



2022
PHILANTHROPIC
IMPACT REPORT



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RENEWING OUR PHILANTHROPIC APPROACH

Putting people at the centre of everything we do

Blue Cross has served communities since it was founded more than 80 years ago.

In 2022, we developed a new mission for our philanthropic efforts:

Protect, promote, and improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents.

Through our social involvement, we make a positive impact on people's lives.

Serving communities by bringing people together

It is important for us to share a common vision with our employees and partners: **to care for those around us.**

We are fortunate to have partners who make a difference in communities through their exceptional work. The determination they show daily is inspiring.

All our employees are committed to helping us meet our goals every single day. Their involvement and generosity enable us to fulfill our commitment to communities.





Putting our goals into action

We have targeted certain areas of intervention to enhance our commitment to our partners and create a long-term positive impact. We have also forged links with new organizations to expand our social involvement.

We are committed to supporting initiatives that:

- Provide personalized care and empathy-driven support
- Reduce inequalities to improve access to health care and meet basic needs so that living conditions are fair for all

This first-ever report highlights the contributions of our partners who have helped protect, promote and improve the health and well-being of children and adolescents.

Supporting our communities

FULFILLING CHILDREN 'S DREAMS

Make-A-Wish | Rêves d'enfants Canada **grants life-changing wishes to children facing serious illnesses.** Blue Cross has provided health coverage to children and their companions since 1989, lifting exclusions related to their pre-existing conditions. The impossible becomes possible, transforming fear, sadness and anxiety into confidence, joy and hope. **Granting wishes can improve childrens' physical and mental health in the long run, allowing them to smile again.**

- 99% of parents said that their children were made happier by having their wish come true.
- 97% of families reported an improvement in their child's mental health when their wish came true.
- According to 89% of health care workers, granting a wish can positively affect a child's physical health.
- 80% of children said fulfilling their wishes gave them the strength to fight serious illness.

In 2022, Make-A-Wish | Rêves d'enfants Canada granted 371 wishes in Ontario and 125 wishes in Quebec. Through Blue Cross support, **85 Ontario children and 38 Quebec children were able to take the trip they wanted.**

Blue Cross presented the Golf Classic together with Medavie Blue Cross. Our efforts made 7 children's wishes come true. We also sponsored the Golf for Wishes tournament in Ontario which made the dreams of 24 children come true as well.

To continue making a difference across Canada, the Canadian Association of Blue Cross Plans signed an agreement with the Make-A-Wish | Rêves d'enfants Canada Foundation in 2022.





Supporting our communities

PROVIDING TRAVEL OPPORTUNITIES

The mission of CHU Sainte-Justine **is to improve the health of children, adolescents, and mothers in Quebec.**

Since 2014, Blue Cross has offered free travel insurance without pre-existing condition exclusions to young patients of CHU Sainte-Justine in hematology and oncology and since 2018, to those in neurology.

A total of 11 children travelled with Blue Cross travel insurance in 2022.

IMPROVING CHILDRENS' HEALTH IN QUEBEC

The mission of the CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation is to engage the community and support Sainte-Justine in its pursuit of excellence and its commitment to **providing children and mothers world class healthcare, now and in the future.**

Since 2020, Blue Cross has sponsored the Tree of Lights, an initiative of the CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation.

The Sainte-Justine Tree of Lights brings Christmas cheer to children and families who must spend the holidays in the hospital. It also helps Sainte-Justine develop pediatric care for tomorrow and supports its Social Services Department so that parents can focus on the needs of their children.

Supporting our communities

BRINGING SMILES TO FACES

The Dr. Clown Foundation **brings joy to the most vulnerable people in our society.**

In pediatric hospitals, rehabilitation centres and specialized schools, therapeutic clowns meet children of all ages, from babies who are just a few weeks old to young children and teenagers.

Through their presence and collaboration, therapeutic clowns humanize care by:

- Allowing the child and their family to enjoy a break
- Providing comfort and friendship
- Helping relieve pain caused by certain medical procedures and situations
- Treating the person with respect and kindness during visits

Blue Cross has supported therapeutic clown programs in child psychiatry since 2018 by contributing to the endowment fund and ensuring the programs' long-term viability.

Some 80,239 visits were made in 2021 and 2022, including 543 with child psychiatric patients.

"[...] M is 12 years old and [...] lacks confidence. Her experience has caused her to struggle with suicidal thoughts. [...] She rarely utters a word other than a whisper to answer a question. [...] If she could disappear into thin air, she would.

(During their visit to the hospital) The clowns [...] introduced themselves to the young patients. M didn't make eye contact and didn't say a word. [...] Improvisation was the first activity of the day. The hospital worker asked the group to divide into pairs. Dr. Pédalo rushed to choose M [...] (he) set up a scenario in which M had to walk around while he created silly situations around her. It was a big success. Everybody laughed, even M.»

-Maxime Larose, Dr. Pedalo





Holland Bloorview
Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Supporting our communities

CREATING JOYFUL MOMENTS

Holland Bloorview Children's Rehabilitation Hospital **cares for children with disabilities, children who need rehabilitation after illness or trauma, and children with complicated medical situations requiring specialized care.**

Blue Cross has supported Holland Bloorview Hospital's therapeutic clown project since 2022.

Clowns bring joy to children, as well as to parents and staff. Through play, they also build self-confidence and promote mental health, well-being, and coping mechanisms.

This year, more than 850 children and youth have received individual therapy from clowns, who spark joy in hallways and at vaccination clinics.

Blue Cross helped make **466 clown visits possible in 2022.**

In a survey conducted by Holland Bloorview in 2022, 86% of respondents felt that clowns were very important to them and 100% said that clowns make them happy and joyful.

"It was difficult at times, but they helped me get through it."

-Nathan, 17

"The time spent at Bloorview can be really tedious when you're trying to get your child back on their feet. The clowns entertained my son and made him laugh. It was great seeing his face light up when they appeared. No words can describe how wonderful it feels to see your child smile again, and the clowns made it easy for him."

-Parent

Supporting our communities

OFFERING PERSONALIZED IN-HOME CARE

Nova Home Care is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to provide compassionate, high-quality, **personalized, in-home care to people who are ill or nearing the end of life and the families who support them.**

In 2019, with support from Blue Cross, Nova **launched the Blue Cross Home Palliative Care Mentorship Program.** As part of this program, home care nurses across the province have access to free and accredited training in:

- Improving the quality and accessibility of home care
- Providing patient and caregiver support

There were 120 participants in the Blue Cross Home Palliative Care Mentorship Program in 2022, **allowing 16,870 patients to benefit from the improved knowledge** of their palliative care nurses.





ORCHESTRE SYMPHONIQUE
DE MONTRÉAL

Présenté par



Supporting our communities

INCLUSION THROUGH MUSIC

The Orchestre Symphonique de Montréal (OSM) is a world-renowned orchestra whose philanthropic mission is to **make classical music accessible to as many people as possible**. Since 2006, Blue Cross has offered travel insurance to OSM musicians on their international tours.

In 2022, Blue Cross supported OSMose, a family-based program geared toward making music accessible to children with special needs.

This adapted program provided:

- An inclusive concert experience for children with special needs
- Special needs concerts to families and schools
- Materials to help the audience learn more about the orchestra during the concert

A total of 550 people attended the performance.

“This was an incredible opportunity for us! [...] We were welcomed with warmth and kindness.

At the end of the day, my 7-year-old son told us it was the best day of his life! (Nothing short of amazing! We were touched! It's all because of you! Thank you so much!)”

-Mom who attended the concert with her son

Supporting our communities

BRINGING HEALTHY BABIES INTO THE WORLD

Through Fondation Olo, **families are given an equal chance to have healthy babies and develop healthy eating habits early in life.** Since 2013, Blue Cross has supported Fondation Olo's mission.

Fondation Olo intervenes in the crucial period of the first 1,000 days of a baby's life. In this way, every child has an equal opportunity to be born and develop healthily.

The Olo follow-up program helps pregnant women in need to eat well during pregnancy to ensure a healthy birth and helps parents promote healthy eating habits early in their child's life.

Olo's follow-up care helps:

- Mothers-to-be develop better eating habits and access healthy foods and prenatal multivitamins
- Reduce low-weight births and developmental delays
- Increase the number of breastfeeding mothers and lower the incidence of postnatal depression
- Enhance parenting skills and parent-child attachment
- Reduce obesity and chronic diseases
- Improve academic success

A total of 7,000 vulnerable pregnant women in Quebec benefit from Olo follow-up care every year.



"I know that it is thanks to this help that I was able to give birth to a healthy baby. Thank you so much for being there for me! Being pregnant at such a young age isn't easy, but with the support I received, I was able to give my child a healthy start."

-Kentya, mother supported by Fondation Olo



Supporting our communities

EMPOWERING THE ADULTS OF TOMORROW

As a not-for-profit organization, UpstartED creates programs to promote the mental health and well-being of young people so they have an equal chance to achieve their potential. These programs aim to **empower teenagers in historically marginalized communities by enhancing their autonomy and self-confidence.**

The program allows them to:

- Explore their identity in a non-judgmental environment
- Access tools and practices to help them regulate their emotions
- Engage in meaningful relationships with peers and caring adults who invest in their success
- Become changemakers in their own lives and communities by acquiring the required tools and mindset

During the 2021–2022 school year:

- **433 students participated in the program in more than 30 classes**
- More than 1,100 kits were distributed
- Students showed an improvement in empathy in 93% of cases
- 68% of participants demonstrated a strong sense of knowledge and self-expression
- 66% of students demonstrated improved teamwork skills

"It has taught me that we are all different in our own way and we don't have to fit in to belong. I learned a lot about myself during this time, especially that what I experience is normal and that everyone goes through the same things."

-12-year-old student, Montreal

"The ability to be self-aware is something I had to learn. Understanding how I act when I feel certain emotions and how it affects other people is important. Through increased awareness, I am now able to better control my emotions."

-16-year-old student, Montreal

Supporting our communities

INTERNATIONAL CHILD CARE

The SickKids Foundation encourages communities to invest in **health and science advances to improve the lives of children and their families in Canada and around the world.**

The Herbie Fund is a Foundation project that **allows children around the world to come to SickKids in Toronto for better care.** The hospital's health staff:

- Provides child and family-centred care
- Creates innovative clinical and scientific advances
- Develops the next generation of child health experts

In 2022, Blue Cross began offering travel insurance to parents of children travelling to Canada for life-changing medical care. As a result of this support, one family's child was able to receive quality care in Canada this year.



DISCRETIONARY DONATIONS



Supporting those affected by the war in Ukraine

The Canadian Red Cross launched the Ukraine Humanitarian Crisis Appeal to assist with immediate and ongoing relief missions and other humanitarian activities in Ukraine and surrounding countries. **Québec Blue Cross, Ontario Blue Cross and the Canadian Association of Blue Cross Plans made a joint donation to help people in Ukraine affected by the war.**

The donations enable the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement to provide immediate and ongoing relief services in Ukraine and neighbouring countries.

THE CANADIAN RED CROSS:

- Provided essential humanitarian assistance to those affected by the war
- Got multiple humanitarian specialists to provide assistance in areas such as operations management, accommodation, and communication
- Sent more than 39,000 relief items, such as blankets, tarps and kitchen items, to Ukraine and neighbouring countries
- Supported mobile health units that provided primary health care in remote areas of Ukraine to more than 3,200 people
- Provided financial and technical support to help repair water and heating systems in the pediatric and neonatal units of the Regional Children's Hospital of Cherkassy
- Helped recruit ten psychotherapists to meet the mental health and psychosocial needs of war-affected residents



Supporting patients at all stages of illness

Leucan provides distinctive and tailored **support services at all stages of illness to cancer-stricken children and their families**. Through its support in 2022, Blue Cross helped the organization:

- Provide children with massages by pediatric oncology massage therapists during treatment to improve their well-being. The massages help reduce pain and stress in children, improve their immune function, and allow them to regain positive associations with the sense of touch.
- Give parents detailed information on the disease so they can deal with it more easily
- Set up playrooms with activities led by educators so young people can live in the present rather than worrying about upcoming treatments
- Offer safe, supervised, and adapted socio-recreational activities to break families' isolation and allow them to connect, share, and find comfort from others in similar circumstances
- Educate, sensitize, and inform teachers and peers about the realities of children with cancer returning to school



Supporting our communities

DISCRETIONARY DONATIONS



Access to urgent health care for all patients

Helico Secours **increases the chances of survival for all Quebecers by ensuring equal access to urgent health care.**

Helico Secours operates rescue and inter-hospital transport missions from regional centres to major specialized hospitals in Montreal and Quebec City. A wide range of people in critical situations have been transported, including newborns. Some babies, however, had to be refused due to a lack of equipment.

In 2022, Blue Cross funded the purchase of a **neonatal stretcher adapted** for air service.

OTHER DISCRETIONARY DONATIONS



INVOLVING OUR EMPLOYEES

It's our 30th year supporting United Way's and HealthPartner's joint national fundraising campaign. Our employees have once again shown their generosity in support of our communities.

The funds raised will be used to:

- Ensure the most vulnerable have access to essential community services by improving their living conditions
- Build stronger and more equitable communities by making lasting social changes
- Enhance the quality of life for people with chronic diseases and their families through personalized programs and services
- Promote a healthy lifestyle through awareness and prevention

We far exceeded our \$20,000 goal this year. By matching employee donations, we raised \$32,755.

It is a privilege to work with committed teams who share our desire to make a meaningful difference.





STAYING COMMITTED

We renewed our philanthropic approach in 2022, and have now signed an exclusive partnership with the CHU Sainte-Justine Foundation to **support the Tout doux program over a six-year period.**

The Tout doux program was created in 2021 by Dr. Marie-Joëlle Doré-Bergeron, pediatrician and head of the pain clinic and Dr. Evelyne Doyon Trottier, pediatric emergency physician. Dr. Doré-Bergeron and Dr. Doyon Trottier co-direct the program. The objectives are to:

- Improve pain management and reduce procedural distress and acute and chronic pain in children by teaching staff best practices
- Reduce patients' and parents' anxiety about medical care
- Increase the children's chances of staying on their medical trajectories by reducing trauma related to certain forms of treatment

The five-year objectives are to:

- Train all staff at CHU Sainte-Justine in best practices regarding care and pain management
- Educate professionals and caregivers across Quebec
- Establish CHU Sainte-Justine as a reference for the twelve French-language hospitals in the pan-Canadian SKIP network (Solutions for Kids in Pain)
- Adapt tools to Ste-Justine's environment

We have been working with CHU Sainte-Justine for fifteen years, demonstrating our strong and lasting commitment to the health of Quebec children.



Wherever life may take you