

2023 Annual Report

The Riverwood Conservancy

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Forging ahead



In 2023, as we witnessed a sustained increase in program participants and heard from our community about the value of connections to nature, we dedicated time to crafting a strategic plan that will help guide The Riverwood Conservancy (TRC) through to 2026.

Our strategic planning process was no small undertaking. We solicited feedback from our program participants, staff, and volunteers. We put a survey out to assess public needs. And we connected with various groups and stakeholders for their input. The result was a well-rounded and detailed assessment of TRC goals and objectives for the years ahead; you'll find an overview of the plan in this annual report.

Last year, we saw the retirement of two longstanding members of the Board of Directors, Shirley Daniels and Dave Leeder. At the same time, we welcomed Jonathan Davis and Peeter Poldre to the Board, two new directors who will bring their unique perspectives and experiences to our organization's work.

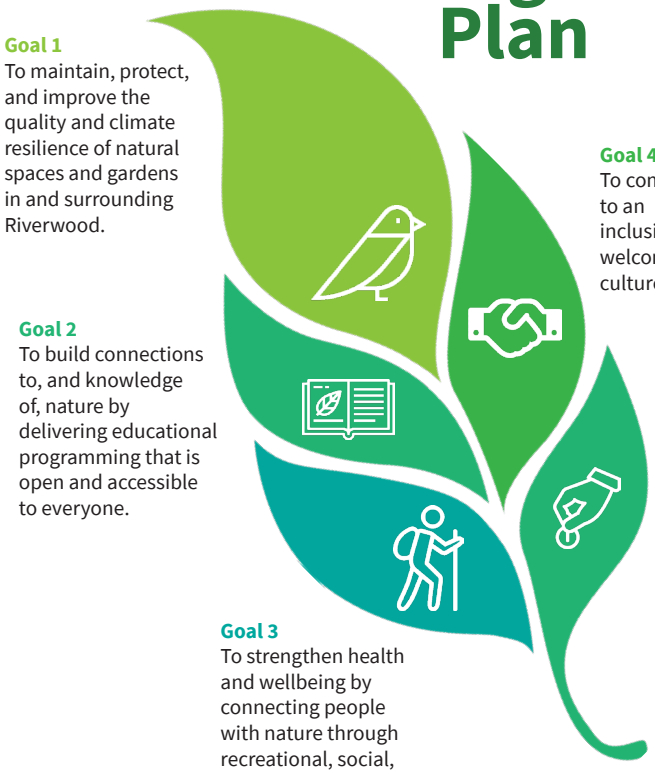
Between the foundation that our past volunteer directors established, our new Board appointments, and the clear vision of our latest strategic plan, we're poised to achieve more success in the years ahead and build upon our successes from 2023.

We're so grateful for the chance to keep our community connected to nature, and to also receive so much support from that community in all we do to preserve Riverwood.

Heather Shaw

Heather Shaw
Chair of the Board of Directors

2023-2026 Strategic Plan



Goal 1
To maintain, protect, and improve the quality and climate resilience of natural spaces and gardens in and surrounding Riverwood.

Goal 2
To build connections to, and knowledge of, nature by delivering educational programming that is open and accessible to everyone.

Goal 3
To strengthen health and wellbeing by connecting people with nature through recreational, social, and cultural activities.

Goal 4
To commit to an inclusive and welcoming culture.

Goal 5
To build financial assets, planning and processes for the resilience and sustainability of The Riverwood Conservancy.



The Riverwood Conservancy would like to acknowledge that the land on which we operate is within the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and the traditional land of the Wendat Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. This land is part of the Upper Canada Land Surrenders to the Crown. Today, the region surrounding Riverwood remains home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work here.

Growing responsibly

As a conservancy, we're in a uniquely paradoxical position where growth is both essential and challenging.

With the city around us growing, we need to grow to meet the increasing demand for human connections to nature. That demand was made clear in the surveys we distributed and consultations we held as part of our strategic planning process. We heard from our community about the need for more ways to engage with and protect the local environment, and we responded by putting our strategic plan into action with initiatives like our Summer BioBlitz and summer camps, while updating our education programs to keep them connected to elementary and secondary school curricula.

In 2023 we embarked on a three-year effort to build financial foundations for a successful future. Developing our culture of philanthropy, while ensuring that our programs consider economic equity, will help us to activate our strategic plan goals. To increase our community impact, and reach new audiences, we are aiming for fresh new growth in fundraising. And we're so grateful for the ongoing support of our donors, members, volunteers and sponsors who make our work possible. We're fortunate to be surrounded by caring individuals and groups who truly appreciate the joy of being surrounded by nature.

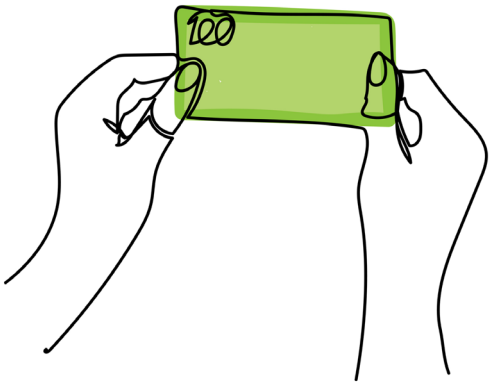
We're acutely aware that more visitors and more program participants coming into Riverwood means more strain on our trails, more chances of curious feet inadvertently trampling plants in the garden beds, and potentially harsher conditions for our wildlife.

Keeping growth and conservation in balance is what The Riverwood Conservancy has been doing since our inception, and we're proud to have made strides on both sides of the equation in 2023. As you'll see in the following pages, we welcomed more program participants to Riverwood and expanded our program offerings while still controlling invasive species and engaging volunteers and corporate groups in gardening and environmental stewardship.

Thank you for holding a place for Riverwood in your heart, and in doing so, entrusting us to maintain the balance.



Sara Wilbur-Collins, CFRE
Executive Director



$31,301

Funds raised from our holiday direct mail campaign, which focused on our conservation work



Driving our mission forward

Nicole Clarkson
Director of Development

It takes a lot to engage over 18,000 people in The Riverwood Conservancy's education, gardening, and conservation programs, as we did in 2023. To keep our community connected to nature, while also preserving that very nature, we raised over $1.2 million through grants, sponsorships, partnerships, events, and fundraising initiatives. A huge thank you to everyone who contributed to this effort.

As a registered charity that relies on the philanthropic giving of our community, we are thrilled that so many organizations and individuals continue to recognize the value of our work, and support our vision through their time and funding.

We're grateful for the outstanding financial support we received from the City of Mississauga, the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund, and the Community Foundation of Mississauga, alongside our numerous sponsors, partners, donors, and members. Our major supporters are listed at the end of this report, and you can find a full list of our wonderful supporters on our website.

With the ongoing support of our caring community, we're looking forward to continuing our work in building financial resilience to ensure a secure future for our programming, which matters so much to local residents and the local environment.

We always love hearing from our supporters! Please get in touch with us if you'd like to have a conversation about what Riverwood means to you, and how you can develop your relationship with The Riverwood Conservancy.



$5,907

Net funds raised from The Riverwood Harvest event at Capra's Kitchen



A place to call home

Derek Stone
Program Director

In 2023, our conservation work focused on repairing and assessing the state of Riverwood's wildlife habitat. That work had the support of 815 volunteers who contributed 3,972 hours of service, responding to continued pressures on our ecosystems, and protecting sensitive wildlife habitat. We've increased our effort to give Riverwood's wildlife the space they need to thrive and flourish in this uniquely nature-centric city park.

Most exciting this year was observing the impacts of our work on the land. After repairing and installing several new bird boxes on site, including some new owl boxes, volunteers sent us pictures of tree swallows poking their heads out of their new homes, loudly declaring that the boxes were no longer vacant!

Our Junior Naturalists Club took part in wildflower planting and saw butterflies landing on the flowers within seconds of them being in the soil. These planted wildflowers play the role of host plants, providing both food and habitat to a wide array of butterflies and other creatures.

We were thrilled this year when after years of fighting invasive phragmites in MacEwan Pond, we finally eliminated over 99% of the population. As a result, green frogs were found during our monitoring sessions in the MacEwan Pond for the first time in 10 years, croaking away as if in celebration of having a home here once again.

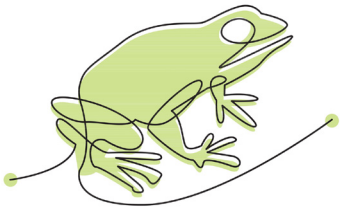
Riverwood is in a state of, "If you build it, they will come", and we have every intention of continuing to build it (habitat) so they (a variety of species) will come to this oasis.

Thank you for respecting Riverwood's wildlife and natural areas, and for actively supporting our conservation work. Your support makes all the difference for the many species who continue to call Riverwood home.

1,730
Lbs of invasive garlic mustard removed in 2023

564
Trees planted in 2023

941
Wildflowers planted in 2023







From blooms to beets

Taya Kehler
Gardens Coordinator

Thanks to the hard work of our gardening volunteers, Riverwood's gardens bloomed beautifully throughout 2023. A regular group of nearly 40 volunteers came to Riverwood each week to weed, water, plant, and care for our numerous garden beds. From rhododendrons to roses, waterlilies to vegetables, they grow 'em all!

These diverse garden beds spark joy in park visitors and become great teaching tools for our Discovery and education programs. As a visitor to the park or a program participant, you may have gone searching for butterflies and insects in the Pollinator Paradise Garden, or photographed a hummingbird in one of our perennial beds. Maybe you were inspired by our Resilience Garden to plant more drought-tolerant species, or you fell in love with native plants in our Carolinian Garden. Whatever the impact, we're so glad you stopped to smell the flowers.

Our gardening program also delivered exciting new events this year including a tour of Brueckner Rhododendron Gardens, an evening talk with environmental researcher and writer, Lorraine Johnson, and Winter Wreath Design workshops. We also strengthened our community partnerships by hosting the Mississauga Master Gardeners' Plant Sale in May, and the Misseto Bonsai Club's Annual Show in October.

Last but certainly not least, we grew just over 300 lbs of fresh produce for the Compass Food Bank, a number we hope to beat in 2024 as we look ahead to another great year of growing in the gardens!

300
Lbs of produce grown and donated to The Compass Food Bank

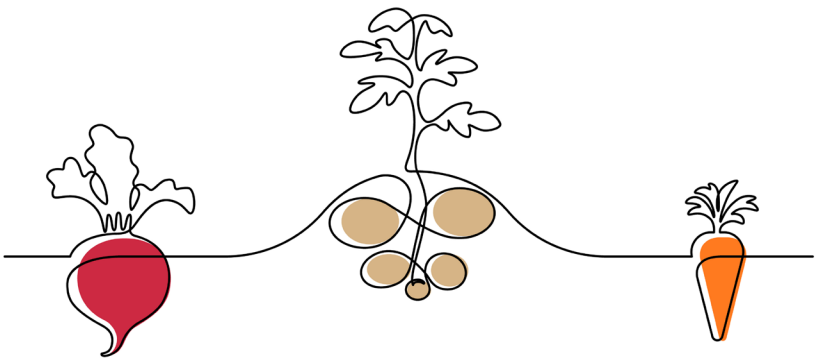






Photo by David Reid

Community action

Stephanie Keeler
Community Programs Coordinator

In 2023, the spirit of community took center stage at Riverwood, as we witnessed a growth in our community of passionate, kind, nature-loving individuals who dedicate their time to supporting the land. Our volunteers, program leaders, and Discovery participants created an inclusive place where everyone could get outside and learn from one another. The success of our Discovery programs this year was a testament to the involvement of people of all ages, backgrounds, and knowledge levels, united by their profound love for nature.

During the summer, abundant with flora and fauna, we organized a daylong BioBlitz. Unlike previous years, where the BioBlitz spanned an entire month, our goal in 2023 was to unite nature-lovers for one, expansive day of documenting Riverwood's biodiversity. A total of 73 citizen scientists dedicated their day to recording over 3,000 observations of plants, animals, fungi, insects and more – recording a total of 794 species! Notably, 75 of these species were newly documented in our database. This fostered a more personal connection to the land for participants, and it gave us a better understanding of the species residing within Riverwood.

Growing on the community connection to nature and the ability to identify the challenges brought on by climate change, we introduced a new series of events under the banner of the Riverwood Climate Club. These events engaged the community in climate action while supporting local wildlife end ecosystems in Mississauga. Events blended hands-on activities and educational walks that focused on protecting biodiversity, combatting climate change, and supplementing habitat lost due to local development. During these events, participants made an impact on Riverwood's natural areas by installing 10 new bird boxes for wrens and swallows, planting 35 trees for habitat restoration, planting 75 wildflowers for pollinators, and monitoring frog species in wetlands to document species still present in our park.

To help strengthen the connection between Riverwood, the park, and The Riverwood Conservancy, the organization, we initiated our Trail Ambassador program. Several passionate volunteers routinely engaged the public on their park visits, raising awareness of TRC, and our work, vision, and mission. These engagements opened the door to more individuals having direct involvement with nature through our programs, and more understanding of TRC's role in preserving Riverwood's health and beauty.

220
Discovery programs delivered in 2023

6,674
Discovery program participants in 2023

+9% vs 2022



Lots to learn

Erin Farrow
Education Naturally Coordinator

It's safe to say that 2023 was wonderfully busy, as we ran a full slate of Education Naturally (elementary grades) and LEADS (secondary grades) programs, and introduced the wonders of nature to the littlest members of the community through our Nature Babies program. It takes a stellar team to deliver all those programs, and we indeed had that with seven nature educators, alongside a myriad of volunteer support from individuals and institutional partners, including the University of Toronto Mississauga, York University, Queens University, and the Peel and Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Boards.

Over the course of the calendar year, we delivered 243 Education Naturally programs to 6,541 participants. Those programs provided experiences that allowed for learning about the various habitats and habitants found in Riverwood, and helped participants picture themselves as a part of the wider natural world.

We added a new Education Naturally program offering, Gardening Naturally, that saw students learn about wild and cultivated foods, explore the concept of food forests, and get their hands dirty by planting their own take-home herbs in environmentally-friendly pots. The 18 Education Naturally programs we offer continue to meet the educational goals of the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum for kindergarten to grade eight students.

LEADS programs engaged 1,230 students and their teachers in 49 land-based retreats or science-focused programs. In the Retreat in Nature program, students explored the intersection of wellness and time spent in nature, and were invited to reflect on their experience by participating in stewardship activities and watercolour painting using ink harvested from invasive buckthorn.

+14% vs 2022

243
Education Naturally programs delivered in 2023

+15% vs 2022

6,541
Education Naturally participants in 2023

49
LEADS programs delivered in 2023

1,236
LEADS participants delivered in 2023









So campy!

On top of our Education Naturally and LEADS programs, we expanded our offerings of nature education to include day camps. We held week-long day camps for the week of March Break, and for four weeks during the summer. Our day camps delivered nature-focused learning, adventure, and fellowship to 72 participants.

Each day of camp operated on what we called a “Choose Your Own Adventure in Nature” model, where campers voted to direct how their days would be spent exploring and learning together. We’re looking forward to building upon our successes with day camps once again slated for 2024.







+19% vs 2022

161
Therapeutic horticulture programs delivered in 2023

320
Therapeutic horticulture program hours delivered in 2023

998
Therapeutic horticulture participants in 2023

Here (and there) to make nature accessible

Kerry Furneaux
Therapeutic Garden Coordinator

In 2023, we continued to provide unique and creative therapeutic horticulture programs to groups and individuals in our community. With the support of dedicated volunteers, we delivered 161 in-person therapeutic horticulture programs to 19 partner organizations.

We piloted a four-week Saturday morning program for students with autism and their families in partnership with Peel District School Board After School Skills Development Program. We successfully introduced 12 students and their families to therapeutic horticulture activities, while also exploring the trails and gardens for stories, games, and reflection activities. The program was well received, and we will look to support this group again in 2024.

Monthly programs continued off-site for seniors at Bough Beeches Place Retirement Home, and we welcomed back participants from Community Living Mississauga, who had not participated in programming since before the pandemic. Three different Community Living Mississauga base sites now visit Riverwood for weekly or biweekly programming, and that meant we were able to welcome several new participants to their very first therapeutic horticulture program in 2023!

The Goldenrod Girls continue to be familiar faces at Riverwood and their twice weekly visits are something that the girls – as well as staff and volunteers – really look forward to! For the first time, our therapeutic horticulture program is hosting two interns from the University of Toronto Mississauga's Psychology Program, and they have been assisting with the Goldenrod Girls' regular Monday activities. Over their placement, they contributed 160 volunteer hours to supporting therapeutic horticulture participants.

As we look ahead to 2024, we are grateful for the support we receive from the community and look forward to continuing creating connections to nature for people of all abilities.



Photo by David Reid



The greenest givers

Jodi Cabral
Volunteer Coordinator

The Riverwood Conservancy's dedicated team of volunteers has once again gone above and beyond in 2023. Through a contribution of over 12,000 volunteer hours, all areas of our organization have benefitted from the time, expertise, care, and concern our volunteers provided. With close to 500 long-standing and newly recruited volunteers, along with the support of hundreds of corporate volunteers, we have been able to accomplish great things at and for Riverwood.

In addition to the amazing volunteer contributions in conservation, education, gardening, and administrative support, 2023 brought forward new ways to volunteer. We welcomed volunteers as Camp Assistants and Trail Ambassador Leaders. Our Summer High School Student program also engaged many new volunteers by providing opportunities to gain skills and experience in gardening and conservation. These high school student volunteers contributed over 2,100 volunteer hours of service.

Our volunteer team is such an integral part of the success of TRC, and we were honoured to be able to celebrate their accomplishments at our annual Volunteer BBQ in June. Just over 100 volunteers enjoyed an evening of great food, lawn games, prizes, and sweet treats. The Volunteer Committee's work in organizing and planning the BBQ helped make the event an outstanding success!

The generosity of our volunteers provides a lasting impact on our natural space, and the community that relies on it. A heartfelt thank you to our volunteers for choosing TRC as the place to share their time, passion, and purpose.

1,182
Total number of volunteers in 2023

12,661
Total volunteer hours contributed in 2023

Statement of Financial Position

As at December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash and cash equivalents	$ 473,163	590,595
Short-term investments	100,000	100,000
Accounts receivable	11,497	19,909
Harmonized sales tax receivable	9,320	7,331
Prepaid expenses	9,326	5,694
	603,306	723,529
Capital assets	15,588	23,077
	$ 618,894	746,606
Liabilities and net assets		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	$ 78,806	78,691
Deferred contributions – operating	102,944	134,914
Deferred contributions – capital	5,706	7,748
	187,456	221,353
Net assets		
Operating Reserve	421,556	509,923
Capital Asset Reserve	9,882	15,330
	431,438	525,253
	$ 618,894	746,606

Statement of Changes in Net Assets

For the year ended December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Operating Reserve		
Balance, beginning of year	$ 509,923	419,449
Excess of (expenditures over revenues) revenues over expenditures for year	(88,367)	96,117
Transfer	-	(5,643)
Balance, end of year	$ 421,556	509,923
Capital Asset Reserve		
Balance, beginning of year	$ 15,330	21,786
Excess of expenditures over revenues for year	(5,448)	(12,099)
Transfer	-	5,643
Balance, end of year	$ 9,882	15,330

Statement of Operations

For the year ended December 31, 2023

	Operating Reserve	Capital Asset Reserve	Total 2023	Total 2022
Revenues				
Grants	$ 741,203	4,006	745,209	779,113
Program fees	167,179	-	167,179	106,944
Donations	166,836	-	166,836	283,012
Events, fundraising, and sponsorships	73,723	-	73,723	63,825
Honoraria	8,246	-	8,246	35,894
Other revenue	26,577	-	26,577	22,273
	1,183,764	4,006	1,187,770	1,291,061
Expenditures				
Administration	103,623	-	103,623	100,248
Amortization	-	9,454	9,454	12,099
Communications and marketing	6,061	-	6,061	12,075
Fundraising	27,881	-	27,881	16,907
Program expenses	86,143	-	86,143	130,526
Purchased services	24,462	-	24,462	20,749
Salaries and wages	1,023,961	-	1,023,961	914,439
	1,272,131	9,454	1,281,585	1,207,043
Excess of (expenditures over revenues) revenues over expenditures for year	$ (88,367)	(5,448)	(93,815)*	84,018

* Reflective of the first year of our three-year plan to invest in fundraising and program pricing that considers economic equity.

2023 Major Supporters

Guardians of Riverwood | $100,000+
City of Mississauga
Ontario Trillium Foundation

Guardians of Riverwood | $25,000+
Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund
Community Foundation of Mississauga
Anonymous (1)

Sunshine Circle | $10,000+
Amazon
Armstrong Milling Co Ltd
Canada Summer Jobs wage subsidy
Frank Fowler Foundation
Gore Mutual Insurance
Hazel McCallion Fund for Arts, Culture and Heritage Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga
Scotts Canada Ltd
Suncor Energy Foundation
TD Friends of the Environment Foundation
TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
University of Toronto
Walker Environmental
Weston Family Foundation
Weston Forest

Pollinators' Circle | $5,000+
Aviva Canada
Greater Toronto Airports Authority
Johansen Larsen Foundation
Patricia M. Kluge
Sherilyn Ketchen
The Marion Ethel & Frederick John Kamm Charitable Foundation
Anonymous (1)

Gardeners' Circle | $1,000+
Alectra Utilities Corporation
Arthur and Carol MacDonald
Axis Communications
Canadian Turner Construction Company
Catherine Doehler
Chancery Mendez Holdings (Canada) Ltd.
Chancery Pacific Trade Corporation
Cloverleaf Garden Club of Mississauga
Evergreen Retirement Community
GFL Environmental Services Inc.
Gillian Lien-Robinson
Granite REIT Holdings Limited Partnership
Hancock Van Alstyne Family Fund
Hoffman-La Roche Ltd.
Intact Insurance Employees
Jim and Micheline Muscat
John and Maire Percy
Jonathan Davis
Laurie Pallett
Marc and Reagan Johnson
Medtronic
OSC Seeds-Ontario Seed Co.
Prophix Software Inc.
RBC Wealth Management/RBC
Dominion Securities Inc.
Sage Foundation
Scott Funeral Home
Sheridan Nurseries Limited
Suzanne Graham
Suzanne J. Roy
The Riverwood Conservancy Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga
Tiptappay Micropayments Limited
Ulrich Krull
Violet C. Bull
Waterloo Community Foundation
Whole Foods Market - Ontario Support Office
Anonymous (1)

Riverwood Supporters | $500+
Allegis Group Foundation
Amy Tjen
Carolyn and Allan Sherk
Carolyn Parrish
Christina Woodward
Credit Valley Horticultural Society
Dean M. Sane
Greg Laverty
Heather and David Shaw
Holly Nadalin
Ipsen Biopharmaceuticals Canada Inc.
Julia D'Costa
Lorraine Crow and James Giles
Luke Gillin Fund at the Community Foundation of Mississauga
Marcia Gifford
Mercedes-Benz Financial Services Canada Corporation
MGC Mercantile Inc.
Michael Briem
Mississauga Steelheads
Park People
Peeter Poldre
Pina DeLuca
Recycle Smart Solutions, Inc., O/A
Recycle Track Systems CA
Rotary Club of Mississauga
Sandra Beniuk
Sara Wilbur-Collins
Sprucegrove Investment Management Ltd.
Stantec Consulting Ltd.
The Woodbridge Foam Corporation
Wendy Furtenbacher
Anonymous (2)

Thank you to all of the individuals and organizations who contributed in 2023!
For a full list of the year's donors, please visit **theriverwoodconservancy.org/supporters**.



200
Attendees at Jingtamok: The Riverwood Indigenous Social



14,388
Social followers across Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn

+10% vs 2022



80,469
Website users in 2023

+21% vs 2022

Many thanks to our Guardians of Riverwood and Sunshine Circle supporters

MISSISSAUGA

Ontario Trillium Foundation / Fondation Trillium de l'Ontario
An agency of the Government of Ontario / Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario

Funded by the Government of Canada's Community Services Recovery Fund | Canada

Community Foundation of Mississauga

amazon

ARMSTRONG Canada's Premier Bird Food

Employment and Social Development Canada
Canada

The Frank Fowler Foundation

GORE MUTUAL
INSURANCE THAT DOES GOOD.

HAZEL McCALLION FOUNDATION
for the Arts, Culture and Heritage

Scotts

SUNCOR | SUNCOR ENERGY FOUNDATION

TD | TD Friends of the Environment Foundation

TELUS | TELUS Friendly Future Foundation

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

walker

Weston Family Foundation

WESTON FOREST

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