

Annual Report To Financial Donors 2020–2021

Published for Supporters of
Canadian Blood Services



From left to right: **Brenda**, *blood donor*. **Julia**, *employee and financial donor*. **Vicki**, *blood recipient and former blood donor*.

Your support helps the patients of today and the patients of tomorrow



During the 2020–2021 fiscal year, Canadian Blood Services — like every other organization in the world — had to continually rethink how we did things. Maintaining regular operations of our lifesaving work during the COVID-19 pandemic was and continues to be unpredictable and challenging. As a financial donor, you have given us the capacity and flexibility to persevere through these difficult times. I cannot say “Thank you” enough.

Some tangible examples of what your financial contributions have supported include better tailoring of our blood donor recruitment strategies, which, at certain points of the pandemic, have had to be intensely urgent. In our stem cell division, financial contributions continue to help us increase digital recruitment efforts, allowing our stem cell registry to grow by more than 6,700 potential donors. The results of your support are easy to see.

Financial donors have had an equally powerful impact on our work in less tangible ways. Learning that we could continue to rely on our financial donors during a time of widespread economic uncertainty gave us enormous strength. As the leader of Canadian Blood Services, I know very well that what we do matters. The fact that each of you knows this too, and that you have been undeterred in your support of our work, has been incredibly motivating.

This year, our vision of helping every patient, matching every need and serving every Canadian was made more challenging by the countless interruptions to life as we knew it. Your financial

support was essential to maintaining the continuity and strength of our organization’s core areas of focus. But our work does not end when our goals for today’s health-care landscape have been fulfilled.

Our work also includes planning for the future health of Canadians, and financial support plays an incredibly important role in these areas. For instance, financial donors helped us to support a national network of Canadian medical researchers exploring whether plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients can be used as a treatment for those suffering from the illness. As well, financial support was needed to fund important physician training and research (in the form of grants) to inform and hopefully improve outcomes in transfusion and transplantation medicine for years to come. I invite you to read more about these initiatives elsewhere in this report.

These are just a couple of examples of how your financial support is keeping our organization strong for both the patients who need us now and the patients who will need us tomorrow.

It takes donors of all kinds to keep *Canada’s Lifeline* strong — including you, one of our dedicated financial donors. For all that you have given this past year, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Graham D. Sher".

Dr. Graham D. Sher
Chief Executive Officer

Keeping our blood inventory strong during the COVID-19 pandemic



Aaliyah Mchopanga, right, with her parents, Aziza Mfaume and Abdi Mchopanga, and sisters Naila, left, and baby Mya. Aaliyah receives regular red cell exchanges to manage sickle cell disease, an inherited blood disorder.

When COVID-19 changed the world in March 2020, our national blood system was affected almost immediately. New physical distancing requirements and other safety measures meant we couldn't engage as many blood donors as usual. Regular donors were cancelling their donation appointments, and venues that normally hosted our mobile blood donor events had to close their doors.

"My question was, 'What's going to happen when people are not supposed to go out? That will include donors, right?'" recalls Abdi Mchopanga, father to six-year-old blood recipient Aaliyah. Aaliyah has sickle cell disease and needs red blood cells every few weeks — from as many as four donors matching her rare blood type — as part of her treatment. Finding these matched donors is a challenge in normal times, let alone during a pandemic.

When our dedicated financial donors and corporate supporters heard about the difficulties faced by our blood supply and by patients like Aaliyah who count on our lifesaving products, they quickly reached out to help.

Toyota Canada and Lexus Canada donated more than \$1 million in television advertising to encourage Canadians to book an appointment to give blood. Toyota and Lexus dealers across the country also helped to get the word out through their own communications channels, and several even held blood donor events, adhering to all local public health guidelines, at their local dealerships.

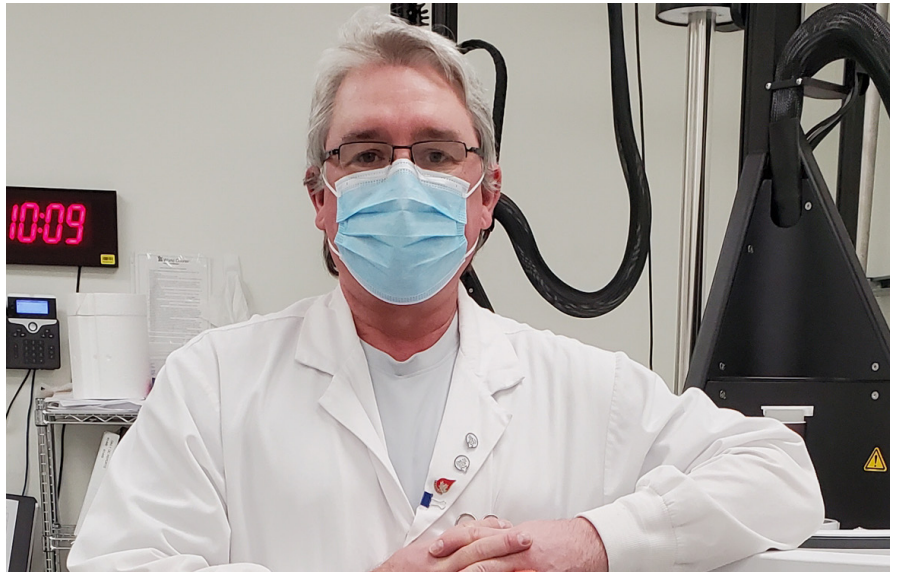
CIBC, another long-time supporter, donated \$150,000 to help with the challenges brought on by the pandemic, and many of its employees gave blood themselves. When Branded Cities wasn't able to use their purchased advertising time with Mediacom, our mutual advertising vendor, they donated it to Canadian Blood Services, further bolstering our outreach efforts.

The need to keep the blood system stable during the pandemic also inspired new partners to join *Canada's Lifeline*. L'Oréal Canada, for example, donated 6,000 units of hand sanitizer to help maintain our wellness protocols.

According to David Howe, director of supply chain process management at Canadian Blood Services, gifts like these helped us to reach people who were looking to step up during a difficult time, attracting them to become new blood donors. "This kind of support really helped keep our inventories strong and allowed us to direct our efforts toward readying our facilities for the 'new normal,'" he says.

A robust supply of blood and blood products means the world to patients like Aaliyah, whose health depends on it. Thanks in part to the swift and generous contributions of our amazing financial donors, our national blood and transplant system has continued to be there for patients — where and when they need it.

“Area of greatest need” explained



James McCarroll is a medical laboratory technologist at the Concourse Gate facility in Ottawa, Ont., which processes stem cells for autologous stem cell transplants.

So ... when making your financial donation to Canadian Blood Services this past year, you checked the box labelled “area of greatest need.” But where did your gift actually go?

Each year, our executive management team sets priorities for how we will deliver on our vision to help every patient, match every need and serve every Canadian. As the year unfolds, unexpected challenges crop up, and we find that some areas of our business and initiatives need extra support.

That’s where your checked box comes in. Our philanthropy and finance departments team up to review these priority projects and ensure your gifts go to those areas most in need of a boost.

When you direct your financial donation to where it is most needed, you give us valuable flexibility. In 2020–2021, a year of great uncertainty and many urgent priorities, this flexibility was especially important and allowed us to respond quickly to the ever-changing environment. For example, your gifts helped us to respond quickly in support of the nation-wide CONCOR clinical trials. This collaborative medical research was undertaken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Canadian Blood Services, with the help of financial donors, recruited those who had recovered from COVID-19 to donate their plasma as a potential treatment for the disease.

With your help, patients in Canada continued to receive the lifesaving products and services they count on, even during the defining health crisis of our time.

Bridging borders: Getting stem cells and organs to patients in the face of pandemic challenges



Tammy Whitteker, senior medical laboratory technologist, works with her team to process, test and freeze stem cells at our lab in Ottawa, Ont.

Before the pandemic, Canada's smooth-running transplantation systems relied on the free movement of both donors and biological products, according to need. When border closures and other transportation barriers made the logistics of stem cell and organ transplants more difficult, our financial donors and corporate partners helped clear the path for Canadian patients to receive the lifesaving products they needed.

In a typical year, about 80 per cent of Canadian patients needing a stem cell transplant receive stem cells from donors in other countries. Recent challenges in getting these donated stem cells into Canada in a timely manner, however, meant that transplant hospitals have had to rely more heavily on Canadian donors than ever before. Our national public cord blood bank, built with the generous support of dedicated financial donors through the successful *Campaign For All Canadians*, proved to be a lifesaver. During the past year, we issued the highest number of cord blood units we've ever shipped, to both Canadian and international patients.

With travel restrictions expected to persist for some time, we expect that patients in Canada will continue to depend on Canadian stem cell donors for their lifesaving matches. This greater reliance on our own stem cell registry and cord blood bank makes it even more important that we continue recruiting more potential stem cell donors, particularly those from diverse backgrounds, to reflect Canada's ethnic mosaic.

"By working to make our donor base more reflective of Canadian society ... we're enhancing our ability to meet the needs of patients in this country," says Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, director of stem cells at Canadian Blood Services.

The limits on travel that refocused stem cell searches within our borders also spurred new practices for organ transplants.

Before the pandemic, most living kidney donors who were matched with transplant candidates through our national Kidney Paired Donation program would have had their kidney removed at the transplant centre where the recipient was scheduled for their surgery,

which usually meant the donor had to travel to another city. When travel restrictions paused this practice, we tried a different tack: moving the organs instead of the donors.

“Knowing that Air Canada had previously shipped solid organs for some transplants, our senior leadership team reached out to see if the airline could possibly provide guidance,” says Sarah Parfeniuk, program manager for living organ donation and transplantation.

Air Canada immediately agreed with the concept, offering to ship kidneys from living donors free of charge. For each donation, the donor’s kidney was removed at their own local

transplant centre and was then flown to the recipient’s hospital for transplant.

By the end of March 2021, the airline had facilitated 11 successful kidney transplants in this manner. “These are transplants that simply would not have taken place if it wasn’t for Air Canada,” says Sarah.

Thanks in part to the foundational investments of the financial donors who helped to build Canadian Blood Services’ Cord Blood Bank and some truly inspiring in-kind support, we were able to circumvent the pandemic’s travel roadblocks and connect Canadian patients with the biological products they needed.

Calling on Canadians: Advertising for stem cell donors hits its target

In normal times, we usually count on in-person swabbing events to recruit potential stem cell donors. But those in-person events ground to a halt in early 2020 because of pandemic restrictions on gatherings, and new donor registrations dropped by nearly 70 per cent. Yet generous financial donors contributed more than \$55,000 in 2020-2021 to help us highlight the urgent need for new registrants through both focused advertising and targeted campaigns:

- Stem cell recipient Mackenzie Curran and our director of stem cells, Dr. Heidi Elmoazzen, appeared on Breakfast Television Toronto to encourage Canadians to join the national stem cell registry.
- Radio stations with ethnically diverse audiences in Toronto and Vancouver shared our message, while Sportsnet asked its audience, “Where do you stem from?” and encouraged those from diverse backgrounds to register to donate.

- Canada Life, a longtime supporter of Canadian Blood Services and founding sponsor of NextGen Lifeline (our youth blood recruitment program), sponsored our digital #BeAHero campaign, raising awareness of the need and encouraging new stem cell registrations. Canada Life also sponsored our Hockey Gives Blood Player Ambassador Program, which supports young hockey players from across Canada as they promote the ongoing need for stem cells and other life essentials.

- Branded Cities, an out-of-home advertising company, donated the use of prominent video displays at Yonge-Dundas Square in Toronto to promote stem cell registration.

By the end of the year, more than 6,700 new potential stem cell donors had joined the national registry online — almost four times the number who joined through our website during the same period last year. Thanks to your generosity, more Canadians in need now have a better chance of finding their stem cell match.

Fueling research today to transform the transfusion and transplantation system of tomorrow



Nancy Jordan, medical laboratory technologist, contributes to Canadian Blood Services research in blood transfusion and transplantation science.

Although they may not reach the headlines, small projects and investments in research can lead to great leaps in what we understand about blood transfusion, related therapies and transplantation science. The following initiatives are examples of how your support is helping to move the needle on this important research at Canadian Blood Services:

- **Physician education and training:** Through the Graduate Fellowship Program in our Centre for Innovation, we support the career development of graduate students in the field of transfusion and transplantation medicine and science. This year, we were delighted to direct a financial donation to the support of young scientists and researchers undertaking stem cell research projects. This generous donation will help in the education and training of the next generation of stem cell researchers over the coming decade. By backing these new investigators today, this gift will help to build the community of stem cell experts whose work will benefit patients tomorrow.

Transfusion Camp — an annual program that teaches physicians how to use blood as wisely as possible — was also in session this year. To keep the normally five-day program up and running during the COVID-19 pandemic, the team reworked one day of Transfusion Camp into a morning webinar. Philanthropic donations will help with the \$10,000 cost to host this important annual

education symposium. In 2020-2021, more than 200 resident physicians from 13 postgraduate programs joined the session, which included an update on the supply and use of blood during the pandemic.

- **New equipment and technologies:** Next-generation sequencing is an innovative technology that makes more and better stem cell matches possible, and does so faster than the traditional method. This type of sequencing will be especially beneficial for patients from ethnically diverse backgrounds, for whom the matching process can be particularly challenging.

To help fund this new technology, the OtherHalf—Chinese Stem Cell Initiative matched, dollar-for-dollar, all financial gifts received through our winter fundraising appeal. Thanks in part to their \$20,000 pledge, more than \$40,000 was raised. This innovative technology will help reduce patient wait times and transplant-related risks, bringing hope to families who are searching for a match for their loved one.

By supporting both the people asking the right questions and the tools needed to find the answers, you're helping us to serve patients better — and to transform our health-care systems.

The lifesaving power of plasma



Heydan's mother, Shannon Morrison (left), and his grandmother, Marlene Wilson (right), were the first to donate at our new plasma donor centre in Sudbury.

A growing number of patients in Canada and around the world count on lifesaving medications made from plasma — a protein-rich component of blood — to treat various conditions.

At a time when demand for these products is booming and Canadian Blood Services is moving quickly to collect more plasma to meet that demand, support from our financial donors is helping us to learn more about the possibilities of plasma therapy and the motivations of those who donate this precious gift.

In April 2020, we joined a national research initiative to test whether plasma collected from people who had recovered from COVID-19 (referred to as convalescent plasma) could be used to treat patients infected with the virus. As the national blood operator, we were proud and uniquely positioned to offer our expertise and infrastructure to safely collect, prepare and distribute this fresh blood component for the clinical trials.

Ultimately, the trials showed that convalescent plasma had limited utility for COVID-19 patients. This wasn't the exact result that was hoped for but we found a definitive answer, which makes this study a success.

It was our financial donors who helped Canadian medical researchers to close this knowledge gap.

On a different research path, financial support allowed Canadian Blood Services to hire social scientist Dr. Kelly Holloway, whose area of research centers around investigating donor behaviour. Her early findings confirm that plasma donors, like whole blood donors, are inspired by the desire to help people. Kelly's research also found that one of the greatest motivations prompting plasma donors to donate is the pleasant environment our team members create at our donor centres.

"The theme that runs through is that they [plasma donors] like the sense of community and want to

come back," says Kelly. Understanding what brings donors through our doors will ultimately help us to increase the amount of plasma we collect at our growing network of donor centres.

A more secure supply of plasma is good news for patients like 10-year-old Heydan Morrison. Heydan relies on immunoglobulin, a medication made from plasma, to manage a rare condition known as hypogammaglobulinemia. In fact, Heydan's mother and grandmother were the first to donate at the 2020 opening of our new plasma donor centre in Sudbury, Ontario — the first of our three plasma donor centres opened to date.

"Everyone at the Sudbury centre is overjoyed by the number of bookings," says Teri-Mai Armstrong, the centre's manager of business development. "And it was so special to welcome Heydan and his mother and grandmother. They remind us what plasma donation is all about."

Building and sustaining community in times of crisis



Natalie Pallisco ran 100 kilometers for her online fundraising campaign in support of Canadian Blood Services.

A strong sense of community is both the driving force for and the result of philanthropy. With popular fundraising events like in-person golf tournaments and “fun runs” put on hold this past year, our passionate supporters were quick to build that sense of community in the one place where people could still safely connect: online.

Drawing on our do-it-yourself resources (give.blood.ca/diy), fundraisers from across Canada launched a range of online campaigns and virtual events. They set up personal and team fundraising web pages, promoted their campaigns on social media, tracked their progress and thanked their supporters — all from the safety of their computer desktops.

For some of our corporate partners, virtual fundraising provided a welcome way for their working-from-home team members to rally around a shared goal and be part of something important, together. Fundraising online also gave individuals who normally volunteer the chance to give back while keeping their community members safe. At a time when many people struggled to find meaningful ways to connect with others, virtual fundraising helped to close that crucial gap.

Some virtual fundraisers took full advantage of the online medium, including the organizers of two online gaming tournaments that put Nintendo and Pong to work for Canadian patients. Others, like Natalie Pallisco, found safe and creative ways to include physical activity in their campaigns.

In 2010, Natalie was diagnosed with a rare neurological disorder called Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS). GBS is an inflammatory disorder that’s treated with intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg), a product made from donated plasma. Thanks to the generous donations of thousands of plasma donors, she made a full recovery.

To mark the 10-year anniversary of her diagnosis and to celebrate her return to health, Natalie decided to run 100 kilometres, combining her run with an online fundraising campaign in support of Canadian Blood Services.

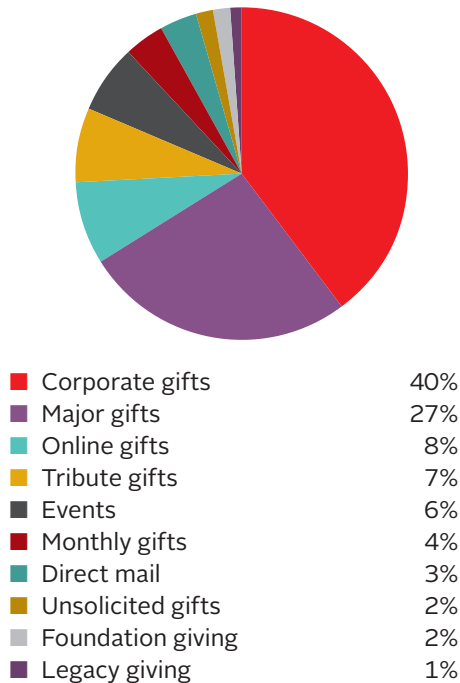
“The positive response I received through my fundraising campaign made me think of my IVIg treatment,” says Natalie. “In both cases, so many people came together to make small gifts that added up to make a huge difference.” Her compelling campaign raised \$625.

Fundraisers like Natalie held a total of 30 online campaigns and virtual events last year, raising more than \$81,000 to help patients across the country. Young people were particularly responsive in the virtual environment, leading most of this year’s online fundraising activities.

While we look forward to connecting again in person as the pandemic subsides, we will continue to cheer on and support our amazing online fundraisers into the future. Their great success has reminded us that community isn’t a place — it’s a feeling.

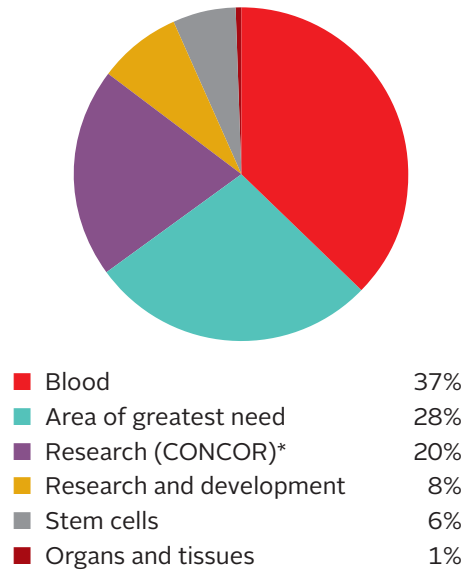
Total cash donations received for the year ending March 31, 2021, were \$1,598,250.

Our 2020-2021 fundraising programs:



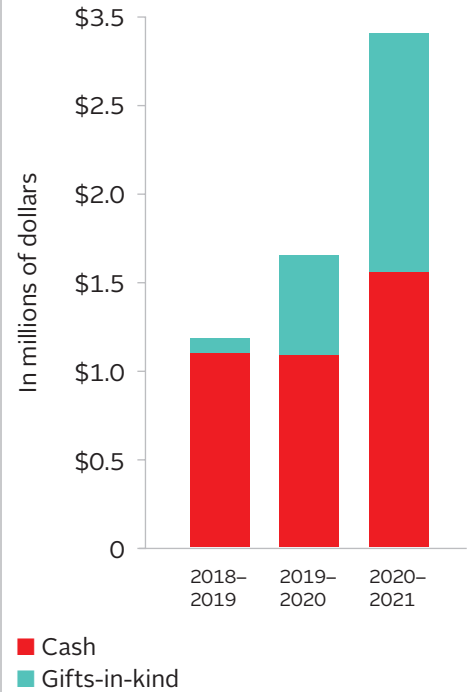
This chart does not include gifts-in-kind

In 2020-2021, your donations supported the following:



This chart does not include gifts-in-kind.
*Research (CONCOR) supported convalescent plasma clinical trials

Last three years of donations:



Gifts-in-kind valued at \$1,786,731 were received from corporate partners

Ways to become a financial donor

Save lives with an online gift

Visit give.blood.ca/donate to make your financial donation.

Give the gift of securities

Make an immediate impact and enhance your tax benefits by donating publicly traded securities.

Launch a fundraiser

Create a fundraising page at give.blood.ca/diy and rally your friends, family and community to help save lives.

Celebrate a birthday, anniversary or milestone

Mark a special occasion by making a financial gift to help patients in need.

Honour a loved one

Pay tribute to the life of someone special in a meaningful way, with an in-memory gift or campaign.

Consider corporate giving

Find out whether your employer will match your charitable contributions, facilitate charitable payroll deductions or honour your volunteer work or blood donations with a corporate gift.

Become a monthly donor

Help connect patients with the life essentials they need year-round, by becoming a monthly financial donor.

Donate your honorarium

If you're a sought-after speaker, you can direct your honorarium to support lifesaving programs and initiatives.

Create a lasting impact

After you've taken care of your loved ones, contemplate leaving a gift to Canadian Blood Services in your will.

Thank you!

We are grateful to all individuals, corporations, associations and community groups for your generous gifts. Many corporations have also chosen to honour their employee's volunteerism or charitable giving with a matching financial contribution. Through financial support, you are helping to save and improve the lives of patients in Canada. While space does not permit us to acknowledge all those who deserve recognition, our 2020-21 community, corporate and third-party event partners that donated over \$1,000 are listed below.



Community and corporate supporters

Benjamin Becker Memorial Fund at The Benjamin Foundation
Boyden Executive Search
Brian Taillieu Inc., in memory of Gerard Taillieu
Canada Life
Central 1 Credit Union, in honour of Paul Havas
CHU Sainte-Justine
CIBC
Clearview Consumer Co-op Ltd.
Davies Ward Phillips & Vineberg LLP
Disciple Methodist Church
Enterprise Holdings Foundation
First Alliance Church Toronto
Granite REIT
Husky Energy Inc.
James H. Brown & Associates
Joe and Nancy Thompson Family Fund, The Edmonton Community Foundation
Jon Witzel Contracting Ltd.
MacDonald Fisheries Inc., in memory of Elmer MacDonald

Microserve
Modern Niagara Group Inc.
OtherHalf-Chinese Stem Cell Initiative
Rangers Reach – Kitchener
Rangers Community Fund
Skelton Truck Lines
The Dorothy and Dan Gibson Foundation
The John and Judy Bragg Family Foundation
The Victor & Eileen Young Charitable Foundation
Toyota Canada Inc.
Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc.
VieFUND Corporation
Wawanesa Insurance
Xbox Canada

Gift-in-kind supporters

Branded Cities
Fluid Energy Group Ltd.
KIND Healthy Snacks ULC
L'Oréal Canada
Lexus Canada
Manulife Financial Corporation
PATTISON Outdoor Advertising

Pfizer Canada Inc.
Toyota Canada
Vector Injection Ltd.

Third-party events

44th Annual Fred McFadden Cooper Point Run
Ahmadiyya Muslim Youth Association, Run for Calgary
Ashima's Birthday 2020
Ben's Facebook Birthday Fundraiser
Bike for Blood Charity Ride
Courtney's Facebook Birthday Fundraiser
Fraser Money on the Board
Granite REIT
Kinsmen Club of Ponoka Charity Auction
Neill's 20 Week Challenge
Quarry Park Chiropractic & Wellness Centre
Shami Rispoli's Birthday 2020
Step Up with Alicia 2020
The Fraser League, In Honour of Brian Fraser

Canadian Blood Services appreciates those who generously left a bequest or legacy gift in 2020-2021. We are honoured when individuals continue their charitable giving through a gift in their will and thank all those who have chosen to name us as a beneficiary of their legacy gifts. Your thoughtfulness and generosity will contribute to our work today and in the future.

Thank you for continuing to have a meaningful impact



At the onset of the pandemic in early 2020, we learned quickly that COVID-19 would not be a fleeting challenge and that Canadian Blood Services would, for the foreseeable future, have to adjust much of what we do. As a financial donor, you were with us on this journey as we ensured that people could continue coming to our centres to donate and that patients needing our products could continue to rely on us. We are incredibly grateful to have had you by our side.

As the pandemic wore on and many traditional fundraising avenues were cut off, not only did you continue to support us, but you also found new and innovative ways to give. Organizing virtual gatherings, capitalizing on the power of social media and undertaking a solo running event are only a few of the ways that individuals reimagined their support for Canadian Blood Services.

And it wasn't just individuals who stepped up for **Canada's Lifeline**. Gifts-in-kind from major corporations — including hand sanitizer from L'Oréal, air travel for kidney transport from Air Canada, and advertising space from Toyota Canada and Lexus Canada — are just a few of the incredible ways that organizations made a meaningful difference.

We would not have had the flexibility to accomplish everything we did this year without your support. Our engagement with donors — however you choose to give — has always focused on building community. Together, over this past year, we did just that, through meaningful conversations and one-on-one interactions that emphasized your personal connection to this cause. Our philanthropy team was privileged to hear and learn from you in myriad ways, and I can tell you, it's been special. What you taught us is that community is not necessarily a specific place, region or gathering of people. Rather, it's a feeling, and we have definitely felt your generosity and support again this year. Thank you for being an invaluable part of this community.

Although you have found many creative ways to be there for us while in-person gatherings have been restricted, I look forward to being able to thank all of you in person one day soon. Until then, please accept my sincere gratitude for all that you do to keep **Canada's Lifeline** strong.

Margaret Miedema
Director, Philanthropy