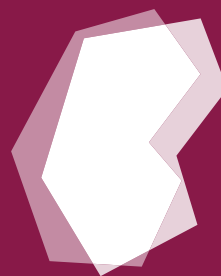


2020 COMMUNITY REPORT

Improving the lives of people
affected by kidney disease.



kidney
FOUNDATION™



Stretching Boundaries

Kidney Community Grows Stronger Together

Message from the President and Executive Director

Together We Are Stronger

RIISING TO MEET THE CHALLENGES DURING THE PANDEMIC

The global pandemic made 2020 a year that challenged people from every walk of life, and it certainly affected the work of the Foundation. While there were obstacles, many opportunities emerged as well.

As an organization, we had to urgently redefine our program and fundraising activities, and fortunately, our volunteers, employees, and donors responded very positively to the new challenges and helped us maintain our work and services without interruption.

New fundraising initiatives were created, like the David Ayres Emergency Fund, online 50/50 draws, and a virtual holiday auction, all of which helped ease the impact of severely hampered regular fundraising activities. Our Walks turned into virtual events and enjoyed great results. Our Kidney Car and Kidney Clothes programs navigated through stormy waters and produced revenues beyond expectations.

Peer Support shifted to online meeting opportunities and evolved in ways that attracted more participants, not only from Ontario, but from across the country. Our Branch helped launch a similar program in the Atlantic Branch and we shared other resources with the Manitoba Branch. Preliminary discussions are now underway with the British Columbia/Yukon Branch to help build their own Peer Support Program.

The employee teams ramped up outreach to patients and families, supported them through emails and social media, and assured everyone that we were still open for business and providing services.

We leveraged technology and were able to stay connected with our stakeholders, not only maintaining existing relationships, but strengthening and nurturing new ones. We collaborated more as a Branch and as One Foundation across Canada. As we continue to redefine our structure to address ongoing and developing needs, we have proven to be nimble and agile.

Later in the year, and after staying on a year longer than planned, Jim O'Brien retired as Branch Executive Director. In addition to his incredible legacy of change and growth, Jim also guided us through the early and troubling days of the pandemic.

In last year's message from the President and Executive Director, the letter ended with *"Together, we will get through this. Together, we are stronger."* At the time, that was a hopeful expectation, but throughout the year there was one example after another demonstrating that we would get through this together, and now we are stronger. Challenges lie ahead as we continue to rebuild, but the Kidney family of volunteers, staff, and supporters are resilient and committed to delivering the Foundation's mission.

Thank you to everyone that stepped up, stretched the boundaries, and contributed to our successes in 2020. You've made a positive impact and your efforts are appreciated.



Craig Kerr
Ontario Branch President



Anthony Tirone
Ontario Branch Executive Director

Research is the beginning of all scientific advances.

The Kidney Foundation supports research into all aspects of kidney health, disease, and treatment by providing Canadian researchers with more than \$124 million in grants since the start of the Foundation over 50 years ago. In 2020, The Kidney Foundation invested over \$2,554,618* in research.

2020 RESEARCH INVESTMENT

TOTAL: \$3,273,000*

* INCLUDES FUNDING COMMITMENTS MADE IN PRIOR YEARS
AND OTHER SUPPORT INVESTMENTS

BIOMEDICAL
RESEARCH GRANTS

62

KRESCENT AWARDS

26

ALLIED HEALTH
KIDNEY AWARDS

10

PARTNERSHIPS IN
LARGE NETWORKS

5

RESEARCH INSTITUTES
ACROSS CANADA

31

PRINCIPAL
INVESTIGATORS

107

GRANTS SUPPORTED
IN ONTARIO

44

RESEARCH INSTITUTES
IN ONTARIO

14

istockphoto credit: RossHelen

Research Themes Funded in 2020

Acute Kidney Injury
Cancer
Chronic Kidney Disease
Diabetes
Dialysis
Genetics
Glomerulonephritis
Hypertension
Kidney Biology
Kidney Development

Nutrition
Organ Donation
Predictive Biomarkers
Quality of Life
Renal Failure
Screening & prevention of renal disease
Transplantation
Urology
Water, Salt and Calcium Handling by the Kidney

Programs provide support when it's needed most.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought into sharp focus the important role that The Kidney Foundation plays for those affected by kidney disease. The crisis created increased demand on our programs and services including short term financial assistance and peer support.

Short-Term Financial Assistance: The Kidney Foundation's emergency short-term financial assistance program provided much needed support in the wake of the pandemic. Requests for support increased and we strived to meet the demand. Over \$164,700 was provided to assist with emergency living, blood pressure cuffs, medication and transportation in 2020.



Patient handbooks: Providing support to kidney patients and their caregivers is core to The Kidney Foundation's mission. The *Living with Kidney Disease* handbooks are provided free of charge to all newly-diagnosed patients. Over 1,460 books were distributed in 2020. The handbooks are also made available online through our website.

Education: New technologies helped broaden the reach of The Foundation's support and educational services. A series of COVID-19 webinars provided an opportunity for patients, caregivers and renal professionals to learn the latest information about COVID-19 at a time when there was so many questions.



Peer Support: Providing emotional support for patients and their families continues to be a key priority for The Kidney Foundation. In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, we transitioned in-person group meetings to virtual groups, providing much needed support at a time when there was increased isolation and anxiety in our community. The online group meeting format provided new opportunities for individuals across the province and country to join. We also saw increased growth in kidneyconnect.ca, our online community, as well as one on one peer support matches. More than 1400* peer support connections in groups, direct calls, or one-to-one matches were made in 2020. (*Does not include Kidney Connect. ca online activity.)



Canadians Need to Know More About Their Kidneys

The Kidney Foundation unveiled its new brand in January 2020 with the launch of a new website. It set the stage for a new public awareness campaign that aimed to inspire Canadians to arm themselves with the correct information about why they need to keep their kidneys healthy.

The Kidney Foundation is taking action to have kidneys recognized as the vital, life-sustaining organs they are, by launching an important campaign to promote broader awareness of kidney health. The campaign challenges Canadians' knowledge of kidneys by asking them if they understand why kidneys are vital and encourages them to get the facts.



Shift to online group support provides an important lifeline to patients during the pandemic.

When Dan's kidney function started to fall below 20 per cent, he and his wife Joan grew very concerned. The Niagara, Ontario couple looked for ways to learn more about renal diets and how to manage Dan's condition. Last spring, they began taking part in Kidney Connect peer support meetings, organized by the Kidney Foundation. Once a month they log on to an online session and join a virtual group discussion.

"I think it is good for people with any stage of kidney disease to meet with others going through a similar experience," Dan says, noting he is especially happy that his wife can also take part. "Some people at the meetings have kidney transplants, while others are on dialysis. It is not an intimidating group, and no one is put on the spot. It is very upbeat and positive."

Dan and Joan's group is one of several virtual peer support meetings taking place across the province. Everyone is welcome, and you can connect either by phone or with Zoom video. There were also in-person groups, but they are now on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At a time when people are living with more isolation and anxiety, the online groups offer both emotional support and practical advice.

Michele is 30 years old, and lives in Toronto. She joined a virtual peer support group after being hospitalized with end-stage kidney disease. The diagnosis "came out of nowhere", and the meetings have helped her manage the transition to dialysis.

"It is good to hear other people's stories and know you are not alone," she says. "It is a diverse group, with some younger members and some older. Some people are there to learn more about options for dialysis and transplants. Others are looking to better understand how to continue working while on dialysis."

Group sessions are just one place to find help and support. The Kidney Foundation also offers one-on-one phone sessions with trained volunteers. For those who prefer online forums, there is KidneyConnect.ca. The site provides a safe and respectful place to share experiences and learn more about ways to manage renal issues.



“I really think that peer support is important for patients. It's an opportunity to bring patients together to share their experiences and maybe for a couple of hours they don't feel alone with this disease.

I know it helps me to share my story and hear the stories of others. As a group meeting facilitator, I benefit from the group meetings as much as the participants do.

These meetings give them the opportunity to relate with others living with the same disease. ”

Mauro B.

Building a strong foundation.

In order to fund our important work, we operate a diverse mix of fundraising campaigns. Our fundraising pivoted to provide more virtual opportunities to give. We are proud of the work done by our volunteers and employees, who work collaboratively to reduce the burden of kidney disease.

The **Kidney Walks** transitioned to a virtual format in 2020. Our community gathered online for the opening ceremony on September 27th bringing together 755 walkers and 212 teams. Ontario Kidney Walk participants collectively raised over \$660,000. The virtual event format was well-received with high engagement levels on social media. We were excited to connect with our community online through the many photos, videos and stories shared.

The - **Six Degrees of Kidney Disease** - digital campaign launched on March 1st and culminated on World Kidney Day raising over \$26,000 in 2020. The social media campaign featured local challengers who shared a video message about their connection to kidney disease and helped encourage local engagement and support. The campaign had 2.1 million impressions and hundreds joined the #SixDegreeChallenge by throwing up 'the six' on social.

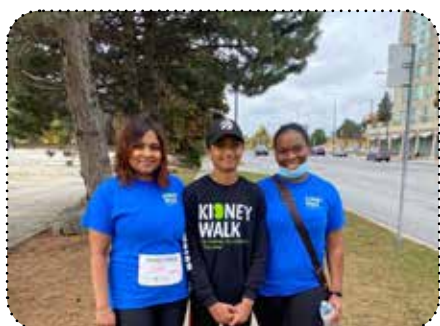
In the wake of the pandemic we explored new virtual fundraising opportunities to replace in-person events. We launched **Kidney 50/50**, an online 50/50 draw licensed by the AGCO. Three draws were held in 2020 raising over \$65,000 to support our mission. An **online auction** was held in November/early December resulting in over \$62,000 in gross revenue.

The Kidney Foundation was the recipient to numerous **grants** through the Emergency Community Support Fund. We generated close to \$90,000 to support the Short Term Financial Assistance program.

The Foundation continues to be acknowledged through generous **memorial and legacy donations**. In 2020, contributions made in memory or gifts made through estates and insurance policies was over \$1.1 million.

Kidney Car donation volumes through 2020 continue to follow a broader trend of reduced turnover occurring across the industry. Despite a few slower weeks in the early days of the pandemic, we achieved our 2020 targets. Growth in the resale of donated vehicles and the commitment of our Partners was instrumental in Kidney Car's success this year.

The **Kidney Clothes** team navigated through a very challenging year with grit and tenacity. While the retail operations of their main partner slowed or stopped for months at a time as a result of the pandemic, the team used their creativity and relationships within the textile recycling industry to source new partners and new revenue streams. The "can-do" attitude of this team ensured that the program ended the year in a positive position.



David Ayres Steps In

Backup goaltender helps raise crucial funds for Canadians affected by kidney disease.

As soon as he was made aware of the urgent circumstances that many kidney patients were facing, David Ayres was ready to lend a hand in any way he could. Ayres, who rose to fame in February 2020 as the first emergency backup goaltender to record a win in the history of the NHL, has first-hand knowledge of the daily plight of those affected by kidney disease.



“As a kidney patient and transplant recipient, I know that coping with dialysis treatments and its effects are challenging in the best of times,” states Ayres. “Now that our world is turned upside down due to the pandemic, I can only imagine what patients and their families have to deal with.”

During a game held in Toronto between the Carolina Hurricanes and the Toronto Maple Leafs, Ayres was called in as emergency goalie after both Hurricanes’ goal-tenders were injured. Even though his performance led to a defeat for the Maple Leafs, hometown fans were won over by the Ontario resident’s Cinderella story, cheering him on all the way.

The Kidney Foundation Emergency Fund Campaign, spearheaded by Ayres was a game changer in the early days of the pandemic and raised more than \$90,000 nationally to support the emergency short term financial assistance at a time when many patients were facing increased challenges with living expenses and transportation to and from dialysis.

A Powerful and Impactful Volunteer Community

The Kidney Foundation is a grassroots organization, driven by people across the country who are dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by kidney disease.

In every area of our work, **volunteers** play a significant role. In the past year, volunteers stepped up in new ways, never wavering in their dedication. From virtual meetings to new program and fundraising activities, our volunteers adapted to the many changes as a result of the pandemic. Peer Support facilitators led meetings virtually for the first time adapting to the new technology. While walk ambassadors recorded videos to highlight the walk helping to recruit new participants in the process.



Stay Connected!

JOIN THE
CONVERSATION
@KIDNEYONTARIO



FACEBOOK

4966 followers



TWITTER

2064 followers



INSTAGRAM

1402 followers



MAGAZINE

6,000 copies



E-NEWSLETTER

3,600+ subscribers

**2020-2021
Ontario Branch Board
of Directors**

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Craig Kerr

Immediate Past President:
Greg Robbins

Treasurer:
Chris Costanza

Richard Bernreiter
Director-at-Large

Mauro Burri
Director-at-Large

Charles Cook
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Teresa Roberts
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Mary-Pat Shaw
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Marlene Smith
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Sonya Solman
Director-at-Large

Susan Tkachuk
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Terry Young
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Charitable Registration Number: 10756 7398 RR0001
The Kidney Foundation of Canada's audited financial
statements are available online at www.kidney.ca,
in the publication section.