR VISION: A VIBRANT, CARING COMMUNITY FOR ALL

Established in 1936, the Victoria Foundation is Canada's second-oldest community foundation and sixth largest of over 200 nationwide. We manage charitable gifts from donors whose generosity allows us to create permanent, income-earning funds. The proceeds from these funds are then distributed as grants for charitable or educational purposes. To date, the Victoria Foundation has invested more than $373 million in people, projects, and non-profit organizations that strengthen communities in BC and throughout Canada.

Following the Funding

A timeline of a grantmaking process* at the Victoria Foundation.

Every year, the Victoria Foundation distributes millions of dollars from donors through an array of grant programs that help charitable organizations do critical work in the capital region and beyond. These programs are based on trust, transparency, and aim to reach as many areas of community wellbeing as possible. Last year, the Foundation distributed over 2,000 grants worth a total of $33 million.

The largest open grant call is the annual Vital Stream of the flagship Community Grants Program, which provides general operating funding to organizations of all kinds.

But what does this granting process actually look like? What makes an application successful? Let's take a closer look.

Alex, from a fictional non-profit called 'Byte-Sized Steps,' wants to apply for a Vital grant to fund an initiative that helps older adults use digital technology safely.

Let's follow her first application through the process.

*Community Grants Program Vital Stream process

1) **Late January:** Alex reads in the Victoria Foundation's monthly eNewsletter that the application portal will soon open. She finds application guidelines on the Foundation's website and begins planning with her team.

2) **Early February:** The grant portal opens. Alex spends 2-4 hours completing her application online before the due date. She has questions, so she calls the Foundation for help, relieved the granting team is readily available. After she submits her application, she's emailed a short feedback survey.

3) **Early March:** The review process begins. The Foundation's granting team has wide experience in the charitable sector, so they know the challenges of grant writing. They work together to make the process comfortable and transparent for all applicants. A friendly reviewer follows up with Alex to ask a few extra questions.

4) The granting team reviews the application thoroughly, focusing on the proposal's strengths. They check that Alex's organization works to address a strong community need, serves equity-deserving groups, and has good governance and financial management.

5) The granting team consults with subject matter experts – community leaders with strong knowledge of certain issues – for some extra background on the region's current need. They check how well the application addresses some of the most pressing issues from various reports like the State of the Sector Reports and **Victoria's Vital Signs.**

6) There are multiple sources of funding, including the **Community Action Funds**, that enable grants to be distributed to community organizations through the Vital Stream. The Philanthropic Services team works all year with community donors and fund holders to pool their gifts for greater impact.

7) **A Community Engagement Committee** of Foundation staff and community members audits a third of the reviews for transparency and accountability.

8) **May:** The granting team finalizes the assessments. They create a long list of grant recommendations. Victoria Foundation CEO Sandra Richardson and the team review the list and ensure donor gifts are matched according to their wishes.

9) **June:** The Community Engagement Committee reviews and validates the final recommendations.

10) **Late June to early July** Success! The Victoria Foundation's Board of Directors approves the grants and Alex's application is on the list. She receives an official email announcing that Byte-Sized Steps will be funded in two to three weeks.

11) **Mid-July:** The grantee list is publicly released, and the community celebrates!

12) **August:** While the Foundation works hard to help support as many organizations as possible, each year the demand exceeds the available supply of funding. Unsuccessful applicants can schedule calls with the granting team to receive feedback on their applications for next year.

13) Throughout the year, the granting team gathers feedback and builds relationships with dedicated organizations, like Alex's.

If you'd like to learn more about this or other granting programs, please contact grants@victoriafoundation.bc.ca or call 250-381-5532. A list of last year's Community Grant recipients can be found at www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca.

Victoria's Vital Signs report is online

Explore 2024 stats and stories in the digital version of Victoria's Vital Signs!

This online report is dynamic, engaging, and easy to navigate on smartphones, tablets, and computers. For 19 years, Victoria Foundation has produced Victoria's Vital Signs exclusively as a print magazine. We hope you enjoy this new and enhanced online reading experience.

victoriavitalsigns.ca

Thank you to our digital platform and online Vital Signs sponsor

SOUTH ISLAND PROSPERITY PARTNERSHIP

The Pulse Blog

Read more stories from our community throughout the year!

Pulse blog is the companion site to Pulse Magazine and acts as a "what's next" to our annual Vital Signs report. Pulse looks at how the Victoria Foundation and other organizations in our community are working to build on the findings in the annual Vital Signs report.

There are many great new stories to read so be sure to visit the blog regularly.

victoriafoundation.bc.ca/pulse

2024

Financial Highlights

The Victoria Foundation continues to strengthen community wellbeing by investing in people, opportunities, and solutions. As of the end of 2024, the Victoria Foundation has granted $373 million since our inception. Starting from humble beginnings with a $20 gift from Fannie Gadsden, the mother of our founder Burges Gadsden, the Foundation continues to work to create a vibrant, caring community for all.

$609 MILLION IN ASSETS
under administration including 49 new funds

7.9% INVESTMENT RETURNS
ten-year annualized investment returns

$36+ MILLION IN GIFTS
including bequest donations and gifts of securities

$21.4 million endowment
$11.8 million pass-through
$1.7 million restricted term fund
$1.3 million unrestricted

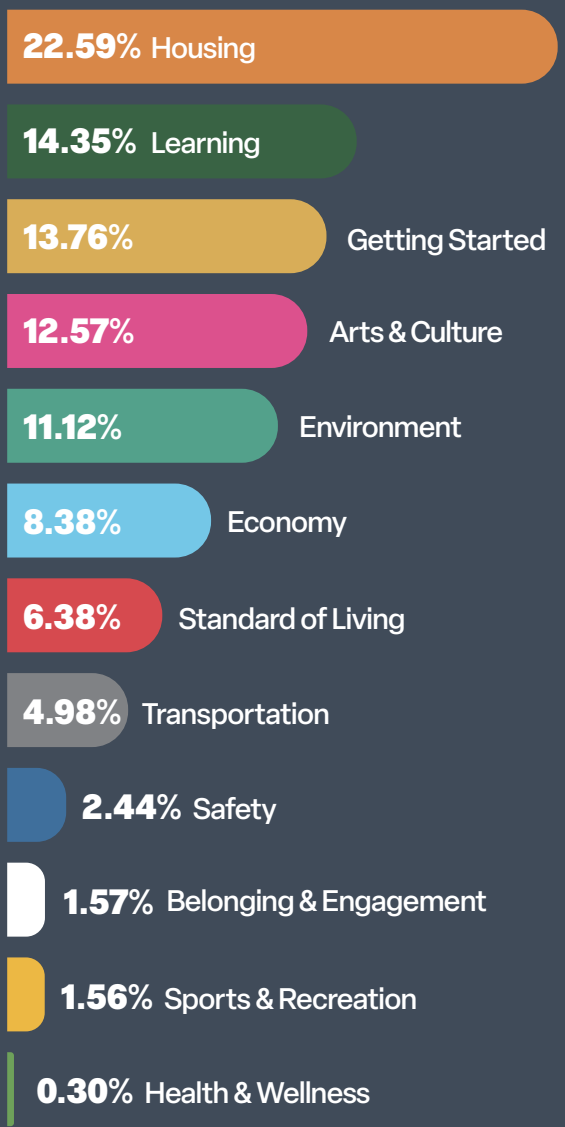
VICTORIA FOUNDATION
CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE WITH CAUSES THAT MATTER®

Complete audited Financial Statements for the year ending December 31, 2024 are available on our website at **victoriafoundation.ca.**

The 2024 Financial Statements were audited by KPMG, who provided an unqualified audit opinion. KPMG's Independent Auditor's Report is available in the 2024 Financial Statements.

Grants Distributed

2024 Grants by Vital Signs Indicator Area



2,006 GRANT DISTRIBUTIONS
All grants paid to registered charities or other organizations in accordance with CRA regulations

$33+ MILLION
- $21 million from endowed funds
- $12 million from non-endowed funds

A WORLD IN A WARDROBE

How VIDEA's Two-spirit regalia library reclaims Indigenous identities

Down a narrow hallway at 1923 Fernwood Road sits a modest room bursting with pride on every table and rack. There are vibrant ribbon skirts, floral cloaks, beaded vests, feathered headdresses, wolf fur garments, caribou antlers, and devil's club jewelry.

> "We're reclaiming our identity [by] showing up in our colours in these neutral spaces. Indigenous people have our own professional wear."
>
> **SANTANA DREAVER**
> Saulteaux and Plains Cree from Kinistin, Saskatchewan, Prime Minister's Youth Council Member

The unique and accessible regalia library, titled "Kinship of the Travelling Ribbon Skirt," sits at the home of the non-profit VIDEA (Victoria International Development Education Association). When many people from Indigenous and Two-spirit communities first try these garments, the experience can be life changing.

"There are no gender norms here," says VIDEA's Kassidy George, of the T'Sou-ke Nation. She holds up a black vest sewn with long, rainbow-hued ribbons down its back – one of many Two-spirited variations on traditional garments.

"These clothes are simply meant to fit who you are, what your energy gives off," she says. Beside her hang intricate Métis sashes and Inuk seal skin robes, some with colourful accents.

This grassroots collection sits free and open for anyone Indigenous to borrow from, especially the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. It fills a major gap in identity-specific regalia to be worn for ceremonies and celebrations, like graduations and conferences, along with everyday wear.

It's a place to discover oneself, to be respected, and to simply belong.

Photos by Adam van der Zwan

VICTORIA'S VITALSIGNS®

77%

of Vital Signs survey respondents feel it is important to learn about and respect Indigenous culture, values, and traditions.

Supporting identities and artists

This belonging is VIDEA's loud-and-proud mandate. For over four decades, the non-profit which employs around 70 people (50 of them Indigenous) has created gathering spaces in multiple countries for diverse people, especially youth, to tackle poverty and climate change. It fosters feminist leaders through creative projects that promote equity, the environment, and human rights.

In Victoria's 2024 Vital Signs survey, 77% of respondents said they feel it's important to learn about and respect Indigenous cultures, values, and traditions.

Rachel Barr, Head of Youth Opportunities, says this is exactly what VIDEA helps accomplish. "We want folks who've historically had their voices silenced to be put into leadership positions, and to represent their peoples," said Barr. She stands in the regalia library, surrounded by a dozen keen-eyed Indigenous youth who are involved.

Barr says the library was the brainchild of a Two-spirited VIDEA leader who knew personally how much this project would connect and celebrate the community. It took off within a year, with support from a $39,068 grant through Communities for Gender Equality, a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada and the Equality Fund, with support from the Government of Canada.

Today, while Two-spirit clothing is a core feature, other identities are also served. There are items for the local Songhees, Esquimalt, T'Sou-ke, and W̱SÁNEĆ communities, but also for Métis, Inuit, and First Nations from up-island, the BC mainland, and the rest of North America.

"There are people from all over who live in Greater Victoria. They deserve to be represented as well," said Barr, adding that VIDEA proudly commissions Indigenous artists from across the continent to create pieces for the library.

[Page 8 Upper] The library sits tucked away like a secret, but it's bursting with pride on every table and rack.

[Above] VIDEA's Two-spirit regalia library is a fully accessible clothing project that fills a gap for Indigenous identities from across North America.

[Below] Kassidy George from the T'Sou-ke Nation presents some of the many Two-spirit variations on traditional clothing.

"A lot of people came into the space thinking 'Is this too good to be true?' 'Is today even real?' It was so beautiful."

TALEETHA TAIT
Wet'suwet'en Gitxsan, Manager of Wellness Programs, VIDEA

"They're hustling," said Barr. "They're incredible business people."

A debut to remember

Taleetha Tait, who is Wet'suwet'en Gitxsan and Manager of Wellness Programs, recalls the library's emotional debut in June 2023, at a Two-spirit poetry reading night in Fernwood.

She says the colourful clothing went on display for attendees to take pictures and start borrowing. It was the first time many Two-spirit members could try on regalia that perfectly matched their identity.

"A lot of people came into the space thinking 'Is this too good to be true?' 'Is today even real?' It was so beautiful," she said. "I felt energized, and I craved more of it."

The library also took a trip in Fall 2023 to the Healing our Spirit Worldwide conference in Vancouver – a global gathering of Indigenous peoples. There, it was set up in a hotel room for attendees to peruse and borrow for the event. Barr says the honour system has been a tremendous success.

Reclaiming professionalism

The library's core mission is to help diverse wearers feel recognized and respected. Santana Dreaver, Saulteaux and Plains Cree from Kinistin, Saskatchewan, says that when someone wears their regalia, they feel protected and safe.

Dreaver, who sits on the Prime Minister's Youth Council, says there's often pressure to wear your best clothes at formal events, and

the vibrant regalia library "challenges colonialism and what's considered professional."

"We're reclaiming our identity by showing up in our colours in these neutral spaces. Indigenous people have our own professional wear," said Dreaver.

Barr says she's scoured the Internet for a similar project and hasn't found one of this caliber and diversity. "We don't want to hog this idea," she said. "If there's another library out there, or if anyone wants to create one, we'd love to connect."

For Taleetha Tait, the importance of making regalia accessible in communities far and wide cannot be overstated. She says the library gives diverse people a sense of possibility they didn't know existed.

"To see relatives that have been silenced for so long, to see their magic. To see them being celebrated. It's beautiful to be a part of that."

To learn more about VIDEA and its projects, visit VIDEA.ca.

[Page 10 Upper left] This gorgeous, traditionally woven hat can be borrowed, among other colourful headwear.

[Page 10 Lower] VIDEAS' Mataya Gillis displays a custom-made jean jacket garnished with Métis floral art.

[Upper left] Santana Dreaver says the vibrant clothing items challenge colonialism and what's considered 'professional' in Western society.

[Above] The library also caters to Métis, Inuit, and First Nations communities from all over North America.

[Below] Rachel Barr, head of youth opportunities, says the library was created by a passionate Two-spirit VIDEA leader.

"We want folks who've historically had their voices silenced to be put into leadership positions, and to represent their peoples."

RACHEL BARR
Head of Youth Opportunities, VIDEA

MASTERS OF THE MOBILE FOOD BANK

How Fateh Care Charity won the hearts of the community.

[Left to right] The Fateh Care team: Dr. Navneet Kaur Popli, Sarah Corea, Manarap Singh Popli, Harjas Singh Popli, Elia Nicholson-Nave, Mansahaj Singh Popli. Not in the photo are Lacey Clarke and Harmeet Singh.

Harjas Singh Popli was jobless in 2021 when he and his family started putting money from savings into their new mobile food bank called Fateh Care Charity.

One year earlier, Harjas, his wife Dr. Navneet Kaur Popli, and their two sons made a split-second decision to start fresh in Canada, amid a new and tumultuous pandemic. They packed their lives in eight bags and managed to snag the last flight from New Delhi to Calgary before the Canadian airspace officially closed.

That September, Navneet found work as an engineering instructor at the University of Victoria, while Harjas kept job hunting. A few months later, isolated and at home sick with COVID-19, they tried reaching out for help obtaining groceries and medicines. It was much harder than expected.

"We were in a new country and city. The moment you stepped out of the house, there was no one you could ask for help," said Harjas. "We knew no one."

That year, Victoria's 2022 Vital Signs report found that only 27% of respondents felt there was sufficient support for newcomers to the region – a number that's risen to 35% in 2024.

Clicking through local Facebook posts, Navneet realized the disconnect went beyond newcomers.

"There were single mothers, seniors, and kids with mobility challenges asking for help, but no one seemed to be delivering them anything. There was a big need," she recalled. The pair decided that if they survived COVID-19, they, themselves, would start a charity to help everyone in need, no questions asked.

VICTORIA'S VITALSIGNS®

43%

of Vital Signs survey respondents rate their ability to afford necessities (e.g., food, shelter, clothing, etc.) as good or excellent.

Photos by Jo-Ann Richards

'Winning hearts by caring'

The Poplis say 'Fateh Care' means "winning hearts by caring," a mission that's grown from a family-run passion project into a wider community initiative.

The charity, now with two part-time employees and many volunteers, has delivered food, hygiene products, clothes, and more, directly to thousands of people with mobility challenges – from Sooke to Sidney.

Navneet says "it's about making sure everyone's life feels valued," and while their goals are a marathon, each day is a sprint. Outside their day jobs, they answer delivery requests, collect donations, purchase and deliver food, and maintain a robust social media presence. Navneet also offers support to charities serving female-identifying people.

Harjas, now an HR executive, says the family puts at least 10% of its salary into the charity, in line with their faith and karmic values.

"We feel this 10% is not ours, so we must spend it on the community, on good deeds, and then what goes around comes around," he said.

Through all this, and with help from a $20,000 grant through the Victoria Foundation's Community Grants Program, they've been winning the community's hearts by building a barrier-free support network and partnering with local charities, like Mustard Seed Street Church. This bold work complements the Victoria Foundation's longstanding commitment to charitable partnerships that help the community achieve food security, working to ensure that no one sleeps hungry.

A medal for the ages

In September 2024, Harjas asked Navneet to pinch him while they sat with his parents at Government House, ready to accept a King Charles III Coronation medal for the family's profound service.

Navneet soaked in the occasion, "taking in these very special moments," while Harjas accepted the medal for their charitable work. The family took portraits with their Member of Parliament – a testament to their deep support for community.

The Poplis say demand for Fateh Care has skyrocketed, and they're always looking for support on new and innovate ways to fundraise, along with recruiting volunteers.

They also now publish the monthly Fateh Care Times – a newspaper to "connect our shared communities" – in print and online.

Long-term, the Poplis hope to expand and inspire new mobile food banks everywhere, based on their achievements.

"We know exactly how it has to be done," says Harjas. "We know the logistics. We're now masters of running a mobile food bank."

For more about Fateh Care Charity, visit fatehcare.com.

35%

of Vital Signs survey respondents agree the availability of supports and resources for newcomers and immigrants is good or excellent.

Two humpback whales displaying social behaviour

Photo by Kristian Gillies

STEWARDS OF THE SALISH SEA

How Cetus slows boaters, saves whales, and protects the future of our waters.

The call came in on a calm July morning — a humpback whale was in trouble.

Spotted thrashing at the surface and dragging a buoy behind it, the whale was entangled and in distress. It was a race against time.

The Cetus Research and Conservation Society team sprang into action by clearing the bow, prepping the gear, and carefully closing in. When the whale paused for just a moment, a fisheries officer snagged the trailing rope, and a satellite tag was deployed — marking the start of a long and harrowing rescue.

For hours, the whale struggled. The rope cut into its skin, leaving wounds and a trail of blood. While the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) disentanglement experts worked to free it, the Cetus team documented the scene, attempted to identify the whale, and stayed close as backup. As the final lines finally broke free, the whale lifted its flukes revealing unmistakable markings. It was Smoke (II) BCX2183, a well-known whale, who is now swimming free and on the mend.

Though Cetus plays a vital role in these rescues, it's important to note, only DFO is authorized to disentangle whales. Cetus assists by tagging, identifying, documenting, monitoring, and keeping the area safe. If you see an entangled whale, report it immediately to the Marine Mammal Hotline at 1-800-465-4336.

Working to slow boaters down

Cetus is at the forefront of informing boaters about best practices for interacting with whales and other marine mammals. One of the major challenges is the speed at which boats travel, so the organization focuses on relaying the importance of slowing down to boaters when near whales. The noise from boat engines and equipment is disruptive, particularly for killer whales, as they rely heavily on echolocation to communicate and hunt.

"There is an emotional component seen in whale behaviour, signaling that they're a deep-feeling species who experience emotions, including grief."

LINDSAY KOLB
Straitwatch South Coordinator

VICTORIA'S
VITALSIGNS®

65%

of Vital Signs survey respondents rated the natural environment as the best thing about Victoria.

Straitwatch team preparing to attach a satellite tag to Smoke (II) BCX2183

Photo by Megan Hockin-Bennett

The Cetus team starts their days early, spending up to eight hours on the water monitoring cetaceans and gathering data on vessel activity around marine mammals.

Executive Director Mark Dombowsky said that Cetus' specialized approach has a substantial impact. "We're one of the few Canadian NGOs on the water every day in the summer protecting the whales. The work we're doing is unique."

Straitwatch Coordinators Emma Shuparski and Lindsay Kolb are among the dedicated researchers leading these efforts. The team records information on the frequency of vessel contact, including how close vessels are coming to whales, what type of activity they're engaging in, and whether there are violations of the marine mammal regulations or guidelines, explained Emma.

Boaters are encouraged to slow their vessels to seven knots or less within one kilometre of a whale to minimize acoustic disturbance. Cetus also advises boaters to keep their distance from the whales, with a minimum of 400 metres for killer whales, and 200 metres for other species.

Protecting deep-feeling species

The Cetus group recognizes each marine mammal as an individual, each life carrying immense significance. "The southern resident killer whale, for example, is an endangered population. They're in a lot of trouble and we need to try to save and protect every single one. One life could make the difference to that population down the road," said Emma.

"There is also an emotional component seen in whale behaviour, signaling that they're a deep-feeling species who experience emotions, including grief," Lindsay explained. When one whale lost her baby to an early death, she carried around its deceased body for 17 days, she added.

"We are a lean organization, and when we receive support from Victoria Foundation and others, it is going to something quite practical — like our staff, fuel, or boat repair. Any support we receive has a direct impact," said Mark. Cetus received a Victoria Foundation Community Grant of $25,000 in 2024 for protecting endangered whales.

Through their steady dedication and innovative solutions, Cetus is setting an important example in marine conservation to ensure that future generations can continue to witness the beauty and intelligence of whales in BC waters.

Smoke (II) BCX2183 lifting their tail fluke free of entanglement

Photo by Megan Hockin-Bennett

Photos by Jo-Ann Richards

HONOURING WHERE WE COME FROM THROUGH FOOD, STORY, AND SPIRIT

For Ariel Reyes Antuan, food has always carried meaning beyond the plate.

He remembers the meals his grandmother used to make when he was a child growing up in Cuba — flavours and scents that stayed with him long after he left home. It wasn't until years later that he began to understand just how deeply those memories were rooted. They were imprints guiding him back to himself, a quiet thread connecting him to his home, his ancestors, and their knowledge.

That thread eventually led him and his wife, Jess Barton, to found Iyé Creative, a grassroots movement focused on restoring food as a relationship — not a commodity.

His life's work is to explore what the world would be like if food were more than just a product on a grocery shelf or a price tag on a menu. What if food were an opportunity to practice reverence? A bond that ties us to the land, to our ancestors, and to each other.

"Our focus is to awaken that ancestral memory and how to bring food from one's lineage to these lands," says Ariel. "It's about learning and then applying these teachings from the people who came before us."

Inclusion through culturally relevant crops

Central to Iyé's mission is uplifting the familial knowledge of communities that are often left out of dominant food narratives. For example, "in Canada, there is a newfound focus on the Indigenous people of these lands, and there are also many people from all over the world now living in Canada with

43%

of Vital Signs survey respondents agree that Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour have equal opportunities and are treated as equals.

different ancestral and Indigenous knowledge that we can learn from," Ariel explains.

According to the 2024 Vital Signs survey, only 43% of Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) feel that they have equal opportunities and are treated as equals.

In response to this inequity and the broad sense of division experienced by these communities, Iyé launched a project called Culturally Relevant Crops. They consulted diverse cultural groups to identify which crops community members wanted to see growing on local farms in Victoria.

In one of Iyé's recent reports, community members shared powerful memories that reconnect them to their cultural roots. One participant recalled gathering lemongrass with their grandmother in Mexico to make tea. Another participant described how seasonal eating deepens their bond with the land.

The project helps BIPOC communities reconnect to the foods their predecessors grew and ate, making space for healing, sovereignty, and belonging. The Culturally Relevant Crops initiative has been supported through the Victoria Foundation's Collaboration Grant Stream with a grant of $30,000.

Victoria's 2024 Vital Signs survey also showed that 66% of respondents think there should be more opportunities to support cross-cultural education and awareness. Just over a third believe it's important to focus on providing opportunities that promote social, cultural, and racial equality. These are concerns that Iyé strives to address.

Community programming that transforms the paradigm

In Ariel's view, Western society's dependence on money as the primary currency has fractured our relationship with the land. He believes that our long-term survival depends on redefining that relationship, and seeing the earth not as a commodity, but as a living part of a wider ecosystem.

"Our modern lifestyle doesn't fit with restoration, and that is how and why alternatives are colliding with the current way that we are living. We are awakening but we are also learning how to dance in two different worlds," he adds.

As Iyé responds to this shifting paradigm, it offers immersive community-based programming that brings people back into a relationship with food and land. Their workshops include cooking traditional ancestral foods, seed saving, gardening and urban farm tours, ecological land stewardship, and teachings in ethnocultural nutrition.

Iyé is more than a collective. It's a call to remember. An enterprise that invites people back to the table to eat, to listen, to share stories, pass down wisdom, and rekindle the sacred relationship between food, culture, and community.

To learn more about Iyé Creative, visit iyeherstories.com.

52%

of Vital Signs survey respondents feel Greater Victorians are committed to anti-racism, equity, and inclusion.

[Page 16: Left to right] Jess Barton - Iyé Co-founder, Resource Development Manager Razan Meereb - Iyé, Visual Knowledge Coordinator Ariel Reyes Antuan - Iyé, Managing Director Jess Walis - Fernwood Food Security, Coordinator Ashley Welan - FED, Project Manager

EDUCATION: THE KEY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Michelle Lindemann is passionate about women in engineering. As a Métis woman studying Civil Engineering Technology at the College of New Caledonia, she sees firsthand how underrepresented women, especially Indigenous women, are in the field.

For Michelle, receiving an Indigenous Women in Technology Scholarship from the BC Scholarship Society (BCSS) not only means financial support but the opportunity to "contribute, inspire, and ignite change."

Women are vastly underrepresented in engineering, with as little as 14% of practicing engineers identifying as women. The disparity is even greater for Indigenous women. "The more women who join, the more others will have women to look up to," said Michelle.

It's this spirit of hope and determination that is helping young people in our province prepare for the tough road ahead, one filled with challenges such as affording a home, accessing healthcare, responding to climate change, and navigating economic instability.

Finding a way forward through uncertain times

Respondents to Victoria's 2024 Vital Signs survey gave Greater Victoria a C grade for the Getting Started issue area, which refers to the ability to get a good start in life, work, and adulthood in the community. While 62% agreed the region will remain a desirable place to live for future generations, only 13% agreed it will remain affordable.

VICTORIA'S VITALSIGNS®

37%

of Vital Signs survey respondents rate their ability to afford post-secondary education as good or excellent.

One of the brightest spots in the report is the Learning issue area, which received a B grade from respondents. This is promising, as access to education and support for students is an invaluable way to help future generations thrive in our community.

One of the ways the Victoria Foundation helps support future generations is through its partnership with the BC Scholarship Society, which delivers millions of dollars annually in scholarships and awards to help young people in our province access the education they need to succeed.

Through BCSS, specific scholarships are available for Indigenous students, students who wish to study internationally, and women pursuing degrees in science and technology. Awards are also available for students transitioning out of Adult Basic Education programs into full-time post-secondary studies and for undergraduate students transferring between two public post-secondary institutions.

"Scholarships encourage, support, and reward determined young people and, ultimately, contribute to the future of our communities and our province," said Rory Grewar, Senior Director, Special Funds at the Victoria Foundation.

"It's very gratifying to help these students to pursue their dreams."

Scholarships help students pursue dreams and inspire change

Scholarships from BCSS help students such as Rachel Beach, whose dream was to study in Canada and internationally to expand her mind and gain experience. While studying Sociology in her third year at the University of British Columbia, a Premier's International Scholarship gave her the opportunity to embark on a five-month study abroad program in Australia.

"Studying abroad really opened me up to new ways of learning and thinking," said Rachel. "The scholarship gave me the opportunity to lean all the way into the experience. It was incredible."

Connor Lewis, from Prince George, is a three-time recipient of an Indigenous Student Award. Both a star student and athlete, Connor is thriving at the University of Victoria, as he prepares for his dream career in environmental law. "Any student would tell you help like that makes a world of difference," said Connor. "To have that financial support allows me to maintain focus on my studies, sports, and community."

A wide variety of funding available

The Foundation also partners with the Province of BC to support young people with experience living in care who are seeking higher education, by way of funding streams such as the Learning Fund for Young Adults and the Youth Education Assistance Fund.

There are nearly 100 additional bursaries and scholarships available through grants from the Victoria Foundation in collaboration with educational institutions, thanks to generous donors who have established funds to help support students attending specific post-secondary institutions or pursuing particular fields of study.

The Victoria Foundation endeavors to always respond to community needs and is proud to be able to offer these educational opportunities, to support the next generation as they move into adulthood and begin to tackle the challenges ahead.

A full list of awards is available at victoriafoundation.bc.ca/grants-funding/scholarships.

For more information on BCSS visit bcscholarshipsociety.ca.

Photo by Rafterman

PACIFIC OPERA: SETTING THE STAGE FOR UNITY THROUGH ART

Emotion through story and sound.

After a recent performance of *The Little Prince,* Brenna Corner was approached by a woman from the audience. "She wasn't quite crying," Brenna recalls, "but she was clearly very affected. She said to me, 'I just needed to feel something, and I feel so much better now.'" Deeply moved by the experience, the woman returned to buy tickets for the remaining two shows.

For Brenna, who is in her first full season as Artistic Director of Pacific Opera, it was a powerful affirmation of why nurturing artistry through opera is so important. "It means everything to be part of a place that people trust. They come here and they feel safe. Safe to experience, and safe to feel."

That simple, vulnerable exchange captures something larger about Pacific Opera's role in the community. Renowned for its world-class productions and imaginative storytelling, the company is equally committed to building spaces of empathy, connection, and care. Beyond the stage, Pacific Opera invests in young artists, uplifts underrepresented voices, and finds ways to include the community through education and outreach.

Here, opera is more than a performance — it's a place where people come to feel seen, moved, and whole again.

Gender equity in the arts

The arts industry has long been a challenging space for gender equity. Women, particularly in leadership, have historically been underrepresented.

According to the 2024 Vital Signs survey, 54% of men and only 42% of women rated equity, diversity, and inclusion in Greater Victoria above a B. With support from the Victoria Foundation's gender equity initiatives, Pacific Opera is taking meaningful steps to support women pursuing careers in opera.

"There is a program called Women in Musical Leadership that started a few years ago. Basically, it's two cohorts of female-identifying

conductors that are introduced to the program every year and they get to shadow a production or a conductor, or even conduct a show or performances," explained principal coach Kimberley-Ann (Kim) Bartczak.

In May 2024, the Victoria Foundation provided Pacific Opera with $40,000 in funding through the Communities for Gender Equality program to support this multi-year project. Communities for Gender Equality is supported by a collaboration between Community Foundations of Canada and the Equality Fund, with support from the Government of Canada.

Students gain hands-on exposure by participating in productions. For many young women, this is an invaluable stepping stone to professional careers in the industry.

Pacific Opera inspiring across generations

Kim, who also leads the Victoria Children's Choir, sees how early exposure to opera can spark a lifelong love of the artform. After a recent production that included the choir's older cohort, the students gathered for a debrief. Without hesitation, they began asking what the next opera would be and how soon they could get involved again. "These are 13-year-olds," Kim laughed, "the generation glued to their phones, and here they are, totally invested."

Through pop-up performances in public spaces, concerts in assisted living homes for seniors, and collaborations with local schools, Pacific Opera ensures that the power of music engages people of all ages and backgrounds.

"We don't just perform on stage, we bring opera to where people are," said Kim. "We've sung in the streets, on kayaks, you name it. It's about making opera an everyday part of life in Victoria."

Giuseppe (Joey) Pietraroia, principal conductor, explained that the focus has always been to take audiences on a journey, and he's witnessed firsthand how the organization has grown into a place where audiences trust that what they will feel, hear, and see will be deeply immersive.

One of Joey's favourite things about the world of opera is that people never forget their experience. "Victoria is such a close-knit community and it's always nice to meet people when you're not at a function," he said. "It might be in a grocery store lineup and someone will say, 'I saw that production, I really enjoyed it, and I love everything you do.'" These moments, he said, happen often and are a testament to the fact that audiences are truly engaged.

Joey, Kim, and Brenna agreed that when the arts are more deeply supported and integrated into communities, they have the power to elevate wellbeing and how people experience and rate their quality of life.

In a world that often feels fragmented, Pacific Opera is demonstrating that the arts are essential to our collective wellbeing.

Photo by Megan Atkins-Baker

21%

of Vital Signs survey respondents who are women gave standard of living a B grade or higher, whereas 35% of respondents who are men rated it as B or higher.

[Page 20] Pacific Opera Victoria Artistic Director Brenna Corner directing Atlanta Opera's 2019 *Hansel and Gretel for Schools.*

[Above] Pacific Opera's Kimberley-Ann Bartczak prepares for a piano performance at Government House.

REVIVING THE CULTURAL PAST FOR A RESILIENT FUTURE

VICTORIA'S VITALSIGNS®

66%

of Vital Signs survey respondents think there should be more opportunities to support cross-cultural education and awareness.

Two innovative projects that are strengthening Indigenous communities, with help from the Indigenous-led Granting Advisory Pilot.

Indigenous-led granting centers Indigenous voices, values, and priorities, improving access to funding for Nations and communities.

Started in 2023, the Indigenous-led Granting Advisory Pilot (IGAP) has focused on social and cultural resilience and infrastructure. Supported by the Victoria Foundation, this pilot has granted over $1.1 million from the Indigenous Priorities Fund.

Some recent initiatives include a nature-based therapy program for Indigenous youth, a safe place for elders' literacy training, and supports for Indigenous people facing gender-based violence.

"It has been amazing to see the vast scope of creative and culturally resilient projects that Nations and Indigenous organizations are implementing," says Tamara Napoleon, Victoria Foundation Board Chair and of the Saulteau First Nations.

She's also a member of the all-Indigenous granting advisory who guided the program's development, grounded in Indigenous values. The Advisory reviews applications and recommends funding that helps address community needs and priorities.

Photos by Jo-Ann Richards

VICTORIA'S VITALSIGNS®

77%

of Vital Signs survey respondents feel it is important to learn about and respect Indigenous culture, values, and traditions.

[Page 22] Pauquachin Environmental Stewardship Staff and Leadership walk down Coles Bay beach, where major sea garden restoration work is taking place.

These past years, IGAP has been building relationships with local Nations and organizations to understand their priorities. Family-friendly open houses held last year invited everyone together to learn about the program, share food, and conversation.

Of the many projects serving the communities' needs, ahead are two local initiatives that bridge societal gaps, connect the generations, and reawaken cultural practices.

When the tide is out, the table is set

Pauquachin Nation's sea garden restoration project

Gerald Henry stands on the rocky beach at Coles Bay with the Pauquachin First Nation Marine team. He looks out to the place where he, as a child, would harvest shellfish with his family when the tide was low.

"My uncles were digging clams, my grandparents were down there shucking, and me and my cousins were playing," he reminisces. "We thought we were just having fun, but we were actually learning."

For thousands of years, the shellfish harvest has been an integral way of life for the Pauquachin First Nation – up until 1997, when the harvest was closed due to marine pollution.

Nearly 30 years later, with the harvest's upcoming return, the marine team has been setting the groundwork for a new sea garden in the bay – to revive an essential cultural practice, restore the bay's health and food sources, and reawaken a deep, intergenerational bond to the beach.

Octavio Cruz, Pauquachin Marine Manager, says the team of eight has spent a few years learning the structures of ancient sea garden sites and hearing from elders about traditional practices. "We've gone as far as Alaska and Hawaii to learn from different communities about Indigenous aquacultures," he adds.

This August, during the season's lowest tides, the team will host a monumental three-day gathering at Coles Bay in Pauquachin territory, where the community will carefully build a 250-metre-long rock wall down the beach. This traditionally designed sea garden will help nourish healthy clam beds to harvest and maintain, from that day forward.

Over the past three years, the marine team has regularly tested the water for contaminants, working with Parks Canada scientists who've partnered with many local

[Above & Below] For thousands of years, the shellfish harvest has been an integral way of life for the Pauquachin First Nation.

Nations to restore shellfish beds throughout the Salish Sea. In 2024, the Pauquachin First Nation also received a $50,000 grant from the Indigenous Priorities Fund for this important work.

The marine team's Leonard Peter says he "can't wait to see more of the younger ones on the beach again," learning from elders about their ancient harvesting traditions – a type of bond put to sleep for a quarter-century.

Pauquachin Chief Rebecca David says it's "an honour to see the team coming together" for such a symbolic project, with help from the surrounding Nations.

"I was probably 16 when the beach closed," she reflects, "and now I have a granddaughter born 7 months ago, so we'll actually have her connect to the beach early on."

Likewise, Gerald Henry says he gets emotional when he thinks about how much his young daughter will learn from the sea garden – harvesting from it, turning the rocks, returning the clam shells.

He's thankful for the bridge she'll build to her ancestors; a chance for them to encourage her when the tide is low: "Get out there, the tide is out, the table is set. Go work on that garden."

Authorship is labelled as "Pauquachin First Nation" in alignment with our community's values of collective representation and acknowledgement of the collaborative nature of our work.

Decolonizing your own backyard

The South Island Reciprocity Trust

Sarah Reid says Indigenous land acknowledgements are being given everywhere these days, from large-scale events to casual online meetings. While well-intentioned, "there's not a lot of substance behind many of them," she says.

As director of the South Island Reciprocity Trust, Sarah, founder Craig Candler, and their team work directly with local Nations and the Smokehouse Foundation to help residents and small businesses bring more meaning to their words of gratitude.

Through Reciprocity Trusts, participants can acknowledge Nations' historic and ongoing presence, influence, and generosity by making voluntary, tax-deductible payments equal to a suggested 1% of monthly rent or annual property taxes to the Nations whose lands they live and work on.

"It's not a huge amount," Sarah says, "but enough to signal an intention to be in better relations." The money is in turn shared among the ten Indigenous communities who have territory in what is known today as the capital region, to use as they choose.

Part of the program's aim is to fulfill the original intent of the Douglas Treaties, which, signed in 1850, involved the exchange of Indigenous lands for goods and rights to continue hunting, harvesting, and fishing, "sentiments that have been washed away over the years through colonization," Sarah explains.

Susan Olding, one of the first participants to begin making payments, says the principle of reciprocity is "an important part of the complex, ongoing work of reconciliation." Her time in the garden and on her bike during the 2020 pandemic restrictions had her reflect on who the south island's beauty truly belonged to. It motivated her to be more reciprocal.

"It's a start," she says. "It gives me hope that together we might build a future that respects and embraces Indigenous wisdom and ways of knowing."

After signing up on Reciprocity Trust's website, Susan received a window decal with Indigenous artwork – a visual declaration of reciprocity, created by Coast Salish artist lessLIE.

So far, 300 homes and businesses in the capital region are on board, and the Trust aims to reach 1,000 participants by end of year, with help from an Indigenous Priorities Fund grant of $22,500.

Sarah adds there are also non-monetary ways to show reciprocity, like Indigenizing a garden with native species. More suggestions can be found at www.reciprocitytrusts.ca.

With plans to expand throughout BC, Sarah says this movement is so much more than simply handing a cheque over to a Nation – it builds trust and shares power with all local Indigenous communities. "Those 300 participants behind us are saying, 'We see you, we recognize that we have an impact here, and we want to be doing better.'"

[Above] All participating homes and businesses receive this decal to display, telling the community they are Reciprocity Trusts certified. The thunderbird symbolizes respect for the land and nature. The artwork was created by lessLIE (aka @andywhorl), a Coast Salish artist from Cowichan, Penelakut, and Esquimalt.

[Above] From top left to right: Sammy Kent (ED, Smokehouse Foundation & Director, Reciprocity Trusts Society), Sarah Reid (ED, Reciprocity Trusts Society), Carolyn Whittaker (Director, Reciprocity Trusts Society). Bottom left to right: Craig Candler (Founding Director, Reciprocity Trust Society), Rosie the dog, and Dorothy Hodgins (Communications & Engagement Coordinator, Reciprocity Trusts Society).

Credit: Justen Soule

HOW INVESTING WITH INTENTION CAN FUEL SOCIAL IMPACT

[Above] Canoes line the shelves of the Collection Hall of the Canadian Canoe Museum, each on a custom built rack.

A Q&A about impact investing – a powerful way to redefine prosperity, wealth, and social good.

A visit to the Canadian Canoe Museum is a striking and rich experience. As you wander through the world's largest collection of canoes and kayaks, in Peterborough, Ontario, you're immersed in the diverse cultures, histories, and waterways that have built our collective identities.

Victoria-based philanthropic and impact advisor Jim Hayhurst sees his childhood in one of these canoes. The name "Ebbs," for his grandmother Adele Ebbs, is imbued on the rib of the birch bark canoe. This traditional canoe was built by young hands at a children's camp in Algonquin Park, in the 1920's, with the help of Indigenous craftsmen from Pikwakanagan First Nation (formerly the Golden Lake First Nation). The camp was founded by Jim's great-grandfather.

"My grandmother kept the canoe at the cabin near the camps where I spent most of my childhood summers," says Jim. "Paddling the canoe was a rare treat, and usually quite a short one, as it leaked after so many decades."

His grandmother donated it to the museum when it was founded in 1997, by her close friend and fellow camp director Kirk Wipper.

The museum has recently moved the canoe, and all others, to a new sustainable facility along the Otonabee River. The Victoria Foundation and other Canadian community foundations are helping finance this building, to keep Jim's story and hundreds of other histories alive. This initiative is one of the Foundation's six current "impact investments."

"Paddling the canoe was a rare treat, and usually quite a short one, as it leaked after so many decades."

JIM HAYHURST

These special investments are hand-picked. They aim to further social change and are part of a growing trend across the globe to invest specifically in initiatives that improve the wellbeing of people and the planet.

Are you intrigued? Let's paddle further into the current of impact investing.

1) HOW DOES IMPACT INVESTING DIFFER FROM TRADITIONAL INVESTING?

Impact investing shifts how we think about our investments and returns. These are investments made into companies, organizations, and funds, but with the intention to generate measurable social or environmental benefits to society – and a financial return. Impact Investing allows a community to invest money toward its values and beliefs.

As one of Canada's oldest and largest community foundations, the Victoria Foundation is leading a reimagining of how money can flow into our community to make positive impact. We believe it's time to further direct our funds to help the community solve the most pressing challenges of our time, to demonstrate that investing can be socially transformative.

2) WHO CAN BE AN IMPACT INVESTOR?

Anyone! You don't need to be a foundation or a financial institution – or even have significant wealth. You just need to invest with intention. The Victoria Foundation started its impact investing journey when we set an intention to place up to 15% of our investible assets into impact investments by the end of 2026. Because of this, every single fundholder and donor whose contributions are invested through the Foundation joins us as an impact investor!

3) HOW MUCH IS THE VICTORIA FOUNDATION AIMING TO INVEST FOR IMPACT?

In 2018, the Foundation set a goal to place 5% of our investible assets into impact investments. The Foundation defines investible assets as the assets of the Foundation's Common Trust Fund which had a market value of $465.6 million on December 31, 2024. By 2022, the first national and global investments were made, including into the Canadian Canoe Museum and the Mackenzie Greenchip Global Environmental Equity Fund. By 2026, we anticipate up to 9% ($41.9 million) to be invested, with a goal to invest 100% of our endowment toward social purpose.

4) WHAT ARE SOME OF THE ISLAND-BASED IMPACT INITIATIVES THE FOUNDATION IS INVESTING IN?

Our investments are actively shaping Vancouver Island's future. In 2023, the Foundation invested locally in the Thrive Impact Fund, which supports BC non-profits and social enterprises. Some include the Victoria-based sustainable clothing enterprise Ecologyst, the FED Urban Agriculture Society, and Indigenous technology enterprise Animikii. These investments are tangible examples of how capital, when intentionally directed, can build stronger, more resilient communities.

5) HOW CAN SOMEONE GET INVOLVED IN INVESTING FOR SOCIAL PURPOSE?

Getting started is easy. If you're a fundholder or donor to the Foundation, your endowed fund is being invested according to our impact investing strategy. You can also support the Innovation and Impact Fund, which helps the foundation participate in exciting new social finance strategies and helps local non-profits invest to grow their missions. To learn more about how you can connect with the foundation's work, please contact Jessica Doll at info@victoriafoundation.bc.ca.

As one of Canada's oldest and largest community foundations, the Victoria Foundation is leading a reimagining of how money can flow into our community to make positive impact.

[Above] Jim and his sister Barb paddling their grandmother's canoe.

In Memoriam

The Victoria Foundation acknowledges the generous support of donors who have passed away over the last year. Our condolences go out to their family and friends. They will be missed.

FUND HOLDERS

Marian Thiel
(May 2024) and her late husband, Henry, established the Henry & Marian Thiel Family Trust, a donor advised fund that has now been transferred to the Vital Victoria Fund which supports the Foundation's Community Grants Program.

Floyd Hall
(May 2024) established a designated fund known as the Floyd R. Hall Fund for the Arts during his lifetime and provided for a legacy gift in his Will to be added to the fund.

Gladys McGeough
(July 2024) and her late husband, Gerry, established a pass-through fund to support causes that were important to them.

John MacRae
(August 2024) and Diane established a pass-through fund to support local charities using the sale proceeds of items they sold on UsedVictoria.

Clint Forster
(August 2024) and Carole established the Clint and Carole Forster Foundation, a donor advised fund through the Professional Investment Advisor Program. The fund is a long-term fund to meet the donors' intention to spend down the capital to support their charitable interests.

Elizabeth Svendsen
(October 2024) established a designated fund in her name to support the most pressing needs in our community on an annual basis.

Derek Fraser
(October 2024) was a donor advisor to the Hantel-Fletcher Fund, a fund that his wife, Christina Hantel-Fraser, established. Christina and their children will continue as the donor advisors.

Jim Wessel
(November 2024) and Dana established a donor advised fund. Dana will continue to carry out the couple's spirit of generosity to support causes near and dear to them.

Anne McLaughlin
(November 2024) established a fund in her name to support the many causes that were important to her. Her daughter will act as the donor advisor to the fund.

B. Anne Wood
(November 2024) established the B. Anne Wood Our Place Victoria Fund, a designated fund to provide annual support for Our Place Society to provide the most cost effective and durable assistance to those experiencing homelessness in Victoria.

Jim Burrows
(December 2024) and Barbra Edwards established the Mosswood Foundation, a donor advised fund. Barbra will continue to carry out the annual granting from the fund in the areas of education and the environment.

Roy Barnett
(December 2024) established the Roy Barnett VCM Fund, a designated scholarship fund to encourage the development of students in piano to pursue their passion through advanced education and performance opportunities through the Victoria Conservatory of Music.

George Smyth
(December 2024) and Christiane established the Salish Weave Fund to support their dedication to the contemporary art form of the Coast Salish peoples. The fund represents their determination to see this art form revived, preserved, and shared for future generations to reflect their desire to foster a better understanding of the Coast Salish culture.

Marjorie (Win) Stewart
(January 2025) and her husband Arnold established the Arnold and Win Stewart Fund, a designated fund to provide annual support to four designated charities that they both hold dear.

Mel Cooper
(February 2025) - The Mel Cooper Fund for Youth Development and the Performing Arts was established in celebration of Mel's 90th birthday by a group of community members and friends to acknowledge and honour Mel's accomplishments, contributions, and legacy of giving.

Ruth Suter
(April 2025) and her husband established the Ruth and Gerhard Suter Fund, a designated fund to support emerging artists and youth education outreach at the Victoria Symphony Society.

OTHER DONORS WHO HAVE GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED US THROUGH THEIR ESTATE PLAN:

Barbara Russell
(May 2024) named the Victoria Foundation to receive a portion of her estate to support breast cancer and stem cell research and childhood cancers.

Jane Telford
(August 2024) provided an undesignated gift to the Victoria Foundation to support the Foundation's strategic initiatives and other leadership and community engagement activities.

Richard Piercy
(December 2024) provided for a cash legacy to establish a designated fund in his name to support the Victoria Conservatory of Music, the Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, and the Victoria Foundation's Community Grants Program.

Patricia Valentine
(February 2025) was a donor to the Foundation for many years, and included a legacy gift in her Will to establish a permanent fund leaving the discretion to her Trustee as to the allocation of the annual grants to support community.

A LEGACY OF NATURE, BY NATURE

Celebrating Nancy Grant's extraordinary life of support for Salt Spring Island

Living by the ocean, amongst old growth forests on an island in the Salish Sea, Nancy Grant created a legacy of nature. In her own way of being on this earth, she left quiet markers of her dedication to social justice issues and their relationship to ecological justice. She did this during her lifetime and through gifts in her Will.

Nancy was an early adopter of the concept of land trusts. As a founding donor to TLC - The Land Conservancy of British Columbia and then the Salt Spring Island Conservancy, she placed her own lands in one of the first conservation covenants. She named it the Ruffed Grouse Covenant, after the bird she loved to observe in the spring and wanted to protect and preserve.

She appreciated that vulnerable people are disproportionately affected by environmental and land use changes: ecological and community health go hand in hand.

As a Salt Spring Island resident, Nancy was deeply aware of the importance of the Islands Trust, a unique governance structure where decisions about land use on the Gulf Islands are rooted in a mandate to preserve and protect. Her cousin and executor of her estate, Briony Penn, says, "she attended every meeting of the Islands Trust. She was a strong observer of democracy. Nancy listened, and she had a good nose for authentic need."

Nancy was active in her community and jumped into action when the

"Nancy felt that community foundations are the best organizations to evaluate over time the priorities in a community. They are well-positioned through their governance and their relationships with charities to stay relevant into the future."

BRIONY PENN

"At a time before this was common, Nancy felt the need to give back and quietly donated to many charities in her home communities of Victoria and Salt Spring as well as around the world."

BRIONY PENN

public laundromat in the heart of Ganges closed. She knew this was more than a place to clean one's clothes. It was an important gathering place. Nancy joined with others to support the Wagon Wheel Housing Society, a grassroots charity committed to providing a laundromat, showers, coffee, a space for local artists to showcase their works, and more, including housing for single parents and women in need.

Nancy's family heritage on the coast began in the 1850s, in the halls of business and law, and she was keenly aware that her personal privilege was tied to the impact of colonization. At a time before this was common, Nancy felt the need to give back and quietly donated to many charities in her home communities of Victoria and Salt Spring as well as around the world.

She was an early supporter of the newly formed Stqeeye' Learning Society to promote the wellbeing of Indigenous youth through ecological restoration of their territory within Xwaaqw'um, or Burgoyne Bay Provincial Park, on Salt Spring Island. Her initial gifts supported a new governance structure that laid the foundation for the charity's sustainability.

Briony also remembers that her cousin relished arts and culture. Nancy supported and attended live theatre and choral performances at ArtSpring, the community's performing and visual arts centre.

These are but a few of the ways Nancy showed her interest and compassion for her community. She believed in the power of the collective, now and into the future.

On her passing in 2021, after gifts were made to loved ones and specific charities, Nancy left the rest of her estate to the Salt Spring Island Foundation and the Victoria Foundation. Briony says, "Nancy felt that community foundations are the best organizations to evaluate over time the priorities in a community. They are well-positioned through their governance and their relationships with charities to stay relevant into the future."

The Nancy Grant Fund supports the foundation's Community Grants Program, environmental initiatives, scholarships and bursaries, the purchase of medical equipment, and children's health.

The Victoria Foundation is honoured to carry out Nancy Grant's legacy which echoes her own nature: her deep concern for others and their environment.

"She attended every meeting of the Islands Trust. She was a strong observer of democracy. Nancy listened, and she had a good nose for authentic need."

BRIONY PENN

VICTORIA FOUNDATION
CONNECTING PEOPLE WHO CARE WITH CAUSES THAT MATTER®
Building a vibrant, caring community for all.
The Victoria Foundation inspires philanthropy and impact by helping people leave charitable legacies for causes that matter in the community. Since 1936, we've been managing generous gifts to create annual, income-earning funds for hundreds of non-profits and charities. To date, we've distributed more than $373 million, investing in people, opportunities, and solutions. Connect with us to learn more about our programs and initiatives. Let's nurture our future today, together.
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