



LEARNING FROM OUR PARTNERS,
INSIGHTS FROM THE FIELD

LIDLAW FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 2023

LIDLAW
FOUNDATION

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OUR MISSION

Laidlaw Foundation supports young people impacted by the justice, education, and child welfare systems to become healthy and engaged by investing in innovative ideas, convening interested parties, advocating for systems change, and sharing learning across the sector.

OUR VISION

A society in which all young people have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

STAFF

SHARED STAFF:

Ruth Cortez - Receptionist and Office Assistant
 Simran Gill - IT and Data Coordinator

During the year, Miraaj Yousif and Ruth Cortez left the Foundation. We are grateful for their contributions during their time with the Foundation and wish them all the best. Thank you, Miraaj and Ruth.

Jehad Aliweiwi
 Executive Director

Amanda Bernard
 Director of
 Indigenous Programs

Aldeli Albán Reyna
 Director of Grants
 and Community
 Initiatives

Haiat Iman
 Research, Learning,
 and Evaluation Lead

Diana Demjanenko
 Operations
 Coordinator



Not pictured: Musa Alturk, Finance Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Janine Manning, *Chair*
 Rebecca Darwent, *Vice Chair*
 Tim Apgar
 Sandra Kagango
 Christopher McFarlane
 Benjamin Mitsuk
 Randy Steuart
 Setareh (Tara) Farahani
 Julia Laidlaw
 Paul Nagpal
 Jesse Waugh
 Kathryn Simmers

OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Janine Manning, *Chair*
 Paul Nagpal, *Vice Chair*
 Sandra Kagango, *Chair of Finance and Audit Committee*
 Setareh (Tara) Farahani, *Chair of Granting Committee*
 Jehad Aliweiwi, *Secretary*

FINANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Sandra Kagango, *Chair*
 Jesse Waugh
 Paul Nagpal, *Vice Chair*

External Advisors

Heather Brubacher
 Sumant Inamdar
 Ken Gibson
 Andre Lewis

INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Carissa Coe
 Chevaun Toulouse
 Jady Hardie-Bardy
 Alison Seymour
 Eternity Sutherland

FAMILY COMMITTEE

Julia Laidlaw, *Chair*
 Bob Smith
 Tim Apgar, *Vice Chair*

External Advisors

Jessica Hammell
 Kathryn Simmers
 Melissa Laidlaw
 Jamie Laidlaw
 Nicole Denoudan

Non-Family Board Members

Rebecca Darwent

INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

Paul Nagpal, *Chair*
 Sandra Kagango, *Vice Chair*
 Tim Apgar

External Advisors

Paul Fensom
 Kristina Inrig
 Randy Steuart
 Heather Hunter
 Hanifa Kassam
 Ewa Townsend

IMPACT INVESTMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Paul Nagpal, *Chair*

External Advisors

Kristina Inrig
 MJ Sinha
 Hanifa Kassam

GRANTING COMMITTEE

Setareh (Tara) Farahani, *Chair*
 Jesse Waugh
 Christopher McFarlane
 Benjamin Mitsuk

External Advisors

Irwin Elman
 Teddy Syrette
 Koubra Hagggar
 Paul Bailey

GOVERNANCE AND RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

Rebecca Darwent, *Chair*
 Benjamin Mitsuk, *Vice Chair*
 Julia Laidlaw
 Christopher McFarlane
 Bob Smith
 Jesse Waugh

External Advisor

Hanifa Kassam

2023 CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE



2023 was a year of high engagement and intentional learning. It also marks the fourth year of Laidlaw Foundation's five-year strategic plan.

Over the past year, we made great progress and generated measurable momentum that built on the Foundation's strategy to support young people impacted by the justice, education, and child welfare systems. During the year, we granted to a range of initiatives and projects that further the Foundation's priorities and mission.

One of the tangible privileges of working in philanthropy and specifically with youth is the opportunity to partner with and learn from young people's leadership, ingenuity, and boldness. Many of our grantees are at the forefront of social and community advocacy and change. Over the past years, most grantees have had to step in to support much more than services to communities that have limited access to resources.

The year was marked by two significant accomplishments. The first is the release of a seminal report titled, *The State of Black and Indigenous Youth in Ontario*. The study, conducted in partnership with INDSight Consulting, is an examination of the experiences and impacts of policing on Black, Indigenous and racialized youth. The second accomplishment is a full review and evaluation of all granting, convening and research

activities that the Foundation completed under the current strategic plan. The learning report titled, *Impact of Laidlaw Foundation 2019–2024 Strategic Plan: A Summative Evaluation Report (2023)*, was conducted by AgentsC, a consulting firm specializing in fundraising, philanthropy, and social change. This year's annual report and the Foundation's website provide further details on these two reports.

In addition, the year saw us conclude the Youth Collective Impact partnership between the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS) and McConnell Foundation's Innoweave platform. The partnership supported dozens of youth serving collectives tackling long-standing challenges through the creative process of building strategic clarity, partnership structure, and communication strategy.

To strengthen the organizational excellence of the Foundation, we've made a few changes internally with the Laidlaw team resulting in new titles and enhanced roles for Aldeli Albán Reyna and Amanda Bernard. The new titles reflect the work that both will be doing regarding the management and stewardship of the Foundation's granting portfolio, network of partners, and sector connections.

During the year, we responded to Revenue Canada's proposed guidelines to allow foundations, like Laidlaw, to provide direct grants to organizations without charitable status, uncharitably known as non-qualified donees (NQD). Considering that Laidlaw has been working with groups and collectives over the years who are not charities, these changes were critical to our grantees and our work. The new guidelines issued by the government continue to insist on a culture of risk and accountability rather than partnership and equity. It has been long recognized, at least by communities we work with, that intentionally excluding organizations and entities for not having a CRA registration number is a de facto profiling that has negatively impacted many racialized communities from accessing donations, grants, and contributions. We will continue to advocate for more open, trusting, and enabling grant-making practices and an equity-focused legislative framework. We cannot meaningfully address inequity in society without engaging with those who are most impacted by it.

In addition, we responded to the war on Gaza and its devastating impact on many of our local communities. In a statement issued publicly, we extended solidarity with those affected, expressed alarm at the silencing of young people, challenged the influence of donors and philanthropists, and committed to combating hate and racism.

As we continue to pursue the full spectrum of our portfolio and what it can do to serve our mission, the Board of Directors has asked the Investment Committee to explore new and innovative options for the management of our assets and endowment with three desired outcomes. These include searching for a new asset manager, enhancing alignment between granting priorities, and adopting an investment approach that allows us to invest and grant in the same space.

Laidlaw's grant-making practices and values are considered leading in the sector. In 2023, the Foundation was featured in *Lifestyle Magazine's* special edition focused on Foundations and Family Offices. The article in the Spring 2023 edition of the magazine profiled the work and priorities of the Foundation and presented it as an example of excellence in working with and addressing community needs.

The coming year marks the 75th anniversary of the Foundation and the end of the current strategic plan. As we move forward, we are planning several events and activities to celebrate the Foundation's 75 years of philanthropy that places communities at the heart of its priorities and its focus.

In the upcoming year, the Board will actively engage in a planning process to establish the 2025-2030 plan to support communities with Black and Indigenous youth leadership.

The team continues to be engaged and actively connected to the sector as guest speakers, panel members and participants having important conversations about the state of philanthropy. Through our membership with various networks serving the sector, we remain connected to and engaged with the not-for-profit sector across Ontario and beyond.

The work of the Foundation continues to be guided by a committed Board and professional staff team without whom the accomplishments outlined in this report could not have been possible. Our deepest gratitude for their dedication and contributions. We pay special tribute to Rebecca Darwent and Tara Farahani, who are leaving the Board after six years of generous leadership and service. In the next page, we acknowledge and celebrate their service to the Foundation.

Lastly, we invite you to read the 2023 annual report and find out more about the work of our grantees and see how for nearly 75 years, Laidlaw has remained here, actively present for young people across the province. We look forward to hearing your feedback.

In Solidarity,
Janine Manning,
Chair

Jehad Aliweiwi,
Executive Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Rebecca and Tara joined the Board in June 2018 and served for a total of six years. As their terms come to an end, we are grateful for their leadership in transforming the Foundation's governance and granting practices.

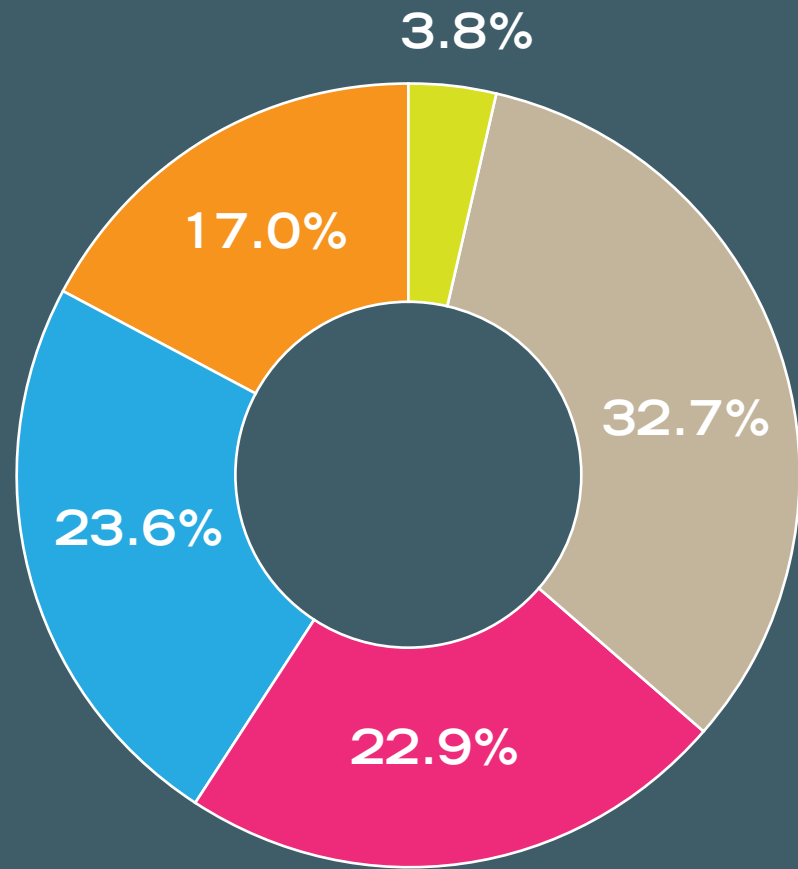
Thank you, Rebecca Darwent and Tara Farahani.

Rebecca's time on the Board saw two significant accomplishments in her role as the chair of the Governance Committee. She led the Foundation's compliance with Ontario Not-for-profit Corporations Act (ONCA) and oversaw the complete rewrite of the Foundation's governance manual and supporting documents.

We would also like to acknowledge Tara's contributions as the chair of the Granting Committee and her leadership in the development of the Youth Action Fund, which was the cornerstone of the Foundation's current strategic plan.



INVESTMENT AND FINANCE



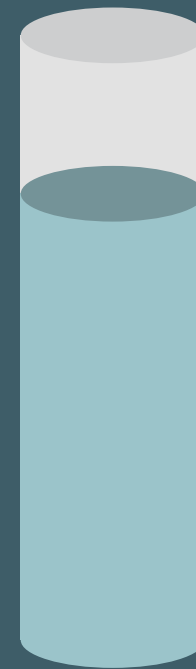
ASSET MIX

- Cash and Equivalents - 3.8%
- Bonds - 32.7%
- Canadian Equity - 22.9%
- US Equity - 23.6%
- International Equity - 17.0%

31 December 2023		
Asset Mix	Market Value	% Assets
Fixed Income	\$27,370,098	36.5
Cash and Equivalents	\$2,832,435	3.8
Bonds	\$24,537,663	32.7
Equity	\$47,700,042	63.5
Canadian Equity	\$17,216,118	22.9
US Equity	\$17,689,268	23.6
International Equity	\$12,794,656	17.0
Total	\$75,290,934	100.0



INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY FUTURES FUND
24 grants total
\$681,970



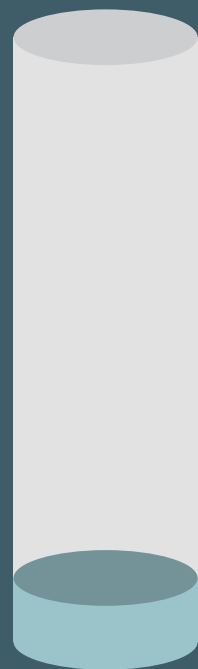
YOUTH ACTION FUND
18 grants total
\$1,673,469



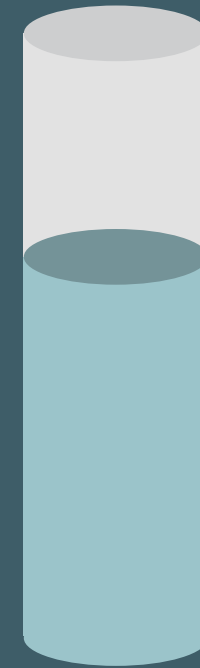
CAPACITY BUILDING
20 grants total
\$62,924



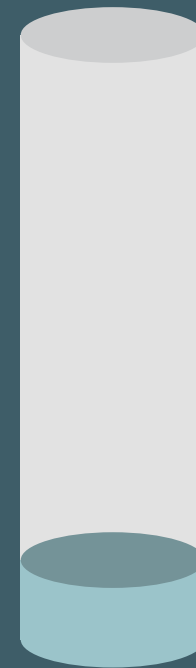
POP UP GRANTS
6 grants total
\$30,000



YOUTH COLLECTIVE IMPACT
5 grants total
\$129,944



COMMUNITY, EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY FUND
5 grants total
\$1,208,200



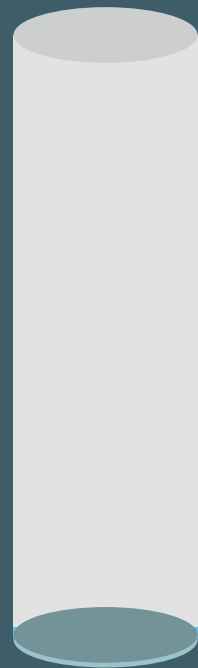
FAMILY DISCRETIONARY FUND
11 grants total
\$95,500



STAFF DISCRETIONARY FUND
6 grants total
\$11,500



BOARD DISCRETIONARY FUND
8 grants total
\$65,000



BOARD RECOGNITION DISCRETIONARY FUND
5 grants total
\$10,000

IMPACT INVESTING

Five years ago, the Board embarked on a strategy to align investment decisions with granting and programming priorities. The Foundation's desire to explore additional ways that our assets serve our mission and purpose has led to the creation of the impact investment strategy. This included a 5% carve-out of our endowment to be invested in opportunities, in addition to expectations in revenue, that

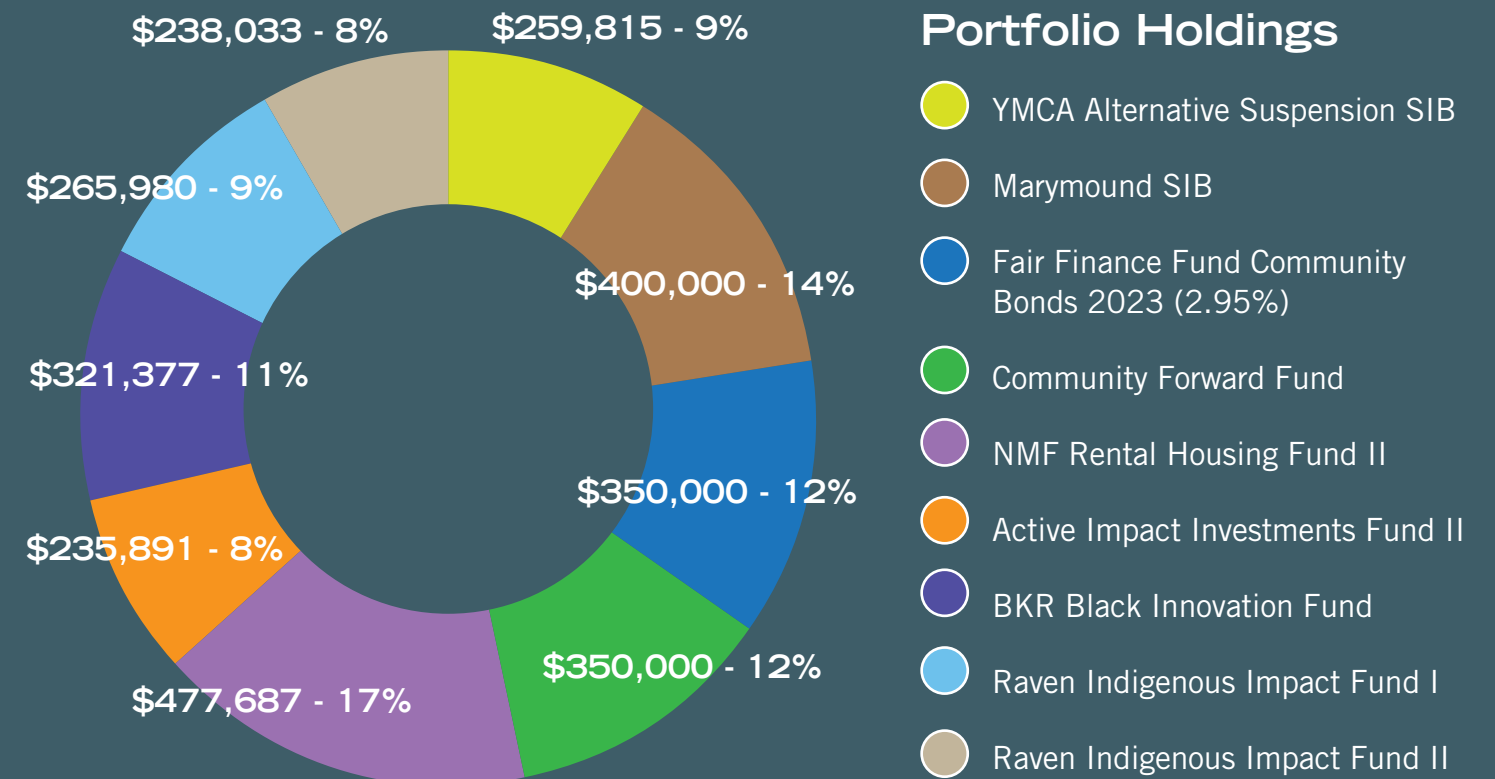
have specific social and environmental outcomes. Currently this investment portfolio includes nine opportunities including the YMCA Alternative Suspension Bond, Community Forward Fund, Raven Indigenous Impact Fund, and BKR Black Innovation Fund which we are spotlighting in this report. These assets are currently managed by Rally Assets.

Asset Mix	Market Value + Uncalled Capital	Percentage of Total
Social Impact Bonds	\$659,815	23%
Private Debt	\$700,000	24%
Real Assets	\$477,687	17%
Private Equity/Venture Capital	\$1,061,280	36%
Total	\$2,898,782	100%

ASSET ALLOCATION

The asset mix table (previous page) and asset mix pie chart below are based on the market value plus uncalled capital. Unlike committed capital or market value alone, this calculation captures changes in investment valuations, returns of capital, and the cash balance held by the custodian.

The asset allocation strategy is aligned with stated investment objectives and is not limited to a set asset mix as per the Foundation's Investment Policy Statement. The asset mix for the current portfolio is provided for information purposes. The capital is generally equally distributed across assets classes with private equity/venture capital having the largest allocation of capital.



IMPACT INVESTMENT SPOTLIGHT: BKR CAPITAL



One major event made Lise Birikundavi want to accelerate her work in her community: the murder of George Floyd. After much contemplation about what to do, Lise reflected on a specific question: How do you bridge the gap between historically negative perceptions of the Black communities in North America and the wealth of experiences and knowledge that these communities actually have to offer?

Lise and Isaac Olowolafe founded BKR Capital in 2021 to invest in technology-based companies and innovators with at least 25% of their team being Black-identified. BKR is the first Black-led fund in Canada that has raised institutional dollars.

Laidlaw's Impact Investment Fund (IIF) expands the goal of investments to include opportunities that address social issues and create impact. When Lise learned about it, she knew there was alignment with BKR Capital (BKR), which aims to bridge the funding gap for minority founders and foster the creation of a more inclusive business ecosystem.

"We want to invest in entrepreneurs who are determined to use technology to push boundaries and break barriers, regardless of where they stand today. We are looking for Black-led tech startups with this mandate of disrupting and outperforming the market. It's not a philanthropic endeavour to look at diversity when investing; it's good business."

Nonetheless, while fundraising, BKR has experienced pushback from potential investors regarding the existence of a substantial pipeline of Black entrepreneurs. BKR has proven there is a robust opportunity, after having spoken to over 1,300 Black-led technology startups since 2021. So far, BKR has invested in 12 companies and plans to reach its goal of 15 by mid-2024.

One example of their investments is Arternal, a startup that is transforming a rather change-resistant sector that is mostly paper-based: high-end art galleries. It provides these galleries with an all-in-one SaaS technology that provides support with client management, sales, payment and inventory. The added innovation and impact are evidenced by their "buy now, pay later" feature. It allows communities who cannot typically afford art as a storage of value to start considering that option. Furthermore, it helps smaller gallery owners from marginalized communities operate more efficiently.

A key insight of BKR's work is to recognize where to make the biggest impact. BKR raised \$22.3 million, over double the amount of the expected \$10 million, for their demonstration fund. Despite that, they are still considered a micro-fund, providing cheques that are relatively small by tech sector standards to their portfolio companies. BKR aims to raise a bigger fund in 2024, in order to build on their impact and increase their support to Black innovators.

"The ripple effect of their impact is huge. Companies we invest in now have the means to build and others are quickly looking up to them. It creates a new level of empowerment when people start seeing themselves represented. We feel privileged to back extremely smart and values-driven entrepreneurs...who go out of their way to ensure that their business adds to the wellbeing of their community."

\$681,970

INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY FUTURES FUND

Through the Indigenous Youth and Community Futures Fund (IYCF), Laidlaw invests in opportunities for Indigenous youth to develop and lead projects where they are immersed in their lands, languages and cultures;

participate in everyday acts of resurgence, reclamation and wellbeing; build relationships within and across Indigenous communities; and learn about and define for themselves what reconciliation means.

INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY FUTURES FUND - \$681,970

ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
Minwaashin Lodge: Indigenous Women's Support Centre (Aunties on the Road: Indigenous Full Spectrum Doula Collective)	\$30,000
Spirit Earth Holistics Inc (13 Moons Land Based learning)	\$30,000
Children's Peace Theatre (Niizh Manidook Hide Camp)	\$30,000
(Brayden White) Ratitsienhanonhna	\$30,000
Kaitlin Rizarri (Tkaronto Plant Life)	\$30,000
Sheshegwaning First Nation	\$30,000
Waabinong Head Start Family Resource Centre (Youth Odena)	\$30,000
Isaruit Inuit Women's Sewing Centre in Ottawa	\$30,000

INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY FUTURES FUND - \$681,970

ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
CatalystsX (Bawaating Child Welfare Warriors)	\$30,000
Finding Our Power Together	\$30,000
Dwadewayehsta' Gayogoho:nq?	\$30,000
Restoring Our Roots	\$30,000
Hotinohsioni Inc Brantford Native Housing	\$30,000
Brantford Region Indigenous Support Centre	\$30,000
Endaayaan Awejaa	\$30,000
Mohawks of the Bay of Quinte Council	\$30,000
Nigig Nibi Ki-win Gamik Society	\$30,000
Biigtigong Nishnaabeg Social Services	\$30,000
Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (Kahnekanoron)	\$24,500
Viola Rose Day (The Wolverines)	\$27,500
Auntie's Place	\$30,000
Wolf Lake First Nation	\$30,000
M'Chigeeng First Nation	\$30,000
NORDIK Institute (Aki Kikinomakaywin)	\$18,200

AUNTIE'S PLACE



Relationship-building is not as straightforward as it seems. But there is something special about naming it as a practice that is akin to a heartbeat. Without it, we lack direction about how to inspire and champion each other and our communities.

The heartbeat of Auntie's Place, its three co-founders, tells this story about their own aunts and the roles they've played in each of their lives. One of them, Leslie VanEvery, had an aunt who looked out for her wellbeing as a child growing up in Six Nations.

These relationships were the catalyst for the founding of Auntie's Place, a community-led group that supports Afro-Indigenous, Black and Indigenous girls in sharing their cultures and developing their relationships to each other, themselves and their communities.

The Empowerment Circle, funded by the Indigenous Youth and Community Futures Fund (IYCFF), is a six-week program where young girls get to know each other through a range of workshops on topics such as community care, hood feminism and self-expression. In the sixth week, the girls get to go to Six Nations and create digital stories about their experiences. Their bonds with each other strengthen, especially given some past experiences with discrimination in other programs. The program has been a welcome change.

"They were happy that they were in a space where they could be themselves and not face any kind of discrimination," says Leslie. "I think they just enjoyed the community and being in a space that was...a lot more relaxed...We let them guide [the music] we listened to because it was their space...it was an opportunity for them to just be themselves."

When her own daughter requested to do the Empowerment Circle logo, Leslie had an aha moment: Young girls could benefit from more leadership opportunities that allow them to build their skills and deepen their connections to their communities and each other.

However, trying to achieve many things at once can create an imbalance. "When you're focused on relationship-building, it's hard to focus on administration...Sometimes when we want to do everything, we do a little bit of everything but we don't do one or two things really really well," said Leslie. The heartbeat needs time to slow down.

With a renewed focus on one or two major program outcomes, there's been more time for the three co-founders to reflect. "It's helpful because you get to reflect on the program as it goes along...it's all about refining the program and details so that we can build upon it later," says Leslie. One detail is the hope to include mentorship within the current program. Another is to create a Black and Indigenous parenting program that reclaims traditional practices of the communities.

Space continues to be a challenge. Currently, the program can only accommodate nine participants instead of 12 total. With Laidlaw Foundation's support, Leslie is hopeful for incorporated non-profit status and owned space in the near future. Relationship-building has laid the groundwork for this path to a heart full of possibilities.

\$1,673,469

YOUTH ACTION FUND

The Youth Action Fund offers grants to grassroots initiatives working with youth who are underserved by the education system and over-represented in the justice and child welfare systems, prioritizing Black and Indigenous youth-led projects. The development of this fund was guided by a series of consultations with experts and advocates in the field.

Objectives:

- Elevate the voices of young people with lived experiences in the justice, education, and child welfare systems
- Support initiatives working on or advocating for early intervention
- Promote equitable and accountable institutions and systems
- Support initiatives working on or advocating for evidence-based policy
- Support initiatives that are informed by youth, families and communities

YOUTH ACTION FUND - \$1,673,469	
ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
Collective of Child Welfare Survivors	\$100,000
The Remix Project / FYOU	\$100,000
Positive Change Toronto Initiative	\$100,000
Restoration and Empowerment for Social Transition Centres (REST Centres)	\$100,000
Youth Association YAAACE	\$100,000
PositiveVibes T.O.	\$44,653
Somali Scholars	\$33,000
Assembly of Seven Generations	\$100,000
IMPACT 'n Communities	\$100,000
Unity Charity (Previous name: Children's Peace Theatre) / River Rocks	\$100,000
Endaayaan Awejaa	\$100,000
Hey Black Girl!	\$100,000
FLOW Financial Literacy Online Workshop Management	\$100,000
Think Twice	\$100,000
Disability Justice Network of Ontario	\$100,000
Near North Mobile Media Lab	\$96,400
Peacebuilders International (Canada)	\$100,000
Helping Hands Platform	\$99,416

\$62,924

CAPACITY BUILDING

Capacity Building provides professional development to Youth Action Fund recipients.

CAPACITY BUILDING - \$62,924	
ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
Helping Hands Platform	\$36
Amadeusz	\$2,600
FLOW Financial Literacy Online Workshop Management	\$1,090
Amadeusz	\$1,000
Vibhor Garg	\$1,000
Endaayaan Awejaa	\$4,000
Community Legal Education Ontario	\$750
Somali Centre for Culture Recreation	\$30,000
Jeanne Corrigan	\$300
Hey Black Girl!	\$2,100
Near North Mobile Media Lab	\$455
The Remix Project / FYOU	\$3,000
Near North Mobile Media Lab	\$836
Youth Association YAAACE	\$3,600
Disability Justice Network of Ontario	\$2,000
Hey Black Girl!	\$1,500
Brown & Fleming Social Work Corp	\$1,000
Assembly of Seven Generations	\$4,000
Near North Mobile Media Lab	\$2,704
FLOW Financial Literacy Online Workshop Management	\$952

RESTORATION & EMPOWERMENT FOR SOCIAL TRANSITION CENTRES (REST CENTRES)



As a B3 charitable organization – Black-led, Black-serving and Black-focused – Restoration and Empowerment for Social Transition (REST) aims to end homelessness among BIPOC youth in the Peel Region. Over time, it has incorporated more storytelling into its community-building initiatives.

Alya and Mya have been connected from the very beginning. Alya began at REST in 2021 as a volunteer; Mya began as a client the same year. The same day Alya was hired as a program assistant, Mya was hired as a coordinator for the REST podcast, *Homelessness in Hiding: Our Youth Between the Cracks*. Together, they've contributed to a space where no one feels left out.

"Youth come here because they can come here to speak to people casually or to receive services...It makes a really big impact on youth who otherwise don't have any other safe places to be and that can mean literally they're experiencing active homelessness, living out of a shelter or have housing that is secure [yet constraining]," says Mya, now a Peer Support Leader at REST.

Among the many programs that REST offers topics on, such as tenant rights, is My Story, My Power. It's a multi-year storytelling program that empowers youth with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity to shift narratives about it by telling their stories to build confidence in their voices. It is funded by the Youth Action Fund (YAF).

Youth meet biweekly on Saturdays with peer leaders who lead sessions that encourage youth to tell their stories, build their skills and connect with one another. These workshops help youth change their own minds about homelessness and the value of their voices. When there are

no peer leaders, Mya and Alya take the lead: Mya leads sessions related to storytelling skill-building and Alya leads sessions related to self-reflection. Through these experiences, both Mya and Alya have grown and learned alongside the youths. In particular, Alya connected to her artistic side.

"It's a big step out of my comfort zone because I don't have a background in writing or storytelling...I'm still learning but I feel like from October until now, I've experienced a transition with my efforts and what I bring...I'm grateful that I've been part of the program," says Alya.

What makes the program easier to run is the clear budget structure of the YAF that includes financial information about all aspects of the program. The challenge is navigating the youth grant funding structure of the My Story, My Power program. Each of the 20 youths receives \$1,000 to participate, making the possibility of doing so a guarantee. However, youth receive this grant in instalments, which may delay their participation or completion of their projects.

The beauty of My Story, My Power, nonetheless, is the creativity of the youths' storytelling projects, which include digital art, spoken word, music experimentation and more. As the program nears its end, Alya and Mya are hopeful about their upcoming exhibition and the future of storytelling at REST Centres.

YOUTH COLLECTIVE IMPACT SPOTLIGHT: HALTON YOUTH COLLECTIVE IMPACT (HYCI)



Collaboration can be a powerful catalyst for sustainable change and impact in communities. Gillian McLaren, Project Manager and Board Liaison, and Frances Pace, Director of Fundholder and Community Engagement, have a deep understanding of it. Their organization, the Oakville Community Foundation, is dedicated to addressing local issues by making long-term collaborative investments in communities.

One of those investments was the Halton Granters Roundtable (the Roundtable), a collaboration between local funders with engagement from Sheridan College researchers. Its purpose was to identify priority areas and how collaboration could support tackling issues within them.

“We [wanted] to develop more impactful funding rather than having a long list of supports for a number of organizations with a little bit of money,” said Frances.

After several months of work, the Roundtable settled on a collective goal: To serve youth aged 18–24 transitioning out of care in education, employment and training, supported by Halton Children’s Aid Society. This initiative transformed into the Halton Youth Collective Impact (HYCI) program, a further collaboration between community partners, local service agencies and youth with valuable knowledge and lived experience. The momentum was looking promising, prompting the Roundtable to seek customized resources to capitalize on their collaborative energy and translate their shared goal into tangible outcomes for youth leaving care. They enrolled in our Youth Collective Impact (Youth CI) program which aims to help organizations in local communities across Ontario, learn about, develop, launch and implement collective impact approaches that directly improve outcomes in their community.

Since 2014, Youth CI has provided resources to 109 collectives across Ontario, addressing a variety of issues such as mental health, housing, youth navigating the justice system, and challenges faced by newcomers.

“The program shone a light on the ability of organizations to work more intentionally together,” said Tamer Ibrahim, former Program Manager of Youth CI.

The program was also unique in that it allowed collectives to start from the concept stage, even if their ideas weren’t fully developed. It recognized that ideas need time to evolve into action and that resources are necessary for that development.

Like the Roundtable, Youth CI engaged collaboratives to attend an initial workshop to support the design of a strategy for deeper engagement on their chosen issue. During this workshop, partners define their issue, build a common agenda with key players and agencies, and create a three to six-month action plan. After this stage, collaborative members, guided by a backbone organization, become eligible for on-going coaching and grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$250,000. These resources help the collaborative build momentum and capacity to effectively implement their initiative.

YOUTH CI SPOTLIGHT CONTINUED



Youth CI was a partnership between Laidlaw, Innoweave, and the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services. The program model was developed from Innoweave's initial Collective Impact program stream, designed to address a variety of complex issues. The Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services provided the funding to implement the program. At the time, Innoweave had been housed at the McConnell Foundation for 12 years, and has since transitioned to the MakeWay Foundation in December 2023 to continue its impactful work.

The Oakville Community Foundation has navigated each phase of the Youth CI program with success, securing invaluable coaching and funding resources, including Exploration, Launch, and Execution Grants.. "Our focus is on removing barriers for the youth in the program. This included community table partners creating videos that described their offerings, in order to make ourselves known to youth. We want youth to know we're dedicated and they can rely on this program," said Gillian.

But there were also challenges. The funding did not cover all program costs and there were opposing measures of success. Furthermore, in 2023, the Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services abruptly ended funding for the Youth CI program during the execution phase of the Foundation's work, leaving staff to adjust quickly.

"With the cancellation of the initiative, there was a missed opportunity to prove the long-term success of the program and roll it out to the broader population," said Frances.

The Collective must continue to submit grant applications to ensure that the support continues for youth. Stopping the program is not an option.

As Tamer puts it: "There's an appetite for groups to work together, but there's a question of resources. In order for collective impact to be sustainable, it needs large scale funding."

The Halton Youth Collective Impact (HYCI) program was launched in 2019 with the goal of annually supporting 30 youths exiting Children's Aid Society (CAS) with employment, education and training. Each youth is set up with community, financial and mentorship resources.

"When you look at the cost of housing, food, inflation, etc.... access to employment and education provides better opportunities for success," says Steve O'Hearn, Supervisor of Youth Programs at Halton's CAS.

The HYCI program is a triumphant victory.

In four years, youths have set goals and achieved what seemed impossible. One youth got their real estate licence; another is getting their commercial pilot's licence. The mentorship component in particular has also created a reliable structure in youths' lives. As one youth put it:

"The mentors have been there for so many important times in my life...when I couldn't find work the collective impact still gave me and my son a sense of food security that we needed so badly... I was also inspired to finish my high school so I can achieve my goal of post-secondary education."

In Jennifer McKnight's role as the Collective Impact Coordinator at HYCI and as the most reliable point of contact role in HYCI as the most reliable point of contact in youths' lives has provided her with insights about system gaps, youths' needs and their bravery.

"Youth are so open to the possibility of something developing and having [a mentor] in their life...they come from tumultuous backgrounds so having the courage to be open...is incredible."

The hope is that HYCI will remain a permanent fixture in Halton Region and a model for community-building.

\$30,000

POPUP: YOUTH DIRECT ACTION MICRO-GRANTS

This fund supports Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities dealing with increasing social insecurity and lack of resources to access support. Echoing South African disability activists, the PopUp Grants 2023 espouse the “Nothing about us, without us” slogan. Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth know how best to support their own communities. When it comes to collective and

community support, we want to amplify multiple perspectives including leadership from Black and Indigenous communities. To recognize this, Laidlaw Foundation launched PopUp Grants up to \$5,000 to support projects and events created by youth that address social inequities through collective and community support.

POPUP: YOUTH DIRECT ACTION - MICRO-GRANT - \$30,000	
ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
Fanta Ly / BlackAcademiaCanada	\$5,000
Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto / Chinese Young Worker Network	\$5,000
Jane Mbae / Community Compassionate Bridge	\$5,000
Frontline Youth Centre	\$5,000
Konecting-Wit-Humanity	\$5,000
Yiwei Quan / SafeHarbor Project	\$5,000

\$1,208,200

COMMUNITY, EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY FUND

The relief fund addresses inequities in philanthropy and extends solidarities to communities impacted by the pandemic, as well as by racism, colonization, and systemic exclusions.

COMMUNITY, EQUITY AND SOLIDARITY FUND - \$1,208,200	
ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
Calgary Foundation - Foundation for Black Communities	\$500,000
Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund	\$500,000
Toronto Metropolitan University (Ryerson University) / Yellowhead Institute	\$100,000
ENAGB Youth Program	\$58,200
Anishnawbe Health Centre Foundation	\$50,000

DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

In recognition of the leadership and contributions to the Foundation by its Board of Directors, Family, and Staff, corresponding Discretionary Grant Funds were established. During each fiscal year of the Foundation, every Board, Family, and Staff member have an allocated amount of funds to grant to their choice of charity or

grassroots groups that align with the current mission and vision of the Foundation. Grants were made to support a range of initiatives in support of the environment, women and children, arts, and youth organizing, among others.

\$10,000

BOARD RECOGNITION DISCRETIONARY FUND

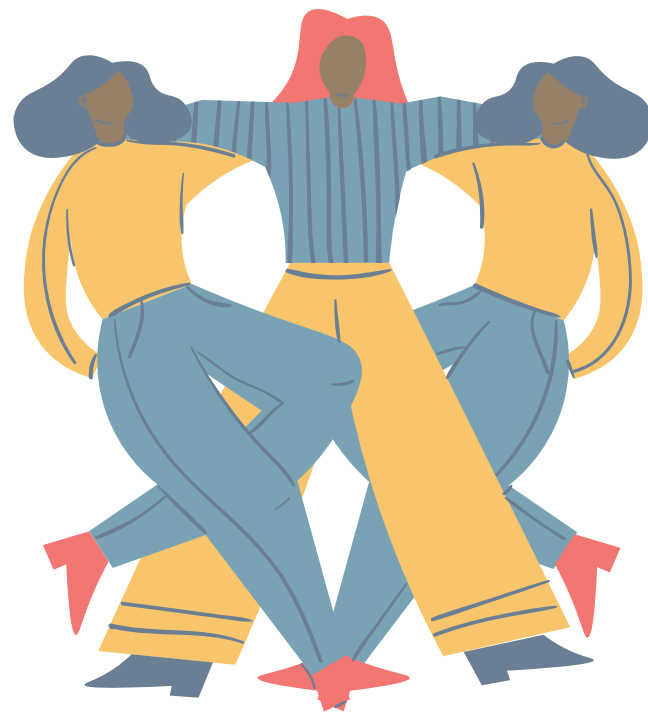
BOARD RECOGNITION DISCRETIONARY FUND - \$10,000	
ORGANIZATION NAME	AMOUNT
Gardiner Museum (In honour of Dr. Lorna Marsden)	\$2,000
Small Change Fund / Alliance for a Liveable Ontario (In honour of David Crombie)	\$2,000
Student Energy (In honour of Dr. David Wheeler)	\$2,000
Arts Canada Institute (In honour of Joyce Zemans)	\$2,000
Upper Canada College (In honour of Joyce Zemans)	\$2,000

THE STATE OF BLACK AND INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN ONTARIO

The State of Black and Indigenous Youth in Ontario

An Examination of the Experiences and Impacts of Policing on Black, Indigenous & Racialized Youth

Executive Summary
November 2023



LAIDLAW
FOUNDATION

On November 15, 2023, Laidlaw Foundation launched its inaugural report titled *The State of Black and Indigenous Youth in Ontario: An Examination of the Experiences and Impacts of Policing on Black, Indigenous, and Racialized Youth*. This milestone marked the beginning of a series of publications aimed at highlighting the enduring challenges faced by today's youth, which have persisted for decades despite policy interventions.

While changes have been introduced at a macro level, they often occur too slowly or fail to have the intended impact. Countless publications, academic or otherwise, have meticulously documented these issues, and youth across Ontario are calling for an immediate shift in the narrative. A change in perspective and approach is crucial to effectively address these persistent challenges.

The report aims to raise awareness on these issues in the hopes of informing targeted efforts to address the diverse and unique challenges faced by youth, particularly those at significant risk of marginalization. This transformative process begins with open dialogue and discussions directly involving affected youth. In celebration of the launch, we initiated the first conversation by hosting a panel discussion where 118 unique attendees joined us virtually and in person. The guests, while primarily from the Greater Toronto Area, represented audiences we targeted in our report, which include all levels of government, the philanthropic sector and community organizations. The panelists were youth with lived experience of being policed in the Education, Child Welfare, and Criminal Justice systems. Also included on the panel were members of the Youth Advisory Council, who played a crucial role in informing the research for the project. The discussion centered on the challenges faced by Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth and their experience with policing in Ontario, paving

the way for further conversations. It must be noted that “policing” is a term used metaphorically to describe the discriminatory treatment Black, Indigenous and racialized youth are subjected to that marginalizes them.

Our vision at Laidlaw is for *The State of Black and Indigenous Youth in Ontario* to be a dynamic platform where young individuals can freely share their experiences, voice concerns, and offer insights. Through this initiative, we aim to identify and address existing gaps, barriers, and create lasting solutions, reshaping the prevailing narrative that has endured for far too long.



IMPACT OF LAIDLAW FOUNDATION'S 2019 – 2024 STRATEGIC PLAN: A SUMMATIVE EVALUATION REPORT (2023)

Below is an excerpt of the Executive Summary of AgentsC's evaluation of Laidlaw Foundation's 2019 – 2024 Strategic Plan.

For all of its strengths, commitments, and investments in child welfare, the Province of Ontario adopts a fragmented rather than a holistic approach to preparing youth for their future as adults. Throughout the Province's many youth oriented programs and services, it is difficult to identify the overarching strategy that underpins work with youth in Ontario.

Key segments of youth strategy appear not to be integrated. For example, youth health and wellness is often separated from youth mental health, which in turn is separated from the youth justice system, which in turn is separated from youth employment, education, care, and housing. Programs for Black and Indigenous youth or 2SLGBTQ+ youth are often offshoots of other programs and lack integration.

We know that Provincial youth strategy impacts non-profit youth service delivery, which in turn impacts youth philanthropic investment practices among funders. However, if the links to the youth welfare chain lack integration, it stands to reason that the outcomes associated with youth programs will also be fragmented.

Such fragmentation in and of itself is not necessarily a negative situation. However, unless a more holistic approach to youth welfare can be practiced, we will not realize the benefits of an integrative systems approach to supporting Ontario's youth in their journey towards adulthood.

Could youth in Ontario be better served with integrated systems, policies, and strategies that are holistic rather than fragmented/ thematic? This is one of the fundamental questions which the board and leadership within Laidlaw Foundation will need to answer in the lead up to the creation of the organization's new and ambitious strategic plan in 2025.

This report is focused not on what the future may look like but rather, what we may learn from the recent past. AgentsC Inc. is pleased to provide insight stemming from our summative evaluation of the progress made towards the Foundation's strategic plan (2019 – 2024). It may be fair to say that this report is in fact an evaluation of the strategy to date, along with conclusive observations for how current learnings may influence continuity of practice until 2024 and create new ambitions for 2025 onwards.

There are some we know and others that we do not when it comes to the current strategy itself:

Our vision at Laidlaw is for “The State of Black and Indigenous Youth in Ontario” to be a dynamic platform where young individuals can freely share their experiences, voice concerns, and offer insights. Through this initiative, we aim to identify and address existing gaps, barriers, and create lasting solutions, reshaping the prevailing narrative that has endured for far too long.

What we know:

- Laidlaw Foundation is uniquely positioned as a champion of trust-based and equity philanthropy in the sector in Ontario and across Canada. As a private foundation that has intentionally invested in decolonizing its giving, the Foundation can play an important role as a peer leader for other private foundations in the country.
- The Foundation has made great strides in centering youth voices and youth lived experiences to address systemic barriers and impact change in Ontario's justice, education and child welfare systems. There is now an opportunity for the Foundation to seek out and explore a more integrated and intersectional approach to investing in youth. Laidlaw Foundation can differentiate itself as a youth development funder by promoting the integrative approaches required for youth to make a healthy and prosperous transition to adulthood.
- The Foundation has a significant and proactive role to play in centering transformational story-telling and youth-led public and political engagement to amplify the discourse on intersecting challenges faced by Ontario's Indigenous and Black youth impacted by the justice, education and child welfare systems.
- The Foundation is ripe for the development of a Theory of Change and a complementary organization-wide Logic Model that enables its various funding streams to explore

intersectional opportunities for work in the areas of Trust-based Philanthropy, Capacity, Engagement and Advocacy, Convening, Research, Granting and Ethical Investing.

- While the Foundation has started its journey of decolonizing its granting, reporting and impact evaluation processes, there is a need to ensure a consistent implementation of these approaches across all granting streams to enable more robust and cohesive data and knowledge gathering.

What we don't know:

- There is a need for greater strategic clarity on how the Foundation will share vital research data and youth voices with key stakeholders such as government representatives, policy-makers, other funders, and service providers to impact future funding and policy directions.
- The Foundation's role and approach in strategically building pathways for youth with lived experiences to lead policy and decision-making on systemic change across the province needs further exploration.
- The strategic impact of Laidlaw Foundation's Community Equity and Solidarity Fund that provided multi-year cornerstone funding to the Foundation for Black Community and Indigenous Peoples Resilience Fund needs to be evaluated and widely shared across the sector.

ARTIST STATEMENT

Hello, Aanii! My name is Grace Swain, I'm from Swan Lake First Nation Treaty One territory on my father's side, and Wiikwemkoong First Nation on my mother's side. I grew up and currently live in Bruce Mines, Ontario. I'm an Indigenous artist, speaker and advocate. I'm passionate about making traditional land-based art accessible to all Indigenous peoples. In addition to my online collection at graceswainart.com, I offer commissioned pieces and host paint nights/workshops.

graceswainart.com / @graceswainart on Instagram, Facebook & TikTok / anishinaababeblog@gmail.com

ILLUSTRATION DESCRIPTIONS

COVER ART

The cover art for Laidlaw Foundation's annual report embodies partnership, trust-based philanthropy, and the transformative power of community collaboration.

At its heart lies the Medicine Wheel, resonating with the Foundation's commitment to inclusive partnerships, devoid of hierarchy. Much like how the medicine wheel is a balanced shape without a top or bottom, length or width showing that we are all equal and no one is above or below each other. It represents unity, harmony, courage, and respect—core values driving the Foundation's work.

Perched atop the Medicine Wheel is the revered Eagle, Migizi, symbolizing our connection to the Creator and love. Only the eagle has the ability and strength to fly higher than any other animal, thereby placing it closer to the Creator than all others. In my community, I've been taught that when we pray the Eagle brings our prayers to the Creator. Therefore, I've decided to include the Eagle in this cover to represent all of our efforts being brought back to the Creator to help guide us and to our communities to help ground us.

Wrapped around the Medicine Wheel is a tree which also embodies the cyclical nature of life, as it sheds its leaves in the fall only to be reborn with fresh foliage in the spring. The tree also represents a connection to the land and our ancestors who are helping to guide us in this work.

The youth holding hands stand as a powerful representation of empowered voices, shaping their own futures. This inclusion underscores the Foundation's dedication to amplifying Black, Indigenous, and youth voices.

A connecting line weaves through the elements, symbolizing the interconnected nature of the Foundation's work and its commitment to building bridges between partners and communities, fostering ongoing dialogue and collaboration.

Surrounding the artwork, vibrant florals bloom, signifying growth, renewal, and the interconnectedness of all living things, serving as a poignant reminder of the beauty and resilience inherent in nature and the communities served.

PAGE 7: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: THE FRUITS OF OUR LABORS

This artwork shows hands holding ripe fruits surrounded by colourful flowers. It's a visual reminder of the good things that come from hard work, and the fruits of our labour.

The hands represent the effort we put into our work. They're holding the fruits, which symbolize the results of our hard work and dedication.

The strawberries in my community are called the "heart berry." They stand for love, compassion, and connection. Some teachings say the heart-shaped leaves of the strawberry plant remind us to care for each other and build strong communities.

Blueberries are important too. They symbolize wisdom, protection, and living in harmony with nature. They're tough little berries that grow in rough places, teaching us about resilience and strength.

The flowers around the fruits and hands add a touch of beauty and remind us of the cycles of life and nature.

This artwork is a reminder that our hard work can bring good things, and it also teaches us important lessons about love, wisdom, and living in harmony with the world around us.

PAGE 14: IMPACT INVESTMENT: BKR CAPITAL

In this artwork, a tree symbolizing innovation stands adorned with vibrant technology branches in red, yellow, green, and black, echoing the Rastafarian colors. Roots of Innovation embodies the mission of the BKR Black Innovation Fund, dedicated to fostering Black entrepreneurship in tech.

BKR Capital nurtures the seeds of innovation by investing in promising Black founders, and providing vital resources. Through strategic partnerships, mentorship, and funding opportunities, BKR empowers Black youth to thrive in the tech landscape.

The Rastafarian colors carry significance: red for the struggle for liberation, yellow for Africa's wealth, green for the land's beauty, and black for community strength. By weaving these colors into the branches, the artwork celebrates the cultural heritage driving innovation in Black communities.

PAGE 18: INDIGENOUS YOUTH AND COMMUNITY FUTURES FUND: AUNTIE'S PLACE

In the heart of a celestial scene, an Auntie embraces girls, each embodying one of the Seven Grandfather Teachings: love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, truth, and wisdom. Surrounding them are delicate florals, symbolizing growth and resilience.

Auntie's Place honors the vital role of Aunties in Indigenous communities. The Auntie, akin to a mother in Haudenosaunee culture, offers guidance and care, fostering kinship ties that endure for generations.

I intentionally chose purple for this piece to represent the Black community, signifying resilience and pride. It reminds us of the strength of Black heritage, interwoven with Indigenous traditions. In the sky of purple, I've interwoven the northern lights as they dance across, a teaching given to me by my Elders. The Northern Lights represent the energy and beauty orchestrated by our ancestors. Thus, showing the Afro-Indigenous community shining through in this piece.

The Empowerment Circle at Auntie's Place empowers Afro-Indigenous youth through cultural teachings and workshops led by Elders. They connect with their roots and community, culminating in a journey to Six Nations for ceremony and tradition.

Aunties Love Heals All celebrates the transformative power of love and community. In Auntie's Place, every embrace is a testament to healing, empowerment, and belonging.

PAGE 22: YOUTH ACTION FUND: RESTORATION AND EMPOWERMENT FOR SOCIAL TRANSITION CENTRES

The Youth Action Fund prioritizes storytelling designed to mobilize youth with lived experience of homelessness and housing insecurity to tell their stories from a place of empowerment, rather than victimhood. The Youth Action Fund has a program called Strength in Storytelling: My Story, My Power which aims to share stories that empower youth to see that they are more than their trauma and that they have built power through what they have overcome. In this artwork, I wanted to portray this by showing two Black youth standing side by side, their faces uplifted with determination and resilience. Each youth is depicted with their mouth open, symbolizing their voice being heard. Emerging from their mouths is a vibrant stream of energy, representing the power and impact of their voices.

Overall, the artwork encapsulates the theme of empowerment and resilience, highlighting the transformative power of storytelling and the importance of amplifying marginalized voices.

PAGE 24: YOUTH COLLECTIVE IMPACT: OAKVILLE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

In the center of this artwork, a person symbolizes the diverse youth of our community. They are surrounded by three essential elements of wellbeing, our mind, body and spirit, each representing Indigenous teachings and vital aspects of holistic health.

A line extends to the Eagle, representing love and our mind, emphasizing emotional well-being and connection. The Eagle also represents transportation, much like how Youth Collective Impact is assisting youth transitioning out of care, and physical transportation – the Eagle transports our prayers to the Creator as they are closest to the Creator. Another line reaches towards a smudge bowl and rattle, symbolizing our body and the importance of physical health and spiritual cleansing. A third line connects to a tipi and lodge, embodying shelter and our spirit, highlighting safety and cultural identity.

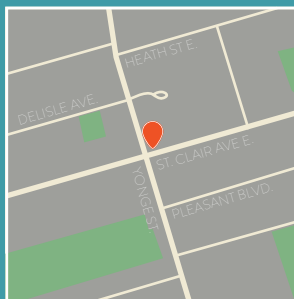
This artwork is a visual representation of the collaborative efforts of Youth Collective Impact, the Oakville Community Foundations project, and insights from Sheridan College's Community Development Faculty research. Through this project, they address the multifaceted challenges faced by youth in the Halton region, including homelessness and the lack of support for those transitioning out of care. Thus, reconnecting youth to their mind, body, and spirit is integral to our being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to recognize the many contributors to this report, including Kinmond Smith (Designer), Grace Swain (Artist), Jean Boampong (Copywriter), and Dimitra Chronopoulos (Editor).

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