

# LEGACY

Investing  
in an icon.  
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## Mapping for student success

Local students will benefit from The Hamilton Community Research Partnership (CRP) — a coalition whose groundbreaking work will provide insights into their pathways to, and through, secondary and post-secondary education.

CRP's members are Hamilton's two school boards, McMaster University and Mohawk College. Hamilton Community Foundation and the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario brought the group together in 2018, and are providing funding and organizational support.

The group's purpose is to connect data housed by individual educational institutions, to provide a fuller understanding of students' trajectories and how they could be affected by spending and other decisions. Within a secure infrastructure, CRP provides the means to share de-identified data and fill critical information gaps. This will lead to knowledge such as the characteristics and predictors of students' likelihood to attend post-secondary and their success once there. It can provide information about the programming and assistance that may increase this likelihood, and how colleges and universities can support incoming students, particularly those who need it most.

"CRP is a good example of HCF's systems-change work in education," says Lorraine Valmadrid, HCF's Learning and Evaluation Lead. "Deepening our understanding of student pathways also helps to ensure HCF's roles as funder, convener and policy influencer are based on the best evidence."

Like the Foundation, all CRP members will gain an improved, evidence-based understanding of how educational systems can support student success across the learning journey.

"Our interest in students doesn't end when they leave us in Grade 12," says Dave Hansen, director of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board. "CRP highlights what we can do at an early stage to increase the likelihood of success later, and defines the partnership's shared purpose: to serve the students of Hamilton."

## Making the right connections

There is no overstating how the pandemic has increased both reliance on technology and the technology gap for those already facing systemic inequities. A new pilot program that connects McMaster University and community partners is working to address this need.

As part of its environmental stewardship plan, McMaster's Academic Sustainability Programs Office was exploring ways to donate tech devices in the community. At the same time, community organizations working with racialized communities, including newcomers and immigrants, expressed a critical need for technology, particularly as the pandemic disproportionately affects these communities.

The Foundation helped connect McMaster with a group of local non-profits, including the Afro Canadian Caribbean Association, Empowerment Squared, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Immigrants Working Centre, Munar Learning Centre, and Refuge: Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health. Up to 100 high-quality tech devices will be available for re-use each semester. An HCF grant is also supporting Empowerment Squared to acquire software licences and refurbish the donated devices for distribution.

"This pilot is an example of community coming together to address a significant challenge for many communities in remote working and learning environments," says Rudi Wallace, Vice-President, Grants & Community Initiatives.

## A trusting relationship

Kathy Wood already had a clear picture of how she and her husband John wanted to give to charity: she had spent her career as a trust officer helping people make decisions about their money.

Kathy and John demonstrated their trust in HCF by setting up a field-of-interest fund; this means that while they identify areas they want to support (animal welfare and adult literacy), they leave specific grantmaking decisions to the Foundation.

of 46 years and they have given us much happiness,” says Kathy. Half of the fund’s proceeds will support organizations that house, treat, feed and help the adoption of animals in need; the rest will support adult literacy, where they expect needs to grow. A portion of the fund will also go to the Community Fund that helps to address urgent community needs.

The Graas-wood Fund is a deferred fund, meaning the donation will come through the Woods’ estates. Giving through a will is a powerful way to give, and HCF is part of a national campaign called Will Power that seeks to educate Canadians about these benefits.

Animal welfare is important to the couple, who understand the joy that animals bring.

“We have had pets for all of our marriage

## Back in the studio

After more than a year of recording Vital Signs over Zoom, we’re glad to be back in the Cable 14 studio with socially-distanced interviews, important topics, and great guests.

We were honoured to welcome Dr. Tracy Bear on the show in September for her first Hamilton interview. Dr.

Bear is Nehiyawiskwew (Cree woman) and member of the Montreal Lake Cree Nation in northern Saskatchewan. She comes to Hamilton as the newly appointed director of the McMaster Indigenous Research Institute.

This fall, we’ve also featured episodes about local award-winning poet John Terpstra, the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce’s *Women Out of Work* report, and the theme of economic reconciliation.

Watch new episodes on Cable 14 and stream on demand at [cable14now.com](http://cable14now.com).



Terry Cooke



Dr. Tracy Bear

## From empowerment to equity

### MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT & CEO: TERRY COOKE

The concept of empowerment has traditionally been one of HCF’s core values. For decades, this was how we saw ourselves engaging with community, and in some ways it made sense. As an organization that primarily funds charities and projects, we could viably see our work as empowering communities.

However, as a progressive organization, the Foundation continually reflects upon its role. In our ongoing journey to reflect diversity and ensure inclusion in every aspect of what we do, we’ve come to understand that equity better reflects our work than empowerment, which

may inadvertently place us at a distance “above” the community we serve.

More than anything, advancing equity requires us to continually examine our own privilege, including the power dynamics between funders and grant recipients, our policies, practices and culture and, always, to stay centered on the needs of our community. It’s a way of life to which the Foundation is committed — one that is inherently both worthwhile and necessary to fulfill our mission.

## Grants at a Glance

### Making life less taxing

Thanks to the Social Planning and Research Council’s free 2020 tax clinics, clients received an average refund and tax benefit of \$3,359. It’s an income boost of more than 10 percent for those living on \$30,000 a year that would have gone unclaimed without the program.

In total, since 2018, \$9 million in refunds and tax benefits have come back to Hamilton residents living on low incomes. A grant from HCF’s Pandemic Response Fund helped keep the program running in 2021.

Program volunteers have assisted seniors, people with disabilities, single parents, working couples and others. The benefits go beyond financial. Clients report less stress and better food security. Some have been able to retain their immigration status as a result of the program.

“Many clients are terrified to do their own taxes,” one service provider said. In the words of another, “This program is a life-saver.”

### Community calls the shots

After almost 18 months of pandemic restrictions, members of Hamilton’s Indigenous communities came together at Gage Park in September to dance, heal and make an informed choice about vaccination.

The Indigenous Health Social featured food, vendors, door prizes, traditional singers and contemporary Indigenous artists, including Juno-nominated headliner DJ Shub, to attract a new crowd to an event that focused on strengthening body, mind and spirit.

The province’s mobile vaccination unit — the GO VAXX bus — was on site, but the focus of the event was not exclusively COVID-19. Recognizing the negative experiences that have led some Indigenous people to view the health care system, and vaccinations in particular, with fear and suspicion, event organizers Hamilton Public Health and Indigenous organizations in Hamilton promoted the health of the whole community. To further increase trust and decrease barriers, information was also translated into Anishinaabe.

### Natural value

It turns out putting a price tag on nature can be a good thing.

Supported by an HCF grant, communities that intersect the greenbelt are getting the tools and training they need to think of their natural assets as essential infrastructure. As a result, they will be able to value nature’s contributions to clean water, breathable air, healthy soil, sustainable food, flood reduction and climate stability, and include this accounting in provincially mandated municipal plans.

Hamilton is one of 10 municipalities with near-urban nature — defined as the natural areas and farmlands that surround and intersect our cities — that will complete natural asset inventories as part of the program. These inventories will list the community’s natural assets, assign a value to the services these assets provide, and model the costs and benefits of natural solutions compared to alternatives.

The ultimate goal is to protect and restore the greenbelt’s natural integrity.



# HCF moving to a new home

Hamilton Community Foundation will have a new home in 2023. This fall, TAS, an impact development company, announced it had acquired the historic Coppley Building in downtown Hamilton. HCF is both a founding investor in the project and a future anchor tenant.

TAS plans to restore the Coppley Building's original character and footprint, transforming it into a community-serving hub that will include a lively mix of commercial uses and tenants. Restoration and renovation is expected to begin in mid-2022, and TAS plans to start welcoming new tenants – including the Foundation – in mid-2023. HCF's investment is part of

its impact investing commitment that targets both social and financial returns.

“For over 165 years, this landmark has meant so much to the vibrancy of the core and the lives of many Hamiltonians who worked here,” says Terry Cooke, HCF's President & CEO, pictured above with Mazyar Mortazavi, TAS President & CEO. “We look forward to partnering with TAS to deliver a new hub for commercial and social activity downtown.”



## Welcome aboard!



**CA Klassen** has joined us as Co-ordinator, Grants & Community Initiatives. CA's primary role is to lead the Foundation's scholarship and bursary program and provide mentorship and direct support to post-secondary students. “I see my role as helping students to identify and work towards their goals around post-secondary education,” says CA, “and to approach HCF's scholarships and bursaries in a student-centered, equity-focused way.”



**Lissette Nunez Gomez** has joined us as Philanthropic Services Officer. Lissette helps the Philanthropic Services team to build relationships with new audiences and expand the work we do with existing donors and other key stakeholders. Says Lissette, “My goal is to help people carry out their charitable interests and make the impact they want in our community.”

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