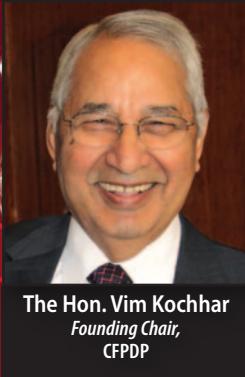


42  
YEARSTHE GREAT  
VALENTINE  
GALA

## GALA FOUNDER



**The Hon. Vim Kochhar**  
Founding Chair,  
CFPDP

## HONOURARY GALA CO-CHAIRS



**Jay-Ann Gilfoy**  
President & CEO,  
Meridian Credit Union

## EMCEE



**Scott Russell**  
Chancellor, Nipissing University  
Former CBC Sports Broadcaster

## THE 2026 GREAT VALENTINE GALA AWARD WINNERS

## THE HON. DAVID C. ONLEY AWARD



**David Coriat**  
Executive Vice President and  
Chief Financial Officer,  
Slaight Communications Inc.



**Lynn Coriat**

## THE HON. VIM KOCHHAR AWARD



**Duncan Sinclair**  
Chair,  
Deloitte Canada & Chile

## CORPORATE AWARD



**Kevan Gorrie**  
President & CEO,  
Granite REIT



**David Errington**  
President & CEO,  
Accessible Media Inc. (AMI)

## KING CLANCY AWARD



**George Przybylowski**  
Board Director,  
CFPDP



**Prasanna Ranganathan**  
Founder, Prasanna  
Ranganathan Consulting



**Tony Wight**  
Board Director,  
CFPDP



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# THE Great Valentine Gala

WhyNot. MAGAZINE / FEBRUARY 2026

Published by the Canadian Foundation  
for Physically Disabled Persons

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**Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons**, a charitable organization founded in 1985, assists people with physical disabilities to live fuller lives. Its mission is to create awareness in the public, business communities and government of the abilities of persons with disabilities and their needs in the areas of housing, employment, education, accessibility, sports and recreation and research. In the past 42 years, the Foundation has raised substantial funds, which it has distributed to a wide variety of organizations and events. These include the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame, Eternal Flame of Hope, Canadian Helen Keller Centre and housing for people who are deaf-blind, the Great Valentine Gala, the King Clancy Awards, the Corporate Awards, the Hon. David C. Onley Award, the Hon. Vim Kochhar Award, A Seat at the Table, WhyNot Marathon, the first Canadian marathon for the Paralympics, Jeff Adams' CN Tower climb, Rolling Rampage Wheelchair 10K Road Race and Rolling Rampage on the Hill.

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# WhyNot.



As viceregal patron of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP), I am pleased to convey my warmest greetings to everyone gathered for the 42nd Great Valentine Gala.

For more than four decades, the CFPDP has raised funds through the Great Valentine Gala in support of Canadians with disabilities, making vital services and life-changing initiatives possible.

This prestigious event has also become a remarkable platform for celebrating the achievements of Canadians. This evening, extraordinary individuals will be honoured for their outstanding contributions to Canada's disability community. Each of them is a shining example of how people of all abilities can transform challenges into inspiration.

Congratulations to the award winners! I wish everyone a successful and memorable gala.

**Her Excellency, The Right Honourable Mary Simon**  
*The Governor General of Canada*



It is my great pleasure to extend warm greetings to all taking part in this inspiring celebration as the community comes together for the 42nd Annual Great Valentine Gala at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel in support of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons.

This remarkable evening honours the exceptional achievements of individuals and organizations whose leadership, innovation, and commitment have advanced accessibility, inclusion, and opportunity for Canadians with physical disabilities. This Gala stands as a testament to what we can accomplish when we work together to break down barriers, champion accessibility, and recognize that the full participation of all Canadians enriches our communities and strengthens our nation.

À titre de représentante de la Couronne en Ontario, je félicite chaleureusement les lauréates et lauréats et je salue le travail remarquable de la Fondation. Je vous souhaite une soirée mémorable qui célèbre l'excellence, l'équité et notre engagement collectif envers une société toujours plus accessible.

**The Honourable Edith Dumont**  
*The Lieutenant Governor of Ontario*



At Meridian, we say, "Our purpose is to help our Members achieve their best lives." For me, that purpose only has meaning if it includes everyone. Accessibility is not a separate initiative

or a box to check. It is fundamental to whether people can participate fully, pursue their dreams and live with independence and dignity. A commitment to inclusivity must start at the top and be reinforced through action. That belief shapes our approach to banking at Meridian for our Members and our employees. It is also why the work of Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) matters so deeply.

CFPDP focuses on removing barriers by investing in programs and awareness, celebrating achievements and creating pathways that allow people with disabilities to thrive. Its work recognizes a simple but powerful truth — that potential exists everywhere and opportunity grows when ability is recognized first.

The Great Valentine Gala brings that commitment to life. It connects people who understand that meaningful change requires sustained effort, collaboration and a willingness to lead with intention.

I am honoured to serve as an Honourary Co-Chair and to support CFPDP's mission. Thank you to everyone who contributes their time, energy, resources and belief to this work. Together, we can continue building a Canada where more people truly have the opportunity to live their best lives.

**Jay-Ann Gilfoy**  
*President and CEO, Meridian Credit Union  
Honorary Co-Chair, 42nd Annual Great Valentine Gala*

# MESSAGES



I am proud to serve as Honourary Co-Chair of the 42nd Annual Great Valentine Gala and to support the essential work of Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP). What draws me

most to CFPDP is its commitment to meaningful outcomes. CFPDP identifies real gaps in inclusive leadership, education, accessible housing, sport and other support systems and works steadily to close them. Its programs are thoughtful, well-structured, and designed to deliver lasting impact.

Baylis Medical Technologies is driven by a commitment to improving lives through meaningful healthcare innovation. Through the Shah Family Foundation, we have long believed in supporting initiatives that help people build strong, independent futures. CFPDP's work reflects that same belief. These efforts recognize that progress happens when people are equipped with both resources and confidence.

The Great Valentine Gala is a meaningful moment each year. It is a chance to reflect on what has been achieved and to renew our collective responsibility to uplift others. It unites people who care deeply about creating a more accessible and equitable society.

I would like to thank CFPDP's volunteers, donors and partners for their continued dedication. Congratulations as well to this year's award recipients. Your achievements and leadership remind us why this important work must continue.

**Kris Shah**  
Co-Executive Chairman, Baylis Medical Technologies  
Honourary Co-Chair, The Great Valentine Gala



As we gather for the 42nd Annual Great Valentine Gala, at 90 years of age I remain filled with gratitude, pride and a strong sense of responsibility for the work that continues ahead of us. When CFPDP was

founded, we had a modest goal and a bold belief — that barriers could be removed when people come together with purpose. What followed has exceeded anything I could have imagined. Today, the Foundation is a powerful catalyst for change. We are funding accessible housing, Para sport, leadership opportunities, post-secondary education and initiatives that have improved the lives of countless Canadians with disabilities.

One of the achievements closest to my heart is Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC), which CFPDP founded and continues to support. As CHKC prepares to open its new 56-unit affordable and accessible apartment building, I am reminded that long-term vision matters. Building on the legacy of the world's first purpose-built home for people who are deafblind, which we opened in 1992, this project represents independence and hope.

I am continually inspired by the Paralympians we honour, the leaders we recognize and the partners, donors and volunteers who support us. Progress happens because people choose to stay engaged, give generously and serve others.

Thank you for being part of CFPDP's journey and for helping to shape what comes next.

**The Honourable Vim Kochhar**  
*Founding Chair, Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons*



There is something profoundly moving about the Great Valentine Gala each year. It is not just an event on a calendar. It is a collective commitment to the belief that progress

is possible when we choose to care, show up and keep going. I am reminded of that serving alongside The Honourable Vim Kochhar, whose vision and generosity as our volunteer CEO have shaped CFPDP from the beginning. His leadership continues to guide us with quiet persistence and an unwavering belief in people.

What sustains CFPDP is the collective effort behind it. Our board of directors, staff and volunteers bring thoughtfulness, integrity and heart to everything they do. Many have been part of this journey for years. Others are newer to the community. All play an essential role in expanding opportunity in ways that truly matter.

We also could not do what we do without the incredible support of our sponsors, donors and supporters.

It is my privilege to be part of this dedicated group and to help steward the Foundation forward while honouring the values on which it was built. Our work is about acting with intention and staying committed even when progress takes time.

Thank you for being here, for believing in CFPDP's mission and for contributing to the future we are building together.

**Christine Payne**  
*Executive Director, Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons*

42 GALA YEARS

THE Great Valentine Gala

IN SUPPORT OF  
[cfpdp]

For 42 years, CFPDP's Great Valentine Gala has been a beacon of celebration and connection — an evening where achievements are honoured, lives are uplifted and a collective commitment to inclusion and possibility fills the room.

As the Foundation's flagship fundraising event, the 41st Annual Great Valentine Gala marked both a milestone and a new chapter. **Scott Russell**, Chancellor of

Nipissing University and former CBC Sports broadcaster, made his debut as emcee. The accomplishments of individuals with physical disabilities and their allies whose dedication continues to create lasting change were recognized during the annual awards ceremony. Another highlight was the fireside chat with Paralympians **Aurélie Rivard** and **Greg Stewart**, who shared stories and insights about accessibility and the power of sport.

Over more than four decades, the Gala and CFPDP's broader fundraising efforts have raised in excess of \$40 million to fund programs and services that improve the lives of Canadians with physical disabilities.

"From the very beginning, the Great Valentine Gala has been about turning vision into lasting impact," says **The Honourable Vim Kochhar**, Founding Chair of CFPDP. "Our first Gala helped fund the world's first fully accessible, barrier-free apartment complex for people who are deafblind, managed by Canadian Helen Keller Centre

(CHKC), an organization we proudly founded. Today, as CHKC completes its new 56-unit, affordable and accessible apartment building for even more deafblind individuals, we are immensely proud of the organization and its dedicated team for expanding our original vision."

In addition to its long-standing support of CHKC, CFPDP advances inclusion through its "A Seat at the Table" (SATT) program, which increases corporate board representation for highly qualified professionals with disabilities. Additionally, SATT is working to create endowment funds at universities and colleges across the country to help develop the next generation of leaders.

CFPDP also founded and manages the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame, is a pioneer in funding for Paralympic athletes, supports other Para sport initiatives and provides critical funding for local and national disability initiatives.

**Taylor Lindsay-Noel** was celebrated with **The Honourable David C. Onley Award** in 2025 for her impressive work as a social media influencer, advocate, entrepreneur and community leader. Through candid and engaging social media videos, Lindsay-Noel emphasizes



Head Table guests celebrate the 41st Annual Great Valentine Gala. Back row: Tony Wight, John A. Adams, Caroline Adams, Hon. Edith Dumont, Sal Iacono, Stella Scalia, Hycinth Viswanathan, Kate Stevenson, Ruth Ann Onley, Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Raj Viswanathan, Phillip Crawley. Front row: Kris Shah, Mark Attanasio, Laura Dottori-Attanasio, Hon. Vim Kochhar.

that accessibility isn't optional but essential. She founded Cup of Té, a luxury tea brand recognized twice on Oprah Winfrey's Favorite Things List, and serves as a board member of the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital Foundation.

Each year, the CFPDP **Corporate Awards** recognize the exemplary contributions of Canadian companies and organizations in support of people with physical disabilities. The first recipient for 2025 was **Primerica Life Insurance Company of Canada**, recognized for diversifying its corporate board and leading by example. Primerica Life Canada appointed **Gaurav Upadhyा**, a senior financial, risk, actuarial and insurance business executive who contracted polio at age three, to its board of directors in the fall of 2024. This appointment ensures inclusive leadership at the highest level.

The second recipient of the 2025 Corporate Award was the **Shah Family Foundation** for its impactful work in healthcare and dedication to expanding access to post-secondary education for students with disabilities. The Shah Family Foundation's generous \$1.3 million gift, with matching support from universities, colleges and CFPDP, will help create over \$2.8 million in endowment funds, providing support for students with disabilities in each province and territory for generations to come.

CFPDP's **King Clancy Award** is presented annually in recognition of outstanding personal

achievement and important contributions in support of Canadians who live with disability. The 2025 award was bestowed upon a group of exceptional recipients, the **31 medal-winning athletes from the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games**.

Team Canada Paralympians delivered an extraordinary performance in Paris, securing a total of 29 medals: 10 gold, 9 silver and 10 bronze. This medal count exceeds the 21 won at Tokyo 2020 and equals the team's remarkable showing at Rio 2016. The 10 gold medals are particularly significant, marking Canada's highest total since Beijing 2008.

The athletes also received cheques from CFPDP's Podium Fund, sponsored by **Scotiabank**.

Established in 2024 as a tribute to the incredible legacy of CFPDP's founder, **The Honourable Vim Kochhar Award** celebrates individuals who have significantly impacted the disability community and our country. **Laura Dottori-Attanasio**, the visionary leader at the helm of Element Fleet Management Corp., was the 2025 recipient. She was honoured for her commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility, as well as her outstanding leadership in creating opportunities for people with disabilities and her dedication to giving back.

"Laura Dottori-Attanasio's journey inspires us to reimagine what true leadership looks like. It is not defined by loud declarations but by consistent actions, heartfelt commitment and an unwavering sense of responsibility," said

**Tony Wight**, Board Director for CFPDP. "She reminds us that the most impactful leaders inspire meaningful change with quiet strength, genuine authenticity and a firm determination to shape a better future."

"Everything CFPDP has accomplished over more than four decades has been made possible by the generosity, commitment and belief of our supporters," says **Hon. Kochhar**. "When people come together with compassion and purpose, meaningful change follows. I am deeply grateful to everyone who supports us as we continue our work to make Canada the best country in the world for people with disabilities."



## 2026 Great Valentine Gala Committee Members

### GALA CO-CHAIRS

George Przybylowski  
Tony Wight

### FOUNDATION CHAIR

Hon. Vim Kochhar

### EMCEES

Scott Russell  
Rob Snoek

### EVENT PRODUCER

Christine Payne

### IT MANAGER

Rob Ham

### FINANCE

David Ford

### VIP RECEPTION

Jay-Ann Gilfoy  
Kris Shah

George Przybylowski  
Tony Wight

Faye Blackwood  
David Ford

Maureen Harquail  
Major Beverly Ivany

Mark Lecker  
Brian McLean

### TOMBOLA

Jennifer Robbins  
Dale Heckman

Jan Verboom  
Kelly Chumbley

Rob Ham

Nicole Allossery  
Thomas Gaffney  
Lynne Hardy

Nicole Hardy

### EVENT VOLUNTEERS

Iqra Ajaz  
William Anderson

Jacqui Banner-Jeffrey  
Anne Choy

Cassandra Federbusz  
Rick Jeffrey

Lisa MacLellan

Jessica Parrott

Jean Pickering

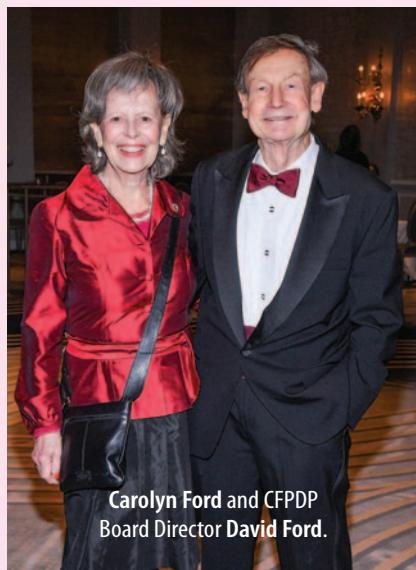
Britt Rolston

Joan Wilson





Gala emcee Scott Russell (left) and George Przybylowski, Gala Co-Chair and CFPDP Board Director.



Carolyn Ford and CFPDP Board Director David Ford.



Hon. Vim Kochhar and Sarah Cooper.



Primerica Life Insurance Company of Canada CEO John A. Adams (left) and Board Director Gaurav Upadhyā (second from left) receive the 2025 Corporate Award from Honourary Gala Co-Chairs Laura Dottori-Attanasio and Sal Iacono.



Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell, former Lieutenant Governor of Ontario (left) and Hon. Edith Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.



Nancy McFadyen and John McFadyen.



Anita Panday, Hari Panday, Anita Gupta and Ajay Gupta.



Kris Shah, President, Shah Family Foundation (left), receives the 2025 Corporate Award from Honourary Gala Co-Chairs Laura Dottori-Attanasio and Sal Iacono.



## Creating a world without limits to ambition

Built on our longstanding history of supporting our communities, CIBC is committed to removing barriers to personal ambitions and making a positive impact.

We are proud to support the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons as they celebrate their 42nd Great Valentine Gala.



# INVESTING IN TOMORROW'S LEADERS: —CFPDP's Endowment Funds Legacy—

**F**OR MORE THAN FOUR DECADES, the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) has worked to remove barriers and expand opportunity for Canadians with disabilities. While much of that work has focused on raising awareness, accessible housing, programs and services for the deafblind community, celebrating achievements, Para sport and inclusive board leadership, one of CFPDP's most enduring investments is now unfolding quietly and powerfully across campuses nationwide.

Through its endowment funds initiative, CFPDP is helping to create permanent, sustainable support for students with disabilities at universities and colleges across Canada. These awards do more than ease financial strain. They send a message of belief — that talent exists everywhere, that education is a pathway to leadership and that students with disabilities belong in every academic and professional space.

The latest part of this national effort has been made possible through a partnership with the **Shah Family Foundation**, whose landmark \$1.3 million gift is enabling the creation of 13 endowment funds — one in every province and territory. With matching funds from CFPDP and participating institutions, the initiative will result in a \$2.82 million investment supporting students with disabilities in perpetuity.

“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,” says **Kris Shah**, President of the Shah Family Foundation. “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.”

When the Shah Family Foundation endowment funds are fully established, CFPDP will have facilitated

almost \$5 million in total investments to help students with disabilities across Canada.

The endowment funds initiative is part of CFPDP's “A Seat at the Table” (SATT) program, launched in 2019 to increase the representation of highly qualified professionals with disabilities on corporate boards. While SATT focuses on leadership today, the endowment funds look ahead by investing in individuals who will become tomorrow's executives, entrepreneurs, advocates and changemakers.

“Our work with CFPDP aligns perfectly with their mission to build academic pathways and cultivate leadership opportunities for students with disabilities,” says **Neelam Shah**. “Together, the Shah Family Foundation and CFPDP aim to create a positive and lasting impact.”

For **Renata Caughlin**, the impact of CFPDP's endowment funds program is deeply personal. Caughlin was the recipient of a 2025 award at Toronto Metropolitan University from one of CFPDP's earliest endowment funds.

“As a mature student, going back to university in my 50's with a disability while parenting a child with a disability and working full-time as a social service worker, I cannot begin to tell you how much this award will help me to meet the costs of my education,” she wrote in a letter to The Honourable Vim Kochhar.

Yet for Caughlin, the recognition mattered as much as the financial support.

“Even more than the financial assistance, the acknowledgement of my contribution to the field of disability studies is the biggest honour, and coming from someone I respect so much makes it even more meaningful,” she said. “I hope so much to one day have a fraction of the impact on the lives of people with disabilities that you have had.”

Her words capture what CFPDP's endowment funds are ultimately about. They build confidence, provide affirmation and help shape trailblazers. One student, one institution and one future leader at a time.

## Endowment funds established:

- 1 York University - CFPDP
- 2 Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) - CFPDP
- 3 Toronto Metropolitan University (formerly Ryerson University) - Vim Kochhar - CFPDP
- 4 University of Manitoba - Asper Foundation - CFPDP
- 5 Pearson College, Vancouver - Vim Kochhar
- 6 Ivey Business School at the University of Western Ontario - Thorpe Family Foundation in partnership with CFPDP
- 7 Queen's University - Duncan and Michelle Sinclair Foundation in partnership with CFPDP's “A Seat at the Table” program
- 8 Osgoode Hall Law School at York University - Abe Bresver Award with CFPDP
- 9 York University - Noor Award with CFPDP
- 10 Queen's University - Jim Leech in partnership with CFPDP's “A Seat at the Table” program
- 11 Ontario Tech University - Dottori-Attanasio Family with CFPDP Award
- 12 University of Calgary - Aaron Family Award for Students with Disabilities in partnership with CFPDP's “A Seat at the Table” program
- 13 University of New Brunswick - The Honourable Vim Kochhar Award in Partnership with Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons
- 14 Nipissing University - The Honourable Vim Kochhar Award in Partnership with Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons
- 15 University of Alberta - The Honourable Vim Kochhar Graduate Bursary in Partnership with Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons



## INSPIRING POSSIBILITY WITHOUT LIMITS

Baylis Medical Technologies is a proud supporter of the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons and is honoured to celebrate the 42<sup>nd</sup> Great Valentine Gala.

**Baylis**  
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PRESENTING

The Honourable  
**David C. Onley**  
AWARD

**In tribute to our 28th Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons introduced *The Honourable David C. Onley Award* in 2014.**

**F**or **David and Lynn Coriat**, giving back began with the birth of their daughter Jessica. Raising a child with cerebral palsy brought them face to face with the everyday realities of disability and with how much help can depend on what you can afford.

“Jessica has faced many challenges over her lifetime,” David Coriat says. “We are fortunate enough to be able to provide the help and equipment she needs. Along the way, though, we met many parents who were desperately in need of support they could not afford.”

What began as a response to those early experiences grew into a sustained commitment to helping children and youth with disabilities and their families. Over time, the Coriats came to understand that the need for support does not end in childhood but often intensifies as young people move into adulthood.

“Out of the blue one day, Jessica said, ‘Dad, what happens when you and Mom are gone? Who’s going to take care of me?’ That was an eye-opener for me,” David Coriat recalls. “If she raised the point, then other people must think about it. It’s very important for them to know that somehow, when their parents are gone, they are going to be taken care of.”

That moment helped spark what would become the LIFEspan Program, developed in partnership with Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and University Health Network. LIFEspan, which stands for Living Independently Fully Engaged, supports youth with disabilities as they move into adulthood.

“When kids turn 18, there are literally no supports available to them,” David Coriat says. “They are on their own and do not know how to navigate the system or even where to start. They have to find housing, a job, learn how to use public transit, how to buy groceries and take care of themselves.”

Through their philanthropy, the Coriats have focused on building practical supports to address these gaps, including the Coriat Youth Transitions and Development Centre, the LIFEspan Program and LIFEspan Future Care Planning, life-skills and mentorship initiatives, research into youth transitions and rehabilitation innovation, and direct

assistance that helps families meet everyday needs.

“When we first started, our support initially benefited just a few children,” David Coriat says. “As support has increased, hundreds of individuals are benefiting, and we only see this growing over time.”

That long-term view is reflected not only in the programs they support, but in their own family. Jessica, now an accomplished young adult, has moved from being a

client and volunteer at Holland Bloorview to working at the Holland Bloorview Foundation. She pursued the role herself when it was advertised, advocating for her skills and experience.

Jessica’s success reinforces why the Coriats continue to look beyond individual outcomes to the broader gaps families still face, including struggling to meet basic needs. David Coriat recounts

hearing about a child sleeping on the floor because a specialized mattress was not covered by government funding.

“This is a story that pops up all the time,” he says. “Families cannot afford what I call the basics. And when you go back to something like a wheelchair, wheelchairs are really the legs for these people. To deny them a wheelchair is to deny them the opportunity to get around.”

Despite the scale of their contributions, the Coriats stress that meaningful change depends on people acting together.

“It accumulates,” David Coriat says. “All contributions are critical. It doesn’t matter whether it’s \$500, \$1,000, or \$10,000. If you multiply that by the number of people, it adds up.”

When asked what they hope their work inspires, David Coriat returns to a simple message.

“People in general have to be more understanding of people with disabilities, whatever the disability is,” he says. “Give people a chance. You’d be surprised what could come out of it.”

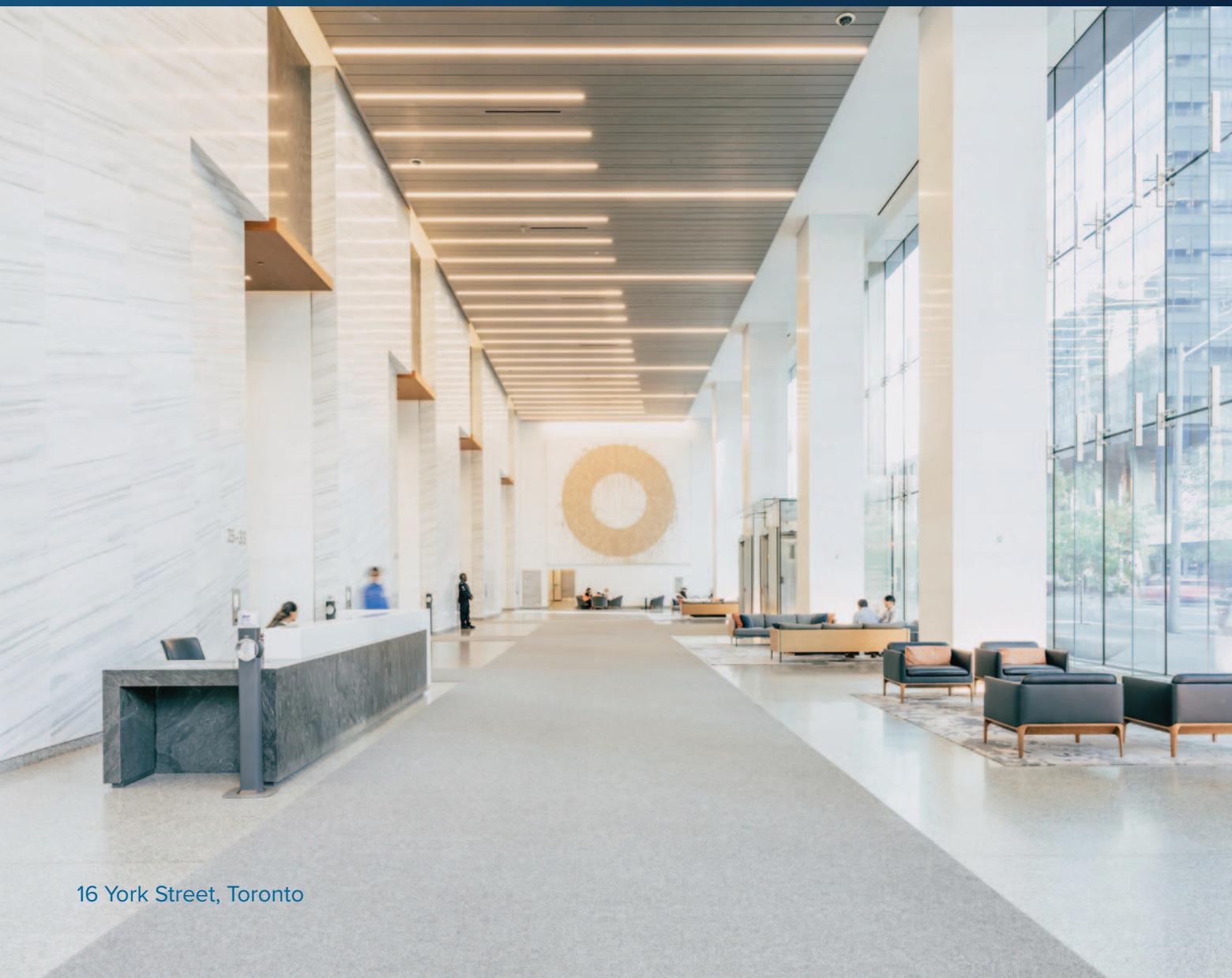
He adds, “Lynn and I are very honoured to receive The Honourable David C. Onley Award from the Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons and hope our story and journey inspire others to support those living with a disability.”



# Transforming communities for a vibrant tomorrow

Cadillac Fairview has a longstanding history of sustainability action. From our award-winning Green at Work® program, to evolving governance and risk strategies, we strive for leading ESG practices. Our commitment shines through in our business performance, GRESB achievements, and climate action including the largest number of Zero Carbon Building Performance Certifications in Canada.

Learn more by visiting [cadillacfairview.com/esg](http://cadillacfairview.com/esg).



\*\*\*\*\*  
PRESENTING THE 2026

# King Clancy Award

The Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons' **King Clancy Award** is presented annually in recognition of outstanding personal achievement and important contributions in support of Canadians who live with disability. There are three recipients for 2026.

## George Przybylowski

George Przybylowski learned early that a life well lived carries an obligation to others. His parents came to Canada as displaced persons after the Second World War, having survived profound loss. They rebuilt their lives through perseverance and generosity by focusing significantly on providing opportunities and a better life for their children. "I felt like there was an IOU," Przybylowski says. "They did all of this for me. I should be trying to do this for others as well."

That sense of responsibility was reinforced by his father's involvement with War Amps. When opportunities arose to support people with physical disabilities himself, he stepped forward without hesitation. Przybylowski became involved with Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) as a founding board member, helping the team build the organization and advance initiatives such as the Great Valentine Gala and Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. What mattered to him was contribution, not recognition.

That outlook has guided him throughout his life, captured in a favourite line attributed to U.S. President Harry S. Truman: "It is amazing what you can accomplish if you do not care who gets the credit."

Przybylowski's path into large-scale community action took further shape through the Rotary Club of Toronto-Don Valley, after The Honourable Vim Kochhar invited him to join. "One major factor was that I found it difficult to say no to Vim," Przybylowski says, laughing.

The purpose resonated immediately. Hon. Kochhar wanted to change the narrative from



disability to ability. "That absolutely appealed to me very much," Przybylowski says.

As Rotary leaders considered where funds raised through the earliest Great Valentine Galas should go, they asked a defining question: Where could they make the greatest difference? "The first thing was acknowledging that our target group was going to be the deaf-blind community," Przybylowski recalls. "The second was to determine what would be the most significant need that they were not able to meet, and could we then roll up our sleeves and achieve that?"

What followed was a rethinking of how support for people who are deafblind could work. At the time, individuals were largely isolated and received limited intervenor services. "It was obvious to us to reverse that," Przybylowski explains, "and bring them together, where they could live independently, but as part of a community."

That thinking led to Rotary Cheshire Homes (RCH), the first purpose-built apartment complex of its kind anywhere in the world for people who are deafblind. The model combined affordable, independent living with intervenor services, community connection and skills training. In 2016, Rotary Cheshire Homes amalgamated with Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC), which CFPDP had also founded.

Turning vision into reality for RCH required sustained advocacy. Drawing on his experience in public service, including senior roles within Ontario's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Przybylowski worked persistently to help secure capital from the Non-Profit Housing Program and operating funding from the province at a time when existing policies were not designed for such a model. The reality

is that a golf game with a senior civil servant played a key role.

After retiring from a highly successful career in the commercial real estate industry in 2023, Przybylowski returned to the CHKC board of directors, lending his experience once again. "This was a no-brainer," he says. "I already knew who this constituency was and what their needs were."

Alongside his work in disability advocacy, Przybylowski's commitment to service has taken other forms. After being diagnosed with prostate cancer in 2006, he became a vocal advocate for awareness and early detection, serving seven years on the board of Prostate Cancer Canada. "It is by far the most common cancer in men," he says, noting that many men he spoke with were not having regular checkups and were missing opportunities for early detection. "When a PSA result spikes unexpectedly, that is a reason to investigate it."

Serving without a spotlight, building without ownership and acting for the love of the work itself define George Przybylowski's contribution to Canada's disability and charitable communities.

## Prasanna Ranganathan

**T**he King Clancy Award honours individuals whose leadership expands opportunity and understanding for people with disabilities. In Prasanna Ranganathan, it recognizes a leader whose work has advanced diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility and belonging (DEIAB) through both systemic change and storytelling in Canada and around the world.

"My journey has been characterized by often being the first and only person on a team or in an organization," he says. "As a disabled (blind), queer, racialized person, who I am is what I bring ... I add value by bringing different perspectives and lived experiences to bear in decision making."

Over more than 20 years, Ranganathan has worked as a documentary producer, DEIAB consultant and advisor, speaker, writer and human rights lawyer. "Throughout my career," he explains, "I have often had to be a multi-hyphenate by obligation, bringing my expertise to the work while working tirelessly to bring down systemic barriers and create organizations that reflect and serve the world in which we live."

His motivation is clear. "My commitment to disability rights and equity is driven by a desire to remove barriers and create a more equitable, accessible

and inclusive world for people with disabilities."

Reflecting on his international development and human rights work across 15 countries, Ranganathan continues, "As disabled people, we exist everywhere across all countries, regions, places and spaces. And yet our existence, experiences, stories and the barriers we face are treated as niche issues that are not worthy of consideration, attention, resourcing or action."

He says, "My work in this space has been driven by my own personal journey as a disabled person navigating inaccessible and inequitable organizations. [I have spent years] advocating for change so that I could show up in the fullness of who I am and add value through my work. Whether championing policy changes, creating community with fellow disabled colleagues, or designing programs to shatter accessibility barriers and advance disability inclusion, my work has always been deeply informed by the stories and lived experiences of disabled people."

Storytelling has been a consistent throughline in Ranganathan's work — including during his tenure leading Shopify's global diversity and belonging strategy, where inclusive storytelling was embedded across programs, systems and culture.

"I have always believed that stories have the power not just to reflect the world in which we live but imagine the world we seek to build. As a child who grew up loving film and television, I found my way through the world based on the stories I consumed. They helped me make sense of my feelings ... and understand a world not designed with me in mind. They helped me dream of a vibrant, expansive future."

Ranganathan has brought that philosophy to some of the world's most influential cultural platforms, including the Toronto International Film Festival, where he has led inclusion and accessibility learning for staff, volunteers and industry leaders.

But he concedes that representation still has a way to go. "Attitudinal barriers rooted in ableism are one of the main barriers to accessibility that must be dismantled," he says, citing a 2025 University of Southern California Annenberg Inclusion Initiative study showing that fewer than 2.5 percent of speaking characters in the top 100 grossing films are disabled.

That gap between Canada's population — where 27% live with a disability — and onscreen representation (which isn't yet fully tracked or understood across Canada) led Ranganathan to help establish the Disability Screen Office. This national, bilingual not-for-profit organization serves disabled creatives and



eliminates accessibility barriers across the sector.

Still, the moments that stay with him are personal. "When an attendee at one of my accessibility workshops or keynotes or someone who has watched one of the projects I have worked on, shares that ... my story/lived experience or creative work centring disabled stories has given them the language to articulate their own experience and to know that they are not alone, that means the world to me. It moves me to tears. To create spaces where people can feel seen, heard, and know that they matter is profoundly powerful and moving."

## Tony Wight

Some people change the world by taking centre stage, standing at a podium and speaking into a microphone. Others do it by joining a committee, helping with event documents and details, making sure everyone gets inside, and then slipping quietly into a chair at the back.

Tony Wight has always been the second kind.

For significant periods during the past four decades, he has shown up not to be seen, but to help make sure the work gets done. That steady commitment to community service has earned him the 2026 King Clancy Award.

Wight's connection to disability began long before his formal volunteer work. "I became aware of people with disabilities at an early age," he says, citing family, friends, people in his community and news stories that resonated deeply. Those early impressions have shaped his perspective ever since.

His desire to give back deepened through personal experience. As a child, and again more than 30 years later, he suffered severe fractures of his left femur, resulting in difficult hospital stays and months of rehabilitation. "I learned what it was like to have someone offer to open a door for me," he says.

That understanding shaped what came next.

In 1981, while working in the legal department at IBM Canada Limited, Wight became Charter President of the newly formed Rotary Club of Toronto-Don Valley. It was even more memorable as his second son was born that same morning. Rotary appealed to Wight because it was practical. It wasn't about recognition, but helping others.

A year or two later, The Honourable Vim Kochhar joined the Rotary Club and, in 1985, enthusiastically proposed the idea of a Great Valentine Gala to raise funds to build housing for the deafblind community.

"The Club was new and only getting established," Wight says, and the proposal felt overwhelming. But Kochhar was persistent. "Despite the size and objectives of this proposal, we joined arms and did our best to make his grand vision materialize," recalls Wight.

The goal had been to raise \$10,000. The group raised \$239,000.

"What probably stands out the most," Wight says, "includes the enthusiasm of the attendees and the appreciation expressed by the people who were there. Skeptics became instant believers."

That spirit carried forward. By 1988, the Don Valley Rotary Club had become the highest per-member fundraiser in the world. Ever humble about his contributions to the community, Wight is quick to redirect credit. "It was initially Vim's enthusiasm, relentless energy and foresight that drove us forward. If it weren't for Vim, we probably would never have achieved this high level of success."

Wight became a board director for Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) in 2020, a few years after having retired from IBM as Senior Counsel. His motivation, once again, was simple. "Vim!!" he says, laughing. "As many have said, 'No one ever says no to Vim.'"

Since then, Wight has immersed himself in CFPDP's mission, co-chairing events, representing the Foundation at functions and contributing to planning and strategy.

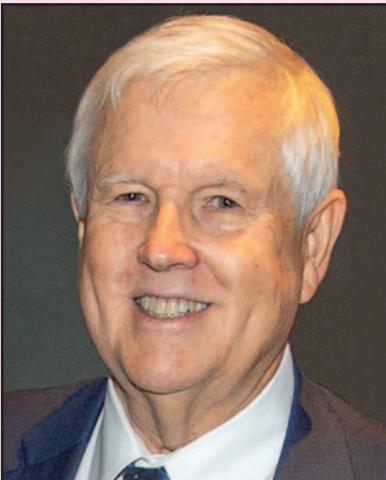
As a years-long Co-Chair of the Great Valentine Gala and Canadian Disability Hall of Fame Induction Luncheon, Wight finds meaning in the moment of recognition itself. "It is thrilling for me to see such worthy persons honoured publicly for their amazing accomplishments," he says.

Wight's volunteerism also extends to the Lymphedema Association of Ontario, inspired by his late wife's experience with cancer and lymphedema. "We learned very late in her journey that serious limb swelling was in fact a condition called lymphedema,

which could be treated but not cured," he says. "After she passed away, I wanted to find out more about this debilitating condition and encourage others — patients, health providers and government — to improve awareness and support."

And his advice for others regarding the importance of volunteering? "Find an area or a cause that interests you, perhaps based on your own personal experience, or that of family, friends or others, and do what you can to help."

These are wise words from a man who has done precisely that and more for so many years.



# Honouring Excellence: CFPDP and Scotiabank Celebrate Canada's Paralympic Medallists

For more than two decades, Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) and Scotiabank have proudly partnered to recognize and reward Canada's

Paralympic medallists following each Summer and Winter Games. Through this enduring partnership, Scotiabank has generously contributed nearly \$1 million in financial support to help recognize the achievements of outstanding Team Canada athletes.

These medallists have inspired the nation and make all of us very proud.

**A**fter each Paralympic Games, CFPDP honours Canada's medal-winning athletes with a financial award through the Podium Fund and with the King Clancy Award, recognizing athletic excellence and the role these athletes play in advancing awareness of disability and sport. The ceremony has become one of the most powerful moments of the Great Valentine Gala, as athletes are recognized in a room filled with gratitude, admiration and pride alongside their fellow Team Canada teammates.

In the years leading up to the Games, CFPDP also brings current and past Paralympians together at the Gala, creating a multigenerational celebration of excellence, mentorship and shared experience. CFPDP hosts a special tribute and send-off for athletes preparing to compete

on the world stage, acknowledging their dedication and the pride they inspire in Canadians from coast to coast to coast.

One of the most cherished traditions is CFPDP's Team Canada banner. Guests sign it with messages of encouragement and good wishes before it is shared with the Canadian Paralympic Committee and displayed in the Athletes' Village at the Games as a visible reminder that an entire country is cheering them on.

"Our Paralympic athletes represent the very best of Canada," says **The Honourable Vim Kochhar**, Founding Chair of CFPDP. "Through the King Clancy Award, CFPDP's Podium Fund and our partnership with Scotiabank, we recognize their achievements and let them know that Canadians believe in them every step of the way."



**Scott Russell**, Nipissing University Chancellor and former CBC Sports broadcaster (left), **George Przybylowski**, Gala Co-Chair and Board Director, CFPDP (third from right), **Raj Viswanathan**, Group Head and CFO, Scotiabank (second from right), and **Jeff Tiessen**, President, Disability Today Publishing Group (right), with Team Canada medallists from the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. The athletes received the 2025 King Clancy Award and cheques from CFPDP's Podium Fund, sponsored by Scotiabank.

<b>2004 – Athens</b>	Lori Radke Marni Abbott Jeffrey Adams Amy Alsop Patrick Anderson Mike Bacon Andre Beaudoin Chantal Benoit Dean Bergeron Jaimie Borisoff Bradley Bowden Karen Brain Danielle Campo Ian Chan Allan Chartrand Chelsea Clark Andrea Cole Kirby Coté Stephanie Dixon Jason Dunkerley Dave Durepos David Eng Tracey Ferguson Viviane Forest Lisa Franks Jared Funk Travis Gaertner France Gagne Paul Gauthier Darda Geiger Clayton Gerein Shira Golden Chelsey Gotell Kelley Hannett Roy Henderson Garett Hickling Brian Hill Benoit Huot Joey Johnson Alison Kabush Courtney Knight Jennifer Krempien Linda Kutrowski Adam Lancia Chelsea Lariviere Fabien Lavoie Annette Lisabeth Raymond Lizotte Jessica Matassa Stuart McGregor Arley McNeney Nancy Morin Ross Norton Kendra Ohama Daniel Paradis Danielle Peers Richard Peter Chantal Petitclerc Sabrina Pettinicchi Anne Polinario	Chelsey Gotell Diane Roy Contessa Scott Allan Semeniuk Patrice Simard Kelly Smith Chris Stoutenburg Donovan Tildesley Karla Tritten Elisabeth Walker Michael Whitehead David Willsie Walter Wu	Marco Dispaltro Valérie Grand'Maison Robert Hedges Garett Hickling Trevor Hirschfield Benoit Huot Mathilde Hupin Joey Johnson Adam Lancia Fabien Lavoie Stacie Louttit Say LuangkhAMDENG	Karl Ludwig Mac Marcoux Tyler McGregor Brian McKeever Graeme Murray Graham Nishikawa Kevin Rempel Benoit St-Amand Dennis Thiessen Corbin Watson Gregory Westlake Derek Whitson Chris Williamson	Ina Forrest James Gemmell Alexis Guimond Tyrone Henry Liam Hickey Brittany Hudak Mark Ideson Mollie Jepsen Collinda Joseph Russell Kennedy Adam Kingsmill Dominic Larocque Zach Lavin Antoine Lehoux Mac Marcoux Tyler McGregor Brian McKeever	Brittany Hudak Mark Ideson Anton Jacobs-Webb Mollie Jepsen Collinda Joseph Russell Kennedy Adam Kingsmill Dominic Larocque Zach Lavin Antoine Lehoux Mac Marcoux Tyler McGregor Brian McKeever						
<b>2006 – Torino</b>	John Scott McRoberts Ross Norton Genevieve Ouellet Colette Bourgonje Bradley Bowden Billy Bridges Gary Cormack Chris Daw Marc Dorion Sonja Gaudet Raymond Grassi Kimberly Joines Jean Labonte Herve Lord Shawn Matheson Brian McKeever Robin McKeever Graeme Murray Todd Nicholson Mark Noot Paul Rosen Benoit St-Amand Robert Taylor Dany Verner Greg Westlake Chris Williamson Lauren Woolstencroft	John Scott McRoberts Ross Norton Genevieve Ouellet Colette Bourgonje Bradley Bowden Billy Bridges Gary Cormack Chris Daw Marc Dorion Sonja Gaudet Raymond Grassi Kimberly Joines Jean Labonte Herve Lord Shawn Matheson Brian McKeever Robin McKeever Graeme Murray Todd Nicholson Mark Noot Paul Rosen Benoit St-Amand Robert Taylor Dany Verner Greg Westlake Chris Williamson Lauren Woolstencroft	John Scott McRoberts Ross Norton Genevieve Ouellet Colette Bourgonje Bradley Bowden Billy Bridges Gary Cormack Chris Daw Marc Dorion Sonja Gaudet Raymond Grassi Kimberly Joines Jean Labonte Herve Lord Shawn Matheson Brian McKeever Robin McKeever Graeme Murray Todd Nicholson Mark Noot Paul Rosen Benoit St-Amand Robert Taylor Dany Verner Greg Westlake Chris Williamson Lauren Woolstencroft	Brent Lakatos Adam Lancia Fabien Lavoie Zak Madell Daniel Paradis Richard Peter Chantal Petitclerc Kyle Pettey Anne Polinario Jean Quevillon Stefanie Reid Yvon Rouillard Diane Roy Erika Schmutz Patrice Simard Michelle Stilwell Chris Stoutenberg Donovan Tildesley Paul Tingley Mike Whitehead David Willsie	Brent Lakatos Adam Lancia Fabien Lavoie Zak Madell Daniel Paradis Richard Peter Chantal Petitclerc Kyle Pettey Anne Polinario Jean Quevillon Stefanie Reid Yvon Rouillard Diane Roy Erika Schmutz Patrice Simard Michelle Stilwell Chris Stoutenberg Donovan Tildesley Paul Tingley Mike Whitehead David Willsie	Brent Lakatos Adam Lancia Fabien Lavoie Zak Madell Daniel Paradis Richard Peter Chantal Petitclerc Kyle Pettey Anne Polinario Jean Quevillon Stefanie Reid Yvon Rouillard Diane Roy Erika Schmutz Patrice Simard Michelle Stilwell Chris Stoutenberg Donovan Tildesley Paul Tingley Mike Whitehead David Willsie	2016 – Rio	Logan Campbell Tristen Chernove Stefan Daniel Virginia McLachlan Tyler Miller Marie-Claude Molnar Summer Mortimer Travis Murao Norbert Murphy Brianna Nelson Richard Peter Aurélie Rivard Yvon Rouillard Patrice Simard Nathan Stein Michelle Stilwell Amber Thomas Josh Vander Vies Brandon Wagner Robbi Weldon Mike Whitehead David Willsie	Logan Campbell Tristen Chernove Stefan Daniel Virginia McLachlan Tyler Miller Marie-Claude Molnar Summer Mortimer Travis Murao Norbert Murphy Brianna Nelson Richard Peter Aurélie Rivard Yvon Rouillard Patrice Simard Nathan Stein Michelle Stilwell Amber Thomas Josh Vander Vies Brandon Wagner Robbi Weldon Mike Whitehead David Willsie	Logan Campbell Tristen Chernove Stefan Daniel Virginia McLachlan Tyler Miller Marie-Claude Molnar Summer Mortimer Travis Murao Norbert Murphy Brianna Nelson Richard Peter Aurélie Rivard Yvon Rouillard Patrice Simard Nathan Stein Michelle Stilwell Amber Thomas Josh Vander Vies Brandon Wagner Robbi Weldon Mike Whitehead David Willsie	2024 – Paris	Nicholas Bennett Morgan Bird Tristen Chernove John McRoberts Alister McQueen John McRoberts Meghan Montgomery Stefan Daniel Danielle Dorris Danielle Ellis Anne Ferguson Cody Fournie Alexandre Hayward Brianna Hennessy Julie Kozun Brent Lakatos Allison Lang Sebastian Massabie Reid Maxwell Jennifer McCreesh Sarah Melenka Shelby Newkirk Jennifer Oakes Kate O'Brien Heidi Peters Nathan Riech Aurélie Rivard Tess Routliffe Keely Shaw Greg Stewart Nicolas Guy Turbide
<b>2008 – Beijing</b>	Jim Armstrong Colette Bourgonje Lindsay Debou Josh Dueck Viviane Forest Ina Forrest Sonja Gaudet Brian McKeever Robin McKeever Darryl Neighbour Karolina Wisniewska Lauren Woolstencroft Bruno Yizek	Jim Armstrong Colette Bourgonje Lindsay Debou Josh Dueck Viviane Forest Ina Forrest Sonja Gaudet Brian McKeever Robin McKeever Darryl Neighbour Karolina Wisniewska Lauren Woolstencroft Bruno Yizek	Jim Armstrong Colette Bourgonje Lindsay Debou Josh Dueck Viviane Forest Ina Forrest Sonja Gaudet Brian McKeever Robin McKeever Darryl Neighbour Karolina Wisniewska Lauren Woolstencroft Bruno Yizek	Mark Arendz Jim Armstrong Stephen Arsenault Bradley Bowden Billy Bridges Caleb Brousseau Nick Brush Erik Carleton Ben Delaney Adam Dixon Marc Dorion Joshua Dueck Robin Femy Ina Forrest Anthony Gale Sonja Gaudet James Gemmell Mark Ideson Kimberly Joines Christopher Klebl Dominic Larocque	Mark Arendz Jim Armstrong Stephen Arsenault Bradley Bowden Billy Bridges Caleb Brousseau Nick Brush Erik Carleton Ben Delaney Adam Dixon Marc Dorion Joshua Dueck Robin Femy Ina Forrest Anthony Gale Sonja Gaudet James Gemmell Mark Ideson Kimberly Joines Christopher Klebl Dominic Larocque	Mark Arendz Jim Armstrong Stephen Arsenault Bradley Bowden Billy Bridges Caleb Brousseau Nick Brush Erik Carleton Ben Delaney Adam Dixon Marc Dorion Joshua Dueck Robin Femy Ina Forrest Anthony Gale Sonja Gaudet James Gemmell Mark Ideson Kimberly Joines Christopher Klebl Dominic Larocque	2020 – Tokyo	Morgan Bird Tristen Chernove John McRoberts Alister McQueen John McRoberts Meghan Montgomery Stefan Daniel Danielle Dorris Danielle Ellis Anne Ferguson Cody Fournie Alexandre Hayward Brianna Hennessy Julie Kozun Brent Lakatos Allison Lang Sebastian Massabie Reid Maxwell Jennifer McCreesh Sarah Melenka Shelby Newkirk Jennifer Oakes Kate O'Brien Heidi Peters Nathan Riech Aurélie Rivard Tess Routliffe Keely Shaw Greg Stewart Nicolas Guy Turbide				
<b>2012 – London</b>	Patrick Anderson Lyne Bessette Ian Chan Jason Crone Abditatch Dini Stéphanie Dixon Ilana Duff Jason Dunkerley David Durepos David Eng Jared Funk	Patrick Anderson Lyne Bessette Ian Chan Jason Crone Abditatch Dini Stéphanie Dixon Ilana Duff Jason Dunkerley David Durepos David Eng Jared Funk	Patrick Anderson Lyne Bessette Ian Chan Jason Crone Abditatch Dini Stéphanie Dixon Ilana Duff Jason Dunkerley David Durepos David Eng Jared Funk	James Anseeuw Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Stephen Arsenault Anthony Gale Sonja Gaudet James Gemmell Mark Ideson Kimberly Joines Christopher Klebl Dominic Larocque	James Anseeuw Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Stephen Arsenault Anthony Gale Sonja Gaudet James Gemmell Mark Ideson Kimberly Joines Christopher Klebl Dominic Larocque	James Anseeuw Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Stephen Arsenault Anthony Gale Sonja Gaudet James Gemmell Mark Ideson Kimberly Joines Christopher Klebl Dominic Larocque	2018 – PyeongChang	Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Billy Bridges Collin Cameron Rod Crane Lisa DeJong Ben Delaney Adam Dixon James Dunn Ina Forrest Alexis Guimond Tyrone Henry Liam Hickey	Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Billy Bridges Collin Cameron Rod Crane Lisa DeJong Ben Delaney Adam Dixon James Dunn Ina Forrest Alexis Guimond Tyrone Henry Liam Hickey	Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Billy Bridges Collin Cameron Rod Crane Lisa DeJong Ben Delaney Adam Dixon James Dunn Ina Forrest Alexis Guimond Tyrone Henry Liam Hickey	2022 – Beijing	Mark Arendz Rob Armstrong Billy Bridges Collin Cameron Rod Crane Lisa DeJong Ben Delaney Adam Dixon James Dunn Ina Forrest Alexis Guimond Tyrone Henry Liam Hickey

PRESENTING

The Honourable  
**Vim Kochhar**  
AWARD

**Established in 2024 as a tribute to the legacy of CFPDP's founder, *The Honourable Vim Kochhar Award* celebrates individuals who have significantly impacted the disability community and our country. The honourees are quiet champions with an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. As leaders who live the principles they champion, they motivate others to do the same and make a difference.**

**W**hen Duncan Sinclair learned that he would be named the 2026 recipient of The Honourable Vim Kochhar Award, his first response was not celebration.

"I had to pause because being presented with the opportunity to be the recipient and the custodian of this award, you have to ask yourself, do you really think you're worth it? And do you really think you've earned it?" he says.

It is a reaction that reflects a leadership style influenced more by responsibility than by recognition. As Chair of Deloitte Canada and Chile and as a long-time advocate for disability inclusion and accessibility, Sinclair has spent decades working to ensure that opportunity is real, sustained and shared.

"I didn't do it to go get awards. I didn't do it to get limelight and get my photo in a magazine," Sinclair says. "It is actually about the results and making people's lives better."

That outlook aligns closely with the spirit of the award Sinclair is receiving, which honours leaders who translate values into action and who shape change through consistency rather than self-promotion.

That commitment did not emerge from policy or professional ambition. It began much earlier, impacted by what he observed growing up.

"My mom had polio," Sinclair says. "While she contracted it in her 20s and then regained a fair amount of mobility, there were certainly always challenges associated with that ... In the 1970s, there wasn't really any interest in accommodation. People simply had to work around it, toughen up or do what they needed to do."

Seeing how expectations were set and how little flexibility existed stayed with him. As Sinclair moved into leadership roles, he became increasingly focused on whether people were truly being given the opportunity to contribute

and advance — or whether unconscious bias was quietly shaping decisions and limiting what was possible.

"If we were really going to create strong organizations and strong communities, inclusion couldn't just be a tagline or a punchline," he says.

Inclusion, in Sinclair's view, had to be something you believed in and something you acted on every day. It was not only the right thing to do. It was also the sensible thing to do. As he says, "You can't leave people behind and build a prosperous community or country."

That belief found tangible expression through his work with Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP), particularly through the "A Seat at the Table" initiative. The program focuses on placing highly qualified professionals with disabilities on corporate boards, not as symbolic appointments, but as active participants in governance and decision-making. The distinction matters to Sinclair because who sits at the table

shapes how choices are made. "People shouldn't just have a seat. They deserve to be heard," he says.

That principle has also shaped Sinclair's approach within Deloitte. Rather than treating accessibility as a standalone initiative, he has worked to embed it into how the organization functions and governs itself.

Many years ago, Deloitte articulated a simple statement that said its purpose is to create an impact that matters. The language was intentional.

"We deliberately didn't tie it to a revenue target or a profitability metric," Sinclair explains. "We just asked, as an organization, as a group of people that are coming together, whether it is in the service of clients, the development of our people, the development of our reputation or the evolution of the communities where we live and work, is what we're doing creating an impact that matters to the people around us?"



That framing helped anchor the firm's Disability Accessibility Action Plan, launched in 2021. The plan focuses on creating safe, welcoming and inclusive environments, advancing education and awareness, strengthening employment practices and expanding marketplace engagement.

"This is not a marketing document," Sinclair says. "[It is] tracked and measured, people are held accountable, we reward accomplishment and we do course-correct when we are falling behind."

Accessibility and inclusion are embedded in Deloitte's performance management system at every level and are overseen by the executive team. They sit at the top of the house with the CEO and are regularly discussed at the board level. Sinclair insists that this structural integration is essential.

"It doesn't become a program that sits off to the side somewhere," he says. "It is an active part of how we are running and managing the place. It's an active part of regular executive meetings and of board discussions."

For Sinclair, receiving an award that bears Hon. Kochhar's name brings both pride and responsibility. He speaks of him with deep respect, particularly for his refusal to aim toward anything less than the biggest ambition he can dream.

"Vim has always had the bold goal. He has always pushed himself, pushed the people around him and been relentless in doing the right thing. If there's something that the 'A Seat at the Table' program was really built around ... it was this notion that we are going to create better boards, organizations and a better country as we make

them more inclusive. Being part of his legacy ... and being one of the many people in this country who carry that forward, is a wonderful and inspiring opportunity. It also brings with it a big obligation and a responsibility to honour that and to live up to that in the way in which I continue to conduct myself as a leader."

That sense of responsibility extends beyond CFPDP and his advocacy for board inclusivity. Sinclair's leadership also includes work with the True Patriot Love Foundation, supporting Canada's military and veteran community, and the Invictus Games Vancouver 2025, which reconnected wounded and injured military personnel and veterans to a purpose after active duty. And there is a common thread that connects the causes he supports.

"It all comes back to are people being given the opportunity to become the very best version of themselves and how does a particular organization help to advance that," he says.

Asked about seeing the real-world impact of his work, Sinclair says the moments that matter most are the simple ones when change is evident in the workplace he joined almost 40 years ago.

"We are just all coming together. Someone is in a wheelchair and someone isn't and it's not a strange, foreign or unique experience. It's just part of who we are, how we come together and how we work ... For me, when you get to that place, that's what real inclusion is. It's not about, 'Look at all our differences.' It's about, 'Look at all of us working together.' Everybody can be themselves and therefore your energy in life goes towards our shared purpose, not on trying to fit in."



Duncan Sinclair served as Honorary Co-Chair of CFPDP's Great Valentine Gala in 2017 and 2018.



2018 Honorary Gala Co-Chairs Donald Guloien (left) and Duncan Sinclair (right) with emcee Suhana Meharchand (centre).

# 2026 Great Valentine Gala

*Presented each year at the Great Valentine Gala, the CFPDP Corporate Awards recognize the exemplary*

## Accessible Media Inc. (AMI)

*The first recipient of the 2026 Corporate Award is Accessible Media Inc. (AMI). The organization is being honoured for its leadership in producing original, accessible content that elevates the voices, achievements and authentic representation of Canadians with disabilities.*

**AMI** was founded on a simple but powerful belief: access to information and storytelling is not a privilege, but a right. Established in 1989 as the National Broadcast Reading Service following a parliamentary report pointedly titled *No News is Bad News*, the organization began by addressing a fundamental gap — the lack of accessible news and information for Canadians who are vision- and print-restricted.

What began as an audio reading service has grown steadily over more than three decades into a highly respected, award-winning national media organization. Today, its accessible programming reaches audiences in both English and French through AMI-tv, AMI-audio, AMI-télé, apps for iOS and Apple TV, Roku, YouTube and the free streaming platform AMI+, reflecting the many ways Canadians now access content.

“Everyone wants to see themselves represented in the media they consume, regardless of the platform they use,” says David Errington, President and CEO of AMI. “And everyone wants to see their stories told. The disability community is no different.”

That belief shapes how AMI operates. All AMI television programming includes integrated described video for blind and partially sighted audiences and closed captioning for members of the Deaf community and those living with hearing loss. Just as significantly, people with disabilities are involved not only as hosts on screen but also behind the scenes, contributing as writers, producers, decision-makers and leaders across the organization.

“I encourage media organizations to invite members of the disability community to join them on both sides of the camera or microphone. This ensures that all stories are being told,” says Errington. “AMI’s library of award-winning content shines a light on the people and topics that are often overlooked or ignored in mainstream media. Whether it be blind or Deaf, a wheelchair user or Little Person, someone with a visible or invisible disability, everyone has a seat at the table and a voice at AMI.”



That approach has led to programming that resonates far beyond traditional accessibility conversations. Shows such as *Crip Trip* have sparked national discussion about caregiving, employment and support systems for the disability community while drawing strong engagement across multiple platforms. The road-trip docuseries stars Daniel Ennett, an artist, director and quadruple amputee, and his friend, filmmaker Frederick Kroetsch. *Underdog Inc.*, which follows heavy-equipment operator Dale Kristensen, a Little Person who tackles jobs built for giants, became AMI’s most-watched series on AMI+.

AMI measures success not only by reach but by relevance. Through the AMI Research Panel, viewers and listeners regularly share feedback that helps shape future content plans.

“We do look at television ratings and social media interaction,” Errington says, while emphasizing that the feedback AMI receives directly from Canada’s disability community is just as important in helping to understand what is working and what still needs to be done.

The organization’s commitment extends beyond content. AMI offers paid internships and apprenticeships to people who identify as members of the disability community, creating pathways into media, production, technology services, marketing and communications, finance and human resources. Additionally, the AMI Robert Pearson Memorial Scholarship provides bursaries to post-secondary students with permanent disabilities in both English- and French-speaking communities.

Receiving the Corporate Award affirms AMI’s long-term approach.

“This recognition proves that AMI is on the right track when it comes to spotlighting the stories of Canadians with disabilities. I am proud to accept it on behalf of AMI,” Errington says. “I’m fiercely proud of the teams at AMI. Our content teams are committed to providing a platform for the disability community and to share the stories that are unique and relevant to them.”

Through its content, culture and commitment to opportunity, AMI continues to set a national standard for inclusive media leadership in Canada.

Stream AMI content anytime at [AMIplus.ca](http://AMIplus.ca).

# Corporate Award Winners

*contributions of Canadian companies and organizations in support of people with physical disabilities.*

## Granite REIT

*The second recipient of the 2026 Corporate Award is Granite REIT. The organization is being honoured for its deeply embedded culture of philanthropy and community engagement and for how giving back is woven into everyday life across its global locations.*

At **Granite REIT**, community involvement doesn't begin with a policy document or an annual campaign.

"I would say it starts with genuine gratitude," says Kevan Gorrie, President and CEO of Granite REIT. "Across all our offices, there is a sincere thankfulness for what we have. Recognizing how fortunate we are, there is a collective desire to give back to the communities and help others who may not be in the same position as we are."

This spirit underpins *Granite Gives*, the company's charitable giving and community volunteering initiative. The program is carried forward by teams across the organization, with employees driving local initiatives and giving generously of their time in the communities where they live and work.

"When I joined Granite REIT in 2018, I could see immediately that there was this collective desire to become more involved in our support for charities and community engagement. The actual engagement was something that our team embraced and appreciated, above, obviously, the financial contributions."

Granite REIT supports a wide range of charitable causes across Canada, the United States and Europe. The team places particular emphasis on participation — on showing up, getting involved and understanding their impact firsthand.

In 2024 alone, employees supported 88 charitable organizations through 27 different initiatives. The causes varied from disability inclusion and food security to health care and animal welfare, but the pattern was consistent.

"Our employees want to know that we are contributing to charities," Gorrie says, "but they also strive to be engaged. Being involved with these charities and seeing how they deliver their services is an important aspect of what we do. I think that desire to be involved says a lot about our team."

Granite REIT's focus on direct interaction and tangible



outcomes is especially evident in its support of disability-related initiatives. The company's commitment to Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP), Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC), Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital and the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame reflects the value of meaningful giving and impact.

"No company has infinite funds and time to support every cause. So, it's important to prioritize your time and resources on charities that, one, align with your values as an organization, and two, very importantly, do a good job in delivering real benefits to their respective communities. When I think about CFPDP, whether it's raising awareness of the capabilities of people with disabilities through the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame lunch, which we participate in, and the Hall of Fame itself, or delivering critical services and support through Holland Bloorview and CHKC, I think what stands out for me is [these organizations are] measurably improving the lives of those within the community."

Granite REIT's approach is intentionally local. The organization donates a minimum of \$500 (in local currency) per income-producing property to charitable causes in the communities where it operates, allowing teams to support initiatives they personally connect with.

"As a CEO, I don't feel comfortable dictating where all of our resources and time are allocated," Gorrie explains. "It has to be personalized and customized for our individual teams for there to be a real connection. And I think that that's something that we do pretty successfully."

Asked what he is proudest of when looking at Granite REIT's culture of giving, Gorrie shifts the focus away from leadership.

"I'm just part of the team and the effort here has been embraced so collectively across all of our offices," he says. "What I am most proud of is that I have zero doubt that our efforts here would continue or even grow, with or without me in the chair."



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# ANGÈLE PERIARD'S JOURNEY: From Isolation to Independence

For many years, Angèle Periard faced a future defined more by limitation than choice. Born with Usher syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that affects hearing and vision, she depended on others to help navigate a world shaped by dual sensory loss. She says growing up in North Bay "was very isolating as a deafblind person."

Periard struggled due to a lack of control over her life. "I would always need to ask my friends and family for support to access my community," she says. "I was unable to find work for 24 years because no one believed a deafblind person could do the job."

To change her life, Periard decided to take things into her own hands. Her first connection to Canadian Helen Keller Centre (CHKC) came through Elio Riggillo, CHKC's Consumer Relations Coordinator. At the time, she was struggling with how dependent her life felt. "I expressed my lack of independence and he encouraged me to follow my dream of moving to Toronto," Periard recalls. "After a lot of consideration and planning, I succeeded."

She continues, "I moved to Toronto because I needed access to intervenor services."

Intervenors are highly trained professionals that help people who are deafblind to participate in daily life and their communities by acting as their eyes and ears. They use various communication methods, including visual or tactile sign language, braille and print-on-palm.

After travelling almost 400 kilometres to her new home, Periard's world began to expand.

"Having more intervenor hours allows my schedule to be much more flexible and accommodating," she says. "I am able to cater my service hours to my needs, which can change from week to week based on medical appointments, social events, my work and more ... Now that I am in Toronto with intervenor services, I have been able to get a job and to interact with many other deafblind people."

Periard adds, "When I finally decided to put myself first, move to Toronto and join CHKC's intervenor services, for the first time, I felt like I could fully be myself. I now have genuine friends and excellent relationships with the staff at CHKC. I have found my self-confidence."

As a child, Periard learned to crochet and do macrame. "My grandmother and I would spend a lot of

time crafting together and she taught me many of the designs I still use." That early experience led to a job at Michaels, where she has been working part-time in the yarn department for the past two and a half years. "It brings me so much joy. They are very accommodating and I have built up a camaraderie with my coworkers," she says proudly.



Angèle at the groundbreaking ceremony for CHKC's new affordable, accessible apartment complex.

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Today, she adores spending time with her own grandchildren and especially enjoys teaching them some basic sign language. “The youngest, a pair of four-year-old twin boys, have recently mastered the sign for ‘I love you!’”

When Periard first came to Toronto and moved into an apartment, she began to advocate for herself. “My landlord had never heard of Usher syndrome before,” she says. Periard clearly explained her needs, from lighting to accessible doorbells and fire alarms. “I am lucky that my landlord was very accommodating and met all of my needs.”

She adds, “It is increasingly rare to find housing that is safe, affordable, and accessible at the same time. I was very fortunate to find a suitable unit in Toronto ... Without appropriate housing, I would struggle to access my community and employment.”

Now, Periard is getting ready to move again — this time to the new 56-unit affordable, accessible CHKC apartment complex at 150 Eighth Street in Toronto’s Etobicoke-Lakeshore neighbourhood. The project has been under construction for the past year and a half and is scheduled to open in mid-2026.

“When I think about moving into 150 Eighth Street, I am very excited. I feel seen and understood,” says Periard. “I will finally feel rooted in a home that was made for me ... By creating a space designed specifically for our community, we can be spontaneous and visit our friends without needing any intervenor support. We will be able to access more training to improve our independence and quality of life.”

Asked what the move represents for her future, Periard is clear. “I will no longer be limited by my environment; instead, I will be uplifted.”

Periard's relationship with CHKC goes beyond receiving services. She also serves on the organization's board of directors. “CHKC uses a ‘do with, not for’ model of service, which includes the board,” she says. “The decisions made by the board could impact the CHKC's consumers' services and their lives, so it would be unacceptable not to have consumer representation. We enable the voice of the deafblind community to be heard at the highest level within CHKC.”

Her lived experience shapes every board discussion. “As a deafblind person, I am able to provide critical advice and perspective that can only be gained through experience,” Periard explains. “I have personally experienced many different types of access barriers and I am connected to other deafblind people with a variety of other experiences. I am able to help educate board members about deafblind access, culture and communication to ensure that our work is inclusive.”

When Periard reflects on her journey, the difference

is unmistakable. “While I love and miss North Bay and being close to my family, I am much happier living in Toronto. I am able to be independent in ways I never could before.”

Her message to readers is simple and generous. “Deafblind people would love to communicate with you. A small amount of effort goes a long way. There are many different ways to communicate with deafblind people like me. You can learn some basic sign language, write back and forth in English on paper or a phone or even write English on my palm with your finger. If we have an intervenor or interpreter assisting me, you should still speak to me directly instead of saying, ‘Tell her I said...’ We always appreciate the effort to include us.”

In closing, Periard exudes warmth and wishes to help others as she has been helped. “I hope everyone reading this will consider supporting CHKC with donations so they can continue to provide these life-changing services and opportunities. Love, Angèle.”



Angèle proudly shares a recent crochet project.

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# A SEAT AT THE TABLE: WHY BOARD INCLUSION MATTERS

**C**orporate boardrooms are not spaces most Canadians ever enter. Yet decisions made around those tables shape much of what people experience every day.

These decisions extend far beyond corporate walls, influencing workplaces, services and communities in ways that often go unseen. For too long, the lived experience of people with disabilities has been absent from governance-level decision-making.

This is precisely the gap that Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP) set out to address when it launched “A Seat at the Table” (SATT) in 2019. The initiative focuses not on symbolic inclusion but on appointing highly qualified professionals with disabilities into corporate board roles where their expertise and firsthand perspectives can meaningfully influence governance and oversight.

Few voices have been more influential in advancing this work than **Duncan Sinclair**, Chair of Deloitte Canada and Chile and a long-time champion of disability inclusion. Sinclair serves as Chair of SATT and was instrumental in helping **The Honourable Vim Kochhar** establish the program and an impressive leadership group, which continues to shape its direction and impact.

For Sinclair, inclusion is about organizational strength, better governance and stronger outcomes.

“I think companies with diverse boards make better decisions,” he says. “I would certainly say in my time [at Deloitte], our board is far more diverse today than it has ever been ... We have a stronger board and we make decisions that better understand the lived experience of the people in the organization, the clients we serve and the communities we work in. We are just a stronger organization because of it.”

## Why Governance Matters

While many corporate inclusion strategies focus on staffing, accommodation or workplace culture, governance is often left out of the conversation. Yet boards shape executive priorities, approve strategic direction and influence how organizations define success.

The premise of SATT is straightforward — people with

disabilities represent 27% of Canada’s population, yet they hold only a small fraction of corporate board seats. That imbalance is not due to a lack of qualified candidates. Instead, longstanding recruitment practices and informal networks have determined who is seen, considered and selected.

Over the past year, the SATT initiative has continued to expand visibility for its candidates through additional national newspaper ads generously donated by The Globe and Mail, direct outreach to executives and board chairs and sustained engagement within governance circles. This work has helped bring disability representation into board conversations where it was previously absent.

Equally important is the SATT infrastructure that continues to grow behind the scenes. The program has built a national pool of board-ready candidates with disabilities — individuals with senior executive experience and governance expertise. That talent exists. The challenge remains opening doors that have historically been closed.

Candidates securing director positions also bring significant pride to the SATT team, including at Primerica Life Insurance Company of Canada and Amex Bank of Canada.

Asked directly why placing highly qualified professionals with disabilities on corporate boards is so essential, Sinclair says, “To sum it up around some pretty simple statements, number one, it’s just the right thing to do. You have to be proud of yourself and you have to be proud of the organization you’re a part of — and are you doing the right thing or are you not? From that point of view alone, it is important.”

He also points to governance quality: “Second, I think you actually do get a richer, deeper, more valuable conversation at an executive or at a board level — in governing not just an organization in terms of what it does within itself, but how it engages with its customers, supply networks, the communities that it works with, how it advocates within the broader public policy — because you have this level of deeper, more reflective understanding and awareness happening at the board table.”

The message is clear: inclusive governance is not optional — and “A Seat at the Table” is helping corporate Canada move from intention to action.

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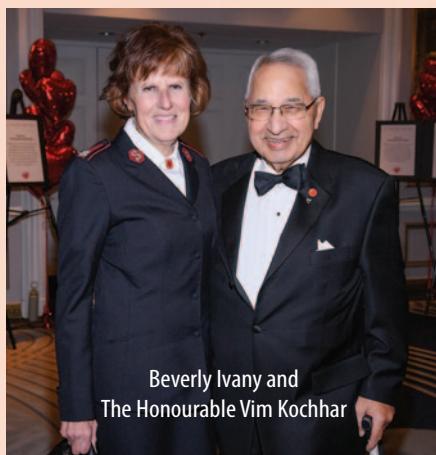
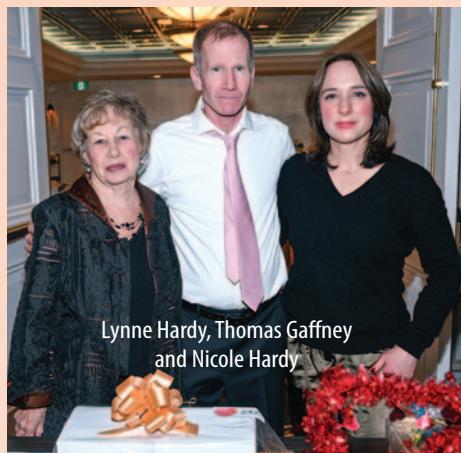
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—The Honourable Vim Kochhar, *Founding Chair, CFPDP*





# CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

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## FOR INDUCTION INTO THE CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME



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# CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME

## Latest Inductees Celebrated at 32nd Annual Induction Luncheon

**O**n October 9, 2025, the Canadian Disability Hall of Fame (CDHF) inducted three outstanding Canadians during a ceremony presented by **CIBC** at the Fairmont Royal York in Toronto. The event continued CDHF's proud tradition of honouring individuals whose leadership, achievements and vision have helped build a more inclusive country. With the Class of 2025, CDHF now showcases 132 extraordinary Canadians who have collectively contributed more than 3,000 years of public service and whose accomplishments over more than three decades have set new standards of excellence.

"Canadians with disabilities make remarkable contributions in business, community life, sport and beyond. Equally, there are innovators whose groundbreaking work has opened doors to new possibilities," said **The Honourable David Crombie**, Chair, Canadian Disability Hall of Fame. "Our 2025 inductees embody both paths of achievement, carrying forward a proud tradition of impact and inclusion."

**Dr. Tom Chau** was inducted in the Builder category. He is a Senior Scientist at Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital. Dr. Chau's lab has developed numerous access innovations that support children and youth with disabilities. These novel pathways enable communication and interaction with the environment in the absence of functional speech and gestures.

Inducted in the Achiever category, **Kevin J. Collins**, President and CEO of Easter Seals Ontario, has spent decades supporting children and youth with disabilities. A former Easter Seals ambassador "Timmy," he is a passionate advocate and community leader who has expanded awareness, fundraising, access to programs and opportunities.

**Ina Forrest** was inducted in the Athlete category. She has been a key member of Canada's National Wheelchair Curling Team since 2007, winning four Paralympic medals (two gold, two bronze) and six World Championship medals (three gold, three silver). Forrest is a long-time supporter of Plan International and has served on the Canadian Paralympic Committee's Athletes' Council.

"The impact of our inductees is felt not only in Canada, but around the world. This year, Dr. Tom Chau, Kevin J. Collins and Ina Forrest demonstrate how innovation, leadership and athletic excellence can make a lasting difference," said **The Honourable Vim Kochhar**, Founding Chair of Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons (CFPDP). "The Canadian Disability Hall of Fame exists to recognize those whose successes expand opportunity and drive progress. We are proud to add their names to this distinguished legacy."

The Canadian Disability Hall of Fame was founded by CFPDP in 1994.



*Front L-R:* 2025 CDHF Inductees **Ina Forrest** (Athlete), **Kevin J. Collins** (Achiever) and **Dr. Tom Chau** (Builder).

*Back L-R:* **Maria Gregory**, Senior Director, Client Experience Strategic Planning, CIBC, **The Honourable David Crombie**, CDHF Chair and **Rob Snoek**, CDHF Emcee and CFPDP Board Director.



*Front L-R:* The Honourable David Crombie, CDHF Chair, Himadar Maddipatla, President and CEO, ICICI Bank Canada, Ruth Ann Onley, Disability Activist, Tony Wight, CDHF Event Co-Chair and CFPDP Board Director and Scott Russell, Chancellor, Nipissing University and former CBC Sports broadcaster. *Back L-R:* Bill Sutherland, Chief People Officer, Element Fleet Management, Gillian Smith, Executive Director, Office of the Chair, Deloitte Canada and Chile, The Honourable Vim Kochhar, Founding Chair, CFPDP and Paul Clark, Senior Executive Vice President, TD Wealth.

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Canadian Foundation for Physically Disabled Persons

# FUTURE EVENTS



## 2026 CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

**THE CANADIAN DISABILITY HALL OF FAME** recognizes distinguished Canadians who have made significant contributions to assisting or enhancing the lives of physically disabled persons.

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