

# Together, we'll go far



**2024 Impact Report**  
Desjardins Member and Client  
Philanthropic Funds

 **Desjardins**  
Foundation

## EDITORIAL

# The ripple effect of generosity

Do you remember the first time you tried to ride a bike? You struggled to find your balance and get your feet onto the pedals. But with some encouragement from your parents and help from your friends, suddenly, you were doing the impossible!

The same is true in society. To create lasting change, we have to be bold and take action. And sometimes we seek support to effectively turn plans into reality.

Through the Desjardins Philanthropic Funds, we work alongside generous individuals who want to provide long-term support to causes that matter to them. These donations create a ripple effect. They allow us to spur initiatives, provide support to organizations and ease the pressure on fundraising.

They also reflect a growing trend of people including philanthropy in their financial planning.

We've noticed a substantial increase in donations to philanthropic funds over the past few years. This is because these funds offer clear advantages. They provide a very simple way to create and manage a separate foundation while supporting organizations with long-term, targeted support. Helping donors set up their fund is really meaningful work. Sometimes they come to us with the intention of making donations through their will, but quickly realize that with the right planning, they can start donating today and witness the impact of their generosity. We work with them to maximize the potential of their donations by developing strategies aligned with their values and goals.



**Nancy Lee**  
Executive Director of the Desjardins Foundation

The messages of gratitude from beneficiary organizations that we send to donors highlight the tangible changes made possible by their altruism. Whether it's supporting social justice, healthcare research, humanitarian aid or other fields, every donation reflects personal values and has a collective impact. This web of generosity where everyone works toward their aspirations is helping shape a stronger, more resilient society.

Together, we're witnessing a powerful phenomenon—individual action multiplied by the strength of a group. We're seeing a collective influence that drives change in our communities.

Thank you to everyone who is helping to make a difference.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Nancy Lee', written in a cursive style.

**Nancy Lee**



## OUR CONTRIBUTION

# How our donors are making a difference

Every donation is important. But when a lot of people contribute, the effects are multiplied! Since 2015, no less than 302 funds have been set up with the help of the Desjardins Foundation, giving back over \$14 million to the community.

In 2024

# \$2.1 million

awarded  
to 301 beneficiary  
organizations

In 2024, support from our generous donors was distributed among the following sectors:

Healthcare services  
and accessibility

**34%**

Fighting homelessness, poverty  
and social inequality

**19%**

Children and youth

**11%**

Education

**9%**

Religion and  
spirituality

**7%**

International humanitarian aid

**7%**

Arts and  
culture

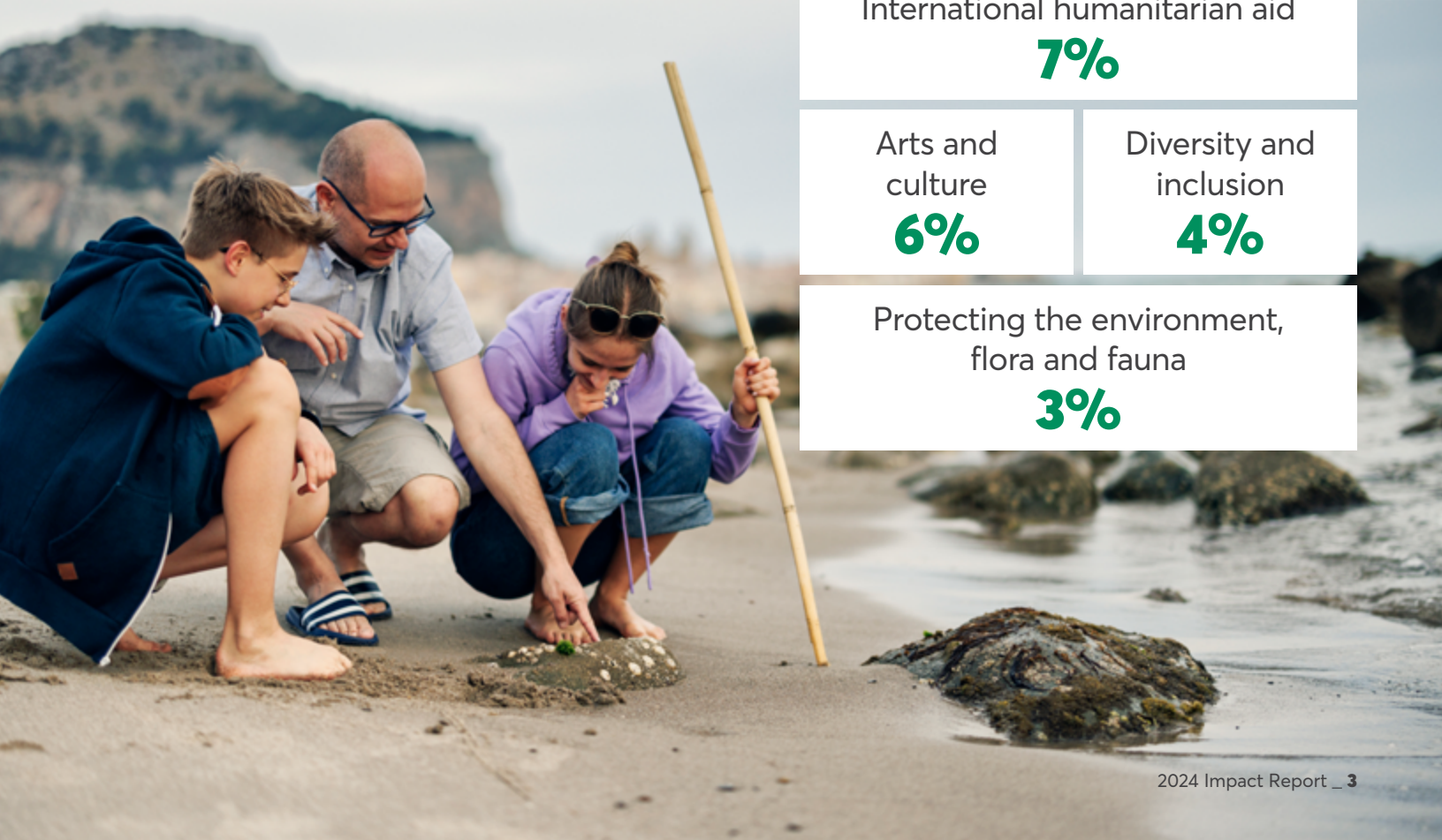
**6%**

Diversity and  
inclusion

**4%**

Protecting the environment,  
flora and fauna

**3%**



Here are some of the main sectors that our donors have supported in the past year.

## Healthcare

### Hospital foundations are crucial to excellence in healthcare

To meet the growing needs of an aging population, our donors support many organizations in the healthcare sector, including hospital foundations and organizations that provide specialized services.

One organization our donors support is the Fondation Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis, which plays a crucial role in maintaining outstanding healthcare in the Chaudière-Appalaches region.

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the institution can stay on the cutting edge of technology while continuing to provide people-focused care. In addition, donations from philanthropic funds provide this organization with the reassurance of regular financial support.

"We don't realize just how much our hospitals rely on hospital foundations," says Nathalie Samson, Executive Director of the Fondation Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis. "As you know, the government's budget is limited. Meanwhile, technology is constantly evolving, and the aging population continues to grow, as do their healthcare needs. Government budgets include funds to replace existing equipment, but there's no money for innovation. So for hospitals to be able to develop, support research, innovate and adopt modern technology, they have to rely on investments from their foundation or support from generous donors."

"Buying local is a common theme," adds Mariska Labarre, Manager, Large Donations and Planned Giving, "but supporting local causes should be too! A hospital with new equipment has a better chance of retaining leading specialists. Naturally, they want to use the best equipment to save their patients."

The Fondation Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis has contributed to a number of major projects over the years, including setting up radiotherapy services in the Chaudière-Appalaches region, together with affordable hotel services for patients who need treatment over several days.

Thanks to the ongoing support of the community and donors, the Fondation Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis continues to be a key catalyst for healthcare development in the region, providing patients with access to quality care close to home.

[\*\*Get to know Éric Tremblay\*\*](#), a former patient at Hôtel-Dieu de Lévis (in French only).





## Fighting homelessness, poverty and social inequality

Housing insecurity is a serious issue in Quebec and across Canada. Nationally, more than 1.6 million Canadians have reported experiencing homelessness in their lifetime, according to Statistics Canada.

"Economic homelessness spiked after the pandemic. And the housing crisis is making things even worse," says Diane Pilote, Executive Director at **Chez Doris**, in a recent interview with *Le Devoir*.

"People have a range of different needs. [...] We welcome women who may have physical, mental or relational health issues, as well as immigrants and Indigenous women," said Louise Waridel, Clinical Director of **La rue des Femmes**, on Radio-Canada in April 2024.

"Outaouais has seen the sharpest rise in homelessness of any Quebec region over the past three years. Every week, the housing crisis brings new people to our doors. One in four people who have used our services over the past two years is experiencing homelessness for the first time," explains François Lescalier, Executive Director of **Gîte Ami** in Gatineau.

These three organizations supported by our donors play an important role in helping people in need. Their work underscores the urgent need to step up our efforts to combat homelessness and support vulnerable people.

## International humanitarian aid

### Supporting people in distress

As a result of armed conflict, climate change and food insecurity, humanitarian needs are at an all-time high. According to the United Nations, nearly 305 million people will need vital assistance in 2025.

Tom Fletcher, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, recently said that "We are dealing with a poly-crisis right now globally, and it is the most vulnerable people in the world who are paying the price."

Many of our donors are recognizing this urgency and choosing to support organizations like the **Red Cross** and **Médecins Sans Frontières**.

This assistance is invaluable to these organizations, as it helps limit the scale of humanitarian crises. Every action taken today helps reduce future suffering, preserve the dignity of affected communities and strengthen their resilience.



# A legacy of generosity

**René Roy's** generosity was instilled in him at a young age, when he observed his merchant father discreetly distributing food to families in need. "I wasn't even ten yet," he says. "This desire to help others was ingrained in me. But my father's example got me started early. He played a big part in that."

Now in his sixties, Mr. Roy is continuing this family legacy through conversations with the staff at the Caisse Desjardins du personnel municipal Québec. "Being able to create a philanthropic fund was a great opportunity," he says.



His fund supports two organizations that he knows very well: La Bouchée généreuse and Maison Revivre. Founded by Reverend Bruno Verret, La Bouchée généreuse has become a major player in the fight against food insecurity in Quebec City. Maison Revivre, founded in 1978 by Colette Samson, helps the most disadvantaged Lower Town residents with social rehabilitation. "Their help spans a number of areas, including homelessness, food aid and mental health support. It's really important work," says Roy with admiration.

These choices are no accident. "The way these two founders lived their lives was truly inspiring to me," he says. His fund's mission reflects their commitments to support people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity.

At first, he planned to set up his philanthropic fund via a donation through his will. Initially unfamiliar with planned giving strategies, Mr. Roy found the Desjardins Foundation team very helpful. He decided to set up a fund during his lifetime and further expand his existing community involvement.

▯▯ **It's simple, but not simplistic.**  
**Having a close working relationship and open lines of communication with the Foundation's team made me feel comfortable, even when we were making complex financial transactions. When I didn't understand something technical, I felt comfortable talking about it!** ▯▯

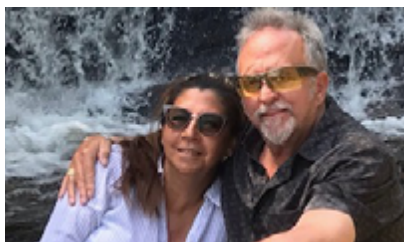
Mr. Roy will be retiring from his position as employee chaplain for the Ville de Québec in 2025. But he intends to remain active, especially by volunteering with organizations that help the underprivileged and perpetuating the legacy of generosity passed on by his father.



# The joy of giving back

"The secret to happiness is helping others." This quote, which left a lasting impression on **Éric Leclerc**, perfectly illustrates his philosophy on life.

After nearly 35 years as an operator at Hydro-Québec's Gentilly nuclear power plant, Mr. Leclerc decided to give his retirement a new meaning.



**Éric Leclerc** and his partner  
Claudia Correa

▮▮ **From a very young age, my parents taught me the importance of giving back to my community. It's a value I still hold dear.** ▮▮

His philanthropic journey began early in life. "When I was first starting a family, I volunteered at organizations like Tel-Écoute," he says. Today, he's particularly focused on international humanitarian aid, through organizations such as Médecins Sans Frontières, Doctors of the World, Oxfam and UNICEF.

"These organizations do remarkable work in the field. They save lives and alleviate the suffering of thousands of people around the world," he stresses.

"My granddaughter had pneumonia once, and it was easily treated. But in other countries, people can die from it. No one should have to die from pneumonia. It's amazing how small donations can make a big difference," he adds.

Creating a philanthropic fund was a natural next step. "I read an article in La Presse that explained the process. I talked to my Desjardins advisor about it, and everything went very smoothly. We immediately developed a relationship of trust."

For Leclerc, choosing the right beneficiary organizations required careful thought. "It's important for your money to be as impact-

ful as possible. Choosing who you donate to requires a little study and analysis." Initially, he planned to make a donation through his will. But he's very happy with the flexibility his philanthropic fund provides and plans to add to his fund so that he can start donating right away.

"According to participants in a Harvard study, the happiest adults were those who had managed to shift their mindset from 'what can I do for myself?' to 'what can I do for the world around me?'" explained Mr. Leclerc. "It's a privilege to be part of this type of project."



# Our expertise at the heart of every philanthropic project

Regardless of the desired approach and social impact, having the support of experienced professionals is crucial.

Éric Grondin and Maxime Cossette, philanthropic advisors with the Desjardins Foundation, support donors throughout the process and help them turn their plans into reality. They spoke to us about some of the things they've learned over the years. → 9



Éric Grondin

Maxime Cossette



## PHILANTHROPIC FUNDS: CHANNELLING MONEY TO CAUSES CLOSE TO OUR DONORS' HEARTS

Studies show it, and we confirmed it in our spring 2024 donor survey: Everyone wants to give back to society, leave their mark, and help charitable organizations during their lifetimes and beyond. Setting up a sustainable philanthropic project is a big decision that comes from the heart!

Even though people want to be actively involved in creating a better world, our advisors have also found that donors are often unsure about how to do it right, particularly from a tax standpoint.

We work with a number of wealth management specialists to inform donors about the many tax-efficient options available to maximize the benefits of their generosity.

For example, business owners could donate securities owned by their holding company. Likewise, Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) holders could reduce their tax bill by donating the minimum annual withdrawal from their registered plan.

As professionals, we make sure to maximize the tax benefits for donors. But we never forget that supporting the causes they care about is the top priority!



## ADAPTABLE AND FLEXIBLE PROJECTS

Our goal is simple: Find the best approach for each individual. That's why our team asks a lot of questions and encourages donors to think about how their situations are unique and how we can best support them.

We also set up periodic reviews of the fund's features to make sure they continue to meet donors' needs. Depending on the situation, we either schedule calls or send out fund summaries to provide updates on projects.

Many people make changes to their funds after our discussions, including adding organizations or successors, or adjusting the withdrawal period. A project is never set in stone! Other priorities may be added over time.

We're always here to walk our donors through the process and help them make informed decisions.

## WE'LL ALWAYS BE THERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON EVERY PROJECT

Over the past few years, following the deaths of some generous fund creators, we've had the privilege of meeting with people who are committed to continuing the legacy of these funds. We saw the same spark in all of them, the same desire to get involved in a movement to support community development. We'll continue working with these passionate individuals to honour the memory of their loved ones.

Our advisors really appreciate being able to provide long-term support to all our donors. We strive to keep this fire burning by making sure that their vision and values continue to shine through and inspire future generations.

**Contact the Desjardins Philanthropic Funds team**

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