



DELIVERING BLUE FOR LIFE



2018 Community Accountability Report





>50 **CHARITABLE
PROGRAMS**
supported yearly



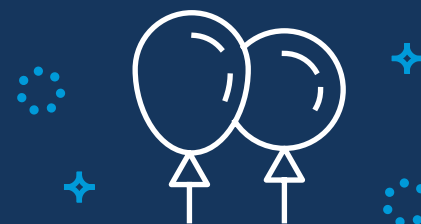
26,000

*kids across Alberta participating
in Youth run club*



**20
YEARS**

of Hearts of Blue



**\$1.3
MILLION**

*in grants
to build
amenities for*

**HEALTHY
COMMUNITIES**

\$20,000

*donated to Community Foundation of
Northwestern Alberta and Grande Prairie
Regional Hospital Foundation in
conjunction with 2018 Leaders Event*

\$25,000

*donation in support of
Humbolt Broncos victims and families*



**8 NEW
WELLNESS**
graduate-level
SCHOLARSHIPS
in 2018

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As an Alberta-based and community-minded organization, Alberta Blue Cross is passionate about making a genuine difference in communities across our province. We live in the communities we serve, and we serve in the communities in which we live.



INTRODUCTION



Four years ago, Alberta Blue Cross embarked on a significant new strategic direction for our organization—a vision we call “Blue For Life.” Blue For Life reflects our aspirations and commitment as an organization to have a greater presence in supporting and promoting the health and wellness of Albertans through all ages and stages of life.



Fundamental to our Blue For Life vision is our commitment to a meaningful presence in the lives of our customers and the communities we serve.

Alberta Blue Cross has a broad legislative mandate to promote and support the health and wellness of Albertans. But beyond our role as a benefits provider lies the role we play as a neighbour. Community engagement is how we deliver our Blue For Life vision beyond our products and services. By connecting with our communities, stepping up for their health and investing in their futures, we make a positive difference in the lives of Albertans.

As Alberta Blue Cross continues to promote the health and wellness of Albertans and expand our role in the communities we serve, we are pleased to provide this Community Accountability Report highlighting our 2018 involvements and initiatives as a complement to our Annual Report.



Alberta Blue Cross employees participate in United Way's interactive art installation, writing why they feel poverty is an #unignorable issue.



THE ABC BENEFITS CORPORATION FOUNDATION

- Funding for community involvements is provided through the ABC Benefits Corporation Foundation, drawing upon interest from \$15 million in endowments from Alberta Blue Cross.
- Created in 1998 in conjunction with the 50th anniversary of Alberta Blue Cross.
- Foundation is overseen by an independent volunteer Board of Directors.
- Provides Alberta Blue Cross with a mechanism to support community engagement on a sustainable basis with funds that otherwise may not be available.

TWO PILLARS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- Health and wellness promotion: activities undertaken in the interest of fulfilling our purpose and Legislative mandate, including leading and supporting province-wide health and wellness initiatives.
- Corporate social responsibility: activities undertaken in the interest of corporate citizenship and for the betterment of the community at large.

Alberta Blue Cross facilitates community involvements and oversees requests for support on an individual basis.



CONNECTING WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS



*I take pride in what I do and what our company does
for the community. This is just one way to show I care.*

—SANDEEP MAHAJAN, ALBERTA BLUE CROSS EMPLOYEE
AND MS BIKE RIDE TEAM MEMBER



Our communities are undeniably vibrant. Albertans are constantly finding new ways to connect, supporting causes they're passionate about and creating pathways that lift each other up.

Every year, we sponsor dozens of initiatives throughout our province. The MS Bike Ride, the Be Free Project, the Grey Cup Family Festival and Children's Festivals across the province are just a few examples of the many initiatives we supported in 2018 that light up our communities and make them stronger long-term.

CONNECTING ACTIVE TEAMS TO WORTHY CAUSES

Our MS Bike team is comprised of Alberta Blue Cross employees who each have their own reason for participating—whether they're motivated by their own personal challenge or connected to someone who lives with Multiple Sclerosis. By biking from Camrose to Leduc in June, they helped elevate a worthy cause and raise awareness of an issue that impacts so many Albertans. Our other employee-led teams include Row for Kids and Big Bike, who fundraise for the Stollery Children's Hospital and the Heart and Stroke Foundation (respectively).

CONNECTING KIDS TO CREATIVITY

When you're a kid, you dream big; your imagination is infinite and you believe that anything is possible.

The 2018 International Children's Festival in St. Albert and the Calgary Children's Festival not only introduce kids across the province to the arts, but promote active living among families. In supporting these festivals, we're aiming to connect kids to their creativity and confidence as well as promote their wellness.



Double high fives to celebrate an amazing day at the Calgary Children's Festival!



CONNECTING MENTAL WELL-BEING TO MOVEMENT

With mindfulness and movement, we can support mental well-being.

In the summer of 2018, we partnered with The Be Free Project, an outdoor yoga event that encourages members of the community to get outside and get active in support of mental health awareness.


CONNECTING FAMILIES TO FESTIVALS

We may not get drafted to QB anytime soon, but we were proud to be part of the team as an official sponsor of the 2018 Grey Cup Family Festival and Gala in Edmonton, an event that brought thousands of families, friends and the city's most passionate CFL fans together to invigorate Edmonton's downtown core.



ALBERTANS' PARTNER IN WELLNESS

DELIVERING BLUE FOR LIFE



We appreciate that Alberta Blue Cross and its employees are so passionate about making a direct difference in communities across our province.

**TERRI DUNCAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
CHILDREN'S AUTISM SERVICES**



At Alberta Blue Cross, we believe we have the potential and responsibility to impact people's lives for the better. That's why health and wellness promotion is such a significant part of delivering our Blue For Life vision.

We're committed to building healthier communities, but to do so, we must start by supporting individuals to take steps toward living healthier lives.

Throughout the year, we partner with a broad spectrum of organizations that are working to make a positive difference in the lives of Albertans. Diabetes Canada, the Arthritis Society, the MS Society, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Liver Foundation, the Heart and Stroke Foundation, STARS Air Ambulance, and the Brain Care Centre are just a few examples of organizations we support that are improving the health and wellness of our communities. Here are a few others.

STAYING ACTIVE WITH AMA YOUTH RUN CLUB

Staying active is an important lifelong habit—and one that starts early. That's why Alberta Blue Cross is proud to sponsor the AMA Youth Run Club, a free, school-based running program that gets children and youth active and helps them build healthier lives. Today, the club has 524 schools across the province participating—and more than 26,000 students. This includes clubs in 20 Indigenous school communities and the GO (Girls Only!) Run Club, providing young girls with organized, judgment-free opportunities for physical activity with their peers and friends.



Look for our Street Team members at events and festivals across the province.

GIVING THE GIFT OF PLAY

Remember playing hopscotch as a kid? What's old is new again!

Alberta Blue Cross is helping make playground surfaces across the province more fun and interactive. As title sponsor of the Gift of Play program, we're covering the cost of stencils that are painted on playground surfaces at upwards of 140 schools across the province.

SUPPORTING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is critical to your overall health. By supporting initiatives including the Alberta Mental Health Foundation, World Suicide Prevention Day, National Depression Screening Day and the Canadian Mental Health Association's Working Stronger workplace mental health conference, we hope to build awareness and positive practices around mental health.

PARTNERING WITH ALBERTA'S PRESCRIPTION TO GET ACTIVE

Ninety per cent of Canadians are not moving enough. For those with chronic health conditions, getting even a little more activity can bring big health benefits. As a sponsor of Alberta's Prescription to Get Active program, we're partnering with Primary Care Networks across Alberta in a unique venture where local family physicians and health-care teams can prescribe physical activity to patients who would benefit from increased activity. Nearly 3,000 physicians and more than 140 fitness and recreational facilities across Alberta are participating in the program.

CREATING HEALTHY HABITS IN OUR SCHOOLS

Nutrition Students Teachers Exercising with Parents, or NSTEP for short, provides fun, interactive nutrition and activity education to every student and teacher within a school community. Both physical activity and healthy eating are emphasized to start a cultural shift toward healthy habits for life. As a sponsor of NSTEP, Alberta Blue Cross is pleased to be part of this movement.

CHAMPIONING INJURY PREVENTION

Injuries cost Alberta \$4 billion annually and on average are responsible for five deaths a day across the province. As a partner with the Alberta Injury Prevention Centre and an advocate for injury prevention, Alberta Blue Cross plays an active role in campaigns including seniors fall prevention, poison prevention and drowning awareness.


ADVOCATING FOR SMOKE-FREE SPACES

Tobacco use is now on the rise in Alberta—particularly among teens and young adults. As a partner in the Campaign for a Smoke-Free Alberta, we want to reverse that trend and help build a smoke-free future for Albertans. We're pleased to sponsor the Alberta Smoke Free Spaces Program, which recognizes Alberta municipalities, school divisions and post-secondary institutions that make smoke-free spaces a priority.



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

DELIVERING BLUE FOR LIFE



*I pursue post secondary education because
I'm confident that university will equip me to face
any challenge the future brings.*

—YNA TEJOL, UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA PSYCHOLOGY STUDENT
AND ALBERTA BLUE CROSS SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT



Just like the very best neighbours look out for those in their community, helping it remain vibrant and livable, they also take steps to make it a great place to live for the future. Beyond our role as a benefits provider lies the role we play as a neighbour.

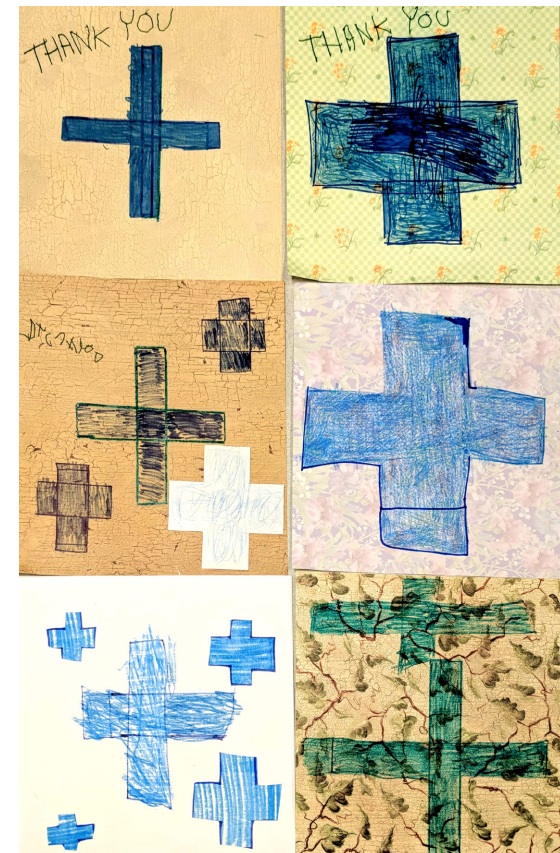
Cultivating leaders, spaces and solutions that improve the lives of future generations is how we make an impact in our communities long-term—and deliver Blue For Life for Albertans as they grow, change and enter new ages and stages of their lives.

CREATING BRIGHTER FUTURES WITH NEW SCHOLARSHIPS

We want students to dream big and have the educational opportunities available to support that.

Since our scholarship program's inception more than 20 years ago, we have provided over \$1 million in funding to young Albertans entering full-time post-secondary study in Alberta. We continued to enhance our scholarship program in 2018 by adding eight wellness graduate-level scholarships for an additional annual investment of \$12,000.

We were also excited to expand our Indigenous scholarship program by adding mature student scholarships. This expansion was based on a need we have seen among applicants to the program, most of whom are parents re-entering education after having children at a young age.



Hearts of Blue volunteers received these incredible thank-you cards from the awesome people they met at AdaptAbilities, a not-for-profit organization that helps individuals with special needs.



DEVELOPING LIFE-LONG COMMUNITY ADVOCATES WITH HEARTS OF BLUE

When you're part of an employee-led charity, something special happens. In the midst of doing all the things you expect—volunteering, connecting with new people, donating to those in need—you're also doing something you may not have expected, developing as a leader and as a life-long advocate for your community.

Hearts of Blue is Alberta Blue Cross's employee-led charity, and in November 2018, we marked a special anniversary as we celebrated its 20th anniversary. Since its inception in 1998, Hearts of Blue has made a positive difference in the lives of tens of thousands of Albertans through donations of needed items, funds and volunteer time to grassroots charitable organizations across the province.



COMBATTING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY WITH UNITED WAY

Poverty is #Unignorable. That's why, in 2018, we decided to increase our funding to the United Way, with an increase of the matching funding to the Capital Region campaign from \$70,000 to \$90,000 annually. This, combined with record-setting employee donations, led us to a \$209,679 contribution to the United Way Capital Region.

We know that the struggle of poverty isn't limited to one town, one city or one region in our province, so neither is our support. We've further expanded our support, donating to each of the United Way campaigns across Alberta for the first time with \$10,000 to Calgary's campaign and a \$5,000 donation to each of the six other United Way campaigns across Alberta.

BUILDING ACTIVE, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

We're passionate about creating spaces that make a positive difference in the lives of Albertans. The Alberta Blue Cross Healthy Communities Grant Program was launched in 2013 to support and promote active living in communities across Alberta with more than \$1.3 million donated since its inception. Grants have supported dozens of projects across Alberta including sports courts, playgrounds, outdoor gyms, skate and mountain bike parks.

In 2018, we were excited to help it reach even more members of our communities. Complementing a fifth 'special merit' grant added in 2017, we added a sixth grant starting in 2018 specifically for an Indigenous community. This has taken the annual amounts dispersed through the grant program from \$200,000 to \$300,000 annually.

Projects that were awarded grants in 2018 include

- a playground replacement for St. Pius X Elementary School in Edmonton;
- a new playground for St. Peter Elementary School in Calgary;
- a multi-purpose four-season sports pad for the Signature Falls neighbourhood in Grande Prairie;
- the Joclyn Snow memorial playground for Bentley K-12 school;
- a new outdoor fitness challenge park for the Maskwacis community;
- the Graminia outdoor rink replacement in the County of Parkland.



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES IN ACTION

What do you get when you combine 600 kids and a brand-new playground? A celebration that lights up the neighbourhood!

This fall, we were thrilled to help open the new Win Ferguson School playground in Fort Saskatchewan—another project made possible with an Alberta Blue Cross Healthy Communities Grant.



#HUMBOLDTSTRONG

We at Alberta Blue Cross shared the heartbreak of all Canadians at the terrible loss of life resulting from the Humboldt Broncos bus accident on April 6, 2018. Although the accident occurred in Saskatchewan, a number of the players who were injured and who passed away in this tragic accident were Alberta Blue Cross plan members, and many of us had personal connections to the players and their families through our communities. While our Benefit Services area reached out to the Broncos organization to provide direct contact information to impacted families to support them with their Alberta Blue Cross coverage, we also decided corporately to make a \$25,000 donation to support the accident victims and their families.



Alberta Blue Cross is the largest benefits provider in Alberta and one of the largest in Western Canada. We serve more than 1.7 million individuals with coverage through more than 5,700 small and large employer group plans, individual plans and government-sponsored programs. In 2018, Alberta Blue Cross processed more than 64 million claim lines with a value exceeding \$2.98 billion.

Alberta-based and Alberta-grown, we are an independent, not-for-profit organization. We provide health and wellness plans, programs and services on a viable, not-for-profit basis for the financial protection and well-being of our communities.



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