



Transition Resources for Canadian Youth with T1D

# COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT

2024-2025



# Table Of Contents

[Message from the CEO](#)

[Message from the Chair](#)

[The Year in Review](#)

[Diabetes Hope Scholarship Program](#)

[Peer Support Programs](#)

[Access to Educational Resources](#)

[Raising Awareness](#)

[Community Voices](#)

[2024-2025 Financials](#)

[Swing of Hope](#)

[Donors and Supporters](#)

[DHF Leadership](#)

[DHF Board & Committees](#)



## 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.



## A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER & CEO

As the CEO and founder of Diabetes Hope Foundation, I am thrilled to share our impact over the past year. Since our inception in 1999, our mission has always been to support and empower youth living with diabetes through various resources and programs that connect them with DHF families across Canada.

This past year, we have significantly expanded our community programs, a testament to the leadership, commitment, and dedication of our incredible team. Their hard work has allowed us to reach new heights, impacting more individuals and families than ever before. Our initiatives are more than just programs; they are lifelines that foster connection, support, and empowerment for youth living with T1D.

I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt appreciation to our Alumni community. Their commitment has been invaluable, with many stepping forward to offer their insights, time, and resources. This involvement has not only strengthened our programs but has also cultivated a vibrant support network that youth can rely on. It's truly inspiring to see our Alumni embody the spirit of DHF, guiding and mentoring the next generation.

As we look to the future, let's carry this momentum forward. The dedication and passion that have brought us here will propel us into the next chapter of our journey. Together, we will continue to innovate, expand our reach, and deepen our impact within the community. Let's continue to work together, inspired by our shared vision. Here's to another year of growth, collaboration, and success!

**BARBARA PASTERNAK, M.S.M.**  
FOUNDER AND CEO



## A WORD FROM OUR CHAIR

The Diabetes Hope Foundation (DHF) continues to positively impact the diabetes community across Canada.

In 2025, DHF awarded its 989th scholarship after receiving applications from coast to coast, and the Foundation is on the verge of awarding its 1000th scholarship in 2026. This is a great accomplishment!

As a nationally recognized diabetes organization, the growing impact of DHF programs, and the volunteers and staff who make them happen, inspires the DHF Board of Directors.

Let me emphasize our shared 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. My fellow 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 T1D and a commitment to improving the lives of young people living with it. The Board is a dynamic group of volunteers sharing the Foundation's mission to provide education and resources to help youth with diabetes transition to a healthier tomorrow.

As DHF Board continues to strengthen, we are proud to have had two scholarship recipient alumni serving as Directors in 2025. This is "pay it forward" coming to be. Nothing pleases us more than to see DHF recipients becoming the next generation of leaders.

Barbara Pasternak continues to inspire my personal involvement with DHF as Board Chair, and I continue to be motivated by her dedication to supporting young people and their families who are impacted by diabetes.

Best always,

**PETER ATKINS**  
CHAIR, BOARD OF DIRECTORS



# The Year in Review: Building Supportive Communities

In 2024-2025, DHF continued to collaborate with youth leaders and health care partners to develop free programming and resources designed to support transitioning youth using peer-support and community-based models, focusing on three pillars:

- **Peer Support Programs**: Including our Hope Connects Peer Support program, Free to Be Community Arts Program, & PEP Talks Caregiver Support Program.
- **Access to Educational Resources**: Including financial support through the Diabetes Hope Scholarship program, webinars and educational resources, and the new Caregiver and Adult Care Guides.
- **Raising Awareness**: Including social media growth, the T1Zine project, Sweet Steps children's book, and the DHF community Blogs and Podcasts.

Over the course of 2024-2025, DHF continued to expand our transition programs and resources to ensure youth and their families have access to the information and support they need to navigate life as a young adult living with T1D.

## Our Reach:

**1,154**

direct peer connections  
made through the our  
peer support programs

**12 k**

active website users,  
with 73 k views

**82.1 k**

Instagram accounts  
reached, with over 500 k  
views across all platforms



# Diabetes Hope Scholarship Program

The 2025 Scholarship program received **172 completed applications**, with **46 scholarships** awarded to students from **nine provinces** across Canada. Applications were reviewed and scored by our Scholarship Advisory Committee (over 50% of members are Alumni), and awarded based on academic excellence, community involvement, personal need and demonstrated resiliency.

“

*“I think that this scholarship shows people that having diabetes does not stop you from achieving your goals, and is proof that people with diabetes can still do great things.*

*Receiving the Diabetes Hope Foundation scholarship will be a very big help as I pursue my dreams of attending medical school and being a doctor, and I am very thankful for being chosen as a recipient.”*

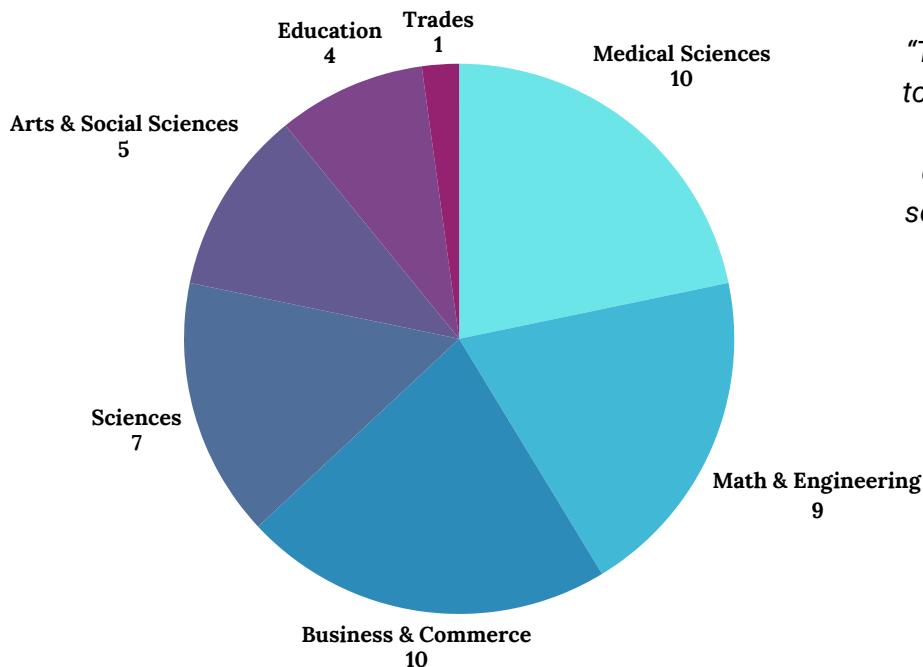
*(Kobe, 2025 Recipient)*

*“This scholarship has really empowered me to reflect on how diabetes has impacted my life and encouraged me to be proud of my own resiliency when it comes to balancing school, extra- curriculars and diabetes. I am so encouraged by the honor of this award and inspired by all the past recipients and getting to read all about their journeys of post-secondary with diabetes.”*

*(Elizabeth, 2025 Recipient)*

”

## 2025 Recipients' Field of Study



**989**

Scholarships awarded  
since 1999

# Congratulations to our 2025 Scholarship Recipients!



Chelsea Solda  
Ontario  
Abbott Laboratories Ltd



Gemma Caron  
Ontario  
Ascensia Diabetes Care



Vaidehi Dalal  
Ontario  
Anna Ruth Atkins Memorial Scholarship



Isabella Pascazi  
Ontario  
Anna Ruth Atkins Memorial Scholarship



Kaelen Roddy  
Ontario  
Aubrey & Maria Óen Foundation



Kobe Nippard  
Newfoundland  
Auster Rubber Co.



Devyn Vieau  
Ontario  
Breakthrough T1D



Tyler Mathewson  
Ontario  
Bulldogs Family & Friends



Maira Saleem  
Ontario  
Canavan Family Fund



Ryan Peters  
British Columbia  
Dexcom Canada



Elizabeth Piche  
Manitoba  
Dexcom Canada



Chloe Staple  
Nova Scotia  
Dexcom Canada



Maya Poelman  
Ontario  
Diabetes Canada



Jake Duncan  
Ontario  
DHF Alumni Legacy



Evan Vellescig  
British Columbia  
DHF Alumni Legacy



Anjelika Bell  
Ontario  
Eve Ayling Fund



Jade Goulet  
Ontario  
Embecta



Mohi Kambo  
Ontario  
Embecta



Tennyson Hard  
Ontario  
Fluidhose & Coupling Inc.



Ethan Flemming  
Ontario  
Fluidhose & Coupling Inc.



Sofia Traid  
Ontario  
Harold (Hushy) Lusthouse



Lily Powers  
Ontario  
Hoyes Michalos



Kylie McKinnon  
Ontario  
Laura Eileen Higginson Memorial



Clara Marshall  
Ontario  
Jeremy & Judith Freedman Family



Kotari Kawai  
British Columbia  
Jeremy & Judith Freedman Family



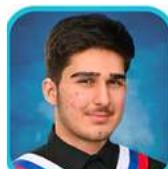
Caleb Buffie  
British Columbia  
Malcolm Perkins Memorial



Nicole Reis  
Ontario  
Marlene Perkins Memorial



Anwyn Burgess  
Nova Scotia  
Medtronic of Canada Ltd.



Al-Hassan Moalla  
Ontario  
Medtronic of Canada Ltd.



Filsane Ahmed  
Ontario  
Medtronic of Canada Ltd.



Maryam Dabbarh  
New Brunswick  
Novo Nordisk Canada



Hailey Ralph  
Newfoundland  
Novo Nordisk Canada



Bryce Black  
Ontario  
Novo Nordisk Canada



Grace Tapuska  
Ontario  
Novo Nordisk Canada



Cohen Campbell  
British Columbia  
Omnipod Canada



Griffin MacDonald  
Ontario  
Omnipod Canada



Kaitlyn French  
Ontario  
Pasternak Family Fund



Vlada Coveny  
Quebec  
Pasternak Family Fund



Chris Hogan  
British Columbia  
Pratt & Whitney Canada



Logan Miller  
Ontario  
Sigulim Family Fund



Mia Scornaienchi  
Ontario  
Sigulim Family Fund



Thandia Lord  
Ontario  
Sigulim Family Fund



Curtis Farrow  
British Columbia  
Walker Wood Foundation



Jazmin Colombe  
Newfoundland  
Walker Wood Foundation



Charlotte Phuong Duval  
Quebec  
Walker Wood Foundation



Adison Halyk  
Saskatchewan  
Walker Wood Foundation



## Peer Support Programs

DHF's peer support programming addresses the emotional and social aspects of living with diabetes by connecting youth and their families with a community of peers with shared experiences. To meet the community where they are, our programs offer multiple points of access, including mentorship, online support forums, and both in-person and virtual drop-ins through our Hope Connects Peer Support, Free to Be Community Arts, and PEP Talks Caregiver programs.

### Our Impact:

**92%**

of peer support participants reported feeling more connected to the T1D community

**100%**

of PEP Talks participants would recommend the program to others

**85%**

of Free to Be participants reported they felt more confident to self-advocate

**75%**

of Hope Connects mentees plan to return to volunteer as mentors



**35** peer mentor matches made across Canada, with 19 new mentors completing the Hope Connects and new EDI mentor training programs



**108** youth connected online through DHF's Campus Connects Discord server, sharing tips around navigating live with T1D



**8** Free to Be Community Arts workshops, creating a safe space for **45** youth across Ontario to explore T1D stigma and find a community of support



**7** PEP Talks workshops hosted for caregivers, providing tools to navigate the transition to adulthood and connecting families



## Access to Educational Resources

In order to ensure students have the information they need to successfully navigate their transition to post-secondary school and the adult health care system, DHF continues to develop free resources for youth and their families. Created in collaboration with youth living with T1D, caregivers, and our health care partners, each resource focuses on sharing reliable information and helpful tools to ensure youth and their families are informed and empowered throughout their transitions.

### Our Impact:

**3.6 k**

transition resources  
downloaded

**2m 17s**

average website  
engagement time

**519**

webinar & podcast  
views on YouTube

**931**

unique visitors to the  
Community Blog



11 new resources made available on the [DHF Resource Hub](#), including our new *Guide to Adult Care* and *PEP Talks Caregiver Resource*



Hosted 9 transition webinars for youth and their families, sharing reliable information about navigating transition with T1D



12 Blog posts launched on our [Greater than T1D](#) community blog, written by 10 youth from across the DHF community



Launched our new [T1D Talks](#) podcast, featuring transition webinars and Diabuddy Dialogue, a new series launched by DHF's EDI committee



## Raising Awareness

Through our programming and our children's book series, DHF continues to build supportive communities for youth living with T1D in order to positively impact both their day-to-day management and their mental health. In 2024-25, we hosted three events with our university club partners, launched the 'What's The Deal with Diabetes' social media campaign, launched our T1Zine, and released Sweet Steps, all focused on raising awareness about the realities of living with diabetes and the impact of T1D stigma - both within and beyond the diabetes community.

## Our Impact:

**125%**

increase in  
Instagram followers

**100%**

increase in content  
interactions

*"Even after years of dealing with T1D, 'Sweet Steps' sparked questions and discussions from my kids. And the surprise ending left our hearts feeling happy. A great book for kids who are dealing with T1D."*

~Leah, T1D Mom (@carbcountingmama)

 **3** issues of T1Zine featuring youth artists from across Canada, exploring themes of T1D stigma, support and diagnosis stories



**500+** posts on social media, exploring stigma, diabetes health literacy and supporting youth with T1D



Released Sweet Steps, a children's book exploring the realities of growing up with T1D and the importance of community



Hosted **3** workshops in partnership with **8** campus diabetes clubs to raise awareness about diabetes on university campuses

# Community Voices



“

*I enjoy what events I can attend because of the common experiences we share as a community of type 1 diabetics. It can be isolating to deal with diabetes sometimes, and the Free to Be programming helps break that up.*

*(Lenore, Free to Be Participant)*

*“I have truly loved being part of the mentorship program, and first and foremost just wanted to give you guys a big thanks for creating such an awesome resource and matching me with two great mentors...*

*the community that you guys have created at DHF surrounding diabetes is one that I would love to get more involved in... I am truly so grateful for DHF.”*

*(Anna, 2025 Hope Connects Mentee)*

*“DHF has given us the space and creativity to develop the programs and resources we need and implement things we know can support our T1D community. As a student, I value this part of DHF because we are able to make opportunities for ourselves, not just passively wait for them to approach us...We helped build the EDI mentor training package, started a health literacy project called What's the Deal With, and launched a podcast.”*

*(Afreen, EDI Committee, Mentor, and Free to Be participant)*

*“I loved the real life experience that these families offered. We are very new to T1D with my son just being diagnosed this past fall and we love to travel and it felt so overwhelming. So helpful.”*

*(Travel webinar participant)*

*“After DHF events, I always leave feeling so supported and understood.”*

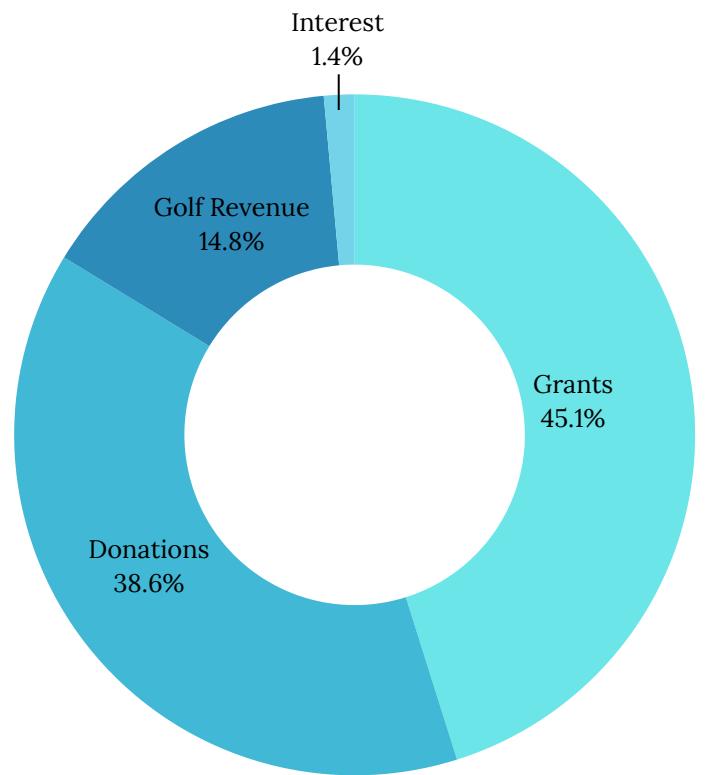
*(Don't Sugar Coat It attendee)*

”

# 2024-2025 Financials

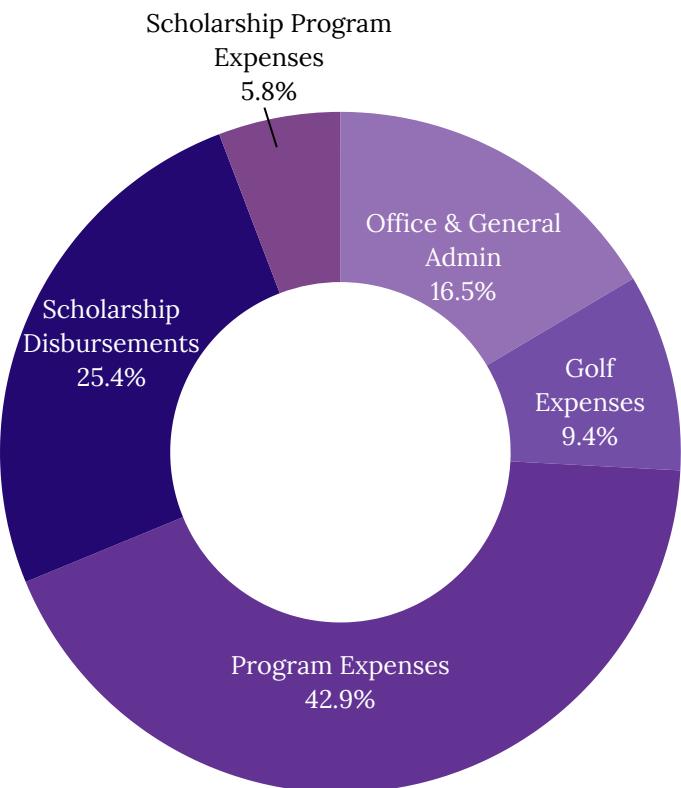
## REVENUE \$510,664

Revenues	2025	2024
Grants	\$230,502	\$179,010
Donations	197,055	160,192
Golf Revenue	75,707	58,500
Interest	7,400	12,342
	<b>510,644</b>	<b>410,044</b>



## EXPENSES \$520,624

Revenues	2025	2024
Golf & Fundraising	\$56,204	\$26,686
Program Expenses	228,682	179,010
Scholarship Program	31,128	32,549
Office & Admin	68,110	89,684
Scholarship Disbursements	136,500	133,500
	<b>520,624</b>	<b>461,429</b>

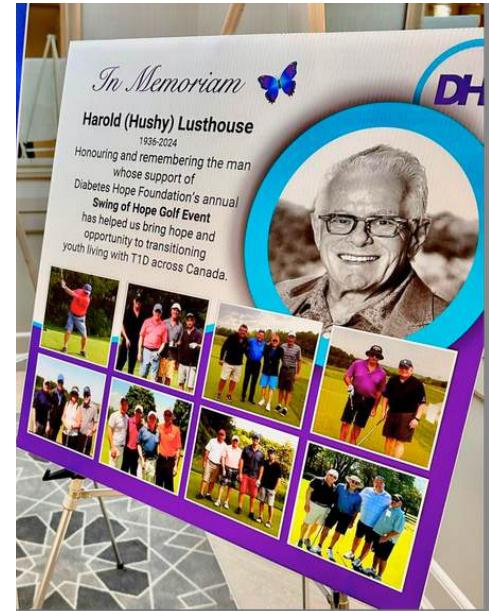




## 28th Annual Swing of Hope Golf Tournament

Diabetes Hope Foundation began with a golf tournament, which helped to fund the first four scholarships in 1999. We are deeply appreciative of the ongoing commitment from our corporate sponsors and dedicated golfers, who continue to support the work of DHF.

In 2025, our annual tournament was hosted at Bayview Golf and Country Club with a full roster of golfers. We honoured the memory of our dear friend and long-time supporter Husky Lusthouse at the event, bringing together family and friends, to remember and celebrate his generous nature. Husky's legacy inspires us to continue our mission and reminds us of the profound impact one person can have.



# Donors and Supporters



The Jeremy & Judith Freedman Family Foundation



Diabetes Hope Foundation also appreciates the generosity and support of our community and family donors:

- Anna Ruth Atkins Memorial
- Senator Norman K. Atkins Memorial
- Bulldogs Family & Friends
- Canavan Family
- DHF Alumni
- Harold (Hushy) Lusthouse Memorial
- Howard Campbell

- Laura Eileen Higginson Memorial
- Marty Usher
- Pasternak Family
- Malcolm Perkins Memorial
- Marlene Perkins Memorial
- Robert and Marla Oringer
- 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,  
Hope Connects &  
Free to Be



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

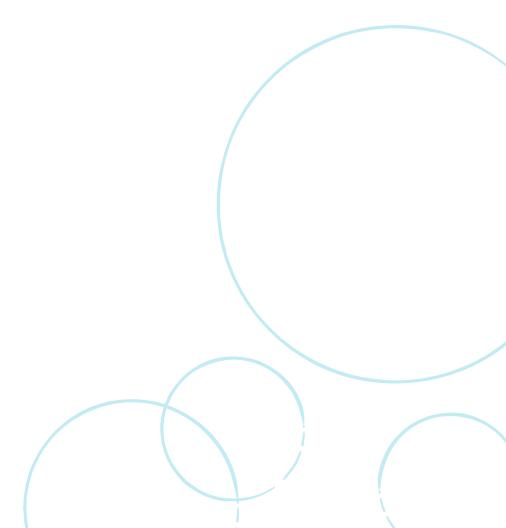
## Special Projects Team



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



**Rajitha Gunaseelan**  
Transition Guide  
Researcher



# DHF Board & Committees

## Board of Directors

**Chair:**

Peter Atkins,  
Retired Toronto Firefighter

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-Rivard, Karen Higginson, Catherine Hotton, Alanna Landry, Matthew Pacchione, Aastha Relan, Rav Samra, Saul Sigulim, Jen Spearen, Mark Yacoub

## Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee

Afreen Nagra, Aastha Relan, Rav Samra

## Youth Advisors

Ethan Parikh, Luka Parikh, Kieran Thordarson



Transition Resources for Canadian Youth with T1D

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

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



**DONATE** ❤

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

2180 Matheson Blvd. E.  
Mississauga, ON L4W 5E1  
Charitable Reg. 865276372 RR0001

