



SMALL DONATIONS REPORT

2024 – 2025

Prepared by the Small Donations Committee: September 22, 2025



Small Donations & the Lou MacEachern Fund

In 2024, at the request of Lou MacEachern, Small Donations assumed responsibility for the Lou MacEachern Fund. Our Report this year includes two parts: Small Donations up to \$10,000, and the Lou MacEachern Fund – Helping Youth.

Small Donations Up to \$10,000

Small Donations receives and reviews small donation funding requests, up to \$10,000, from registered charitable organizations. Funds are provided for projects and programs that support children, youth at risk, seniors, literacy, mental health, poverty reduction and other needs that are identified from time to time. The Committee prioritizes proposals that provide ongoing benefit to the community and do not require on-going financial support from the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown.

Small Donations was formed well before the turn of the century with a mandate to focus on smaller community-based projects. Early records are not easily available but we know that since 2009, Small Donations has provided **\$527,759** in funding to **146** organizations. This year Small Donations added to that total by providing **\$34,500** in small donations to an additional **8** organizations.

BY THE NUMBERS

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St. Rose of Lima School Playground - \$2,500

Rotary Club of Calgary East led a Rotary funding initiative for a project to build a playground at the St. Rose of Lima School as it transitioned from a junior high school to a K-9 school. With no provincial funding available, committed volunteers from the school reached out for community support to raise \$227,000. Rotary East committed \$40,000. Four other Clubs including Rotary Downtown committed \$2,500 each and then received an additional \$7,500 of District Designated Funds for a total of \$10,000 from each of these four Clubs. With \$80,000 from Rotary, the community was able to raise the remainder to meet the project budget which included the playground equipment, excavation and installation costs as well as a contingency. By leveraging our funds and collaborating with others, the playground became a reality.



) Alcove Recovery - \$6,000

Alcove is a residential program for women dealing with alcohol and drug abuse. It is the only program that accommodates the children of these women, and our funds will go towards developing a safe outdoor space for the children to play. A new fence is required, and then some playground equipment to provide the little ones with outdoor physical activity.

) Further Education Society of Alberta - \$5,000

With Rotary's support, FESA was able to deliver 3 additional Reading and Writing Circle programs at Women-In-Need Society's Beltline and Dover locations. A total of 55 newcomers were moved off the waitlist and joined the RWC program. Over 90% of the participants reported that they fulfilled their learning goals and increased their self-confidence and foundational skills. 100% of the participants indicated an increased awareness of resources, services, and supports available in their community.



) Crossroads Community Preschool Playground - \$3,000



This now empty space will soon become a playground for preschool children. The preschool, in an area with many young immigrant families, lacks a safe and inclusive play area for the preschool children and others in the community. Our funds will help build a playground that will offer an engaging environment for the children to enjoy outdoor activities tailored to various developmental needs. This will be a community hub for the children and their families to connect with each other, encouraging interaction and collaboration.

) Calgary Public Library - \$5,000

Small Donations supported Calgary Public Library's recent initiative to provide free menstrual products at specific library locations. The inability to access menstrual products, for whatever reason, impacts the health and dignity of women, especially vulnerable people and youth. The Free Period initiative provides free pads and tampons to anyone who needs them by making them available in Library washrooms - with no stigma or judgment.



) Highbanks Society - \$3,000

Highbanks Society supports vulnerable pregnant and parenting women aged 16–24 and their children by providing safe affordable housing, fostering a nurturing community, and promoting educational and personal growth. Their support model is built on the latest research in epigenetics, brain story, and trauma-informed psychology. Education is a key element and nearly all alumnae complete school with many going on to achieve stable housing and self-sufficiency. Small Donations provided funds for laptops that are available to help these mother-led families stay connected and succeed in their education.

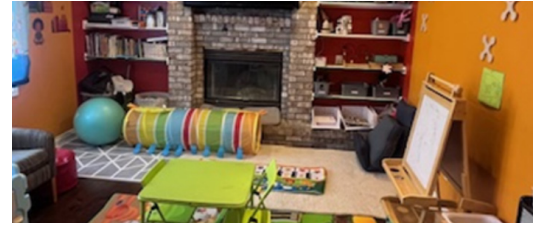
) Dr. Martha Cohen School Park Project - \$5,000

In collaboration with the Calgary Parks Foundation, Small Donations provided funds for the construction of an outdoor engagement project supported by the Dr. Martha Cohen School Parent Association. The project includes a ninja-style obstacle park with durable and age-appropriate climbing structures, all designed to promote mental health and physical activity among youth. This will create an environment in the Brightondale Community where youth and families can decompress, regulate emotions, build resilience, and engage in healthy physical activity.



) Ruth's House - \$5,000

Ruth's House is a shelter for women and their children escaping from unsafe and violent situations. Many children who live with violence at home grow up to repeat that violence themselves, unless steps are taken to deal with the trauma. Small Donations provided funds to furnish a Play/Therapy Room at Ruth's House where children can receive the professional help they need to work through the behaviors they have observed and set them on a productive path.



Lou MacEachern Fund – Helping Youth

Small Donations seeks out organizations that can make a difference in fulfilling the Lou MacEachern Fund's mission to support the education and development of youth and young adults. Lou's mandate to Small Donations is that student funding should not always be focused on the "best" student; it should be focused on the student with financial need who has the intangible grit and determination that is so necessary in life.

Grant MacEachern has shared a powerful memory that reflects the origins of this vision:

"Our dad never forgot the summer he missed out on camp as a young boy on PEI because his family couldn't afford it. That memory stayed with him and inspired a lifelong passion for ensuring other young people wouldn't face similar challenges. He wanted to give every child the chance to participate, whether it was through summer camp, school tuition, or even a car to get to a job while at university. This Fund, in partnership with the Rotary Club of Calgary Downtown, will honor our dad's legacy. The Club will continue his mission by providing financial support to young people so they can pursue opportunities that might otherwise be out of reach."

Since its establishment in 2006 with an initial endowment of \$1,000,000, the Lou MacEachern Fund has distributed **20 grants valued at \$887,792**, with **\$62,774 available this year** alone to support youth and young adults. Over the past year, the Fund supported five organizations.

BY THE NUMBERS

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) Bow Valley College - \$12,000

The MacEachern Pathway to Success Awards provide six bursaries of \$2,000 each to domestic students in the Chiu School of Business or School of Technology who have completed at least one term, demonstrate financial need, and plan to pursue a career in business or the trades. Many recipients have overcome significant personal and financial barriers to continue their education, making these awards a crucial bridge toward stability and opportunity.



) Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT) - \$12,000

The Lou MacEachern Rotary Scholarship Awards support students in SAIT programs who show determination, a positive work ethic, and a commitment to completing their studies despite financial or personal obstacles. These scholarships help reduce financial pressure, allowing students to focus on learning and developing skills that contribute to Alberta's workforce.

) YMCA Achievement Program (YMAP) - \$12,000

YMAP works with newcomer and immigrant youth in Calgary, building leadership skills, confidence, and community connections. The Program runs at 6 different locations around Calgary with about 400 participants annually. The Lou MacEachern YMAP Rotary Scholarships provide post-secondary funding for participants who have demonstrated resilience and leadership throughout their time in the Program, helping them transition successfully into further education and employment. This year, eight participants received funds toward their post-secondary education. Since 2006, Lou MacEachern Scholarships have supported 122 youth in achieving their educational aspirations with over \$137,000 in Scholarships.



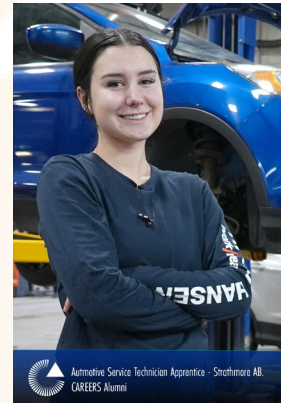
) Junior Achievement of Southern Alberta - \$12,000

Junior Achievement's Company Program engages high school students in an immersive entrepreneurial experience, guiding them through the process of launching and managing a business. The Lou MacEachern Fund supports access for students who may not otherwise have the resources to participate, ensuring that financial barriers do not prevent young people from exploring their potential as innovators and leaders.

) CAREERS: The Next Generation - \$10,000

The "A Day-in-the-Life of a Journeyperson – The Lou MacEachern Library" initiative is a new video series designed to inspire youth to explore careers in the skilled trades. Three short-form two-minute videos will be produced annually showcasing real-life Calgary tradespeople and their career journeys. An initial video will focus on Lou's story and how the series will continue his legacy of empowering youth, celebrating work ethic and investing in the next generation.

What makes CAREERS unique is its deep partnerships with industry leaders who provide internships for high school students interested in trades, and its close working relationships with schools across Alberta. By combining industry engagement with school access, this project carries forward Lou's legacy of opening doors and creating pathways for the next generation.



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Club of Calgary
Downtown



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