



# PROMISE

past, present, and the possible — 2025

## A Legacy Lives On:

*The Final \$1M Gift from the  
Robert Steane Fund  
for Homelessness*

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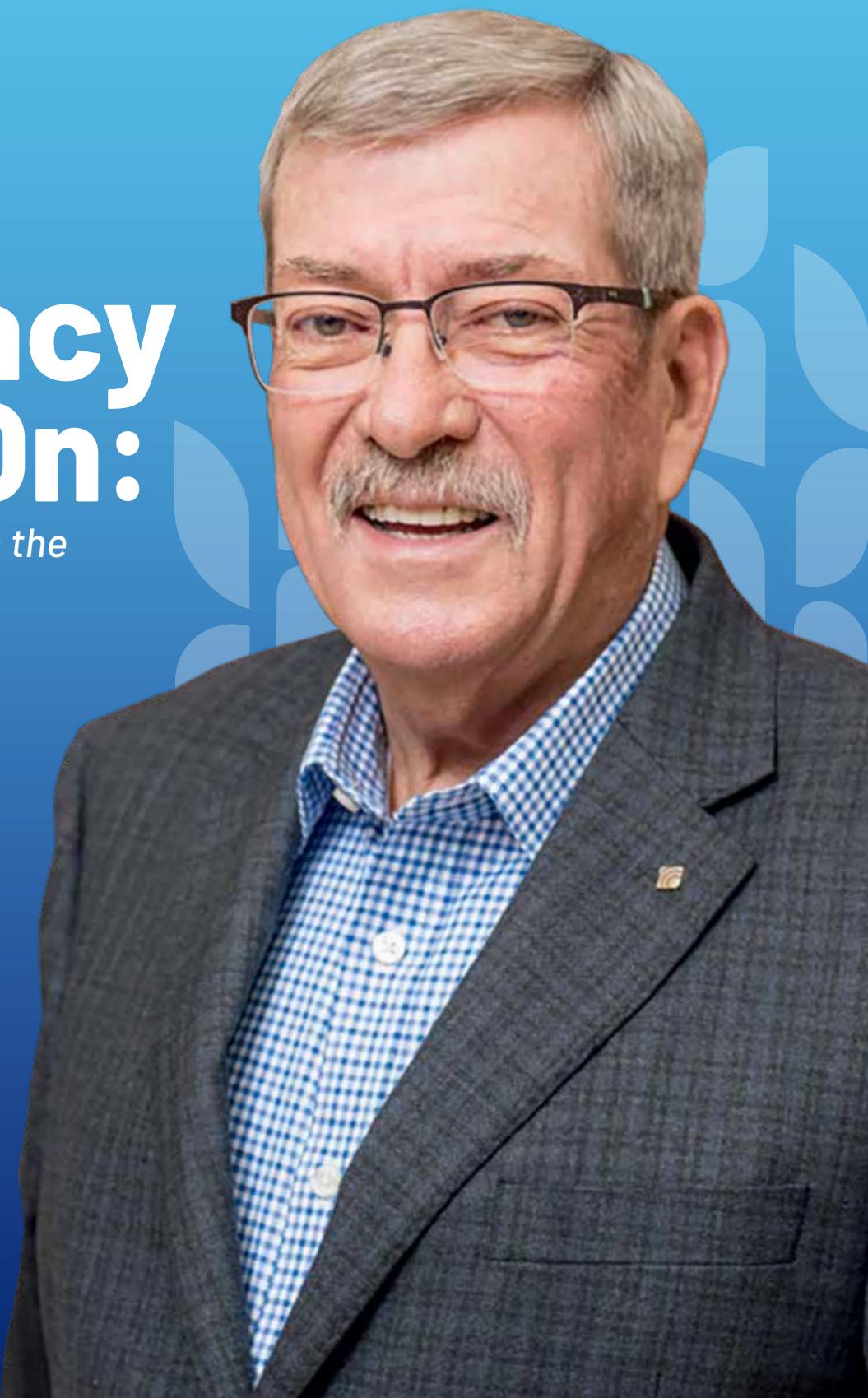
Neil and Verna Buechler's  
Legacy of Quiet Philanthropy

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Building Roots, Building Home  
Away From Home

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Growth in Action:  
Today's Youth are  
Tomorrow's Leaders





**"If we all pitch in, we do nothing but elevate our community and make it a better, stronger place for the next generation."**

- Fundholders Candace and Curtis Kimpton



**Create your Saskatoon legacy.**  
306.665.1766



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# Giving With Intention

Dear Partners and Supporters,

At Saskatoon Community Foundation, we believe that generosity should never be a shot in the dark. When you give, you want your gift to matter - to reach the people and places where it can truly make a difference. That's why we practice what we call community-informed giving: philanthropy that listens before it acts.

This kind of giving starts with curiosity. We ask questions. We listen to local organizations, community leaders, and people with lived experience. We look at the data and the stories behind it - the real picture of what's happening in Saskatoon. Then we connect that understanding with your goals as a donor, helping your generosity land exactly where it can have the greatest impact.

You might hear terms like *strategic philanthropy*, *trust-based giving*, or *participatory philanthropy*. They all circle around the same truth: that giving works best when it's done in partnership. When donors, charities, and communities share knowledge and insight, every dollar stretches further and every effort carries more meaning.

For us, this approach comes to life through tools like *Vital Signs*®, critical data that shines a light on our community's strengths and challenges - from housing and mental health, to belonging and reconciliation. It also happens in the countless conversations we have with people and organizations who know this city best. This wisdom helps guide funding decisions where support is most needed and what kind of change will last.

When you give through the Saskatoon Community Foundation, you're not just making a donation - you're joining a network. You're trusting a process that honours your intentions and channels them through deep local insight.



Rachael Steinke

That's what makes every gift through the Foundation special. It's not only generous, it's grounded. It's giving that knows where it's going and what it wants to achieve.

Because at the end of the day, informed giving is about connection. Connecting your heart to your community, your generosity to its greatest need, and your impact to real lives where it's needed most.

**Rachael Steinke, BA, MA,  
Chief Executive Officer**

**Your gift keeps giving.  
Your story never ends.**



# Neil and Verna Buechler's Legacy of Quiet Philanthropy

Neil Buechler's journey from humble roots to high career pinnacle enabled the giving back of philanthropic time, treasure, and talent to the city he loved. Neil was very proud that his hard work and tireless work ethic culminated career wise in being named as Managing Director of the world's leading professional services firm in risk, strategy and people. At retirement, he was appointed to the Advisory Board of the firm, whose membership included a former Prime Minister of Canada, four Provincial Premiers and a number of Canada's corporate elite. In addition, he served on the Board of Directors for numerous Corporate and Not-for-Profit organizations. But it was his quiet commitment

to causes like the Saskatoon Food Bank, SPCA, St. Paul's Hospital Foundation, Royal University Hospital, Saskatoon City Hospital, Saskatoon Cancer Agency, the Meewasin Valley, among many others that defined his legacy. He was a sought-after Board member; strategic advisor; and funder for many pillar organizations in Saskatoon.

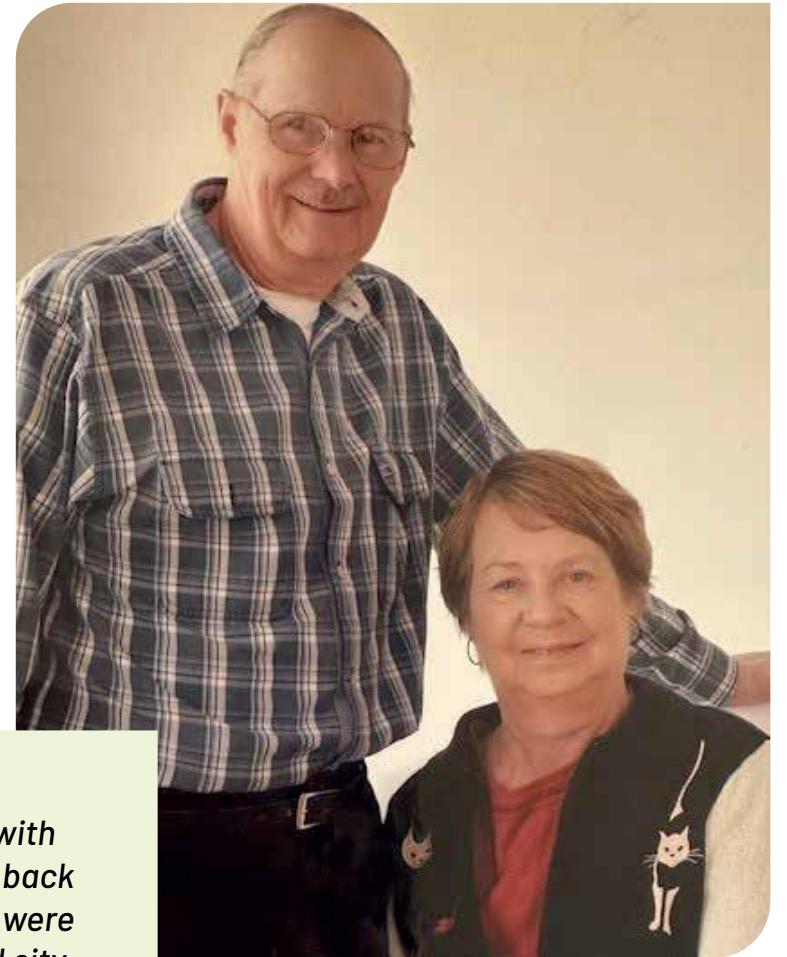
In 2016, Neil and wife Verna established the Neil and Verna Buechler and Family Fund through the Saskatoon Community Foundation to create an enduring philanthropic legacy. They had a clear goal to help kids and families from disadvantaged backgrounds receive help and support.

"Dad [held a] strong belief about inequity and that elevating opportunity for those kids and adults that struggle against their life circumstances [result in] significant barriers to unlocking and realizing their potential. He believed that life can be incredibly difficult if not provided a good start. Dad and Mom were a team with a shared belief about giving back and to causes they both felt were vital to making their beloved city and province better," said daughter, Jill. This belief continues to guide the fund's focus today. At home, those same values were quietly passed on to their children Brent, Curtis, Jill and later grandchildren Troy and Tamara.

In talking with Laurie O'Connor, Executive Director of the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre, she said that "Neil Buechler didn't believe in fanfare. Over more than three decades, he quietly helped shape the Saskatoon Food Bank and Learning Centre into what it is today – and after his passing, his legacy continues through both bricks and mortar, and the family he inspired".

"Neil truly championed our cause and demonstrated his values through the actions he took to help make life a little

*"Dad and Mom were a team with a shared belief about giving back and to causes they both felt were vital to making their beloved city and province better."*



easier for members of the community," said Laurie "Even after his time on the board came to an end, Neil remained a strong supporter over the years, and his impact and kindness will not be forgotten."

"His dedication and encouragement to support community inspired his daughter Jill to also serve on the Food Bank's Board of Directors".

"He generously volunteered his time, donated food, and provided financial support over three decades. Neil had a passion for supporting the work of community-based agencies and he was particularly concerned about children experiencing poverty," said O'Connor.

"Neil lives on because he was the best kind of force to be reckoned with," said O'Connor. "A convincing advocate who easily inspired others to join forces in a shared vision for a better tomorrow." More than a decade since he last served on the board, Neil Buechler's impact still resonates – in the Food Bank's foundations, in the hearts of those he helped, and in the next generation of givers he inspired.. ●

[saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/funds](http://saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/funds)

# A Legacy Lives On:

*The Final \$1M Gift from the Robert Steane Fund for Homelessness*

This past October, we celebrated the legacy of Robert A. Steane at a ceremony honouring his final gift of \$1 million dollars to support homelessness in Saskatoon.

Since 2021, the Steane Fund has granted nearly \$2.9 million to address homelessness in Saskatoon. Through these investments, hundreds of individuals have found safer shelter, stronger community, and greater stability. When Bob bequeathed his incredible gift to our community it was indeed a beautiful, impactful end to his life of giving. Bob dedicated most of his life to volunteering and philanthropy in an effort to give back to his community and connect with our most vulnerable through acts of service, smiles and his kind eyes that held so much compassion and hope. When he passed, he left behind a \$12 million legacy to support causes close to his heart – including homelessness, the arts, and the St. Paul's Hospital Foundation.



This year's grants reflect Bob's compassion in action:

**SaskNative Rentals – \$414,000**

Supporting culturally appropriate, wrap-around services for new rapid housing developments – helping residents build skills, community, and housing stability.

**Station 20 West – \$454,000**

Establishing a System Navigation Hub to help people connect to supports, strengthen advocacy, and inform policy change.

**City of Saskatoon – \$200,000**

Supporting warm-up services to ensure services are available to those who are most vulnerable in our community.

These initiatives span **immediate safety, system-level coordination, and culturally informed support** – a holistic approach to addressing homelessness that reflects what community leadership should look like.

As we close out this chapter of the Steane Fund, we're reminded that philanthropy doesn't end with one person – it multiplies through community.

Bob's challenge to all of us is simple: Be generous. Be kind. Be part of the change. **Be a Bob.** ●

**\$414,000**

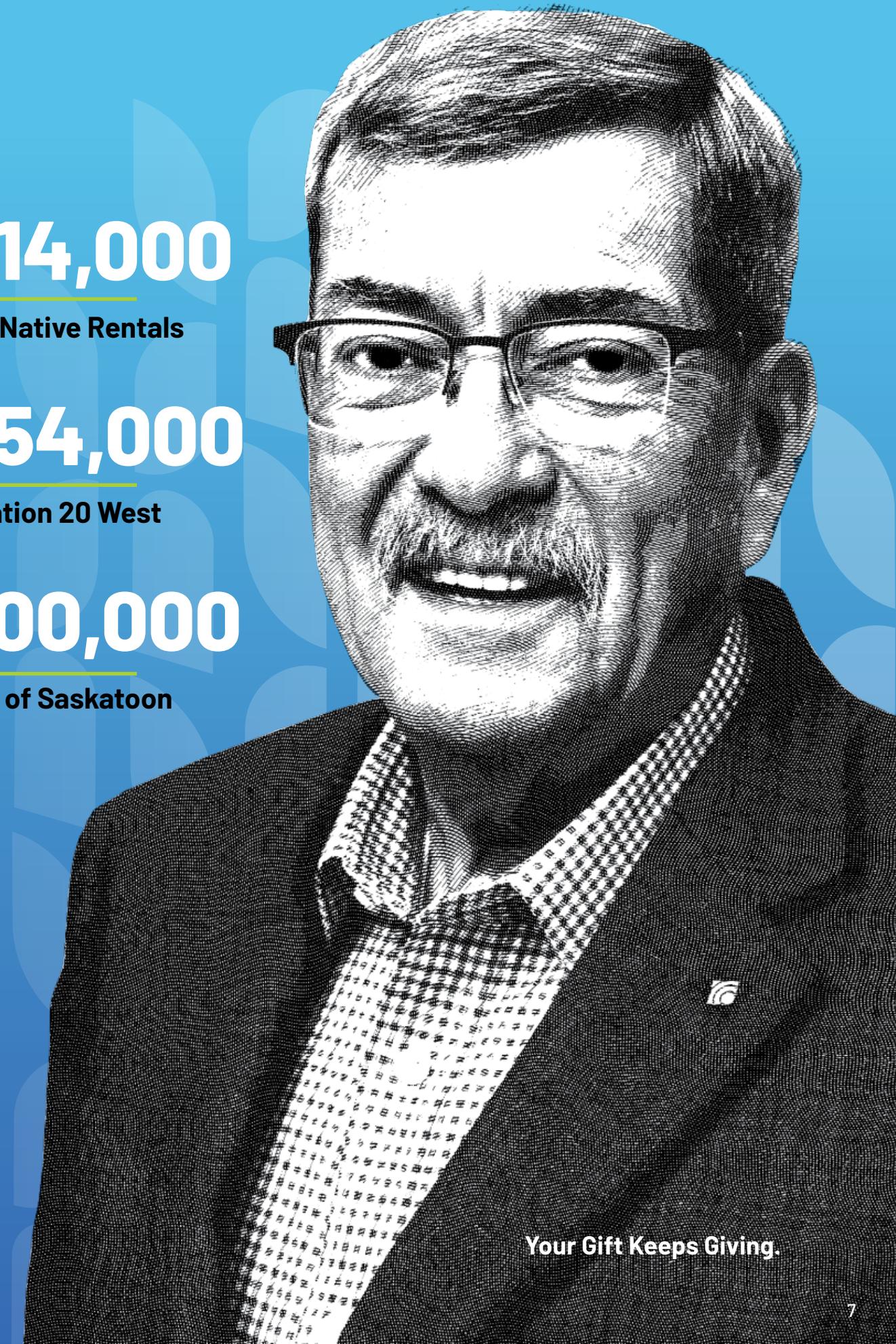
**SaskNative Rentals**

**\$454,000**

**Station 20 West**

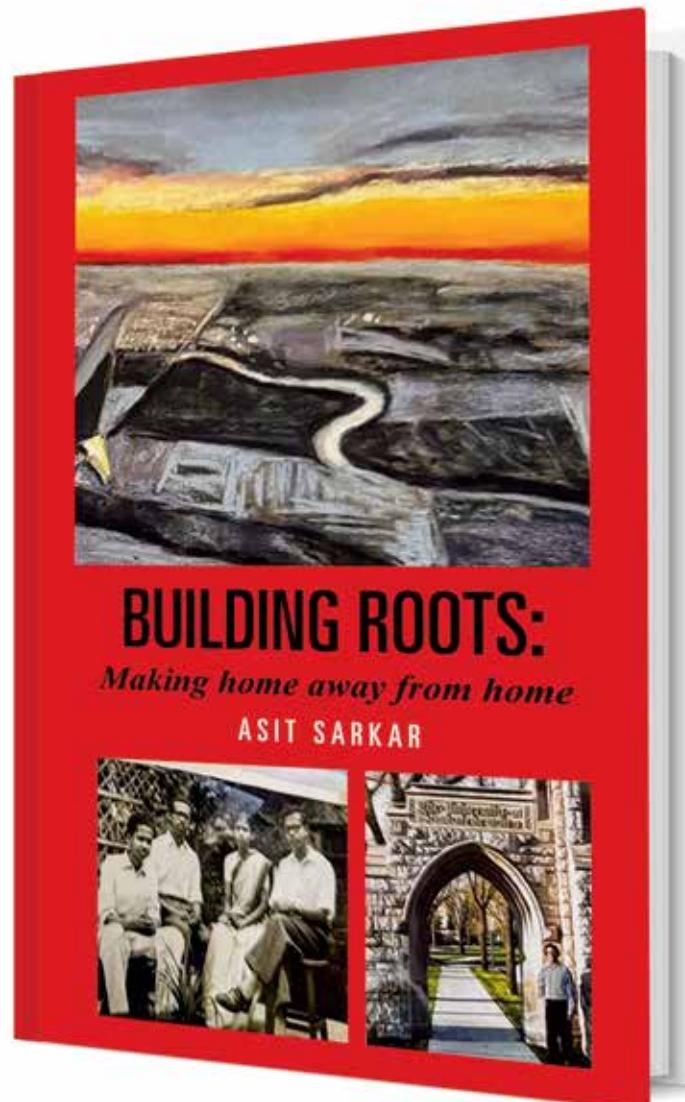
**\$200,000**

**City of Saskatoon**



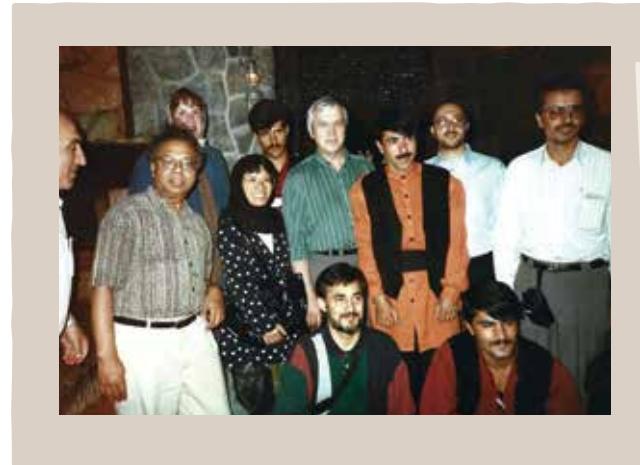
**Your Gift Keeps Giving.**

# Building Roots, Building Home Away from Home



Dr Asit Sarkar's first roots trace back to colonial British India. His birthplace became East Pakistan in 1947 following the British decision to leave after partitioning it along religious lines. It is now known as Bangladesh. He grew up in a multi-faith community, always being surrounded by different perspectives. From an early age, Asit came to see others as humans before anything else. Holding onto this view, he made the decision to leave his home country where people were most often regarded as their faith first. He then found himself in Hawaii where he experienced the connection that a place celebrating multiculturalism can bring.

On August 28, 1963, Dr. Sarkar was in Washington DC for a moment that would again change his life forever. On this day, Martin Luther King Jr delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech and Dr. Sarkar was in the crowd. This sparked something profound in him. He had dreams too - to be free, to be known by his character, not his colour, and to support peace-making everywhere. So he began walking towards that dream.



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Carrying this dream and some values from his ancestral home, Dr. Sarkar found himself in Saskatoon in 1970. The Saskatoon community welcomed Dr Sarkar and his values of wanting to give back. He felt celebrated by the community as a human first, through a career of deep meaning and service over 37 years with the University of Saskatchewan and into his retirement. In his later years, he dedicated himself to serving Saskatoon. Dr. Sarkar shares, "Giving back to the community allows you to see it from a number of lenses. Without giving, you only see a part of the community."

Reflecting back on his life and the lives of others who leave their place of birth to make a new home, he wrote his first book - "Building Roots, Building Home Away from Home". Following his curiosity, Dr Sarkar investigated a few questions as he wrote - What makes a home for a new person in Saskatoon? What are the check marks people need to consider a place home?

"The values a person holds cannot just be from the place of their birth - they must be from everywhere they have touched down along the way," Sarkar shares.

His dream for the book is simple - I hope that newcomers to Saskatoon will look in the mirror and ask themselves: "How can I be involved in the community in Saskatoon?" He'd love to hear more newcomers tell their stories and find their place in this community. That could be through service, philanthropy, or sharing their gifts with others.

For a copy of the book, please contact the Saskatoon Community Foundation. ●





# Vital Focus Grants

## A way of granting for great impact

### Why Should Our Grants Have a "Vital Focus"?

Vital Focus Grants, which were first awarded in 2024 and 2025, represent a major shift in the approach to granting. Some years ago, when I first joined the team, we had much more limited resources, and we tried our best to support many good causes through the wonderful community organizations in Saskatoon.

Our purpose was always to honour the gifts from our donors by making the best choices we could in supporting community. The challenge was, and continues to be, how we make the best possible impact on the many priorities in our city with the funds we have. Over time, thanks to thousands of donors, we have increased our impact, but the city has also grown and so have the challenges. All of us can see these realities.



# 2025 Grant RECIPIENTS



Congratulations to all of the organizations receiving 2025 Vital Focus grants. They are:

#### Hope Restored Canada

Restoring Hope through Equity

#### Prairie Harm Reduction

Empower Employment

#### Saskatoon Friendship Inn

We Helped One Hundred

## Important dates:

**Opening date for Letters of Intent is December 1st, 2025.**

**Deadline for Letters of Intent is March st, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.**

**Deadline for full applications (if requested) is May 1st, 2026 at 5:00 p.m.**



Speak with our **Grants Manager** Don Ewles at [grants@saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca](mailto:grants@saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca) or **(306) 665-1767**

## Turning Data into Action

How could we know we were choosing the best opportunities for positive impact? We first presented our Vital Signs report in 2015, bringing community data to bear on our grant decisions. Each report since then has refined the dataset and included more local data providers. Our upcoming report in early 2026 will include brand new primary data gathered in partnership with CUISR (Community-University Institute on Social Research).

Vital Signs 2021 identified several key issues, including the need to build **sustainable resources** for community organizations especially programming focused on **children and youth, mental health, equity, and homelessness**. The Foundation board and staff responded by bolstering the funds available through Youth Endowment Saskatoon and creating a new program, Vital Focus Grants, to address mental health, equity and homelessness. Several of the funded projects so far deal with more than one of these areas, because they are often linked in terms of the issues people are facing.

## Sustainable Resources for Community Organizations

Seeking funding costs resources and time that would be best spent serving people. The Foundation has relationships going back decades with many of these key partners. Why should we make them re-apply every year? Vital Focus grants, for the first time, offers multi-year funding – up to 5 years and \$100,000.00 through a single application, with a simplified annual reporting process. Our trusted community partners can now focus more time on their vital work.

## Community Experts in an Open Dialogue

Funding decisions are recommended by the Vital Focus Subcommittee, a panel of volunteer experts in the program's focus areas. After careful review, they select and meet with a short list of applicants. Before the final version of the application is submitted, applicants ask questions of the committee and the committee gains clarity on how change will be created and tracked in the project. Both applicants and the Foundation are confident the outcomes can be achieved. Though not all applicants can receive funding in any given year, solid applicants are given consideration in the next grant cycle.

## Proving Community Impact Through Data

The core of the Vital Focus program is a detailed tracking sheet. Each applicant creates its own set of outcomes that will be produced by the funded project, because we know there is no "one size fits all." Recipients explain how they will create change and measure it, how many people will benefit, and the demographic information on those served. There is a tab for each year of the project and a tally of the cumulative impact. Rather than lengthy paragraphs that repeat what was already described in the application, most of the annual reporting is done by simply plugging the outcome data into the sheet that was submitted with the application. This data is later compiled, creating an overall picture of impact on the Vital Focus areas.

Vital Focus Grants strongly connects granting to evidence, and allows organizations, the Foundation, donors and the community to feel confident that we are doing our best to make Saskatoon a vibrant community where everyone belongs. ●



**Vital Signs** is Canada's most extensive community-driven data program. Led by community foundations from coast to coast to coast, Vital Signs uses local knowledge to measure the vitality of a community and support action towards improving collective quality of life. Community foundations and community leaders use local data gathered through the program to support evidence-based, locally-relevant solutions to improve the quality of life at the community level.

**Stay tuned for the release of the next Vital Signs report for Saskatoon in 2026!**



# Growth in ACTION

Today's Youth Are  
Tomorrow's Leaders



Do you know a young person who would be interested in joining our Youth Advisory Council? WE'D LOVE TO MEET THEM.

When we invest in our community, the outcomes continue to grow beyond measure. As adults, we analyze, weigh pros and cons, evaluate budgets, and make discerning responsible decisions. While these are important and help keep us accountable to our project outcomes, there is an admirable passion in youth who bring bright, fresh perspectives to issues that can ignore the "what-ifs" and the "not possibles". When we look at problems through a lens of "what-if it can't be done" we lose out on the possibilities that are sometimes squashed by practical reasoning.

In 2002, we launched the Youth Advisory Council (YAC) with the goal of providing youth an opportunity to discuss social issues and learn about philanthropy, how to create projects for social good, apply for grants, and help shape our community to include and uplift our most vulnerable. In 2025, the YAC program is an innovative leader in Canada, with many organizations and foundations looking to its example as they establish their own programs.

Youth between the ages of 13 and 25 volunteer one or two hours per week at local charities and get to see firsthand how their involvement impacts and benefits their community. While on the Youth Advisory Council they develop their leadership skills and learn how to work cooperatively with their peers managing grant requests through the Youth Endowment



Saskatoon, they learn about the charitable granting process, event planning, social media strategy, and networking.

Among the many important projects the YAC funded this year was The Princess Shop. The Princess Shop's Dress Program follows a proven model that removes financial barriers and fosters confidence in young women. Through community dress donations and volunteer support, participants receive a personalized, empowering experience. The program's welcoming environment ensures each graduate finds a gown that makes her feel beautiful and celebrated. This immediate boost in self-esteem contributes to long-term confidence and engagement in future opportunities. Success is reinforced through participant feedback, partnerships, and alumni connections, demonstrating a sustainable and impactful approach to empowerment.

Do you know a young person who would be interested in joining our Youth Advisory Council? We'd love to meet them. Inquiries can be directed to: [donorservices@saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca](mailto:donorservices@saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca) ●

# Give YXE:

## How Small Donations Have Big Impacts



Give YXE was designed to harness the power of collective impact to create a vibrant community. We recognize the power and impact of community members when we come together in a shared vision to uplift and support our community, even in the smallest ways.

We believe that when many people come together to unite their contributions (no matter how big or small) that we can grow a significant amount of money that can have long-lasting impacts on our community. To date, the GiveYXE has raised over \$3.8 million from folks who might never have donated based on an assumption that they didn't have enough to give to have an impact.

### How it works

The donations themselves are never granted directly. Instead, the earnings on the pooled donations are granted, ensuring that your gift keeps giving for generations to come. Community-based organizations can apply for grants to help fund their projects and initiatives. Decisions to grant

requests for funding are done so based on Vital Signs input from community leaders, service providers, and residents to understand what is needed the most, and what will have the greatest impact.

We analyse data from Vital Signs research that provides insights on the pressing issues in Saskatoon, and we work in partnership with city leadership and local non-profits to ensure the funds are allocated for the biggest impact.

### Who we have helped

We have helped organizations who address homelessness and provide transitional and permanent housing support, community legal services, theatre, arts, music and dance, food programs, and more. For a complete list of recipients you can visit our website at [saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/giveyxe/](http://saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/giveyxe/).

[saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/giveyxe](http://saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/giveyxe)



**Do you feel compelled to give back to Saskatoon? Do you want your donation to go where it can really make an impact on the root challenges that face our community?**

**Join us in giving to make YXE the best community it can be!**

GiveYXE was designed to use the power of collective impact to create a vibrant community. The Saskatoon Community Foundation works alongside community organizations to understand the most pressing challenges and where investment can be made. All the money that is donated through the GiveYXE fund is pooled to tap into leverage economies of scale. Each year, the funds are dispersed with the diligence of the Community Foundation and the guidance of community-service advisors.



# Charitable Gifts of Insurance are a Powerful and Under-Used Tool



## An Innovative Insurance Product is Changing Charitable Giving

The excitement was notable among financial advisor circles and charities when **Canada Life My Par Gift** was unveiled earlier this year. The new one-premium charitable gift policy was developed in consultation with insurance professionals with decades of experience alongside the **Canadian Association of Gift Planners**.

The policy promises to simplify charitable giving through insurance for everyone involved, and it creates a low-risk and high-return option in the tool box for advisors and donors.

*"My Par Gift is an innovative, first-of-its-kind, insurance product designed for charitable giving using life insurance."*

Joseph van der Buhs is a Saskatoon-based Certified Financial Planner and Certified Life Underwriter with Mountain Strong Financial, and he describes My Par Gift this way: "My Par Gift is an innovative, first-of-its-kind, insurance product designed for charitable giving using life insurance. This is a single premium product."

"The donor makes a donation for the single premium, which qualifies as a charitable donation. The registered charity is the owner and beneficiary of the policy. My Par Gift can offer the registered charity the flexibility of a payout when the insured person dies or access to cash while they're alive. It is important to note that any withdrawals or unpaid loans will decrease the size of the charity's payout."

For people planning to make a donation to charity, life insurance policies offer several benefits:

- 1** Life insurance can unlock significant donations for charities important to you;
- 2** You can make a large charitable donation without reducing the inheritance for your children and other loved ones;
- 3** Your gift of life insurance will go to your charity beneficiaries quickly because the policy is outside of your estate and not subject to probate;
- 4** You can choose tax benefits during your lifetime or for your estate, depending on how you structure your gift and policy.

*By working with your insurance advisor and Saskatoon Community Foundation, you can determine how to make an insurance gift that is best for your financial plan, reflects your values, and creates the legacy you want to leave. If at any time you want to make a change, you can come to the Foundation to make changes, at no cost to you.*

While insurance gifts have tremendous potential, they can be complex and require a thorough understanding to ensure you are using the right policy for your giving.

"Having worked in the charitable gifting space as an advisor...for the last 25 years, this new option of making a one-time payment makes it simple for the person making the donation (and for the organization) receiving the gift as My Par Gift provides the charity with options," explains Joseph. "The flexibility is significant and a welcome addition to the charitable gift planning field."

Saskatoon Community Foundation has been a trusted partner in local charitable giving since 1970, and works closely with wealth management and insurance professionals as part of donors' estate and charitable gift planning advisory teams. ●



## How can professional advisors work with the foundation?

Contact Director of Philanthropy Joanne McGrath at [development@saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca](mailto:development@saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca) or (306) 665-1764.

Learn more about making charitable giving part of your financial plan.

<https://saskatooncommunityfoundation.ca/give/legacy-giving-and-wills/>



**Anyone can  
leave a legacy.**  
Donate to your  
community  
in your Will.



**WILL  
POWER**



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