

# 2024

# ANNUAL REPORT



## Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation

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## Introduction

### The Mission

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To build a community that empowers the students of the Foothills School Division.

### The Vision

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Every learner has an equal opportunity to succeed, to thrive within a supportive community, and to achieve their full potential.

### Strategic Priorities

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**Equity in Education** - Removing barriers to academic success and ensuring every child has access to the resources they need to thrive.

**Innovative & Sustainable Growth** - Generating revenue and promoting forward-thinking projects to enhance educational opportunities and ensure long-term sustainability.

**Empowering Communities** - Building flourishing, connected communities where students and families feel supported, while fostering the Foundation's partnership with the broader community.

**Enhanced Learning Opportunities** - Providing resources and support to enrich student learning experiences and drive academic success.

# Leadership and Governance

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On behalf of the Friends of Foothills Foundation Board of Directors, I am pleased to share the significant achievements and progress we have made in our first year. We worked to build a community that empowers the students of the Foothills School Division where every learner has an equal opportunity to success; to thrive within a supportive community and to achieve their full potential.

With the invaluable assistance of our Executive Director, we have continued to evolve and strengthen the Foundation. We have made substantial progress on updating our strategic plan and are close to finalizing it for 2025 and beyond. Recognizing the importance of community building through collaboration, we met with all School Councils, the Council of School Councils, the local ATA executive, and the Foothills School Division Board of Trustees to build essential networks. We remain dedicated to working with the Foothills School Division Board of Education and the Executive Team to ensure our work aligns with their broad goals. Purposeful collaboration and effective communication remain central to fostering meaningful partnerships with our communities and stakeholders.

Within just seven months of our formal organization, we held our first major fundraising event - the Fore Education Golf Tournament. This event raised sufficient funds to enable us to donate \$3000 to three FSD schools. We were delighted to support Senator Riley's purchase of supplies for their tower garden, the upgrade of Highwood High School's theatre lighting control system, and the acquisition of a Next Wave CNC Shark HD510 Router for Okotoks Junior High School's wood shop.

As the year came to a close, we were already deep into planning our second fundraising event: The Heart of Education Gala, an evening of fine dining and entertainment featuring George Canyon, scheduled for February 2025.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from our local media and businesses, who have been integral to our success thus far.

Finally, I am very proud to be part of Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation. Each director has gone above and beyond to ensure the Foundation remains a respected organization that supports student learning. Their dedication through volunteering their time, skills, and talents ensures all students and learners in the Foothills School Division have access to the resources they need to thrive and succeed in their educational journey.

## Our People

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Making an impact is an essential aspect of being in the non-profit sector, and that is only possible with the volunteers and staff that keep an organization running. Our Foundation Board has been active since 2022 working on getting the organization up and running. We received our Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) registered charity status and are a Non-Profit Society registered in Alberta. We have recently received Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis Commission (AGLC) permission to conduct raffles with a total ticket value of \$20,000 or less. We have been busy getting everything in place to position the Foundation and our students for success.

## Meet our Team



Drew Chipman, FSD Representative

These are the folks who helped guide us through our formative stages and are continuing to work toward building a robust and sustainable Foundation.

**Christopher Fuzessy, PhD**  
**Superintendent of Schools**



As the superintendent of Foothills School Division, I am thrilled to contribute to the inaugural annual report of the Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation. Since its inception last spring, this foundation has made remarkable progress in enhancing opportunities for our students and enriching their educational journey. The Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation plays a pivotal role in expanding horizons and creating a vibrant, supportive community that empowers our students to reach their full potential.

The foundation's work aligns seamlessly with our vision of providing exceptional educational experiences for every child. By offering innovative learning programs, supporting school activities, and fostering community partnerships, the foundation is contributing to possibilities for our students. Their efforts in funding cutting-edge technology and supporting creative school projects are invaluable in broadening our students' perspectives and preparing them for future success.

The Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation exemplifies the power of community engagement in education. By connecting our schools with local businesses, organizations, and individuals, they are creating a network of support that amplifies learning opportunities. This collaborative approach not only enhances the quality of education we provide but also instills a sense of community pride and shared purpose. I am deeply appreciative of their dedication and eagerly anticipate the continued positive impact their work will have on our students' educational journeys and future achievements. The Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation assists us in placing education at the centre of a flourishing community.

## **Message from the Board of Trustees**

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, it is my privilege to share our thoughts on the progress and impact of the Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation (FFSF) as they present their first annual report.

The FFSF's four areas of focus—Equity in Education, Innovation and Sustainability, Empowering Communities, and Enhanced Learning Opportunities—resonate with the Vision, Mission, and Strategic Direction of the Board of Trustees. These priorities are vital in fostering engagement, support, and success for every learner.

Our Vision calls us to ensure that each student thrives within a culture of belonging and opportunity. The Foundation's commitment to equity and enhanced learning opportunities aligns directly with this, creating pathways for all learners to access the resources and experiences they need to succeed. Their focus on

innovation and sustainability reflects our shared commitment to building a flourishing community where education is at the heart of progress and adaptability. Through its focus on empowering communities, the Foundation is embracing the spirit of collaboration, fostering meaningful connections that aim to strengthen the foundation of support for our students and schools.

We commend the Foundation for quickly moving funding to enhance the programming and opportunities across our schools. While this year there has been a limited amount that could be distributed, the rapid mobilization by the Foundation reflects an understanding of the needs of our learners as well as a steadfast commitment to bridging gaps and creating meaningful impacts.

Additionally, the Foundation's ability to grow community support underscores the essential role of partnerships in advancing educational excellence. By rallying donors, advocates, and stakeholders, the Foundation has exemplified how collective efforts can amplify opportunities for all.

As a Board, we are grateful for the Foundation's commitment to aligning their efforts with our Mission to explore, develop, and celebrate the unique gifts and abilities of every learner. Together, we are building a future where education serves as the cornerstone of a thriving community.

<p>Theresa Letendre Board Chair Foothills School Division Board of Trustees</p>	
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## What we've accomplished so far

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2024 was a significant year for the Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation (FFSF). An Executive Director was hired in February to oversee the operations and success of the Foundation. This position holds the responsibility of managing volunteers, supporting events, helping with fundraising activities, and providing both leadership and management of the Foundation according to the strategic direction set by the Board.

Larry, Board Chair and Marica, ED visited all twenty schools in the division to ask for their support, get some input, and begin establishing some communication channels. School Councils provided valuable feedback which was reviewed by the FFSF Board to assist in its planning.

We held our first 'meet & greet' with the public to introduce the Foundation to our community in June. Kiosks manned by volunteers were at George Lane Park on June 9, 2024 for the annual Picnic with a Purpose. A great group of 19 community service providers were on site to share resources with our community. There were yard activities, live music, food, face painting, a petting zoo and lots more to share with all who attended.



This was followed up with a fantastic day spent at the Okotoks Children's Festival on June 15, 2024 getting the message out about the Foundation.

## FORE Education Golf Tournament

The Foundation held it's first fundraising event on August 22, 2024.



It was a great day to be on the links in support of the Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation. The Highwood Golf Club was in fantastic shape, the day was perfect, and the food absolutely delicious. Congratulations to the Team from Sobeyes Okotoks for being the first to get their name engraved on the trophy! A total of \$4,600 was raised to support the programs and services of the Foundation.

## Golf Supporters

We'd like to thank the following for their incredible support of our golf tournament.



We'd also like to give a big "SHOUT OUT" to all of the volunteers who helped source auction items and helped out on the day of event. They helped to make the day truly special by greeting golfers, manning the registration tables, helping with the 50/50 draw, setting up auction items and contributing to the success of the entire event!

## Grants

The Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation launched its first grant process in the fall of 2024. The Board was impressed with the quality and quantity of student focused projects. We received 9 proposals up to a total value of \$19,400. Although we were not able to support all requests, we

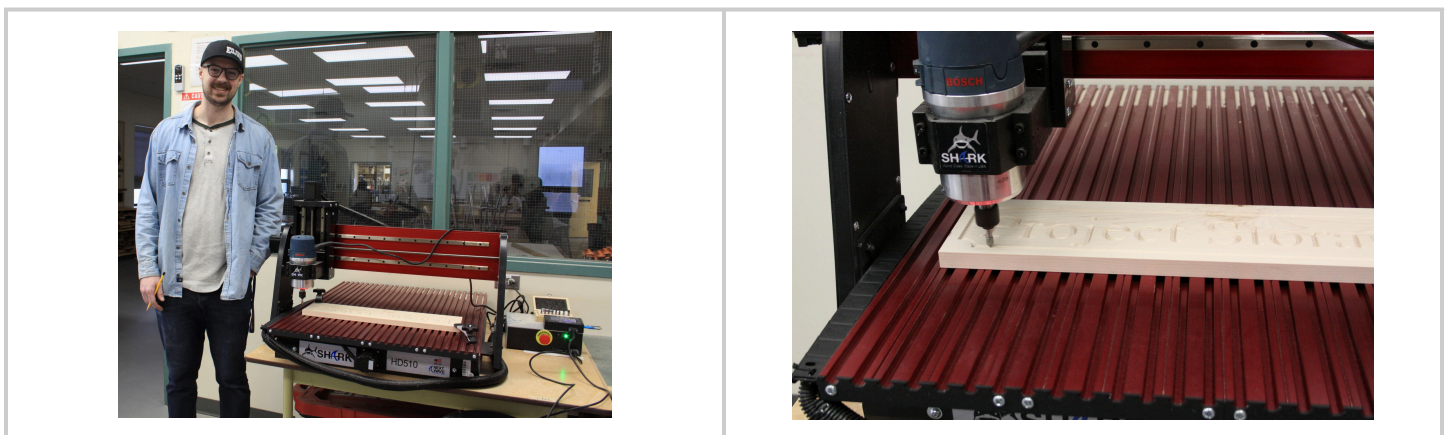
announced funding for three School Council projects. Proceeds from the 'Fore Education Golf Tournament' were used to fund these projects.

These include:

**École Okotoks Junior High School** – to support the purchase of a Next Wave CNC Shark HD510 Router for their wood shop.

**École Senator Riley Middle School** – to support the purchase of tower gardening supplies and the purchase of a Versa Cold Food Serving Bar.

**École Secondaire Highwood High School** – to support their purchase of replacement components for their theatre lighting control system



The Foundation remains very motivated to continue to raise funds and collaborate with Foothills School Division's schools and school councils to enhance student learning. We would like to thank all school councils who participated in the process and hope that as the Foundation continues its fundraising efforts, we will be able to support many more worthwhile projects.





## 'Friends' making new friends at Foothills schools

Western Wheel, Wednesday, January 22, 2025 - A11

By Ted Murphy  
Editor

The smiles on the faces of students are enough for Marica Borovich-Law to know they're on the right track.

Borovich-Law is executive director of the Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation, which launched last spring with the goal of addressing needs at local schools that provincial government funding doesn't cover.

The foundation handed out its first three grants last month at Ecole Okotoks Junior High School, Ecole Senator Riley Middle School and Ecole Secondaire Highwood High School.

"When we went to give the cheques out to those kids, it was phenomenal. They are so engaged and so enamored by what they're doing and they're so appreciative of the support," she said.

"By providing this funding, it allows students to take their interests, their skills, their imagination and creativity and see where it can take them. That's what this foundation wants to do."

Money raised at a golf tournament last summer, the foundation's first fundraiser, provided grants to purchase theatre light-



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation executive director Marica Borovich-Law (second from right) presents a cheque to Ecole Okotoks Junior High School to buy woodshop equipment.

ing, gardening supplies and woodshop equipment at the three schools.

Borovich-Law is hopeful the fledgling foundation, which operates at arms-length from the Foothills School Division, will continue to grow and be able to provide funding to even more worthwhile initiatives in the years to come.

To that end, the organization is holding its second fundraiser, The Heart of Education Gala, next month at The Ranch House, an event that will be highlighted by a 60-minute acoustic set by country star George Canyon.

"You're going to hear his fantastic voice and you're going to be up close and per-

sonal," said Borovich-Law of the Feb. 7 gala.

The evening will also include a prime rib dinner, exclusive auction items and will see renowned Western artist Renee Gould create a painting to be auctioned off.

The foundation will be holding another golf tournament at Highwood in High River, but is moving it earlier in the season to June 14.

Borovich-Law said they're on the lookout for new board members and volunteers, and are always open to those with ideas and suggestions.

She said the foundation would love to create a STEM program, so it's looking for an energy company to provide funding.

Borovich-Law said offering financial support to school initiatives gives students a chance to follow a path that might not otherwise be available to them.

"When you give those opportunities for innovation, for creativity, that may engage a student even more and allow them to see what can happen, what's available to them," she said.

For more information on the foundation or to purchase tickets for the gala, visit [foothillsfriends.ca](http://foothillsfriends.ca).

## AGLC

### Raffle licence approval

Our eligibility to conduct a raffle under \$20,000 was approved late in 2024 giving us another tool to use in our fundraising activities. The Foundation is reviewing the best use of this option for our 2025 events and campaigns.

## Strategic Planning Session

The Foundation held a Strategic Planning Session on November 26, 2024. It was an important opportunity for the board members to share "why" they joined the board and to ensure that our initial mission and vision statements were still relevant. The Board felt that the mission is a concise description of the Foundation's purpose. Following discussion a new vision statement was proposed and supported. Next steps include scheduling a second planning session for January 2025 and determining the Foundation Board's strategic priorities with their corresponding goals.

# Financial Performance

## First Year Financials

The Friends of Foothills School Foundation has been in "operational mode" for eight months. As with any new venture, it has been a period of adjustment, insight, investment, refinement, and challenge.

We are fortunate that Foothills School Division provided a one-time operating grant to cover start-up costs including website hosting & development, marketing, and insurance. They generously continue to provide funds to cover the cost of the Executive Director salary through 2025.

As may be the case with many new Foundations, establishing a positive reputation and a pattern of fundraising is difficult and may take a few years of work. Our first fundraising activity, hosting a golf tournament, raised enough funds to make three \$1000 grants available to three different schools.

The FFSF is focused on developing a mix of funding sources including grants, monthly giving and sponsorships, lotteries/raffles and fundraising events. We will also be developing guidelines for endowments to generate investment income and moving forward with a major donor campaign.

## FRIENDS OF FOOTHILLS SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

### Statement of Operations

*For one year ending December 31, 2024*

#### REVENUES

Foothills School Division Commitment (Operations)	\$46,837.50	
Donations Targeted	\$5,000.00	
Donations General	\$2,568.48	
Fore Education Golf	\$8,885.00	
Heart of Education Event*	\$8,760.00	
Reversed Service Bank Charges	\$109.07	
<b>Total Revenues</b>		<b>\$72,160.05</b>

#### EXPENSES

COST OF FUNDRAISING		
Golf Tournament	\$4,119.68	
Other Fundraisers		
<b>Total Cost of Fundraising</b>	<b>\$4,119.68</b>	
GENERAL & ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES		
Management Salaries	\$36,225.00	
Advertising, Marketing, Promotions	\$990.78	
Bank Service Charges	\$227.44	
Insurance	\$1,854.71	
Grants Dispersed**	\$3,000.00	
<b>Total General &amp; Administrative Expenses</b>	<b>\$42,297.93</b>	
<b>Total Expenses</b>		<b>\$46,417.61</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>		<b>\$25,742.44</b>

Notes: Income for the Heart of Education Gala is shown in 2024, although expenses and the event itself is in 2025. \*\*The Grants Dispersed include a \$1,000 cheque that was not cashed by Dec. 31, 2024.

# Future Plans

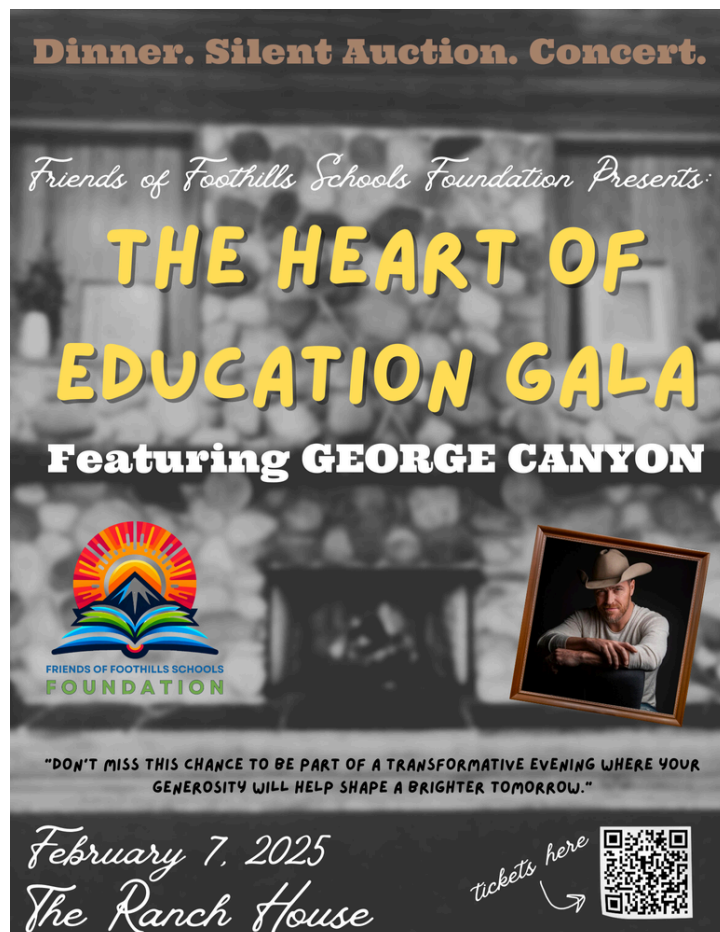
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## Comments from the Executive Director

It has been an exciting few months for the Foundation and we are just getting started. We will continue to move forward with our second Strategic Planning Session in January, 2025. Our board is fully committed to working towards a shared direction and identifying the actions we need to achieve our long term goals.

To coincide with the Strategic Plan, we will be developing a Fundraising Strategy. Having been approved by AGLC for lotteries under \$20,000, we will be incorporating this revenue generating opportunity into our fundraising plans. No casino yet, but we are working on it!

Our next major fundraiser is the the Heart of Education Gala featuring George Canyon in February, 2025.



Keeping with our fundraising theme, our Second Annual Fore Education Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday, June 14, 1 pm at the Highwood Golf Club. Our goal is to get at least 1 foursome from each of our schools. Proceeds will go toward our granting process which opens up in September.

From an “operations” standpoint, we are looking to move our website to our own hosting platform. We are looking for volunteers who have experience and skills in the area to help us out.

With respect to volunteers, I can't say enough about everyone who contributes their time and skills to help the Foundation as we grow. A huge thank you to all board members, committee members, and volunteers who support our activities. For those who would like to become involved, we'd love to have you. Please visit the volunteer page to see what is available or to let us know how you can contribute to our vision.

Education is the heart of EVERY community.

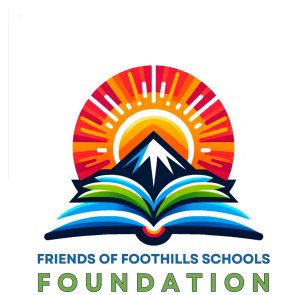
Sincerely,  
Marica

**Make a Difference. Help a Child Succeed.**



**Marica Borovich-Law**  
**Executive Director**

Friends of Foothills Schools Foundation  
[lawm@foothillsfriends.ca](mailto:lawm@foothillsfriends.ca) | 403.422.0274  
f @foothillsfriends



**DONATE  
TODAY!**

# Reach Out

## FRIENDS OF FOOTHILLS SCHOOLS FOUNDATION

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