



TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFT FROM SHAH FAMILY FOUNDATION TO CREATE ENDOWMENT FUNDS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ACROSS CANADA

*Generous Donation Propels CFPDP's "Seat at the Table" Endowment Funds Toward
\$5 Million Nationwide Impact*

TORONTO, ON – January 27, 2025 – [Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons](#) (CFPDP) is pleased to announce a landmark gift from the [Shah Family Foundation](#) to help establish 13 endowment funds supporting university and college students with disabilities in every province and territory. The endowment funds will be named in honour of **The Honourable Vim Kochhar**, CFPDP's founder and volunteer CEO for the past 41 years, recognizing his extraordinary legacy in improving accessibility and opportunities for persons with disabilities.

"The Shah Family Foundation is deeply honoured to support this transformative initiative to advance equity, accessibility and opportunity in education in collaboration with Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons," says **Kris Shah**, President of the Shah Family Foundation. "These endowment funds, named in recognition of The Honourable Vim Kochhar, reflect our shared belief that education is a powerful tool for empowerment and opportunity. By helping students with disabilities pursue their academic goals, we hope to build a legacy of inclusion, resilience, and progress that will benefit individuals and communities across Canada for generations to come."

With a generous commitment of \$1.3 million from the Shah Family Foundation, 13 endowment funds are being created as part of CFPDP's "[A Seat at the Table](#)" (SATT) program. CFPDP will add 10% to the Shah Family Foundation gift, and universities and colleges will match the total donations to their respective institutions. This collaborative effort will result in a \$2.82 million investment nationwide, providing enduring support for students with disabilities to access post-secondary education.

"Thanks to the Shah Family Foundation's remarkable generosity, our 'Seat at the Table' education initiative is closer than ever to achieving a \$5 million nationwide impact," says Hon. Kochhar. "These 13 endowment funds will provide critical, enduring resources for students with disabilities while nurturing the next generation of leaders. This effort reflects the Shah Family Foundation's commitment to providing meaningful resources that foster individual growth and strengthen communities."

Hon. Kochhar adds, "Serving as CFPDP's volunteer CEO for over four decades and working to make Canada the best country in the world for people with disabilities is the honour of a lifetime. I am deeply moved to see visionaries like Kris and Neelam, along with their family, investing in creating opportunities

that empower students with disabilities to become the executives, entrepreneurs and community changemakers of tomorrow.”

The Shah Family Foundation’s gift underscores its commitment to ensuring equitable access to education.

“These endowment funds reflect our dedication to fostering inclusion and creating lasting impacts for students who face unique challenges in pursuing higher education,” says **Neelam Shah**. “Our work with CFPDP aligns perfectly with their mission to build academic pathways and cultivate leadership opportunities for students with disabilities. Together, the Shah Family Foundation and CFPDP aim to create a positive and lasting impact.”

About 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 founded dozens of important projects and events, raising over \$40 million to support them and other initiatives. Learn more at cfpdp.com.

About CFPDP’s “A Seat at the Table” Program:

Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) launched “A Seat at the Table” (SATT) in 2019 to encourage corporate Canada to diversify its boards of directors by appointing qualified individuals with disabilities. An influential [Selection Board](#) of top CEOs, executives, and university chancellors guides the project, working to raise awareness while identifying and promoting candidates with physical disabilities for board positions. Over 30 candidates have been selected since the SATT program launched, with appointments to boards including Amex Bank of Canada and Primerica Life Insurance Company of Canada. Learn more at aseatatthetable.ca.

CFPDP’s SATT endowment funds initiative is creating pathways to post-secondary education for students with disabilities who might otherwise face barriers. By investing in future leaders, the initiative opens doors to educational opportunities and nurtures the next generation of board directors and decision-makers.

About Shah Family Foundation:

Established in 2022, the Shah Family Foundation supports communities globally through equitable education and healthcare access. Kris and Neelam Shah, along with their daughters, lead the foundation with a commitment to making a meaningful impact on society. For more information, visit shahfamilyfoundation.ca.

Further Information / Media Requests:

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