



2025 Annual Report

Brandon Area Community Foundation

*Celebrating **60 years** of community*

bacf.ca

Message from the Chair

A Year of Exceptional Impact

As we reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the remarkable generosity, partnership, and community spirit that continue to define the Brandon Area Community Foundation.

2025 marked a significant milestone as we celebrated 60 years of building a stronger future for Brandon and communities throughout southwestern Manitoba. Since our founding in 1965, BACF has grown from a modest beginning into a trusted steward of community philanthropy, supporting projects and organizations that enhance the quality of life for generations to come.

Our anniversary year was also one of exceptional impact. Through the support of our donors, fundholders, volunteers, and community partners, we awarded more than \$1,946,791 in grants to organizations working across a wide range of sectors, including health and wellness, education, recreation, arts and culture, environmental stewardship, and community development. These investments are helping communities address today's needs while creating opportunities for tomorrow.

The strength of BACF lies not only in the funds we steward but in the people who believe in the power of local philanthropy. Every gift entrusted to the Foundation helps build a permanent legacy that will continue supporting our region for generations. Together, we are creating lasting solutions, strengthening local organizations, and improving the lives of people throughout Westman.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank our donors, fundholders, community partners, volunteers, and dedicated staff for their ongoing commitment to our mission. I am also grateful to my fellow board members, whose leadership and dedication help guide the Foundation's work and ensure we remain responsive to the evolving needs of our communities.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to growing our impact, fostering community leadership, and investing in the people and projects that make southwestern Manitoba a vibrant place to live, work, and thrive.

Thank you for being part of our story and for helping us build a stronger future together.

Marc Alain,
Chair of BACF

Board of Directors

Our Dedicated Team



Tanis Chalmers
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Marc Alain
CHAIR



Greg Gatien
VICE CHAIR



Dale McKay
SECRETARY



Jamie Pugh
CO-TREASURER



Janet Wilcox-McKay
CO-TREASURER



Gail Cullen
DIRECTOR



Stephen Branigan
DIRECTOR



Dean Hammond
DIRECTOR



Dennis Hunt
DIRECTOR



Jon Zilkey
DIRECTOR



Michelle Hood
DIRECTOR



Jeff Fawcett
DIRECTOR (EX-OFFICIO),
MAYOR OF BRANDON

Celebrating 60 years of
being rooted in community.



A Foundation in Transition

Thank You, Laura. Welcome, Tanis.

For over a decade, Laura Kempthorne guided the Brandon Area Community Foundation with a growth mindset, genuine passion for community, and an unwavering work ethic. Under her leadership, BACF strengthened its footprint across southwestern Manitoba, and her dedication leaves a lasting legacy. As Laura moves on to her next chapter, we thank her for generously supporting a smooth transition, helping set the stage for continued success for our donors, fundholders, and community partners.

We are equally excited to welcome Tanis Chalmers as Executive Director. Tanis brings extensive experience in organizational leadership and governance, along with a deep commitment to building strong infrastructure and lasting community relationships. Her knowledge and vision will help guide BACF into its next chapter of growth, ensuring the Foundation continues to serve southwestern Manitoba with the same integrity and care for years to come.

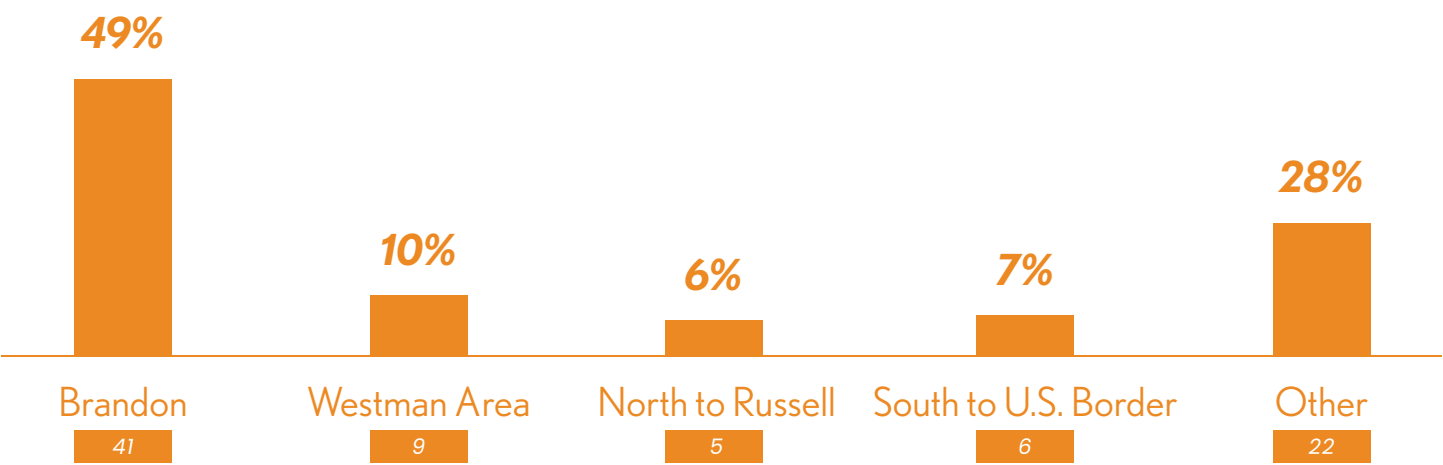


A new chapter of community growth.

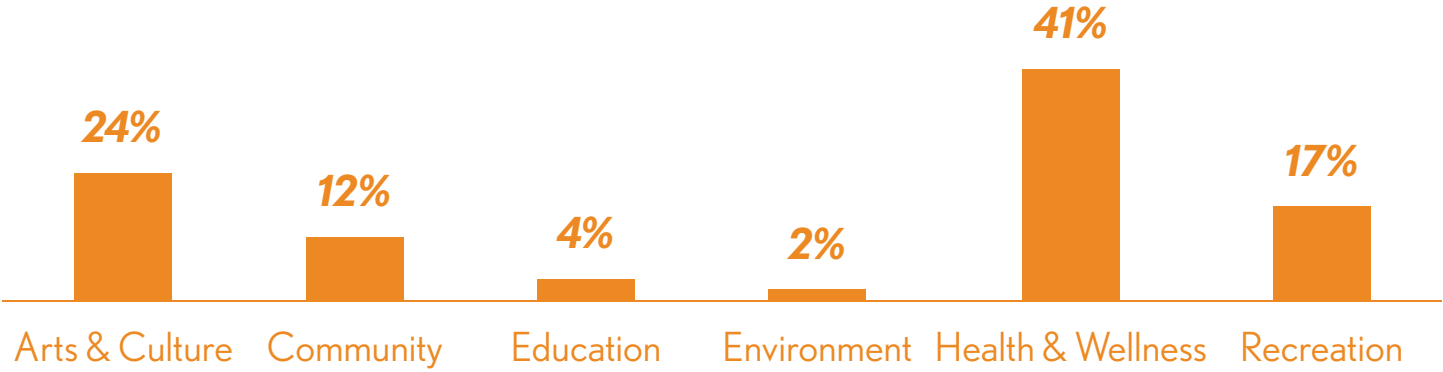


Financials

Grant Dollars Distributed by Area



Grant Dollars Distributed by Type



We support a diverse range of partnerships and projects to benefit the community's needs.

List of Funds

- A**
 - ☞ Alice Hamnett Memorial Fund
- B**
 - ☞ BACF Administration Fund
 - ☞ BACF Community Fund
 - ☞ Bailey-Snelgrove Endowment Fund
 - ☞ BACF/United Way of Brandon & District YIP Scholarship Fund
 - ☞ Dr. Barbara Bourassa Memorial Fund
 - ☞ Sylvia Barr Fund
 - ☞ Dr. Harvey Bergner Fund
 - ☞ Brandon Festival of the Arts Inc. Fund
 - ☞ Brandon's Food for Thought Fund
 - ☞ Brandon Baseball Foundation Fund
 - ☞ Brandon Area REALTORS Fund
 - ☞ Brandon Riverbank Fund
 - ☞ Brawn/Martin Family Fund
 - ☞ Brockie Donovan Senior's Care Legacy Fund
 - ☞ Buckley Family Fund
 - ☞ Burr's Family Fund
- C**
 - ☞ Caitlin Arksey Fund
 - ☞ Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum Endowment Fund
 - ☞ Cristall Family Fund
 - ☞ Travis Crompton Scholarship Fund
- D**
 - ☞ Diefenbaker Scholarship Fund
 - ☞ The Dome Building Endowment
 - ☞ Donn & Sylvia Mitchell Agricultural Bursary
- E**
 - ☞ Egilsson Family Fund
 - ☞ Elgin Community Fund
 - ☞ Elsie Taylor Memorial Scholarship
 - ☞ Environmental Fund
- F**
 - ☞ Fairfax Community
 - ☞ Jeff Freiheit Memorial Fund
- G**
 - ☞ Richard & Keay Golletz Family Fund
 - ☞ Green Acres Lodge Fund
- H**
 - ☞ Dr. Stuart & Mickey Hampton Family Fund
 - ☞ Hartney IOOF Bursary Fund
- K**
 - ☞ Kayes Family Fund
 - ☞ Don & Becky Kille Family Fund
- L**
 - ☞ Leech Family Fund
 - ☞ Live & Give
- M**
 - ☞ McConkey Family Fund
 - ☞ Les & Delia Milne Fund
 - ☞ Milne & Lischka Family Leader Legacy Fund
 - ☞ Minto & Area Community Fund
 - ☞ Murray Auto Group Fund
- P**
 - ☞ Peters Family Fund
 - ☞ Harry & Shannon Peters Family Fund
 - ☞ Shannon & Harry Peters Renewable Hands Up Bursary
 - ☞ Peter Sawatzky Sculpture Garden Fund
 - ☞ Polo's Family Fund
 - ☞ Irv Powers Memorial Baseball Scholarship Fund
 - ☞ Prairie Lakes Community Fund
 - ☞ Provincial Exhibition of Manitoba Fund
 - ☞ Gwyneth & Dr. Frank Purdie Literacy Fund
 - ☞ Gwyneth & Dr. Frank Purdie Samaritan House Adult Literacy Fund
 - ☞ Gwyneth & Dr. Frank Purdie YMCA Youth Fund
- R**
 - ☞ Rapid City and Area Community Fund
 - ☞ Robertson, Wayne and Family Legacy Fund
 - ☞ Rounthwaite Cemetery Fund
 - ☞ Norman Roziere Scholarship Fund
 - ☞ The Rotary Club of Brandon Fund
- S**
 - ☞ Siere Business Family Bursary Fund
- T**
 - ☞ Thomas Sill Endowment
 - ☞ Tri High Alumni Fund
- V**
 - ☞ Vionell Holdings
- W**
 - ☞ Wawanesa Cemetery
 - ☞ Westman Dreams for Kids Fund
 - ☞ Westman Lions Manor Fund
 - ☞ Westman Recycling Fund
 - ☞ Westoba Credit Union Fund
 - ☞ Women's Fund
- Y**
 - ☞ YMCA of Brandon Fund
 - ☞ Youth Science Canada Fund
- 4 new endowment funds were established with BACF:**
 - ☞ Bailey-Snelgrove Endowment Fund
 - ☞ Commonwealth Air Training Plan Museum Endowment Fund
 - ☞ Dr. Jay Winburn Limited Life Legacy Fund
 - ☞ The Rotary Club of Brandon Fund

Fundraising

Tim Hortons Smile Cookie Campaign

For one week in Brandon, a simple cookie became a powerful way for the Brandon community to come together. From April 28 to May 4, 2025, people throughout Brandon stopped by local Tim Hortons restaurants to purchase a Smile Cookie and support a cause close to home.

Together, the Brandon community **raised an incredible \$120,339.96 for the Brandon Area Community Foundation (BACF) and the new Smilezone at the Brandon Clinic.** This remarkable total reflects the generosity of Brandon residents, local businesses, sponsors, and everyone who helped spread a little more kindness throughout Brandon.

BACF is proud to have been part of this initiative. The Smile Cookie Campaign is a wonderful example of how something as simple as a cookie can bring a whole community together, and we're grateful to Tim Hortons, local

businesses, and every Brandon resident who took part. Funds like these **help us continue investing in the people and programs that make Brandon stronger**, and we're honoured to have played a role in bringing the Smilezone to the Brandon Clinic.



Bringing a community together to help the people and programs that make Brandon stronger.

Rural Projects

Partnerships Throughout Southwestern Manitoba



Photo Credit: Study Manitoba

Town of Melita \$56,700

Building a More Accessible Central Park for the Melita Community

Central Park is the heart of Melita, home to the outdoor skating rink, playground, green spaces, and the events that bring residents of all ages together year-round. Thanks to a partnership between BACF, the Town of Melita, and the Southwest Recreation District, that heart is about to get warmer and more welcoming.

This fall, **construction begins on a new accessible washroom and warm-up shack beside the outdoor rink**, timed to start right after Melita’s Banana Days Festival so the park stays fully open for the community’s biggest celebration of the year.

For seniors, families with young kids, people with mobility challenges, and the volunteers who keep the rink running all winter, this means a warm place to lace up skates and a washroom that finally meets accessibility standards. It’s a small addition with a big impact: more people using the rink, more comfortable community events, and a park that truly works for everyone. BACF’s investment here is about more than a building; it’s about keeping community spaces alive and open to all, for generations to come.

AgVenture \$10,000

Growing the Future of Agriculture

Agriculture has always been the backbone of the Westman economy, and its future depends on inspiring the next generation of leaders, innovators, and skilled professionals. Thanks to a **\$10,000 contribution from the Brandon Area Community Foundation (BACF)**, more than 1,000 students from across the region had the opportunity to explore those possibilities through AgVenture 2026!

Delivered by Agriculture in the Classroom – Manitoba, AgVenture is a hands-on educational experience held during Manitoba Ag Days in Brandon. The program connects students in Grades 7 to 12 with real-world agricultural careers, technologies, and innovations, helping them discover the many opportunities available within one of Manitoba’s most vital industries.

This year, AgVenture welcomed over **1,000 students from 30 schools and 20 Westman communities**, making it one of the program’s most successful years to date. For many participants, it was their first introduction to Manitoba Ag Days and their first opportunity to engage directly with professionals working across the agricultural and agri-food sectors.

The impact extends far beyond a single day of learning.

Students arrived with limited awareness of the diversity of careers available in agriculture. Through interactive exhibits, hands-on activities, and conversations with industry professionals, they left with a broader understanding of how agriculture connects to science, technology, business, sustainability, and community development. For some, the experience opened doors to career paths they had never previously considered.

One Grade 10 student reflected, “I never thought about agriculture as something I could do for a job. I thought it was just for people who grew up on farms.”



Comments like this highlight the importance of programs such as AgVenture. By exposing youth to opportunities within their own communities, the program helps strengthen the future workforce while encouraging young people to see a future for themselves in rural Manitoba.

The benefits ripple throughout the region. Students gain knowledge and confidence, educators receive valuable resources, and local industries have an opportunity to connect with future employees and leaders. As awareness grows, so does the potential to retain talent, support economic development, and sustain the agricultural sector that contributes so much to Westman’s prosperity.



Cultivating the Future of Agriculture

BACF’s investment helped make this growth possible. By supporting experiential learning opportunities that connect young people with their communities and future career pathways, the Foundation is helping cultivate a stronger, more resilient region.

Through initiatives like AgVenture or by supporting opportunities, BACF continues to invest not only in today’s students, but in the future of agriculture, rural communities, and the generations that will shape them.

Lions Mobile Screening Unit

\$20,000

Bringing Care Closer to Children and Families

Access to early screening can make a life-changing difference for a child. By identifying vision and hearing concerns early, families can connect with the care and support children need to thrive at home, in school, and in their communities. Recognizing the importance of early detection, the Brandon Area Community Foundation (BACF) was proud to support the Lions Foundation of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario's Bringing Care Closer initiative.

The project will **establish a mobile screening clinic that will travel throughout Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, providing free vision and hearing screenings to children aged**

six months to 18 years. Designed to improve access to care in rural, remote, northern, and underserved communities, the program will help **remove barriers that can prevent families from accessing essential screening services.**

At the heart of the initiative is a custom-built mobile unit equipped with specialized vision and hearing screening technology. Once fully outfitted, the vehicle will serve as a travelling clinic capable of bringing screening services directly to schools, daycare centres, community organizations, and other gathering places where children live, learn, and play.



Improving access to life-changing care for families throughout Southwestern Manitoba.

The Lions Foundation estimates that approximately **40,000 children will benefit from the program each year.** Early identification of hearing and vision concerns can have a profound impact on a child's development, helping prevent challenges that may affect learning, communication, social development, and overall well-being.

The benefits extend beyond individual children. Families will gain convenient access to free screening services without the burden of travelling long distances or incurring additional costs. Schools and childcare providers will also benefit from earlier detection of potential concerns, allowing children to receive appropriate support sooner and helping them achieve greater success in the classroom.

The Bringing Care Closer initiative is led by the Lions Foundation in partnership with its network of 78 Lions Clubs across Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario. Over the past year, the organization has worked closely with healthcare professionals,



community partners, volunteers, and organizations such as the Manitoba Association of Optometrists to develop and prepare the program for launch.

While the mobile unit is currently being customized and equipped, preparations are well underway. Volunteer training is taking place, community visits are being coordinated, and the official launch is scheduled for October 2026. In the meantime, the Lions Foundation continues to deliver vision screenings through its KidSight program, ensuring children continue to benefit from early detection services.

BACF's support of this initiative reflects its commitment to investing in projects that strengthen communities and improve quality of life throughout southwestern Manitoba.

By helping bring healthcare services directly to children and families, the Foundation is supporting a program that will create lasting benefits for years to come.

More than a mobile clinic, **Bringing Care Closer represents a sustainable, long-term investment in the health and future of children across the region.** Through collaboration, innovation, and community support, thousands of young people will have greater access to the early screening services they need to reach their full potential.



Youth in Philanthropy \$36,500

Celebrating 20 Years of Youth in Philanthropy

For two decades, the Brandon Area Community Foundation’s Youth in Philanthropy (YIP) program has empowered local students to become community leaders, grantmakers, and champions for positive change. In 2025, the program celebrated its 20th anniversary, marking a milestone that reflects the lasting impact of youth engagement in community philanthropy. In partnership with United Way West Central Manitoba, YIP continues to connect youth with opportunities to learn about community needs, make meaningful funding decisions, and help shape a stronger future for Westman.

The YIP program provides high school students with a unique opportunity to learn about local charitable organizations, assess community needs, and make real funding decisions. Through hands-on participation, students gain valuable experience in leadership, teamwork, community service, and responsible grantmaking while developing a deeper understanding of the important role charitable organizations play in strengthening communities.

This year, students from Elton Collegiate, Vincent Massey High School, and Neelin High School carefully reviewed applications and awarded grants to organizations serving a wide range of community needs.

The 2025 grant recipients included Big Brothers Big Sisters of Westman Inc., Assiniboine Food Forest Inc., Brandon Museum Inc. (Daly House Museum), Bear Clan Patrol Inc., Pregnancy Support Centre of Westman Inc., Westman Immigrant Services, Brandon Regional Health Centre Foundation Inc., Helping Hands Centre of Brandon Inc., Brandon Literacy Council Incorporated, Brandon Riverbank Inc., Brandon’s Food for Thought, One At A Time Rescue, and the YWCA Westman.

Through these grants, students supported initiatives focused on health and wellness, food security, literacy, community safety, cultural

inclusion, environmental stewardship, youth development, and support for vulnerable populations. Their decisions reflect the diverse needs and priorities that contribute to a vibrant and resilient community.

To commemorate the program’s 20th anniversary, students were entrusted with an additional \$20,000 in funding to support two legacy projects that will provide long-term benefits to the community. Brandon Riverbank Inc. received \$10,000 toward the Peter Sawatzky Sculpture Garden’s “Curious Bear” sculpture, an addition that will enhance one of Brandon’s most celebrated public spaces. Forrest Special Projects Group received \$10,000 to support the development of an accessible walking path, creating opportunities for people of all abilities to enjoy outdoor recreation and community connection.



Empowering students to become champions of positive change.



While the grants themselves create meaningful impact, one of the greatest successes of the Youth in Philanthropy program is the investment it makes in future community leaders. Over the past 20 years, hundreds of students have gained firsthand experience in philanthropy and community engagement. Many have gone on to become volunteers, donors, professionals, and leaders who continue to contribute to the well-being of their communities.

The Brandon Area Community Foundation is proud to celebrate this milestone anniversary and recognize the many students, educators, schools,

donors, and community partners, including United Way West Central Manitoba, who have contributed to the program’s success. As the Youth in Philanthropy program enters its third decade, it continues to inspire young people to recognize the power they have to make a difference, strengthen their communities, and help build a brighter future for generations to come.

By investing in youth today, BACF is helping cultivate a culture of generosity, leadership, and community involvement that will continue to benefit southwestern Manitoba for years to come.

Critical Care Centre

\$140,000

Supporting Critical Care Close to Home

Access to high-quality healthcare is essential to building strong and resilient communities. In 2025, the Brandon Area Community Foundation (BACF) was **proud to contribute \$140,000 toward the new Critical Care Centre at Brandon Regional Health Centre** through the Brandon Regional Health Centre Foundation. This investment was made possible through the generosity of **Gord and Diane Peters through the Peters Fund**, and **Alex and Richele Burr through the Burr Fund**, whose commitment to strengthening healthcare continues to make a lasting impact across the region.

This transformational **project represents one of the most significant healthcare investments in western Manitoba** and will enhance critical care services for Brandon and the surrounding region for years to come.

The new Critical Care Centre began opening in stages during June 2026, with the Internal Medicine Unit (IMU) welcoming its first patients. The facility will continue to expand as additional services, including the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), transition into the new space.

Designed to meet the growing healthcare needs of the region, **the state-of-the-art facility offers significant improvements for both patients and healthcare professionals**. The new ICU will increase capacity from 10 to 16 beds and features private patient rooms that provide greater comfort, privacy, and infection control. The second floor houses a new Internal Medicine Unit that will eventually add 30 higher-acuity medical beds, expanding access to specialized care for patients with complex medical needs.



Every patient room has been thoughtfully designed to enhance care and recovery. Features include private washrooms and showers, ceiling lifts to assist with patient mobility, and flexible airflow systems that accommodate cultural practices such as smudging. The facility also includes negative-pressure rooms and adaptable treatment areas that will strengthen the hospital’s ability to manage infectious disease outbreaks and other emerging healthcare challenges.

Beyond its advanced medical technology and infrastructure, the Critical Care Centre was designed with patient and family well-being in mind. An outdoor courtyard provides a peaceful space for patients and loved ones to find respite, reduce stress, and support healing during difficult times.

The impact of the new facility extends far beyond the walls of the hospital. **Expanded critical care capacity will allow more patients to receive treatment closer to home, reducing the need for transfers to larger centres and keeping families connected during medical emergencies**. The enhanced facility will also support the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals, create new employment opportunities, and contribute to the economic vitality of Brandon and the surrounding region.

BACF’s investment, supported through the generosity of the **Peters Fund** and the **Burr Fund**, reflects the Foundation’s ongoing commitment to strengthening community well-being and improving quality of life across southwestern Manitoba. By helping bring advanced healthcare services closer to home, this project will have a lasting impact on patients, families, healthcare professionals, and communities throughout the region.

Through partnerships like this and the vision of dedicated fundholders such as **Gord and Diane Peters** and **Alex and Richele Burr**, BACF continues to invest in a healthier, stronger future for generations to come.



Why Give?

Every gift to the Brandon Area Community Foundation stays here, working for southwestern Manitoba forever. Whether you're planning ahead or giving today, your donation helps build permanent, growing resources that support the causes you care about, now and for generations to come.

Get in Touch

We'd love to hear from you. Reach us at **info@bac-foundation.ca** or **204-571-0529**, or visit **bacf.ca** to learn more about the funds and causes you can support.

Brandon Area Community Foundation acknowledges with respect and gratitude that our offices are located on Treaty 2 Lands which are the traditional homelands of the Dakota, Cree, Oji-Cree, Anishanabek, Dene and Metis peoples.