



Halton
Learning
Foundation

2019-2020 ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



**HLF donors offered
shelter for students
and families in
a stormy year.**

Participant in the Cogeco Do 5, Give 5, Ask 5 Challenge.

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Eliminating Financial Barriers to Education 2019-2020

Our purpose

HLF helps eliminate financial barriers and support equity for students of the Halton District School Board through funding for basic necessities, school grants, and post-secondary scholarships.

Our strategy

HLF's ambition is to develop strong partnerships to increase revenue and support more students year over year.

HLF donors stepped up for students in a big way in 2019-2020, including the dozens who participated in the Cogeco Do 5, Give 5, Ask 5 Challenge!





Gratitude in a Year Like No Other

When Halton Learning Foundation began its fiscal year in September 2019, at the same time as 60,000 Halton District School Board students began classes, our Board and staff thought we had a good idea of what to expect. HLF's first six months of fundraising were solid thanks to strong outreach activities such as an estate planning workshop and the annual Benefit Bash in November, ensuring there were sufficient funds to meet an increase in demand for student support.

Very few of us could have predicted what would happen in March 2020 when a global pandemic disrupted life as we knew it. HLF felt the impact immediately. After the province shut down there was a huge spike in requests for assistance from our Eliminating Barriers fund to help support HDSB students and families in need.

Fortunately, HLF was well-positioned to rise to the challenge.

The HLF team started working remotely and came up with creative ways to fundraise virtually, including the *Cogeco Do 5, Give 5, Ask 5 Challenge*, to make up for the loss of funds from cancelled in-person events.

Last year HLF surpassed \$1.1MM in revenue, with the support of 1,400 donors.

Throughout the spring and summer, generous sponsors and donors continued to help students and their families who were struggling. By the end of the school year, your support allowed us to fund basic necessities for a record 1,400 students, and provided a second helping hand to almost 200 kids.

The pandemic contributed to a record number of graduating students applying for scholarships through HLF. You provided more than \$90,000 to recognize student achievements and help kids fund their post-secondary education. These funds were particularly critical in a year when many students were unable to secure summertime employment.

HLF also invested almost \$100,000 in student learning through school grants in support of media literacy, arts and music, environmental programs and physical and mental health initiatives. When schools closed for the year in March, however, many were unable to use those grants. Fortunately, some grant donors gave HLF permission to redirect their monies to the Eliminating Barriers fund, and at the onset of the pandemic, RBC Charitable Foundation allowed HLF to direct 50% of its support towards immediate operational needs.

In spite of the challenges presented to our team in 2020, the word that continually comes to mind as I reflect on the past year is **GRATITUDE**. I'm reminded of the phrase "**It takes a village to raise a child.**" Our village of donors, sponsors, school staff, and the HLF team and volunteers responded in a huge way to help thousands of children in our community.

We are also grateful to the Government of Canada for the Emergency Community Support Fund and Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, administered through the Burlington Foundation and the United Way of Halton & Hamilton. These funds provided support for HDSB students in summer school and allowed HLF's operations to continue without interruption.

We appreciate everyone's continued financial support, your flexibility in allowing us to redirect money where needed, and your continued kindness and caring for students.

Certainly 2020-2021 will be another challenging year for many Halton families affected by the pandemic, and HLF is prudently managing your funds to ensure we can continue to meet the expected demand.

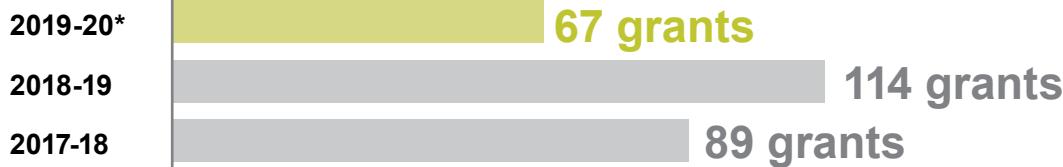
I am confident that HLF will adapt to whatever the future brings, and our team looks forward to sharing the many stories of how you are helping students succeed.

| Anne Cesak,
Chair of HLF's Board of Directors

Investing in Students



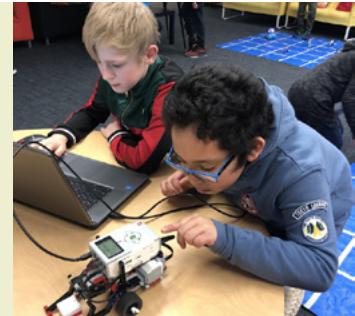
Students at 43 schools benefitted from HLF engagement grants.



*Decline in grants in 2019-20 reflects the fact that many schools were unable to use their funds after schools closed due to the pandemic.

Building 21st Century Global Competency Skills

Ryerson PS was one of several schools to benefit from an HLF grant last year in support of media literacy. HLF funds were used to host a coding camp, allowing all 210 JK to Gr. 6 students to use digital tools to build confidence and skills in problem solving, perseverance and collaborating with peers to solve real life problems at their grade level.



85 students benefitted from an award or post-secondary scholarship.



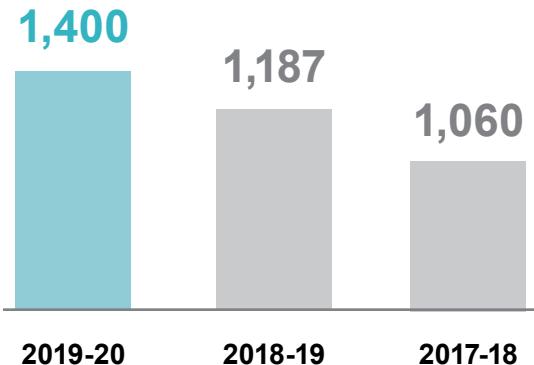
Ashley was not fortunate enough to grow up in an economically stable household. But her hard work and resilience throughout high school caught the attention of an HLF scholarship donor, who is helping fund Ashley's undergrad degree.

"For me, this scholarship goes well beyond its monetary value," says Ashley, who is now in her second year at McGill. As she struggled to adjust to a new city and the pressures of university, the scholarship was a reminder that she had people who supported, believed in, and trusted her.

"The encouragement and support I have been granted through this award has been a blessing, and I will strive to pay it forward through my words and actions every day."



1,400 students received support through the Eliminating Barriers to Learning Fund.



INCLUDING:

Basics	1242 STUDENTS
Activities	125 STUDENTS
Transportation	30 STUDENTS
Post-secondary applications	3 STUDENTS



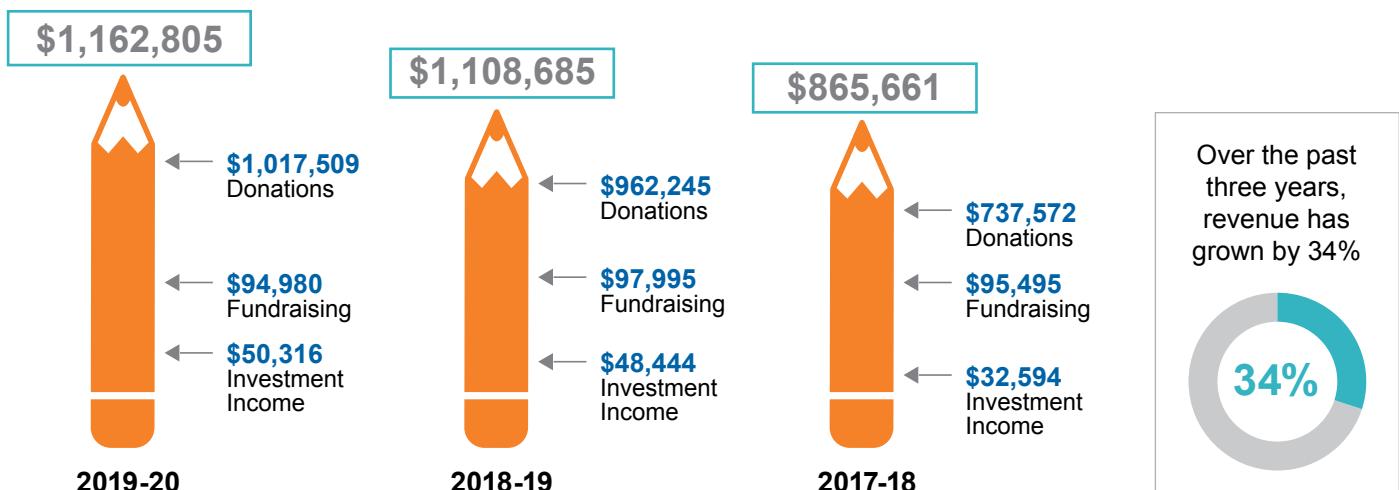
Malak is from a refugee family that has no sponsor. They live in a rental home with only a donated living room set and no other furniture. Malak had nothing he needed to start school.

Gift cards from HLF were used to purchase school supplies, school snacks, and new clothing and shoes that fit Malak properly. His teachers report these items not only prepared Malak to learn, but allowed him to be accepted by his peers. The gift cards also gave the entire family the chance to learn how to select and purchase things in a Canadian store, making them all feel more engaged in their new society.

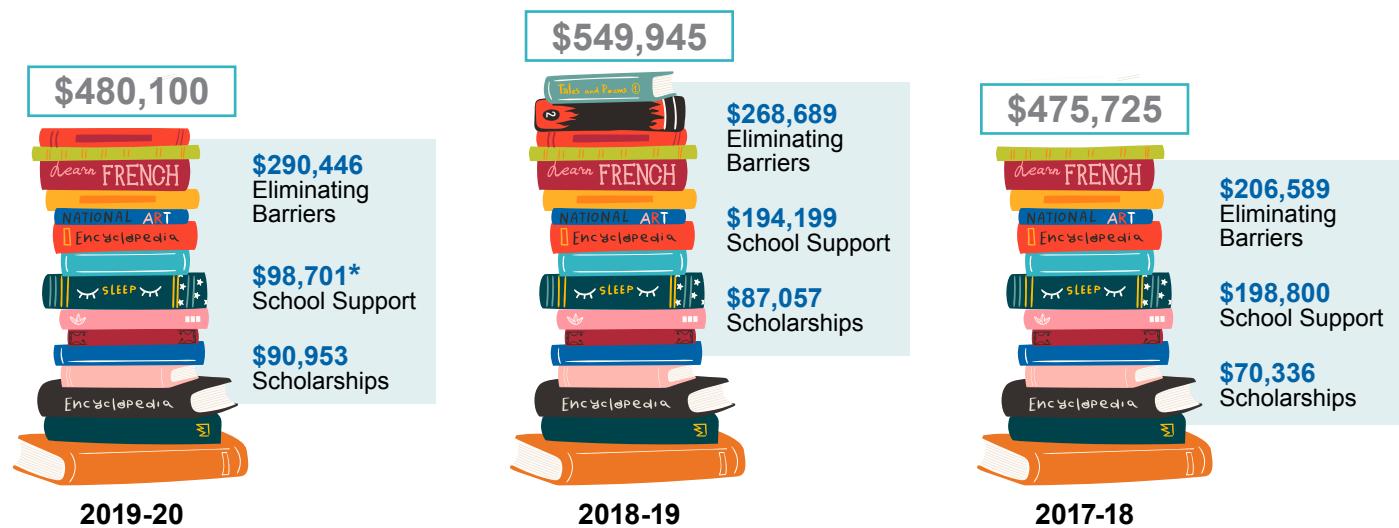
“ Gift cards from HLF have allowed me to be able to purchase school supplies I will need for the coming up school year. Your generosity has helped me realize you can count on others to always be there when you're down. The remainder of the gift cards will be put towards getting a better computer that doesn't shut down and freeze up as much! Thanks again!! ” -Grade 10 student

Financials at a Glance

Revenue

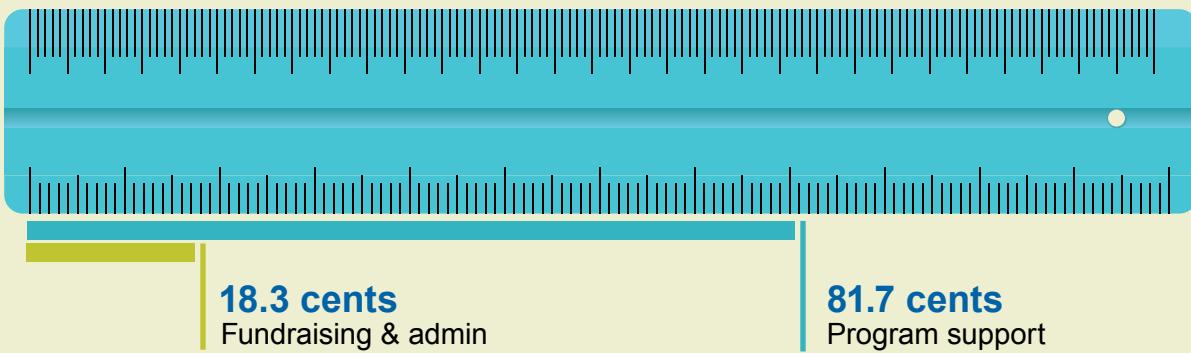


Investments in Students



*School support declined in 2019-20 due to the pandemic forcing schools to close before most could use the funds.

Where your money goes



Accounting Firm Lives up to its Motto

Beneath BLR Chartered Professional Accountants' logo are four words that read: "Numbers can be personal."

The saying is more than just a tagline; it's a credo that the team of 30-plus staff take to heart.

"Our business is not just about numbers," confirms partner Damian Andrews. "It's about caring for the people who work here, the people we serve, and our community."

The Burlington and Waterdown-based firm -- which serves clients throughout Halton, Hamilton and beyond -- has been a strong supporter of the Halton Learning Foundation since 2015, providing HLF with both sponsorships and volunteers.

Damian first heard about HLF five years ago through his colleague, Nancy Brewer, who was serving on HLF's Board of Directors. In 2020, Damian became a member of HLF's Board and the Chair of the Finance Committee.

A father of five school-age kids, Damian says HLF's mission to eliminate financial barriers to learning resonated with him.

"I can't imagine, as a parent, not having the financial means to provide your child with what they need to succeed. Kids being restricted in school because of finances ... it shouldn't happen."

"My belief is that HLF truly does make a difference and it's immediate. HLF is helping put these students on a more level playing ground in school, and BLR is proud to play a part in that."

"I was surprised to learn how many people in Halton are really struggling, and that the number of kids in our community who need support is growing."



BLR staff and spouses attend HLF's 2019 Benefit Bash

Director of Education Reflects on HLF's Impact

HDSB's Director of Education, Stuart Miller, retires this summer after a prolific 37-year teaching career.

Among his accomplishments, Stuart is proud of his involvement with the Halton Learning Foundation. He was the first staff person appointed to HLF's Board in the early 2000s, and it was his idea to have schools raise funds for HLF under the banner of Toonie Tuesday.

Stuart currently serves as an ex-officio director on HLF's Board, and he has long been a vocal advocate and financial supporter of the charity's work.

"As an educator, I've seen time and again the impact HLF can have on students," he says.

He recalls the story of a refugee student who continually arrived late to class. Staff discovered he had to help take care of four younger siblings before leaving for school, so he could never catch the bus on time.

"I applied to HLF for funds to buy a bike for this student, and he was never late for class again. He rode that bike to school in every kind of weather, and he went on to graduate from high school."

"That's the kind of impact a few dollars from HLF can have on kids."

HLF Board of Directors 2019-2020



1st row (top to bottom)

Anne Cesak, Chair

Anne Cesak Consulting

Damian Andrews, Treasurer

Partner, BLR LLP Chartered Accountants

Nicholas Klip

Manager, Operations Hamilton/Halton, Enbridge Gas

2nd row (top to bottom)

Manon Dulude, First Vice Chair

Registered Psychotherapist,
Forge Coaching & Consulting

Philip Evenden, Past Chair

President, CDC, Integrity Wealth Management

Stuart Miller

Director of Education,
Halton District School Board

3rd row (top to bottom)

Kim Phillips, Second Vice Chair

Community Member

Cheryl Goldring

Community Member

Lesley Mansfield

CEO, Halton Learning Foundation



**Halton
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Eliminating Financial Barriers to Education

Halton Learning Foundation

2050 Guelph Line,
Burlington ON L7P 5A8

Charitable registration #:
88997 5223 RR0001

