



Connecting our Kidney Community

Impact Report 2021



Our Vision

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is committed to achieving excellent kidney health, optimal quality of life, and a cure for kidney disease.

Our Mission

The Kidney Foundation of Canada is the national volunteer organization committed to eliminating the burden of kidney disease through:

- **Funding and stimulating** innovative research for better treatments and a cure;
- **Providing education and support** to prevent kidney disease in those at risk and empower those with kidney disease to optimize their health status;
- **Advocating** for improved access to high quality health care;
- **Increasing** public awareness and commitment to advancing kidney health and organ donation.

ONTARIO CHAPTERS

African Caribbean Kidney Association (ACKA)

Brampton

Brant County

Central Ontario

Chinese Renal Association

Durham Region

Eastern Ontario

Hamilton & District

Kingston

London & District

Niagara & District

North Bay

Northern Superior (Thunder Bay)

Sarnia-Lambton

Sault Ste. Marie

Timmins-Porcupine

Waterloo Wellington & District

Windsor & District

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Message from the President and Executive Director

As we reflect on 2021, we can do so with a sense of accomplishment. You will see in the following pages the outstanding achievements of Kidney Foundation volunteers, donors, and employees during what was another challenging year. We continue to show resilience in the face of the unknown while providing vital programs and services. In fact, we've been able to grow patient support by being nimble and embracing the use of technology.

The year started with a successful major advocacy effort. We encouraged the provincial government to make vaccines available to dialysis and transplant patients by making them a priority in the early days of distribution. The introduction of new fundraising activities like the Kidney Quest underpinned the growing demand for emergency financial assistance and peer support. Walk results were outstanding, as were the efforts of Kidney Car and Kidney Clothes.

While the future continues to be unclear, the Ontario Branch is embarking on a new strategic planning process to carry it through 2025. So much has changed in the last two years, but the needs of patients and families have not. Many of the priorities and objectives in the new plan will be similar to those in the current edition and will also strive to seize the opportunity to innovate based on the new realities of carrying out The Kidney Foundation's mission.



Dr. Norman Muirhead
President
Ontario Branch

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Norman".



Anthony Tirone
Executive Director
Ontario Branch

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Tirone".

Thank you to our donors, volunteers, and employees for making people living with kidney disease and their families a priority during difficult times. We look forward to your support in 2022 as we continue to display agility and resourcefulness in carrying out the Foundation's goals.



\$200,284

Short Term Financial Assistance

1013

people were supported with financial assistance

35 Kidney Walks held in Ontario

988 Kidney Walk participants



244

Teams

\$876,035

Kidney Walks raised

HIGHLIGHTS 2021

5266

cars donated



raising

\$3.3 M



Over

3.1 M



impressions online for our

Six Degree Challenge

\$46,259

raised through the Six Degree Challenge

\$1,639,880

Legacy and Memorial Donations

Kidney Clothes collected

4,516,828 lbs

of textiles and



525,736 lbs

of miscellaneous items

90 THE INCREDIBLE KIDNEY QUEST

individuals, duos and groups participated in the first Incredible Kidney Quest

Increased our social media reach to:

5917 Facebook followers



2173 Twitter followers



1740 followers on our Instagram



3966 Enews Subscribers

\$52,000

Online Holiday Auction Raised

\$64,330

raised through Kidney 50/50

Secured

\$50,000

in community grants to support kidney patients



8707



Living with Kidney Disease Handbooks were given to kidney patients.

1365

 peer support **+** group attendance
(96% increase over 2020)

In Ontario, together we raised over

\$11,480

for Giving Tuesday

109

peer support meetings took place in 2021



137

 peer support volunteers

The Power of Hope: We're Committed to Research Excellence

Since The Kidney Foundation's inception in 1964, we've provided Canadian researchers with more than \$127 million in research grants and awards to move their vital work forward. Advances in research would never have been made and won't continue without thousands of hours dedicated to this work coupled with an incredible amount of funding.

Research explores all avenues of a patient's well-being, from the function of the kidney itself to factors which delay progression of kidney disease, influences on the longevity of transplant and the impact of exercise and diet on kidney health.

Dr. Amber Molnar

"The Kidney Foundation supported my research training through the KRESCENT program. This program provided me not only with important research education, but also mentorship, peer support, and a means to foster collaboration with other researchers. The relationships I built while in the KRESCENT program have been truly long lasting and career changing!"

Following my research training, Kidney Foundation grants were instrumental in allowing me to grow my independent research program. I have obtained funds to complete projects focused on improving outcomes in patients with advanced chronic kidney disease.

Most recently, the Foundation's funding will allow us to examine how best to organize and deliver multidisciplinary kidney care using a patient-centered focus. I am forever indebted to The Kidney Foundation for all of the support it has provided me over the years."

Dr. Amber Molnar joined St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton as a Nephrologist in 2015. She is an Assistant Professor with the Department of Medicine, Division of Nephrology at McMaster University.

Did you know, some of the world's leading kidney research initiatives are taking place right here in Canada, the results of which continually serve to expand the understanding of kidney function and kidney disease treatment globally.

The following research themes were undertaken in Ontario thanks to donor support.

Dialysis



Diabetes



Acute Kidney Injury



Hypertension



Prevention of Renal Disease



Transplantation



Chronic Kidney Disease



Genetics



Kidney Biology



Peer Support Groups Offer a Welcoming Space for Kidney Patients and Caregivers

Larry thought he was in good health. Then, on a Friday night about seven years ago, his whole life changed. His doctor had run some medical tests, and the results showed his kidney function was just over 10 per cent. The news came as a shock.

“I had no idea my kidneys were failing,” Larry recalls. “I didn’t have any major symptoms. I was running around doing things and then I get a phone call that turned everything around.”

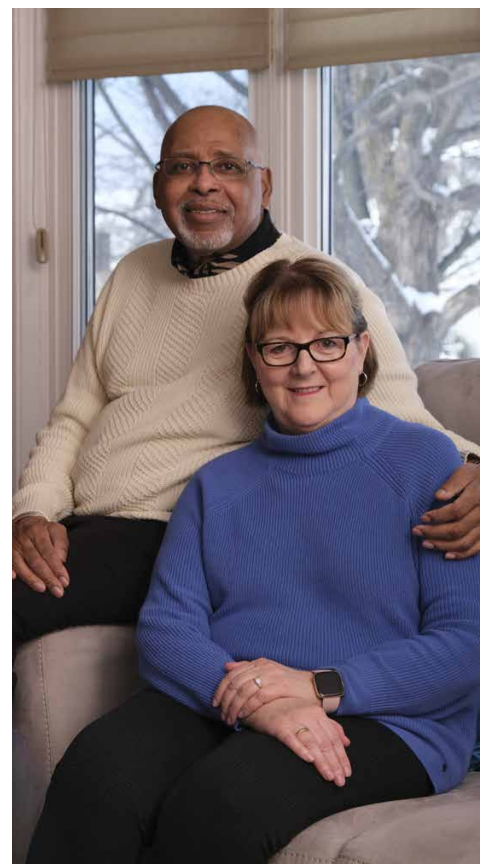
Larry began hemodialysis sessions in hospital about a month later, and then switched to home peritoneal dialysis. The sudden transition from feeling healthy to being hooked up to machines was challenging.

“There was so much to adapt to in so little time,” Francine remembers. “There was so much to learn, and we were feeling quite overwhelmed. It was a lot to take in.”

In 2017, when Larry’s doctors suggested a kidney transplant, Francine did not hesitate. Two weeks before Christmas they learned they were a match. Larry was concerned at first, worried about his wife’s health, but the surgery was a success.

Now the couple, who have both recovered from surgery, are giving back. They are facilitators with The Kidney Foundation’s [peer support program](#).

“I love to encourage others, lift people up and give them hope. I want them to know they can do this with a supportive community around them,” Francine says. She has heard a lot of positive feedback from peer support group members, who say the sessions provide a safe



space for caregivers and kidney patients.

For Larry, it is an opportunity to share his experiences, and help others living through similar situations and challenges.

“Everyone is different. I listen very carefully to what others in the group are going through, and I share what is going on with me,” he says. “I believe we are all part of a community, and I want to reach out and help others. If I can help just one other person, then it is worthwhile.”

Group sessions are just one place to find help and support. The Kidney Foundation also offers one-on-one phone sessions with trained volunteers. For those who prefer online forums, there is [KidneyConnect.ca](#). The site provides a safe and respectful place to share experiences and learn more about ways to manage renal issues.

No matter where you are on your journey with kidney disease, help is available. **Call [1-866-390-7337](tel:1-866-390-7337) or email [our Programs team](#)** for information about group meeting registration or to arrange a peer support connection.

Advocacy in Action

People with kidney failure, either on dialysis or with a transplant, had a disproportionately high rate of hospitalization for COVID-19. In fact, research suggests that the impact of COVID-19 in the first waves of the pandemic were as high for dialysis patients as those who live in long-term care.

In early 2021, The Kidney Foundation began advocating for the urgent need for dialysis patients and transplant recipients to be immunized quickly as the Ministry of Health and Public Health Units considered the phases of vaccine eligibility to those beyond front-line workers and those living in Long Term Care.

Transplant recipients were prioritized relatively early in the vaccine rollout but ensuring that the dialysis population was not forgotten became a key priority for The Kidney Foundation.

While some regions in the province reported that vaccinations for the dialysis and transplant populations were underway early in the year, there didn't appear to be a systematic approach in place to prioritize this vulnerable group.

The Kidney Foundation delivered an urgent plea on behalf of our kidney community to MPPs, Medical Officers of Health, members of the Vaccine Distribution Task Force and key personnel within the Ministry of Health to engage with decision makers to ensure that the needs of the kidney community were met.

The advocacy effort was productive. On March 5, 2021, the Provincial Government moved dialysis and transplant patients to the front of the line in Phase 2 of the vaccine distribution strategy.

Driven to Help

Kidney Car has been Canada's choice in car donation for nearly 30 years! Throughout 2020 and 2021 the program continued moving to a contactless towing experience.

Unwanted vehicles donated to The Kidney Foundation of Canada's Kidney Car program are sold for re-use or completely recycled. Donors receive a tax receipt for at least \$300, though many vehicles in roadworthy condition

qualify for a higher value. They can also feel good knowing their car is funding life-saving programs and medical research for the one in 10 Canadians living with chronic kidney disease.

Every Kidney Car makes an impact, with all proceeds supporting Canadians living with kidney disease through our programs and services.

Kidney car raised over \$3.3 million for Ontario and over 5200 cars were donated in 2021.



Volunteers Take to the Airwaves to Raise Funds

For nearly 25 years, **The Chinese Renal Association has played a pivotal role in raising kidney health awareness.** The volunteer-led chapter was started by patients and nurses who felt education, information and support needed to be more readily available to Chinese-speaking communities. Their many years of work resulted in a wealth of information and resources translated into the Chinese language.

Many of these resources are available in the [Kidney Health Resources section](#) at [kidney.ca](#).

People of Asian descent are at increased risk of developing kidney disease. Traditionally, the Association raises awareness through public kidney health education events, blood pressure clinics and fundraisers, but in 2021, the group took to the airwaves, hosting their first Chinese Radiothon on A1 Sing Tao Chinese Radio.

“A1 Sing Tao Radio, a national Chinese-language radio station that operates in Markham, Ontario, hosts numerous charity radiothons throughout the year to support a wide-variety of initiatives,” said Alan Hui, Chair of The Chinese Renal Association.

“But The Kidney Foundation’s radiothon was special, as we honoured the legacy of one of our founding members Benson Sy. Benson was a devoted member of the Chinese Renal Association, and he proposed the radiothon as a new way to raise funds and awareness in the Chinese community amidst the pandemic.”

While in the early days of planning, Benson passed away unexpectedly. His friends, family and fellow volunteers were committed to seeing the project through in his honour, never imagining that it would **raise over \$124,000 in a single day** to support The Kidney Foundation’s Short-Term Financial Assistance Program.

With a working group assembled, volunteers set out in uncharted territory. No one could have predicted the logistics needed to pull off an event of this magnitude. It started with developing a call to action and key messages, next was assembling a roster of guest speakers to fill 12 hours of on-air programming.

“Sponsorship, marketing, setting up the call centre for donations, training volunteers... The list was long, but we did it!” said Alan.



“We were thrilled with the results” added Alan in conclusion, *“We set out to raise awareness of kidney health and raise much-needed funds to support the kidney community.*

We accomplished both goals with our very dedicated group of volunteers, and numerous supporters.”

A Virtual Adventure Raises Funds to Support Canadians Living with Kidney Disease

With patient safety as our top priority, The Kidney Foundation paused all in-person activities throughout 2020 and 2021. Our team was faced with the daunting task to further enhance our virtual offerings to raise funds to support our mission. With the health and safety of our community top of mind, the goal was to develop a safe, family-friendly fundraiser that could be done while physically distancing.

After much brainstorming- The Incredible Kidney Quest was born.

The unique adventure tested participants with trivia and sent them around their local community to complete a variety of photo and video missions while raising funds to support Canadians living with kidney disease. Delivered through an app, the adventure could be completed anywhere in the province, making it the perfect virtual event.

“My friends and I participated in the first Kidney Quest and it was such a fun experience. We travelled throughout our community, laughed, and took pictures and the best part was that we knew the funds raised support people living with kidney disease. My husband struggled with kidney failure for many years and The Kidney Foundation was always there to support us every step of the way.”

Belinda Robertson, participant in the 2021 Kidney Quest.



A Virtual Success!

Ontario Kidney Walk Raises \$876,000

The kidney community stepped up with strength, hope and courage in communities across Ontario on **September 26th and raised over \$876,000** to invest in high-caliber research and crucial support programs.

For the second year in a row, The Kidney Walks were delivered in a virtual format, with participants walking individually or with their teams in communities across the province.

Over 900 individuals registered, fundraised, and walked, donning their blue Kidney Walk t-shirts. Some 184 walkers earned Kidney Walk Champion status, raising over \$1000 personally and could be seen sporting their black Kidney Walk shirts. Hundreds joined online to participate in our virtual opening ceremonies and shared images and videos on social, further building a community of support.

“We were truly overwhelmed by the support of our kidney walkers and their many donors” said Dr. Norman Muirhead, President of The Kidney Foundation’s Ontario Branch.

“While we couldn’t gather in person in 2021, the Kidney Walk spirit was strong! It was truly inspiring to see so many families, friends and partners in renal care show such tremendous support for their loved ones living with kidney disease,” he added.

The Kidney Walk, is the nation’s largest fundraising initiative. Nationally, walks took place in 106 communities (including Kidney March) with over 2700 participants.





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The Kidney Foundation of Canada's audited financial statements are available online at www.kidney.ca/about-us