



**[cfpdp]** Canadian Foundation for  
Physically Disabled Persons

## **National Hockey League, Council of Canadian Innovators, International Paralympic Committee President and Beijing Paralympic Medallists to Receive Awards at CFPDP's 2023 Great Valentine Gala**

**TORONTO, ON – Feb. 8, 2023** – The [Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons](#) (CFPDP) is proud to be celebrating the 2023 winners of the CFPDP Corporate Award, David C. Onley Award and King Clancy Award this coming Saturday, Feb. 11, 2023 in Toronto.

The 2023 Corporate Award will be presented to the **National Hockey League** (NHL) and the **Council of Canadian Innovators** (CCI), co-founded by **Jim Balsillie** and **John Ruffolo**.

**Andrew Parsons**, President of the **International Paralympic Committee** (IPC), will be honoured with the 2023 David C. Onley Award.

The **37 medal-winning athletes** from the **Beijing Paralympics** are set to receive the 2023 King Clancy Award, with 21 athletes scheduled to accept their trophies in person.

The official awards ceremony will take place during CFPDP's [39<sup>th</sup> Annual Great Valentine Gala](#), presented by **Scotiabank** at Toronto's Fairmont Royal York Hotel. The Gala and awards ceremony will also be broadcast live across the country beginning at 6:30 p.m. Eastern Time on AMI-audio, hosted by **Andy Frank**, **Dave Brown** and **Greg Westlake**. Brown is the host of [NOW with Dave Brown](#) on AMI-tv. Westlake is one of the world's best Para ice hockey players, a multi-medal-winning Paralympian, nine-time world championship team member with three world titles, and host of [Level Playing Field](#) on AMI-tv. Listeners can tune in for the live Gala broadcast via [local television channels](#) and [live streaming](#).

"People with disabilities represent at least 22% of our population in Canada. They are beloved family members, friends and colleagues, and it is essential that they be visibly included in everything we do as a society," says **The Honourable Vim Kochhar**, Founding Chair of CFPDP. "The **NHL** is using its powerful voice and platform to promote people with disabilities, including during its 2022 NHL Awards Gala when they presented major, historic trophies. The League is also working to create a welcoming environment at every point where a player, fan

or employee might interact with the game. We applaud the NHL for being inclusive of the diverse people who live in our communities.”

**CCI** is another powerful ally in advancing equity and inclusion for disabled Canadians. As a membership-based business council, it is exclusively comprised of CEOs from Canada's fastest-growing and most promising technology companies. Co-founded in 2015 by Jim Balsillie and John Ruffolo, the Chair and Vice-Chair of CCI respectively, the Council’s mandate is to help these businesses optimize their growth, which includes helping them gain greater access to the talent needed to scale up globally. Balsillie is the retired Chairman and co-CEO of BlackBerry. Ruffolo is the Founder and Managing Partner of Maverix Private Equity and the Founder of OMERS Ventures.

CCI is training current and future board members through its [Innovation Governance Program](#), then adding participants to a roster of prospective directors within a specialized referral program that helps scale-up companies fill board vacancies.

“The Council of Canadian Innovators is driving change by working to elevate qualified people with disabilities into the boardroom,” says Hon. Kochhar. “Change starts from the top, where leaders use their influence and lived experiences to steer an organization's direction, tone and culture. Bringing together people with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives results in more thoughtful and well-rounded decision-making. We applaud CCI for its efforts to diversify the boardrooms of Canada’s high-growth technology firms so that they can represent the full mosaic of our country’s population.”

**Andrew Parsons**, President of the International Paralympic Committee, will receive the 2023 David C. Onley Award for his passion, commitment and leadership in raising awareness of international Paralympic sport.

Additionally, **Canada’s 37 medal-winning athletes from the Beijing Paralympic Games** are being honoured with the 2023 King Clancy Award. The Foundation is also providing these outstanding athletes with **podium cheques** and recognizes the generous, ongoing support of **Scotiabank**, a partner in CFPDP’s Podium Fund since 2004. **Rob Snoek**, a three-time Paralympian, world champion medallist, Canadian record holder, renowned broadcaster and CFPDP board director, will join us at the 39th Annual Great Valentine Gala to present this award.

“The inclusion of people with visible and non-visible disabilities is a priority for Scotiabank,” said **Raj Viswanathan**, Group Head and Chief Financial Officer at Scotiabank and Honourary

Gala Co-Chair. “We’re proud to support the CFPDP and the work they do to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions of people with disabilities to our communities.”

The 39th Annual Great Valentine Gala is presented by **Scotiabank** along with Platinum sponsor **Deloitte**. The honorary gala co-chairs are Scotiabank’s **Raj Viswanathan** and **Paula Allen**, Global Leader and Senior Vice President at LifeWorks. Our Gala chair for 2023 is **Tony Wight**, a CFPDP board member. Award-winning journalist and retired CBC News Network anchor **Suhana Meharchand** is back once again as the Gala’s emcee, a role she has volunteered in for more than 25 years.

Singer-songwriter duo **The Lay Awakes** are travelling in from Brooklyn, New York, to provide the evening’s entertainment. **Anna Paddock** (piano and vocals) mesmerizes audiences alongside her multi-talented musical partner and husband **Patrick Anderson** (guitar and vocals). Anderson has also spent many years representing Canada in wheelchair basketball and is a three-time Paralympic gold medallist.

“For almost four decades, we have been celebrating the organizations and people who are helping to make Canada the best country in the world for people with disabilities,” says Hon. Kochhar. “CFPDP is also grateful for the ongoing support of our loyal patrons, donors, sponsors and attendees. As a community, we continue to increase awareness, shine a spotlight on abilities, drive positive change and create opportunities so that everyone can reach for their dreams.”

#### **About the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons:**

Founded in 1984, the goal of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) is consistently to seek to put the emphasis on a person’s abilities — rather than disabilities — and to recognize and celebrate their achievements and contributions to society. Since then, CFPDP has initiated dozens of important projects and events, raising over \$35 million. Learn more at <https://www.cfpdp.com/>.

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#### **Further Information / Media Requests:**

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