



[*cfpdp*] Canadian Foundation for
Physically Disabled Persons

CFPDP Celebrates Diversity Leadership on Canadian Corporate Boards and Paralympic Medal Winners Receive Award, Funding at 38th Annual Great Valentine Gala

TORONTO, ON – February 4, 2022 – When the [Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons](#) (CFPDP) launched its “[A Seat at the Table](#)” initiative in 2019, the organization was unable to find a single person who identified as being disabled on a corporate board. That has since changed.

At the **38th Annual Great Valentine Gala**, being held virtually from Toronto on Feb. 12, 2022, CFPDP will celebrate two Canadian companies that each have a highly qualified person with a disability on their Boards of Directors: American Express Canada and OpenText.

Both **American Express Canada** and **OpenText** will receive **CFPDP’s 2022 Corporate Award**, which recognizes exemplary contributions of Canadian companies and organizations in support of people with physical disabilities. **Lisa Kalhans**, President and CEO of American Express Canada, and **Mark Barrenechea**, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Technology Officer of OpenText, will join the gala broadcast to accept the awards.

Following an extensive search process that identified a diverse group of highly skilled candidates, **Gaurav Upadhya**, a top executive at Foresters Financial living with a disability, was appointed to the Amex Bank of Canada Board in July 2021.

“To reaffirm our commitment, remain transparent, and hold ourselves accountable in creating a deeper sense of belonging and community across our organization, it was important that we started at the top with our Board of Directors,” said **Annette Kingsley**, Vice President, Colleague Experience at American Express Canada. “A diverse Board brings diverse perspectives and leads to transformation, growth, and helps us better serve our customers, colleagues, and the communities we live in.”

Major-General (Ret.) David Fraser was appointed to the OpenText Board in 2018 but until recently hid his disability – significant hearing loss that resulted from his service as an infantry

officer during the Yugoslavian civil war. Today, feeling valued and accepted in the diverse, supportive environment at OpenText, he is talking about his disability for the first time to help end the stigma that others with invisible disabilities may feel. OpenText is a wonderful example of all that is possible when you build a culture that recognizes and values people of all abilities.

Duncan Sinclair, Chair of Deloitte Canada and Chair of the “A Seat at the Table” Selection Committee, will provide a further update about how CFPDP’s efforts are helping corporate Canada to diversify their Boards and recruit candidates from the significant pool of talent in our disability community.

Additionally, **Canada’s 16 medal-winning athletes from the Tokyo Paralympic Games** are being honoured during the 38th Annual Great Valentine Gala. They will receive the **2022 King Clancy Award**, presented annually to celebrate outstanding personal achievement and important contributions in support of Canadians who live with disability. In partnership with Scotiabank, CFPDP is also providing these outstanding athletes with **podium cheques** to fill a decades old void when it comes to rewards and financial support for our country’s best performing amateur athletes. **Rob Snoek**, a three-time Paralympian, world champion medalist, Canadian record holder, renowned broadcaster and Director of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons, will join us to present this award.

Tim Rose is the recipient of the **2022 Honorable David C. Onley Award**, recognizing his outstanding contributions as a changemaker, advocate and positive role model. In his current role as Senior Consultant, Accessibility within CIBC’s Client Experience Team in Toronto, Rose is advancing inclusion, accessibility and diversity initiatives, both within the company and in the communities it serves.

The **38th Annual Great Valentine Gala** is presented by **Scotiabank** along with Platinum sponsor **Deloitte**. The honorary gala co-chairs are **Stephen Liptrap**, President and CEO of LifeWorks, and **Raj Viswanathan**, Group Head and Chief Financial Officer at Scotiabank. Our gala chair for 2022 is **Tony Wight**. Award-winning journalist **Suhana Meharchand**, a national anchor with CBC News Network, is back once again as the gala’s emcee, a role she has volunteered in for more than two decades.

The evening’s entertainment will be provided by award-winning musician **Martin Deschamps**, a popular Quebec rock singer who has performed across Canada, in France, at the Kennedy Center in Washington and at the Opening Ceremony of the Vancouver 2010 Paralympic Games.

“We are delighted, as always, to honour the organizations and people who are making a real difference in supporting people with disabilities,” said Honourable **Vim Kochhar**, Chair of CFPDP. “As well, we are incredibly thankful for the backing of our loyal patrons, donors, sponsors and attendees who continue to support our efforts year after year. Together, we are helping to make Canada the best country in the world for people with disabilities, raising awareness, furthering opportunities and creating more inclusive communities.”

The **38th Annual Great Valentine Gala** will broadcast via YouTube on **Sat., Feb. 12th at 7 p.m.**
[Insert any URL or info you have so people can tune in].

About the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons:

Founded in 1984, the goal of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) is to consistently 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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