



Variety - the Children's Charity

DONOR IMPACT REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2020



VARIETY “THE LAST CHANCE” CHARITY: HELPING KIDS BE KIDS

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

As 2020 draws slowly to a close, I look back on what has been a year of unexpected challenges with satisfaction and gratitude for our supporters. 2020 was a year where we all faced a new reality, new circumstances, new fears and concerns and you, our supporters, were there for families across BC when they needed you most.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has made life more difficult for many families of children with disabilities who have experienced loss of – or reduction to – their income due to the current economic situation. This year we have had hundreds of kids ... more kids than ever ... desperately waiting for our help.

I call Variety the “Last Chance Charity” because families come to us when they have no other option ... when all other avenues of help for their children have been completely exhausted. And this year there have been more families than ever needing our help.

It has never been more important for British Columbians to come together to support children and families in communities throughout our province and donors like you answered the call with a resounding **YES, I want to help!**

Thanks to the support of our phenomenal partnership with Global BC and our donors, our 2019 *Variety Tree of Hearts* campaign and this year’s

Variety Show of Hearts Telethon were both huge successes. You, our loyal donors, rallied around both our *COVID-19 Heart of Variety Fund* and *Variety Week* ... so much so that we ended up setting a new record for funds raised for *Variety Week* alone. With your support and unbelievable matching gift of \$500,000 from Strand Development and Townline Homes, we raised \$2.7 million – amounts unsurpassed to date – to help kids from all corners of our province.

Now, because of your generosity, kids like Ashton – whose Mom lost her job due to the pandemic – will no longer need to wait for Speech & Language Therapy. Kids like Ripley will get the hearing aids they need and kids like Greta will receive physiotherapy to regain the strength that cancer took away.

We all came together ... and now thanks to your caring and generosity, so many parents can be assured that their child will receive the necessary equipment, services and treatments to ensure they reach milestones and continue to thrive. From the bottom of my heart, I would like to thank you for contributing to Variety. It truly is because of you that smiles will be back on the faces of BC’s kids with special needs!



Cally Wesson

Cally Wesson
CEO
Variety BC

With demand continuing to grow and challenges with fundraising in a COVID environment, we had close to 300 kids waiting for support. But thanks to your overwhelming support during *Variety Week*, all of these kids received the grants they so desperately needed.

Here are examples of what some of our kids were waiting for:

- 94** for Speech & Language Therapy
- 32** for Occupational Therapy
- 31** for Mobility Equipment including 13 orthotics, 4 wheelchairs and 3 trikes
- 20** Bursaries for tutoring and tuition
- 15** for Physiotherapy
- 7** for Counselling
- 6** for Medical Equipment including 3 hearing aids, 2 CGMs and 1 specialized bed

VARIETY WEEK: BRITISH COLUMBIANS COME TOGETHER

Variety & Global BC once again teamed up to present the 5th Annual *Variety Week* from September 18 to 22, 2020. Throughout the week, *Global News* viewers were introduced to children who Variety has supported while getting to see firsthand how their lives along with their families' lives have been impacted because of Variety's help.

With the generosity of our donors, the support of our sponsors - Accent Inns, Buy-Low Foods, Connect Hearing, RBC Royal Bank, Triple O's and White Spot Restaurants - and an incredible matching offer of \$500,000 from Strand Development and Townline Homes, this year's *Variety Week* raised an unprecedented \$2.7 million dollars!

VARIETY WEEK



**Greta,
Herman,
Luna, Patrice,
Scarlett and
more kids ...**



... all received the help they need

THANK YOU!



ALICE'S STORY

When our daughter, Alice was born in March 2017, my husband, Alexander and I were thrilled. Our beautiful baby girl was perfect ... 10 little fingers, 10 little toes and she seemed to be a very happy and healthy baby. When Alice was 6-months-old, we still thought everything was normal as she was a cheerful and responsive little girl though perhaps a bit slower to progress than some other children her age.

It wasn't until Alice was a year old that the dark cloud drifted in and we realized something was terribly wrong. She had thus far displayed absolutely no vocal sounds. She never crawled, she couldn't sit up and she wasn't able to eat any solid food.

The specialist told us that our beautiful little girl had a progressive disorder and to make her as comfortable as possible because she didn't have long to live. I told the doctor "NO!" ... I knew in my heart that they were wrong and we were not going to lose our dear little girl so soon.

The doctors performed genetic testing and found that Alice was afflicted with an extremely rare genetic disorder that affects her brain development and related motor function. This condition will result in Alice experiencing life-long symptoms and complications – both physical and mental – however the good news was that research has proven that the condition is treatable with intensive therapy.

The bad news was we didn't have the money to afford the expensive treatments Alice needed so desperately and they weren't covered by Provincial health care. We knew she had so much potential

that we just had to do something – but where to turn? Then someone told us about Variety.

We applied for funding from Variety right away and thanks to the generosity of their donors, they were able to push away the dark cloud and provide Alice with the intensive physiotherapy sessions necessary so that she can achieve her motor milestones.

And achieve them she has!

The doctors said Alice would never walk. Alice has proven them wrong and she can now take a few steps with minimal assistance. She also crawls on her own while exploring her expanding world with delight.

Her motor skills have improved dramatically and that has made life much easier for the entire family. The additional exercise she gets with her new mobility has also improved her appetite and enables her to sleep through the night. One of the effects of her condition is the inability to sleep because her brain just doesn't shut down. Thankfully we are now all able to enjoy a good night's sleep.

Alice is very proud of her achievements but can see she is different. Now three years old, she attends play school and wants to take part in group activities and be just like all the other kids.

We always let Alice know that her condition is a part of who she is however it does not define her.

Alice loves her therapy and happily goes to every session singing and smiling. One of our favourite things to do has always been to visit the park. The bike not only



“When we were at the park, Alice always looked with interest and glee at other kids on their bikes. When Variety gave Alice her very own adaptive bike last February on the *Variety Show of Hearts Telethon*, she was thrilled beyond words.”

enables Alice to ride in the park with the other kids – as she had been longing to do – but it’s also playing a key role in developing her balance which is something that is crucial to her future mobility progress.

Alice has come so far since beginning the therapy funded by Variety. We are so proud of our little girl.

Alexander and I cannot possibly ever thank Variety and their donors enough for what they have done for our little Alice. Our entire family has been treated with love, respect and dignity and Alice now feels like a big girl with a bright future!

– Roxanne, Alice’s Mom



CELEBRATING OUR CORPORATE HEROES



BUY-LOW FOODS

For over 25 years, Buy-Low Foods has been partnering with Variety - the Children’s Charity to help BC’s kids. In what has been an exceptional year, Buy-Low Foods has gone above and beyond to ensure Variety BC is able to be there when families need us most. Their 28th Annual *Variety Vintage Market* raised over \$135,000.

And while other Buy-Low Foods events were cancelled due to the global health crisis, their team stepped up with new fundraising initiatives that not only inspired their customers to give but raised enough money to help over 300 kids including the most successful “Scan & Donate” program to date raising \$40,257. They then went on to create an innovative “Sharing is Caring!” campaign where partial proceeds of specially marked items were donated back to Variety. The month-long fundraiser raised a phenomenal \$102,000. Thank you Buy-Low Foods for your incredibly generous support and for continuing to help make a difference in the lives of BC’s kids with special needs!



VARIETY SHOW OF HEARTS TELETHON

Variety BC's iconic *Variety Show of Hearts Telethon* returned to Global BC on February 9, 2020. The eight-hour show included heart-warming stories profiling children who have been helped the past year along with the always-popular Magic Moments plus the unveiling of the 608th Sunshine Coach to the Tong Louie Family YMCA.

The live telecast featured musical performances by Said the Whale, Shawn Austin, Wide Mouth Mason, Todd Richard and special guests, The Tenors. Also making their *Show of Hearts* debut this year was actor Paul Greene and inspirational speaker Cara E. Yar Khan. It was cause for celebration when co-hosts Chris Gailus & Sophie Lui announced the final total of \$5,515,238.



FUNDRAISING IN A COVID CLIMATE

COVID-19 HEART OF VARIETY FUND

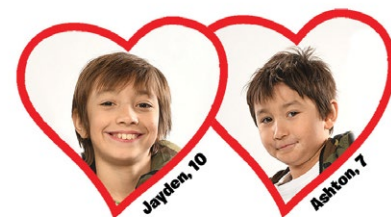
On Giving Tuesday (May 5, 2020), Variety launched its *COVID-19 Heart of Variety Fund* campaign with an emphasis on providing kids with virtual therapies, tutoring and counselling so that they would not lose the progress they had worked so hard to make before school & activities were restricted as a result of the pandemic. The four-month campaign – which included TV spots airing on Global BC that featured television personality, Jillian Harris – raised \$289,379.

YOU ROSE TO THE CHALLENGE

to help keep Variety kids thriving during the COVID-19 health crisis



COVID-19 HEART OF VARIETY FUND



PRINCE GEORGE-VANDERHOOF RADIOTHON

This year's *Variety Prince George-Vanderhoof Radiothon* returned to 94.3 The GOAT, Country 97 FM & 94.3 Valley GOAT on September 9 & 10, 2020. Sponsored by Canadian Tire, the two-day event included vignettes featuring local kids who Variety had helped the past year. Thanks to the generosity of all three radio stations' listeners, this year's *Radiothon* raised \$41,104.

BOAT FOR HOPE

Due to COVID-19 and the restrictions put in place by the BC Health Authorities, it was not possible for our *Boat for Hope* Committee to host Variety's traditional *Boat for Hope* this year. Instead the reimagined event took place on the rooftop parking lot of Coquitlam Centre on September 12, 2020. Over 400 families who had been helped by Variety were able to drive through the event from the comfort of their own vehicles with each corner of the lot decorated as a "Treasure Island" while the children received loot bags. Once again, *Boat for Hope* proved to be a memorable, fun-filled day not just for the kids ... but for the whole family!



YOUR GENEROSITY ENABLED US TO PROVIDE:

3,828

HOURS OF SPEECH & LANGUAGE THERAPY

over 700

HOURS OF MENTAL WELLNESS COUNSELLING

13

KIDS WITH TYPE 1 DIABETES RECEIVED CGM'S

19

KIDS RECEIVED WHEELCHAIRS

54

KIDS LEARNED TO WALK WITH CUSTOM ORTHOTICS

10

KIDS RECEIVED HEARING AIDS

almost 950

HOURS OF TUTORING

31

KIDS WERE ABLE TO ATTEND A SPECIALIZED SCHOOL



VARIETY MOBILITY DAY

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, six-year-old Ethan of Halfmoon Bay on the Sunshine Coast received a specially modified adaptive trike on this year's *Variety Mobility Day* as part of the day's festivities. Ethan's parents, May & Scott Shannon were "left speechless" after the June 24 presentation.

Ethan has nemaline myopathy, a neuromuscular disorder that affects muscle control. The adaptive trike will help Ethan with balance and strengthening his muscles in his legs, core and arms while enabling him to ride his bike ... just like other kids. Variety had previously assisted Ethan's family with wheelchair accessories, orthotics and a ceiling track.

VARIETY AT WORK

The Variety at Work Committee is truly a Committee with a heart. Every year, the dedicated committee members come together to create inclusive events for children with special needs giving not only kids the opportunity to be kids but families the opportunity to be families. From Picnic in the Park to the Grouse Mountain Kids Day to the Variety Kids Christmas Party, everyone has the opportunity to just simply enjoy a day filled with smiles and laughter all because of this incredibly caring and creative Committee!



VARIETY CARES FUND

In 2020, \$125,000 was allocated to hospitals province-wide to help families seeking urgent out-of-town medical care for their child.

SUNSHINE COACHES

For five decades, Variety's Sunshine Coach program has been safely supporting kids on BC roads. It was during our *Variety Show of Hearts Telethon* that we presented our 608th Sunshine Coach to the Tong Louie Family YMCA.

During the summer – in the face of COVID-19 – we presented a Sunshine Coach to the North Shore Disability Resource Centre who are now able to have kids visit their families ... thanks to the generosity of our donors.

Right: North Shore Disability Resource Centre **Below:** Tong Louie Family YMCA



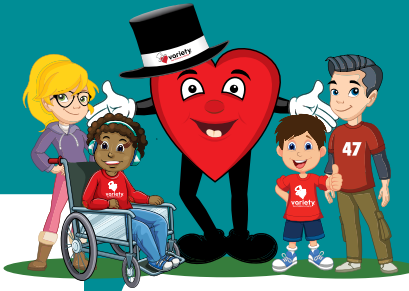
VARIETY DONORS HELP KIDS ALL ACROSS BC



**SELEN ALPAY,
CANADIAN TIRE, PRINCE GEORGE**

"As a business leader in a Northern community, it has always been my mission to give back both personally and corporately with the goal of inspiring others. Since hearing about the great work that Variety has done in my community, I knew I wanted to get involved as I have a passion for helping kids here in Prince George. This partnership with Variety BC has provided kids with the support they so desperately need and I look forward to continuing to help out where I can."

★
**PRINCE
GEORGE**



GRANT & TONI MADDOCK, KELOWNA

"Having followed Variety for years, we really didn't appreciate the struggles that children and their parents go through with disabilities.

We are raising our 12-year-old son/adopted grandson who has ADHD which can at times be challenging however we consider ourselves lucky when we watch Variety stories and see how a lot of parents struggle to give their children the best lives they can.

We donate to Variety with the support of Global BC and the many volunteers because it is an organization that parents can turn to both for emotional support and specialized support to help their children achieve their dreams ... the same dreams all parents have for their children and to achieve their dreams for a more productive and happy life."



GIL & CHERYL SHOESMITH, SAANICH BC

"Many years ago I saw a childhood friend from Tofino on the Show of Hearts Telethon receive help from Variety. Later in his adult years, he continued to have mobility challenges but he was a very smart and tenacious individual who did everything he could to help others. His story inspired us to continue to support Variety so that other children like him could get the assistance they needed."

★
KELOWNA

★
SAANICH



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