



Hockey Education Reaching Out Society

**2023-2024 IMPACT REPORT**





## MISSION

To use the game of ice hockey to teach life skills  
and empower marginalized youth.



Hockey Education Reaching Out Society (HEROS) is a volunteer driven charity that uses the game of ice hockey to teach life-skills and empower Canada's marginalized youth.

Programs support a player's life journey by focusing on the four core HEROS behaviours: Listening, Respect, Discipline, and Having Fun. These core values give players the tools they need to navigate the challenges they face in their day-to-day lives and allow them to translate their on-ice lessons into off-ice success.

By participating in HEROS, players build meaningful relationships with their dedicated volunteer mentors, as well as their HEROS teammates. They are given access to sport training, personal and educational development opportunities, and post-secondary exploration, all while enjoying the thrill of playing hockey.





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Pam Ryan, Board Chair

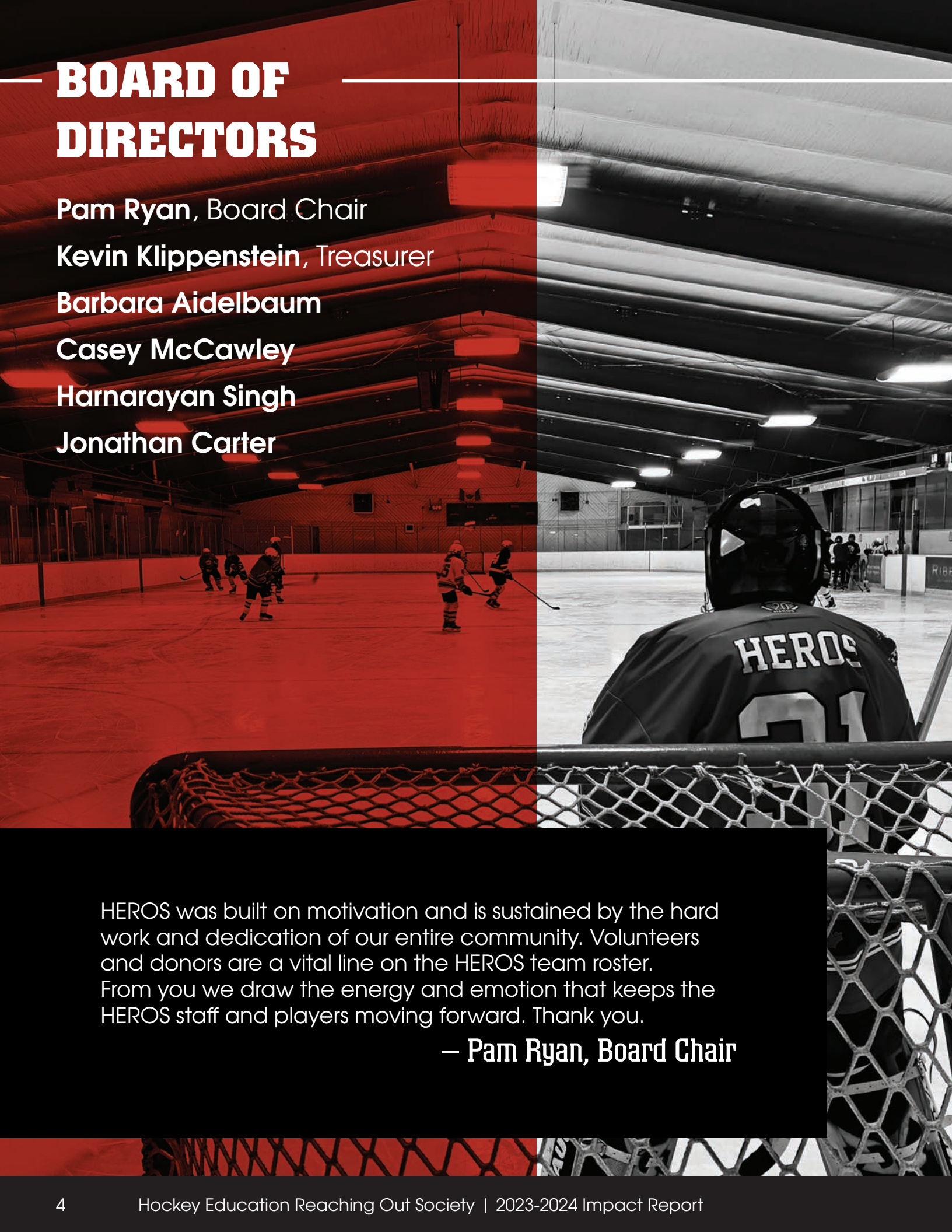
Kevin Klippenstein, Treasurer

Barbara Aidelbaum

Casey McCawley

Harnarayan Singh

Jonathan Carter



HEROS was built on motivation and is sustained by the hard work and dedication of our entire community. Volunteers and donors are a vital line on the HEROS team roster. From you we draw the energy and emotion that keeps the HEROS staff and players moving forward. Thank you.

— Pam Ryan, Board Chair

# LEADING THE CHARGE

## A Message from our Chair & Executive Director

HEROS closed out another amazing year where volunteers, partners, donors, and players all deserve recognition as MVP.

This season took HEROS players to so many new and interesting places, both literally and figuratively.

Six players and their families were given the opportunity to travel to watch their hometown NHL team play an away game – an experience they never thought possible. Players were welcomed into the greater hockey community by players from PWHL, NHL, university, and other local teams, and HEROS was able to launch new programs providing even more young people with the opportunity to play, learn, and grow through the game of hockey.

We also continued to hone our core skills and build the broader HEROS team to better serve young people in HEROS communities as they face tougher challenges than ever before, with the rising cost of living putting everything, let alone sport, further out of reach for many families. Our 2023-2024 season highlighted the essential role of volunteer mentors in each of our communities – in identifying areas of need and ensuring inclusivity.

We thank everyone who volunteered, donated, attended HEROS events, or found new and creative ways to make a difference for our players this season. Your dedication and compassion make HEROS who we are. Because of you, HEROS has the tools we need to continue investing in youth throughout Canada and Belfast, Northern Ireland, and set them up for success today, and wherever their future takes them.

On behalf of the HEROS board and employees, thank you for helping build and sustain something much #BiggerThanHockey.



A stylized black ink signature of Pam Ryan.

Pam Ryan  
**Board Chair**



A stylized black ink signature of Kevin Hodgson.

Kevin Hodgson  
**Executive Director**



# MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

When I first started HEROS back in 2000, it was with the simple thought that we needed to find a way to get kids into sports, regardless of where they grow up or what challenges they might have to overcome on a day-to-day basis. There should always be somewhere safe for them to have fun and learn a few lessons along the way. After all, it's always been apparent that playing sports makes a big impact on the person you become.

Sports teach you to work hard, they help you develop a sense of confidence, and can help you feel welcomed into something so much bigger than yourself – all important factors for young people as they look to find success in their lives.

Now, with 24 seasons under our belt, we've found ourselves at an incredible time. The kids that stepped on the ice with us in our first few seasons have found success through their unique journeys as tradespeople, entrepreneurs, lawyers, and teachers – and the best part is, HEROS has been with them every step of the way.

But it hasn't been just us helping them. Throughout 24 seasons, we've relied on the kindness and generosity of our community to better serve our young people. We have donors and volunteers that have been around since day one and continue to support HEROS, without fail, each hockey season.

Without our community, without you, none of this is possible. You allowed us to turn a small camp of kids from the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver into a community of 18,000 youth who have donned the HEROS jersey over the years.

So, thank you for believing in HEROS players. Thank you for keeping their sticks taped and skates sharp, and for giving them a safe place where they are able to grow into incredible young leaders. With your continued support, we know that the upcoming 25th season will be the best one yet and we can't wait to get back in the rink to get it started!

With sincere gratitude,



Norm Flynn  
Founder & President





Yes, I am a hockey player!

— Samantha, SuperHEROS player



# OUR PROGRAMS

## HEROS CITIES

Victoria  
Vancouver/Lower Mainland  
Surrey  
Calgary  
Edmonton  
Regina  
Winnipeg  
Toronto  
Ottawa



## HEROS INTERNATIONAL

Belfast, Northern Ireland

## 2023-2024 STATS

### A GROWING COMMUNITY



**800**

young people laced up their skates with HEROS this season

### VOLUNTEER DRIVEN



**15,000**

hours dedicated to HEROS programs this season by volunteers

### LONG TERM INVESTMENT



**\$75,000**

spent on HEROS scholarships, bursaries, and personal development opportunities for players this season

### REMOVING BARRIERS



**95%**

of families would be unable to access hockey this season without HEROS due to financial barriers



# OUR PROGRAMS CONT.



## Future Stars/All Stars

The *Future Stars* program (grades 4-8) introduces our youngest players to the game of hockey and the four HEROS behaviours: **Listening, Respect, Discipline, and Have Fun!**

Our *All Stars* program (grades 8 and higher) includes players who have grown, developed, and moved up from Future Stars, as well as new at risk youth participants looking for an opportunity to play hockey. Our focus is to introduce our older HEROS players to responsibility, respect, and mentoring experiences that help prepare them for adulthood.

For both programs, everything required to play hockey is provided completely free, including hockey gear, transportation, ice-time, off-ice support, and snacks. Players form mentor relationships with volunteers and other HEROS players, as well as receive life-skills training.

## HEROS International

In 2008, HEROS began sharing its passion for hockey beyond the Canadian border. We partnered with social workers in both Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to bring local marginalized youth together in promotion of mutual understanding and co-operation.

This cross-border initiative has since grown from a one-week residential hockey camp to a 6-month youth development program. Participants are selected every January and begin work in their home communities; taking part in activities focused on communication, leadership, and understanding.



## SuperHEROS

*SuperHEROS* is open to youth ages 7-17 with cognitive and physical challenges and like all HEROS programs, is completely free. We provide adapted on-ice curriculum focusing on station work from a Learn to Play perspective.

We also provide players with opportunities to share the hockey experience with fellow HEROS and youth from other communities. Participants are supported every step of the way by a dedicated team of volunteer mentors who provide support on and off the ice.



# HEROS 2023-2024 HIGHLIGHTS



## Breaking Barriers

HEROS has joined together with the First Nations Health Consortium of Alberta and Hockey Alberta, with the support of Hockey Alberta Foundation, to deliver street hockey programming to remote First Nations communities! This pilot project is designed to get young people moving, working together, and building important life skills such as teamwork, creativity, and resilience through street hockey.

The programming aims to make hockey as inclusive as possible, bringing everything kids need to play, right to their communities. The accessibility of this program, combined with HEROS' inclusive, hockey-based mentorship programming ensures that young people in remote communities will be able to play hockey with their friends and mentors regardless of the barriers they face in their day-to-day lives.

## Air Canada Fan Flights

This season, six players – each from different HEROS cities – were selected to participate in the Air Canada Fan Flight program, where they were provided the opportunity to travel to Nashville, Las Vegas, and New York to watch their favourite NHL team play an away game. Thanks to Air Canada, our HEROS families were provided with their travel, accommodations, meals, and tickets to the games, not to mention special visits from NHL coaches and players, creating special moments that they never thought possible.



Since 2018, Air Canada Foundation has supported HEROS' fundraising efforts, flown players and coaches to multiple Willie O'Ree All-Star Weekends, helped bring equipment to HEROS players in Belfast, Northern Ireland, and awarded seventeen players and one coach Air Canada Fan Flight experiences!



## SuperHEROS Spring Friendship Series

HEROS was proud to host the inaugural SuperHEROS Spring Friendship Series from March 29-31, 2024! The tournament brought together SuperHEROS from Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, and Winnipeg, as well as players from local hockey teams and HEROS chapters. Six teams participated, all made up of SuperHEROS from different chapters, providing players the chance to play alongside new and old teammates alike! The event was a resounding success thanks to the hard work and dedication of the SuperHEROS



community, which included an incredible fundraiser hosted by Jeff Parry and his hockey team, the Gammy Grinders.

In 2018, the launch of the first SuperHEROS program broke barriers for young people and their families as there was nowhere in Western Canada for players living with physical or cognitive barriers to play the game in a safe and inclusive environment. Now, six years later, we couldn't be more grateful for all those who made this event possible!



## Hockey in the Harbour

On September 14th, HEROS was thrilled to see an incredible group of partners, donors, and volunteers for another fantastic year of Hockey in the Harbour, with this year's event being presented by NexGen Energy Ltd. Once again, the event was held at the stunning Pipe Shop in North Vancouver, bringing together so many friends from the HEROS community, all in the hopes of making an impactful contribution to help marginalized youth across

the country. This year, over \$120,000 was raised, with CIBC Wood Gundy's Vancouver Park Place office – one of HEROS longest standing supporters – leading the charge and committing an incredible \$20,000 contribution for HEROS programs across Canada this season.

Thank you to our planning committee for their 4th year of hard work on this event: Kirsty Dick, Tanya Hayes, Casey McCawley, Josh Mickelson, Pam Ryan, and Luka Vasic.

## Hockey in the Roundhouse

Emulating the evening of inspiration that is Hockey in the Harbour, this past season saw HEROS add another signature event to the calendar with the inaugural Hockey in the Roundhouse on November 16th. Hosted at the Steam Whistle Roundhouse in downtown Toronto, the event welcomed some of Toronto's best and brightest professionals, alongside HEROS volunteers, donors, and partners. Guests were given the opportunity to enjoy some incredible company

and listen to powerful storytelling from award winning broadcasters Harnarayan Singh, Elliotte Friedman, and Rob Kerr, while also hearing first-hand accounts of the impact their support will have on HEROS players. In total \$130,000 was raised through this event, and we can't thank our generous guests, event sponsors, and volunteers enough for their support!



This event was made possible thanks to the hard work of our planning committee: Jonathan Carter, Michelle Cinapri, and Scott McArthur.



# HEROS IN THE COMMUNITY

Each year, generous and compassionate community members find ways to support their local HEROS chapter. Above and beyond the funds raised, support from local businesses, teams, and people shows HEROS players that they are a part of a much larger community than they ever thought possible, and that they have countless fans cheering them on as they work towards their unique vision of success.



## East York Bulldogs: Building Something #BiggerThanHockey

Each year, HEROS is in awe of just how supportive the hockey community is of our players. This year, the 2014 East York Bulldogs and their incredible community raised nearly \$6,000 for HEROS programs in Toronto through their peer-to-peer fundraising campaign. But wanting to do more than that, they also represented HEROS by wearing #BiggerThanHockey on the back of their jerseys.

## Be A Budd

For the second year in a row, Ryley Budd has supported HEROS by tying his on-ice efforts to his #BeABudd fundraiser. This year, he raised \$15,000 with the help of his community, including generous contributions from EnerCorp, Adrenalin Source for Sports, DLR Vinyl Products, and the Meyer Family, who all pledged donations to HEROS for every save and shutout Ryley made throughout the season.



## Making an Impact with Impact Hockey Development

The team at Impact Hockey Development have been supporting HEROS since 2019, teaming up with HEROS Ambassador, Brenden Dillon, to host the first ever BD4 Camp and donating the proceeds of the camp to HEROS. This season, the IHD team, in partnership with both Brenden Dillon of the Winnipeg Jets and Kyle Burroughs of the San Jose Sharks, raised \$7,500 through their camps, ensuring their local HEROS chapter has all the resources they need to help players find success.



My coaches inspired me to do better this season.  
I can't wait to come back and be a leader next year.

— Stephan, HEROS All Star



# VOLUNTEER IMPACT STORY



## Half a World Away: A Volunteer's Story

Tatum Amy, a professional hockey player and HEROS Volunteer Coordinator, has one of those small-town, Canadian hockey stories that you would think came straight out of a CBC film. Born and raised in Birtle, Manitoba, playing hockey from an early age wasn't even a question in her house. As Tatum says, "My town really only had a grocery store, a gas station, and an arena, so for my parents, putting me in hockey was an easy decision and I fell in love with the sport immediately."

When she arrived at Mount Royal University in 2017, it didn't take long before Tatum was recruited by her teammates, Rachel Piitz and Anna Purschke, to help them out on Thursday afternoons at HEROS' Forest Lawn chapter. Tatum still remembers her first day, saying, "I felt so excited about the experience and just so welcomed by everyone at the program, even as a volunteer." That feeling never faded, and Tatum stuck with her friends at HEROS and SuperHEROS over her six years at MRU, being an important part of their growth and development, and building strong relationships with the players and other volunteers.

In March of 2023, Tatum's time at MRU was coming to an end, but her skills and drive had her setting her sights on going pro. With the changing landscape in women's professional hockey, she wasn't sure where she was headed, until a friend mentioned a chance to play with Leksands IF of the Swedish Women's Hockey League. This was an incredible opportunity for Tatum to play the game she loves while living in a new and exciting place, but it also meant that she wouldn't be able to skate with her friends at HEROS and SuperHEROS each week. So, after six years of watching the players grow, she would have to say goodbye to the incredible young people she had come to know so well – or so she thought.

Many past players and volunteers have found creative ways to stay connected to HEROS, even when they can't be at the rink. Some host fundraisers for their local chapter, others provide volunteer or work experience opportunities for HEROS alumni. For Tatum, staying connected meant taking on the coordination of HEROS volunteers by reviewing applications and ensuring players have the right mentors to help them play, learn, and grow. Through this role, Tatum has helped HEROS players so much over the past year, as volunteers are the most crucial component to the delivery of all HEROS programs. "Moving this far away, knowing I'm still part of HEROS is so special to me. Being able to be connected somehow, even though it's not on the ice, is super important," said Tatum.

Tatum has highlighted how important the "Once a HERO, always a HERO" mantra is. She's travelled more than 7,000 kilometres from where she first stepped on the ice at a HEROS practice but continues delivering a lasting impact to the youth who need it most, and also knows that the entire HEROS community is there for her whenever she needs it.

# HEROS IMPACT STORY

## Never Alone: Jordan's HEROS Journey

When Jordan first put on a HEROS jersey, she admits that she didn't even know how to skate. Amazingly, it wasn't long before the HEROS Winnipeg player found herself facing the Great One. "Wayne Gretzky stood in the goal, and I got a slap shot on him," said Jordan. "I've never been more excited to get a goal." Meeting and skating with a hockey legend while participating in the 2016 NHL Heritage Classic in Winnipeg has become one of her most cherished stops on what has been a memorable HEROS path.

"I don't know where I'd be without HEROS," said Jordan, who is now a HEROS All-Star. "They gave me the opportunity to learn and play hockey when I couldn't. They gave me a place to go when I was struggling. They taught me so much about respect and responsibility that I didn't even consider."

Off the ice, like many of her teammates across the country, Jordan has faced many challenging day-to-day obstacles. A true HERO, Jordan doesn't let challenges define her. Over the years, she has learned to lean on her HEROS teammates, coaches, and mentors, who have provided her with tools to continue to work hard and achieve her goals. Even in her most challenging moments, she has turned to the positive experience of HEROS for comfort.

"I love to put my headphones on and picture being on the ice. Hockey was always my escape, my joy in life. I love it," said Jordan. Now, she is looking forward to trying out for her high school hockey team and sharing her experience with younger HEROS as they join the program.

As part of a player's path through HEROS, they're given the responsibility to mentor their younger peers as they begin their own journeys through the program. All-Stars like Jordan take Future Stars under their wing, helping build their mentee's confidence and self-worth, while sharing the lessons they've learned through HEROS along the way.

"I've been taught skills by people I got close to in the program," said Jordan. "I got taught hockey skills and now get to teach those skills to other kids."

Jordan's first piece of advice to her younger teammates as they lace up their skates for the first time is simple: "Once a HERO, always a HERO. We're all here to support you and help you become the best player and person you can be. You're never alone and us HEROS will always have your back."





# 2023 – 2024 SUPPORTERS

HEROS relies on the kindness and generosity of national corporations, local businesses, and individual donors to help remove the barriers keeping children and youth from accessing sport. Thanks to our dedicated donors and sponsors, young people across the country now have the opportunity with HEROS to play, learn, and grow using the game of hockey, developing crucial on- and off-ice skills and relationships that will help guide them as they navigate their life journey. Thank you!

## The Team Captain National Presenting Partner:



## Top Shelf Partners:



## Home Ice Partners:



## Playmakers:



## Teammates:



## Community Partners:



# Donors:

## \$25,000 +

Baytex Energy Ltd.  
Canadian Energy Executives Association  
Canadian Parks and Recreation Association  
Canucks Sport and Entertainment  
Dennis Ewasiuk and Anne Dobbie  
Donner Canadian Foundation  
The Calgary Foundation  
Vancouver Executive Association

## \$10,000 - \$24,999

Brian and Dawn Hodgson  
Calgary Flames Alumni  
Edmonton Community Foundation  
Hyundai Canada  
Jeff Parry  
Minor Hockey Association of Calgary  
New Haven Mortgage Corporation  
Ottawa Community Foundation  
Park Place Foundation  
Paul and Shelley Brown  
Terron Falk

## \$5,000 - \$9,999

2014 East York Bulldogs  
Aikenhead Family Foundation  
Bruce Croxon  
Charity Golf Tournament Presented by Ultimate Stride and Paintex  
CIBC Wood Gundy - Messing Ross Advisory Group  
Dennis Hewitt  
DP World  
Enercorp  
FWS Canada  
Gord and Pat Coli  
Jonathan Carter  
Justin PS Mooney Professional Corp.  
Kory Brewster  
LiUNA Local 1611  
Lower Canada College Spring 3 on 3 Challenge  
Murray and Joyce Fox  
Normand and Laura Lamarche Family Foundation  
Peter Stapleton

S.S. Invitational Golf Tournament  
Shaw Charity Classic

## \$2,500 - \$4,999

Bernard LLP  
Bracko Home  
Bryan Baker  
Buntain Insurance Agencies Ltd.  
CI Global Asset Management  
CIBC  
CIBC Asset Management Inc.  
CIBC Private Wealth Management - Toronto  
Colley West Shipping  
David Scandiffio  
Elliot Scherer  
Empire Grain Stevedoring Ltd.  
Grainsconnect Canada Operations Inc.  
Kildonan MCC Community Assistance Centre Inc.  
Match Retail  
Navico Chartering Ltd.  
Pacific Basin Shipping Canada Ltd.  
Pacific North West Ship & Cargo Services Inc.  
Parrish & Heimbecker  
RBC Foundation  
Round13 Capital  
Ruby Blues Winery  
SGS Canada Inc.  
Sven and Laura Baertschi  
The Gore Mutual Foundation  
Victoria Royals  
WSG Capital Markets

## \$1,000 - \$2,499

Adrenalin Source for Sports  
Allison Quinton  
Andre Nowakowski  
Andrew Bayouk  
BFL Canada  
Blair Maclean  
Brad Wise  
Brandon Beadow  
Brent Johnston  
Brian Duncan  
Brian Mauch

Calgary North Stars Hockey Association  
CIBC World Markets - Vancouver  
Colley West Shipping  
Crystal Campbell  
Daniel Soper  
Dean Colling  
Dmitry Markman  
Doug MacDonald  
Douglas Wright  
Elliotte Friedman  
Euclid Transactional  
George and Donna Marlatte  
Gord and Pat Coli  
Harnarayan Singh  
Jake Rauche  
Jay Adhvaryu  
Jeffrey Bell  
John Eckert  
Karin Finley  
Kelley Tiralongo  
Ken Thompson  
Kevin Klippenstein  
Leonard Andrichuk  
Marc Latta  
Mark Slater  
Mark Weninger  
Match Transact Inc.  
Matthew Wallace  
MCR Mechanical  
Mike Cioffi  
Norden Shipping Canada  
Per Humle  
Redtail Vineyards  
Richard Helm  
Scott Boyd  
Shane McAdam  
Thomas Hansmann  
Tim Preston  
Tom Trimble  
True North Underpinning Inc.  
Tucker Braund  
Vancouver Minor Hockey U15 A1  
Wayne Hayman  
Will MacKay



# YOUR DOLLARS IN ACTION

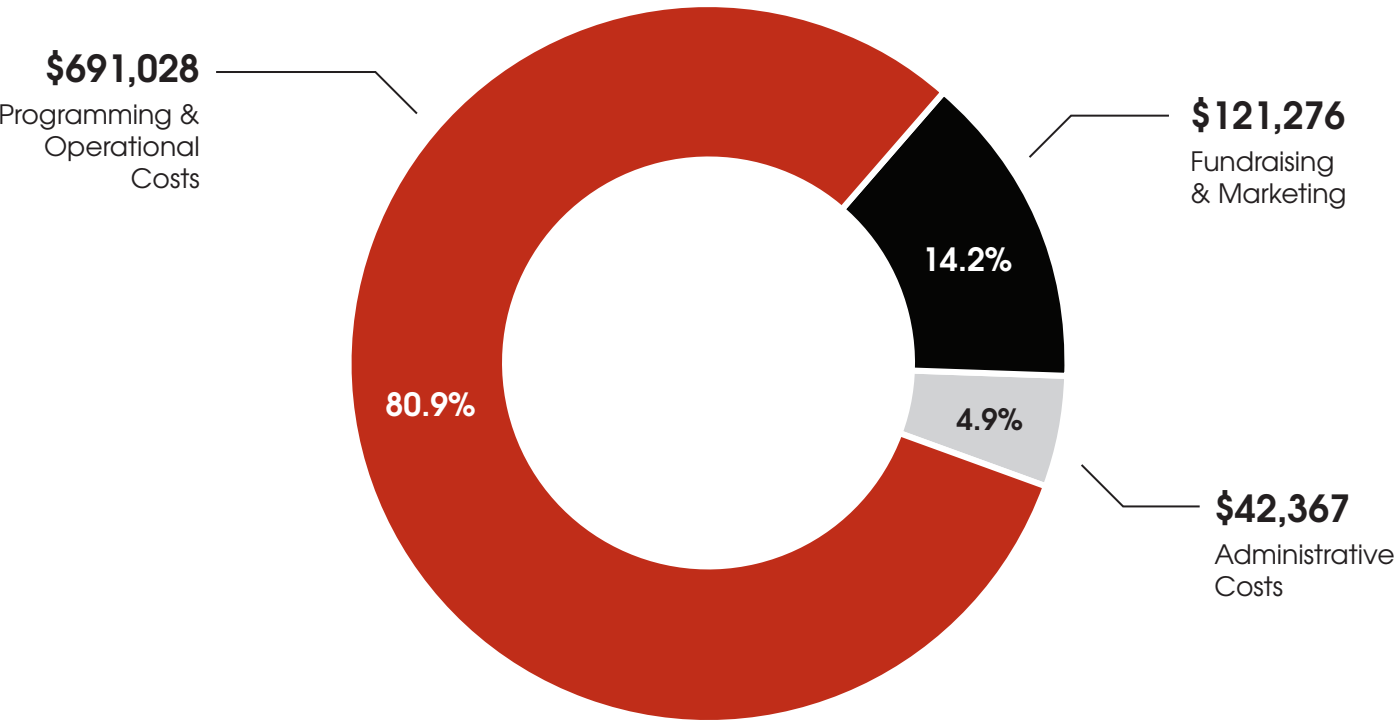
HEROS Expenses  
Sept 2022 - Aug 2023

Total Expenses  
**\$854,671**

## Expense Summary

HEROS strives to operate as efficiently as possible, ensuring that the generous contributions made by our donors and partners are used where it matters most. 81% of each dollar donated to HEROS is used to provide crucial programming components, including equipment, ice-rental, transportation, healthy snacks, and educational development opportunities such as scholarships.

## Cost Breakdown



Numbers are reflective of HEROS’ most recent audited statements from the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year (September to August). The full audited statement for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year can be found at [heroshockey.com](https://heroshockey.com)





# ENGAGE



# EDUCATE



# INSPIRE



**SUPER  
HEROS**



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To donate, volunteer, and learn more, visit [heroshockey.com](http://heroshockey.com) today!