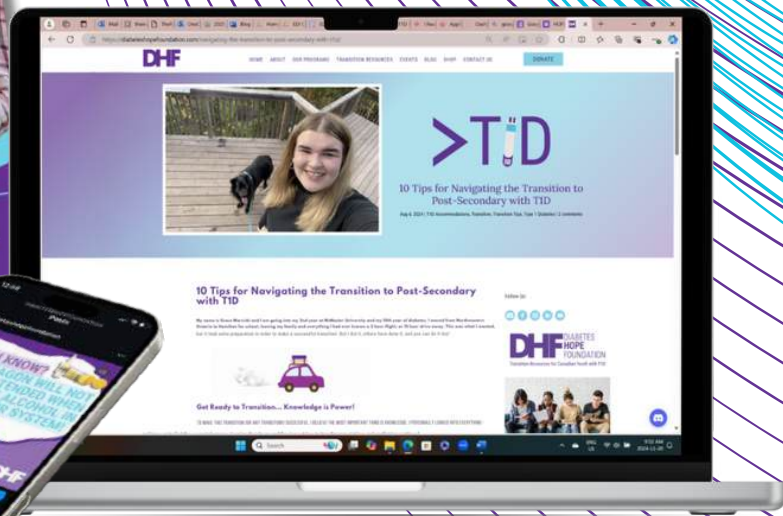
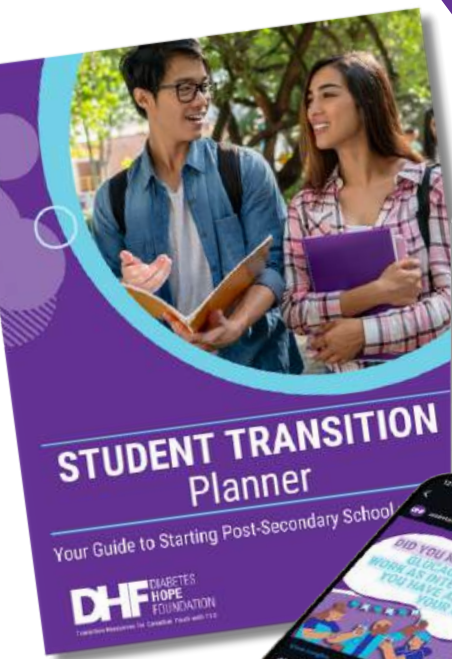




# DHF DIABETES HOPE FOUNDATION

Transition Resources for Canadian Youth with T1D

## COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT 2023 | 2024



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## **Our Vision**

To be a leader in supporting youth with type 1 diabetes (T1D) and their supporters in Canada through transition and beyond.



## **Our Mission**

We empower youth with T1D and their supporters by providing financial, social, emotional, and informational support to transition to a healthier tomorrow.

# Message from the CEO

I am excited to announce that in 2024, Diabetes Hope Foundation (DHF) has expanded its reach beyond our Alumni base, connecting with even more youth and families in need of support. This growth has been made possible by the unwavering commitment of our numerous community partners, whose belief in our mission has reinforced our determination to make a meaningful difference.



Over the years, we have witnessed our initiatives flourish in ways we once only dreamed of. Our team is stronger than ever, equipped with the knowledge, skills, and compassion necessary to propel our mission forward. I am continually inspired by our Alumni and youth leaders, whose energy and innovative spirit infuse new life into our programs.

As we embraced this growth and expansion in 2024, it became clear that a more structured leadership model was essential for our organization. I am incredibly proud to transition my volunteering role with DHF from that of Chairwoman to that of CEO, a decision that reflects my commitment to ensuring the success of DHF's important work in the diabetes community. This transition was not made lightly, and I am excited to collaborate with the new DHF Board of Directors, chaired by my longtime supporter, advocate, and dear friend, Peter Atkins. Through the guidance of Peter and the Board, I am confident that DHF will continue to thrive, innovate, and positively impact the lives of youth living with type 1 diabetes.

As I step into the role of CEO, I am filled with optimism and gratitude, fully confident in the remarkable team surrounding me. Together, we will honour the legacy of DHF and elevate it to new heights. I invite you to join us in this exciting new phase of our journey as we implement positive changes across Canada.

In closing, I want to extend my deepest gratitude to all of you who have supported and believed in the mission of the Diabetes Hope Foundation. It is your unwavering commitment that empowers us to stand ready to embark on this new and promising chapter.

Together, we will continue to be a beacon of hope for those affected by diabetes.

Together, we will create a brighter future for all.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Barbara Pasternak". The signature is written in a dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Barbara Pasternak, M.S.M.  
Founder and CEO

# Message from the Chair



The Diabetes Hope Foundation continues to be a positive influence on young people with diabetes. In 2024, DHF awarded our 943rd scholarship in Canada, with applications being received and scholarships being awarded from coast to coast. We are a nationally recognized diabetes organization. This is an incredible accomplishment from a once small charity!

Since 1999, DHF has grown and evolved as an organization. Barbara Pasternak moved from her position as Chair of the Board of Directors to that of CEO at DHF. She is now able to dedicate even more of her time and energy to directly bettering the lives of young people with diabetes. I've been working with Barbara in various capacities for over 25 years, and as her Vice Chair for more than a decade. She has inspired my continuing involvement with DHF and as Board Chair I remain excited by Barbara's example of leadership and growth for the Foundation.

Let me emphasize my continuing commitment to supporting the DHF mission. I was diagnosed with type one when I was 14 years of age and I understand the bumpy road of diabetes management and transition. The members of the DHF Board of Directors are dedicated to supporting youth with diabetes, and like me, every board member has a personal connection to this disease and a commitment to improving the lives of young people living with it. We are a dedicated and dynamic group of volunteers, sharing the Foundation's mission to provide education and resources to help youth with diabetes transition to a healthier tomorrow.

The growing influence of our Scholarship alumni inspires the DHF Board of Directors, and we remain committed to standing with them as they work to improve life with diabetes for others. Our support is unwavering, and we encourage and welcome the contributions of all. Consider joining us in our efforts!

Best always,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Atkins'.

Peter Atkins  
Chair, Board of Directors

# The Year in Review

This year was one of significant growth for DHF as we expanded our programs and outreach across Canada to support transitioning youth living with type 1 diabetes (T1D) and their families.

165  
Caregivers  
Connected



**November 2023**

Launch of PEP Talks Caregiver Program & Discord Support Forum



**DHF** DIABETES HOPE FOUNDATION  
Transition Resources for Canadian Youth with T1D



**October 2023**

New Branding & Social Media Strategy Developed



7.5 K  
New Website  
Visitors  
84.9%  
Engagement



**January 2024**

Launch of both New Website & Revised Scholarship Application

↑ 650%  
Instagram Reach



**March 2024**

Launch of Free to Be Program



**April 2024**

Student Transition Planner Released

778  
Views  
172  
Downloads

↑ 101%  
Facebook  
Profile Visits



**May 2024**

Barbara Pasternak Receives a Meritorious Service Medal (M.S.M.)



**June 2024**

43 Scholarships Awarded to Youth Across Canada

1,054  
Readers



**Summer 2024**

36 New Mentorship Matches Made, Launch of Community Blogs



833  
Youth & Families  
Connections



890  
Volunteer Hours



# Diabetes Hope Scholarship Program

Following a review over the summer of 2023, the 2024 Scholarship Program focused on increasing access, transparency, and accountability to meet the needs of students across Canada. Changes to the program in 2024 included:

- No longer requiring HbA1c data
- Standardized scoring rubrics were introduced
- Balanced scoring to incorporate merit and personal needs
- Extended outreach to clinics and community partners
- The application was made available to students in Quebec

In response to our new efforts, there were a record **180 completed applications**, with **43 scholarships** awarded to students across Canada. All recipients are matched with a peer mentor to guide them through their first year at post-secondary school. DHF is extremely thankful to our Scholarship Advisory Committee (comprised of over 50% DHF Scholarship Alumni) for their time and efforts in scoring the applications each year.



2024 Scholarship Recipients & Donors, Hybrid Ceremony at Bayview Golf & Country Club



*The Diabetes Hope Scholarship to me is about connection and a supportive resource. Not only will it ease the financial burden, but it will also provide a mentor-mentee bond to create a smooth transition from high school to University. It also allows a connection with open communication about how to solve stressful or anxious situations in post-secondary as a type one diabetic.*

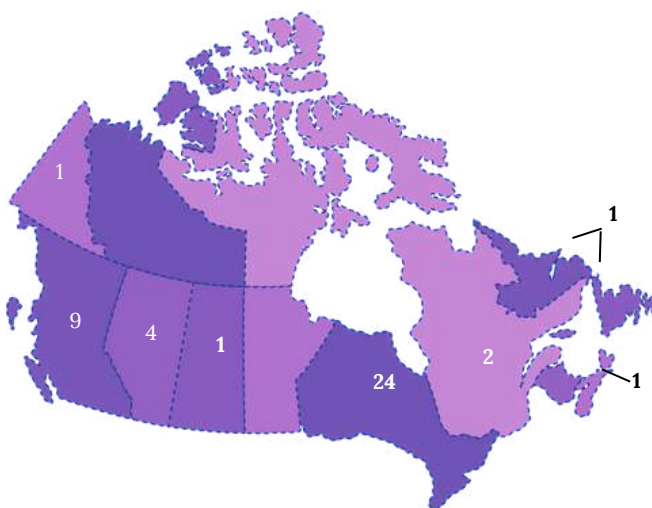
-Brooke, 2024 Recipient

*This scholarship personally will help me to chase my own dreams and not fear that diabetes might hold me back from reaching my full potential. Diabetes comes with a lot of concerns, especially when heading into post-secondary. The DHF scholarship lifts a burden off my shoulders so that I can study and succeed in the program of my choosing.*

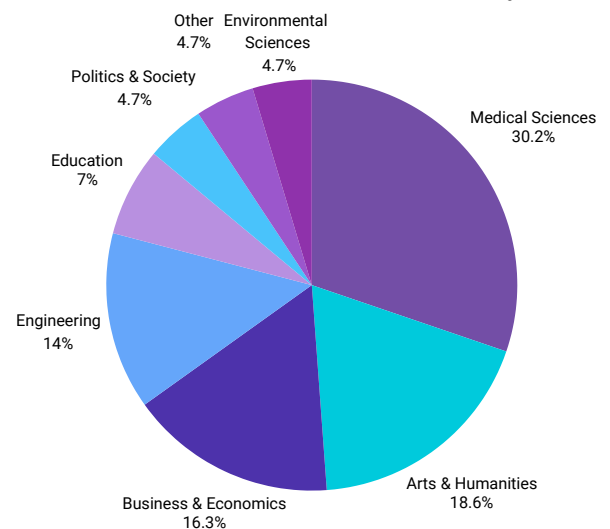
-Leonardo, 2024 Recipient





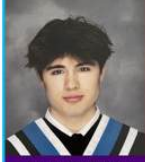

































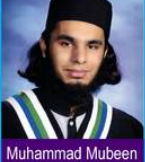






## 2024 Recipients by Province



## 2024 Recipients Areas of Study



# Congratulations to our 2024 Scholarship Recipients!

 Leonardo Brown Woodbridge, ON	 Maya Farres Vancouver, BC	 Henry McBride Kingston, ON	 Lauren Patzer Bradford, ON	 Wyatt Bashford Beeton, ON	 Dea Gjika Milton, ON	 Abigail Lewco Sooke, BC
 Chloe Thompson Victoria, BC	 Carter Gill N. Vancouver, BC	 Phoenix Ng Vaughan, ON	 Winnie Zhang Whithorse, YT	 Emma Cloutier Oakville, ON	 Amy Cooney Goose Bay, NL	 Rowan Smith Ohsweken, ON
 Brielle O'Meara Zurich, ON	 Emily Seabrook Blind River, ON	 Elodie Terriault Montreal, PQ	 Jake Lewis Brockville, ON	 Oliver Suuronen Ottawa, ON	 Daniel Buchinski Wainwright, AB	 William Powell Richmond Hill, ON
 Brooke Shelley Orangeville, ON	 Quilla Decker Kamloops, BC	 Raegan Hayhoe Newmarket, ON	 Olivia McAuley Red Deer, AB	 Juliette Benoit L'Assomption, PQ	 Megan Leonard Elmira, ON	 Macy Litzenberger Moose Jaw, SK
 Hayden Pointer Penticton, BC	 Emma Hou Oakville, ON	 Ava Ilyas Halifax, NS	 Thomas Lane Calgary, AB	 Abbey Mason North Bay, ON	 Russell Labash Vancouver, BC	 Tiana Mainella Richmond Hill, ON
 Kate Gurowka Mississauga, ON	 Muhammad Mubeen Brampton, ON	 Kieran Thordarson Toronto, ON	 Coco Clement Vancouver, BC	 Mikayla Gohring Chestermere, AB	 Jenna Juma Toronto, ON	 Natalie Selvage Surrey, BC
 Rachel Ho Aurora, ON	<p>“ This Scholarship will greatly help me in alleviating the financial stress of University to better focus on pursuing my future studies, and I am so grateful for that! This recognizes that giving diabetics hope doesn't just mean searching for a cure, it also means providing those with diabetes the tools &amp; resources to help them thrive in whatever they choose to pursue. ”</p> <p>- Maya, 2024 Scholarship Recipient</p>					

# Scholarship Alumni Spotlight

## Meet Jordan

Jordan grew up wanting to be a police officer, but when he was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at the age of 14, he was told that he would never be able to fulfill this dream. Knowing he wanted to help others, he applied to college to study social service work and received a Diabetes Hope Scholarship in recognition of his hard work and commitment to his community. When Jordan attended the Scholarship Ceremony, he had the opportunity to hear DHF Chair, Peter Atkins, speak about his journey to becoming the first firefighter living with T1D in Ontario. For the first time since his diagnosis, Jordan realized that diabetes didn't have to stand in the way of him pursuing his career goals.



After graduating and gaining professional experience in the fields of both social service work and security, Jordan now works for the Nova Scotia Government as a youth worker in a treatment facility while actively pursuing a career in law enforcement. Jordan has also continued to give back to the DHF Community through volunteering as a peer mentor and a webinar panelist as a way of supporting the next generation of youth living with T1D.

In 2023, Jordan continued his path of giving back when he joined the Scholarship Advisory Committee, allowing him the opportunity to both score applications from the 2024 cycle and provide invaluable feedback on how to strengthen the program and increase our outreach efforts to connect more youth from Nova Scotia to the program. Jordan shared that he "still to this day vividly remembers the absolute honour of being awarded my scholarship and it would be just as much of an honour to be involved in this illustrious process."



Wellness Wednesday Webinar: Transition to Post-Secondary – The New Reality (Part 2), 2020.



# Hope Connects Peer Support Program

Recognizing the impact T1D has on students' mental health and well-being, DHF created the Hope Connects Program to support students as they balance their T1D during their transition to post-secondary school. Through the Hope Connects program, students can access information and support through a variety of forums, while also offering valuable leadership opportunities for youth volunteers.

## One-to-One Peer Mentorship

- Open to students living with T1D in grades 12, first- or second-year post-secondary school
- Over 50 volunteer peer mentors, fully trained
- Supported 81 mentorship matches

*"Being part of the DHF mentorship program over the past few years has been such a great experience. As a mentor and mentee, I have gotten to meet so many incredible individuals living with type 1 and I have also made lasting friendships with such wonderful people. I am grateful for the DHF mentorship program!"*

*-Hope Connects Peer Mentor*

## Drop-Ins

- Hosted 8 in-person and virtual drop-ins, combining informative conversation with community-building
- 100% of attendees reported feeling more connected to the diabetes community

## Campus Club Collaborations

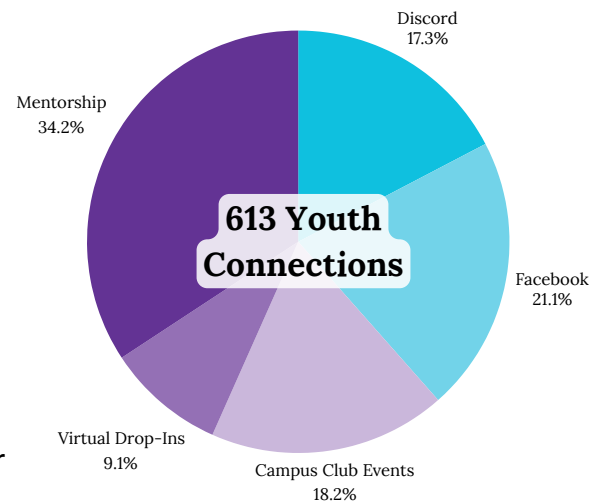
- Partnered with 8 campus Diabetes Clubs across Ontario to deliver three webinars focused on increasing support and reducing stigma

*"I learned there is so much more that impacts my blood sugars and that I should be more gentle with myself."*

*-T1D Student Attendee at Campus Club Event*

## Online Support Forums

- Discord Forum, T1D Campus Connects, launched in November 2024 to support current students with T1D-related issues
- Facebook Alumni Village supports senior DHF alumni as they navigate life transitions



DHF Mentors at the 2024 Scholarship ceremony.



# Connecting Generations of Hope



**Rav, mentor to Tasfia**

“Mentors are here to be a resource - sometimes youth might think “where do I even start?” and although we’re not experts, we will do our best to help them navigate a tough time or challenge. Mentors are supporters, cheerleaders and backup. **Mentors know how important it is to take care of yourself and your well-being - and how hard it can be sometimes. We create a safe space to talk about personal experiences without judgment.**”



**Tasfia, mentor to Laine**

“DHF has given me a chance to feel seen and make others feel seen, a place to vent or just a shoulder, or two, to lean on. My very first shoulder was that of my mentor. **Rav was a pillar of my small but strong support system and having that support during my grueling first year of university meant a lot to me, and it still does, as we stay connected.**”

“Those who I have met through the DHF all exemplify how **diabetes does not hold us back from doing the things that make us feel happy and fulfilled, and I’ve learned a lot about how to make sure that is true for me.** It’s amazing to have discussions with both my mentor, Tasfia, and my mentee, Grace, to hear about their interests and how they have pursued them while managing T1D.”



**Laine, mentor to Grace**

“Although I always tried my best not to let diabetes hold me back from anything, I still faced fears when it came to navigating unknown situations, like moving away from home and starting first year of university...as a mentor, Laine has been a rock for me. **Whether it was in the role of friend, role model, academic advisor, or tour guide, Laine was there whenever I needed her.**”



**Grace, mentee to Laine; began mentoring in 2024**



**Hope Connects**

# PEP Talks Caregiver Program



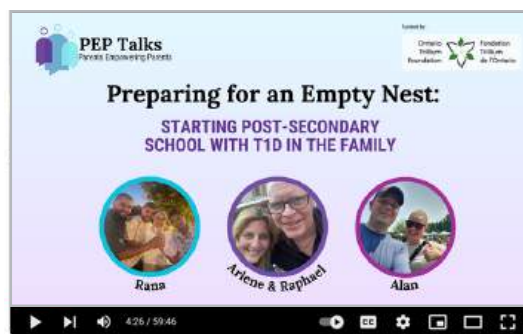
## About PEP Talks

At Diabetes Hope Foundation, we recognize that diabetes impacts parents and caregivers too, so in 2021 we launched our 'Let's Talk About It Workshop' to provide a space for caregivers to come together and talk about the highs and lows of living lives impacted by T1D. With the support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we have expanded this impactful program for caregivers in the Halton/Peel Regions. The PEP Talks Caregiver Program (Parents Empowering Parents) offers parents and caregivers in Halton/Peel Regions the opportunity to find a community of voices to collaborate with as they prepare for and navigate their adolescent's transition into young adulthood.



The program includes:

- Four monthly webinars
- Online resource library
- A Facebook community forum
- Bonus webinars, facilitated with volunteer parent panellists



64

Workshop Attendees



18

Caregiver Panellists



83

Facebook Members



202

Resources Downloaded



100%

Would Recommend

## What Participants are Saying:

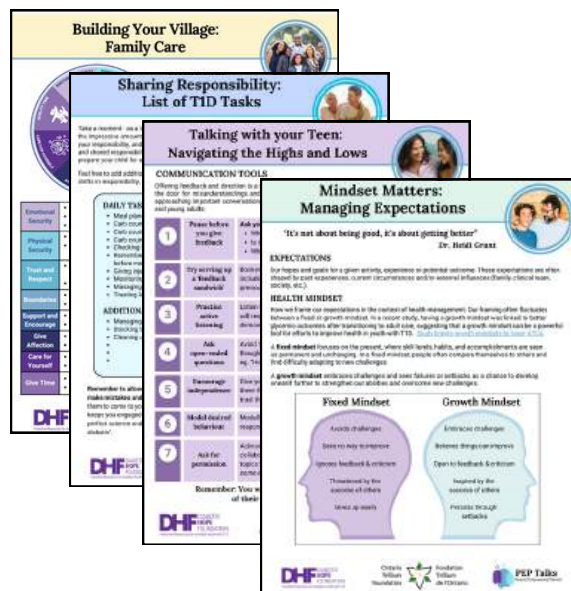
*"I found out I am not alone with all my fears."*

*"I loved the slides and it encouraged me to come up with a process to get [my child] closer to being independent."*

*"Hearing about others' transitions was really helpful. Lots of good points that I hadn't thought of."*

*"I really appreciated how welcomed and supported I felt."*

*"Thank you so much for your time tonight. It was so helpful to hear all of your words of wisdom and to just be able to talk about diabetes with someone other than my family!"*



# T1D Expressions

With the support of the Aubrey & Marla Dan Foundation, DHF piloted two new arts-based initiatives in the Spring of 2024. Recognizing the impact living with diabetes has on youth mental health, our T1D Expressions programming provides a safe space for youth to explore their experiences living with diabetes through creative expression while also developing a community that can support them as they navigate challenges and celebrate their successes.

## Free to Be Arts Program

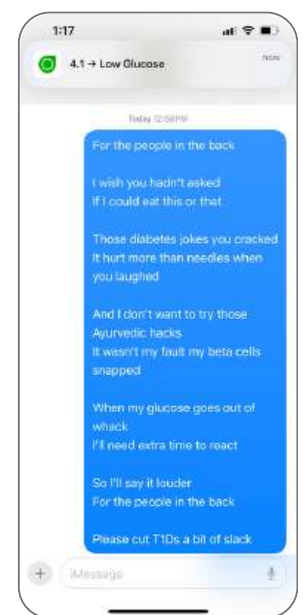
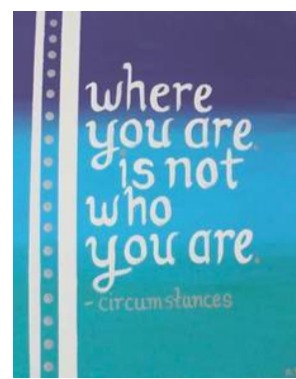
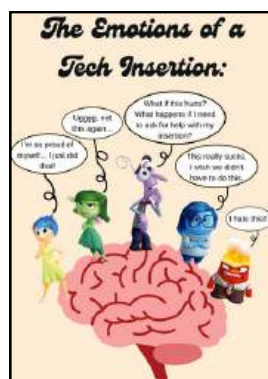
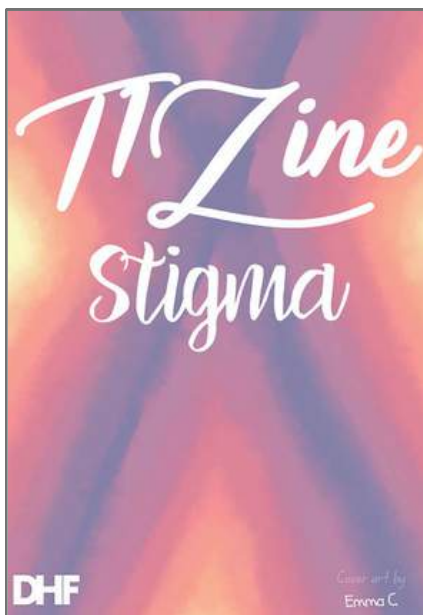
An in-person program where youth have the opportunity to connect with fellow T1Ds to explore the day-to-day highs and lows of life with diabetes using visual arts, improv, and classical theatre techniques. This 6-week program, culminating in an arts showcase, was the first time many participants had met others with T1D.



“ My daughter has enjoyed the program and loved the fact that she was able to hang out with other type one diabetics.   
 -Free to Be Participant's Mother

## T1Zine Project

Through our T1D Expressions programming, DHF launched *T1Zine* in June 2024. A collective work created by **11 youth** across Canada, the first edition explores the stigma youth with T1D face using thought-provoking visual arts and creative writing to express and educate. Available for free online, *T1Zine* has been accessed by **102 viewers**.



# Participant Spotlight



2024 Scholarship Recipient

## Meet Emma

Emma was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at 22 months old, and relied on her mom for her diabetes management for a long time. Eight years ago she took over her management herself, and in 2022, received a Diabetes Alert Dog (Ecco) to help her with her hypoglycemic unawareness. Beyond her diabetes, Emma is an active volunteer in her community, volunteering regularly at Lions Foundation Dog Guides of Canada. Emma also enjoys all kinds of arts and crafts, reading, writing, or researching current topics of interest.

Emma first connected with DHF through the Free to Be program. As a grade 12 student, Emma was able to connect with other youth navigating life with type 1 diabetes and shared that "it was fun getting to know other type 1 diabetics. It's neat being around people that understand...Programs like this help people feel included and less alone." Over the course of the program, Emma showed she is an amazingly talented artist, and further enriched the DHF community by designing the cover art for the first issue of the T1Zine.



In May 2024, Emma was selected to receive a Diabetes Hope Scholarship and was matched with her peer mentor, Brynne. The relationship with Brynne provided Emma with additional support when she moved away to school, both helping her navigate the university systems and also providing socio-emotional support as she adapted to living independently.

Through her relationship with her mentor Brynne, Emma has also connected with a small group of fellow T1D students on campus. Together, they have started exploring the option of starting a diabetes club at the University of Guelph!

Despite her busy schedule, Emma has also joined DHF for our virtual drop-ins where she was able to re-connect with facilitators from Free to Be and continue accessing support around shared T1D challenges and successes.

As part of the Creative Arts, Health & Wellness Degree Emma is pursuing at the University of Guelph, she selected DHF to feature in an assignment featuring an organization that has done a creative project or initiative related to health and wellness, reflecting on the power of community for youth living with a chronic illness.



# Online Resources

Recognizing that information is a key component of a successful transition, DHF has compiled a variety of important and helpful tools and resources for youth, their families, and diabetes educators to support a healthy and successful transition to post-secondary. All of the transition resources are available for free download via our website and are updated regularly by staff and community partners to ensure the information is current and accurate.

## Transition Guide

2,358  
Sessions

439  
Users



- Information on over 190 Canadian public colleges and universities to help navigate campus with T1D.
- Includes accessibility services, health insurance, nearest health care resources, campus supports and more!
- Updated annually and available for PDF download.

## Transition Resource Hub

1,213  
Users

1,093  
Downloads



- Downloadable transition resources for youth, caregivers and clinicians
- Features the NEW Transition Planner, researched and written by youth living with T1D and reviewed by Diabetes Educators

*"Our team just spent some time reviewing the Student Transition Planner. It is amazing, such a valuable resource, and so well done; a very exciting resource and tool for us to share with our families."*

*-Alanna Landry RN, CDE, Markham Stouffville Hospital*

## Community Blogs

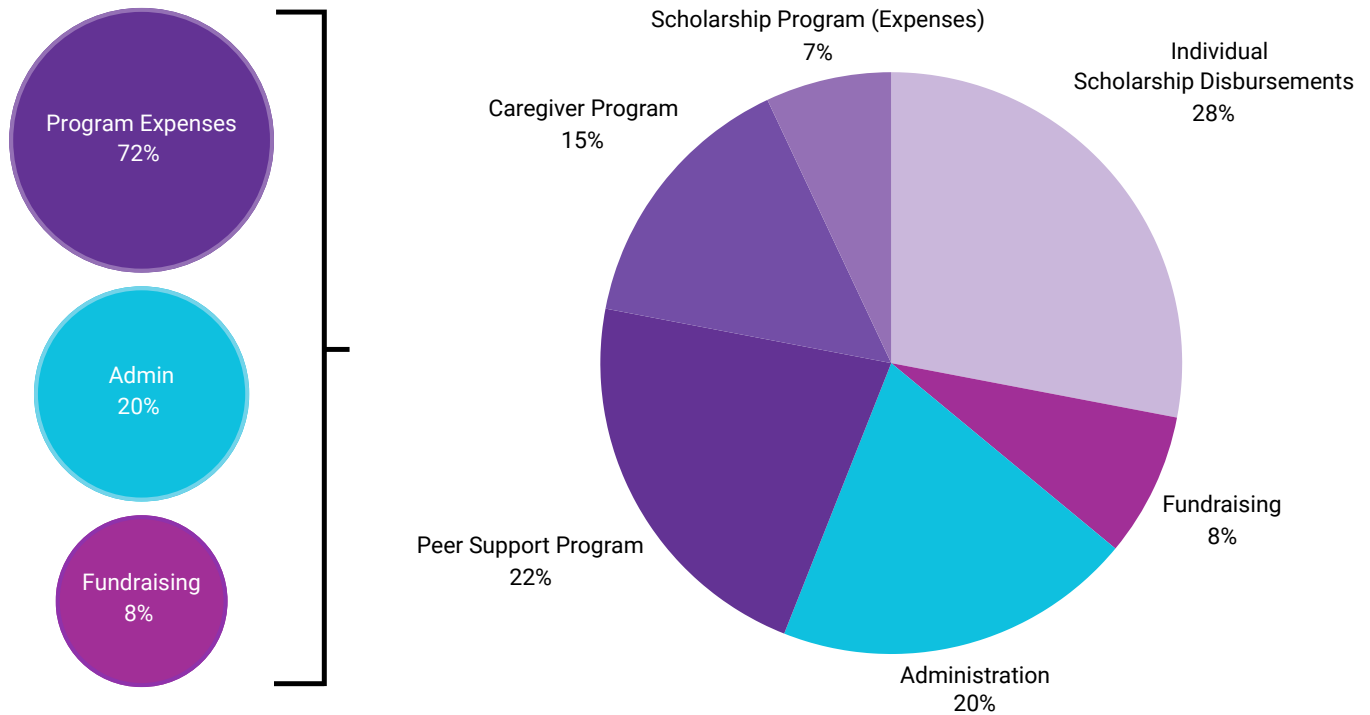
1,054  
Views



- >T1D Blog is written by youth from the DHF community, featuring their experiences and tips for navigating life with T1D, including transition tips and tools
- Features 13 youth contributors with ongoing opportunities for youth to contribute
- Smart Bites Blog is a nutrition hub featuring recipes from Transition in the Kitchen and youth contributors
- Includes a forward from registered dietitian and DHF Alumni, Debora Sloan

# Financial Breakdown

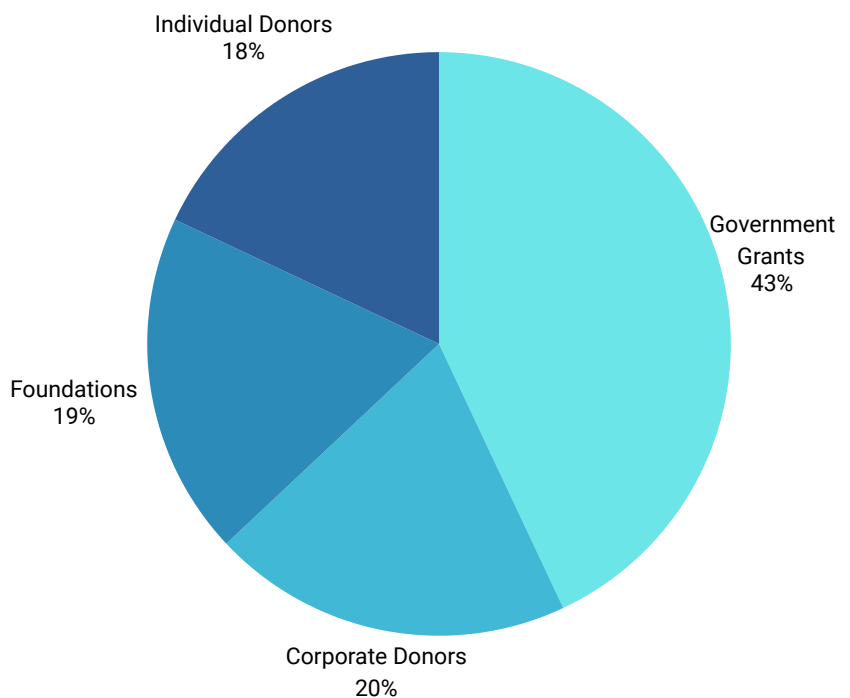
## Operating Costs



## Revenue Streams



Individual and Corporate Donors at the 27th Annual Swing of Hope Golf Tournament, May 2024.



# Donors and Supporters

## Corporate Donors



The Goodman Family Foundation



## Community & Family Donors

Senator Norman K. Atkins Memorial  
Bulldogs Friends & Family Fund  
Canavan Family  
DHF Alumni Legacy  
Jeremy & Judith Freedman Family Foundation

Laura Eileen Higginson Memorial  
Oringer Family Foundation  
Pasternak Family Fund  
Marlene Perkins Memorial  
Sigulim Family



...thank you



# DHF Leadership Team

## Management Team



**Barbara Pasternak**  
Founder & Volunteer CEO



**Heather Miller**  
Executive Director



**Anita Nardella**  
Director of Operations



**Karen Higginson**  
Communications Director

## Programs Team



**Heather Janine**  
Program Facilitator,  
Discord Lead



**Abbi Cloth**  
Program Facilitator,  
Drop-In Lead



**Rav Samra**  
Program Facilitator,  
Campus Clubs Lead



**Nathaniel Kinghan**  
Program Facilitator,  
PEP Talks & Free to Be;  
Social Media Specialist

## Special Projects Team



**Vivian Li**  
Scholarship & Online  
Transition Guide Lead



**Amal Bashir**  
Program Facilitator,  
Free to Be



**Rajitha Gunaseelan**  
Transition Guide  
Researcher

# DHF Board & Committees

## Board of Directors

### Chair:

Peter Atkins,  
District Chief, Toronto Fire Services

Bob Edwards, Director of Retail and Food Services,  
Humber River Hospital

### Vice Chair:

Kim Hanson,  
CEO, HealthPartners Canada

Jeremy Freedman, President, Chiefsrule Consulting  
Corporation

Ryan Macleod (DHF Alumni), Financial Services Executive

### Secretary:

Joan Canavan,  
Health Care Consultant

MaryAnn Nasrallah, Investments Advisor

Matthew Pacchione (DHF Alumni), Teacher, RDSB

### Treasurer:

Saul Sigulim  
Retired

Joe Pasternak, President, Fluid Hose & Coupling

Dr. Bruce Perkins, Director, Leadership Sinai Centre for  
Diabetes

Dr. Angelo Simone, Paediatric Endocrinologist, Trillium  
Health Partners

Ted J. Supelov, Owner, Teamwork Management

## Scholarship Advisory Committee

### Chair:

Dr. Angelo Simone

### Senior Advisor:

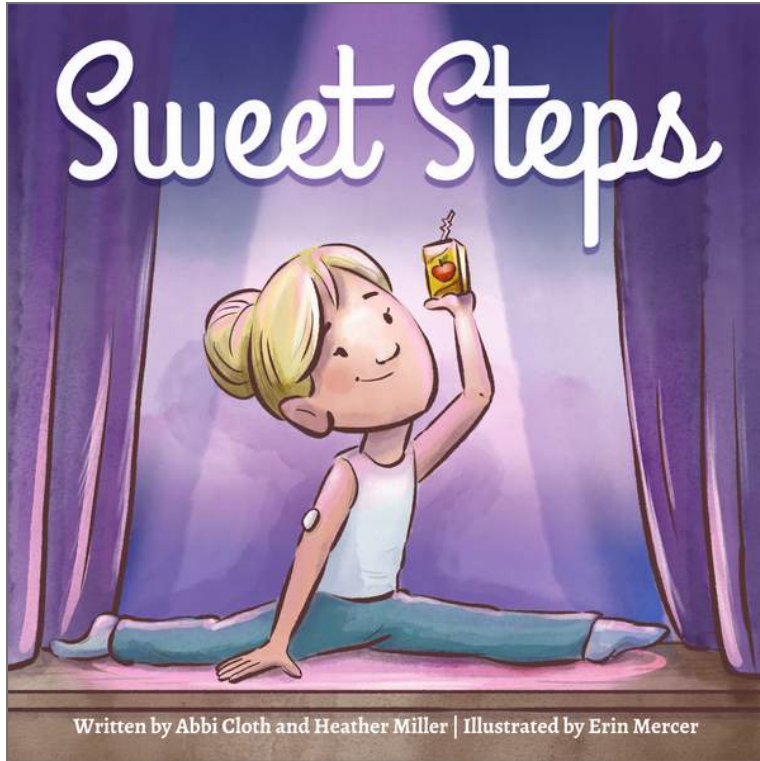
Barbara Pasternak

### Committee Advisors:

Peter Atkins, Jordan Dickie, Emily Gorgenyi, Kristin Herriott, Karen Higginson, Catherine Hotton,  
Alanna Landry, Matthew Pacchione, Rav Samra, Hala Shamaa, Saul Sigulim, Jen Spearen, Mark  
Yacoub

## Alumni Advisory Committee

Heather Choi, Krsitin Herriott, Ryan Macleod, Afreen Nagra, Tasfia Rayhan, Aastha Relan, Rav  
Samra, Dan Siegel, Heather Miller (Advisor)



Meet Abbi, a young dancer with type 1 diabetes. When it feels like diabetes is getting in the way of her dancing, Abbi finds support through her community and learns that T1D never has to stop her from following her dreams!

In 2024, DHF staff worked collaboratively with DHF Alumni to write *Sweet Steps*. Based on the real-life experiences of DHF Alumni Abbi Cloth and David Campbell and illustrated by Alumnus Erin Mercer, DHF's newest children's book shares a message of hope and inspiration for the next generation of children living with T1D.

# Available on Amazon\* November 2024

*Sweet Steps* was made possible through the support of:



\*Proceeds from the sale of *Sweet Steps* support DHF youth programs and resources.

# DHF DIABETES HOPE FOUNDATION

Transition Resources for Canadian Youth with T1D

**To Learn More and Access Free  
Programs and Resources:**

[www.diabeteshopefoundation.com](http://www.diabeteshopefoundation.com)



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[www.diabeteshopefoundation.com/donate](http://www.diabeteshopefoundation.com/donate)