

Newsletter

A Message from our Chair of the Board of Directors and Executive Director

Dear HFSS family,

Thank you for taking the time to read our summer 2021 newsletter! We know it has been an unforgettable year for all of you, and things have been no different at Hamilton Foundation for Student Success.

The COVID-19 pandemic presented a wide range of challenges for us. Public health measures, school closures, and other unexpected obstacles forced us to adapt, but that did not halt our support for Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board students.

Through initiatives like the COVID-19 Relief Fund, Be Safe Bundles, and Showcase of heARTS, HFSS was able to continue raising funds for students in need. These projects were primarily organized and executed virtually, which was a major first for the Foundation! While we welcome the return of in-person fundraising, the pandemic gave us an opportunity to strengthen our online presence.

As incredible as these initiatives were, none of them would have been possible without your support. You kept the wheels turning during a time where most of the world stood still. The pandemic reminded us of student needs that we have seen in the past, while also bringing forth new ones that we have never encountered. Whatever the challenge was, your contributions followed. HFSS, HWDSB, and the entire Hamilton community thank you for your generosity.

We want to take a moment to bid farewell to Leah Schwenger, Past-Chair of the HFSS Board of Directors. Leah's steady leadership helped with the continued growth of the Foundation and also guided our team during the early stages of the pandemic. We are grateful for her commitment to HFSS.

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Foundation Faces

Our Foundation Faces series profiles Hamilton Foundation for Student Success' volunteers, donors and partners. Be sure to follow our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages for future editions of Foundation Faces.

Ian Brisbin, Chair of the HFSS Board of Directors.

Ian is a lawyer with the Burlington firm of Martin, Hillyer Associates, having practiced personal injury and employment law for 20 years.

A proud graduate of Queen's University with degrees in history, politics and law, Ian is married with two young daughters (both of whom attend HWDSB schools) and a Bernese mountain dog named Willow.

Ian has long demonstrated a commitment to volunteerism, and not-for-profit governance. From chairing the Burlington Canada Day Committee in his youth, to chairing the boards of the Royal Botanical Gardens and Melrose United Church, and to his current passions, serving as the Campaign Chair for the Music Hall at New Vision United Church, and as a member of the Board of Directors of Supercrawl, and the Transition Team of 541 Eatery & Exchange, his volunteer commitments have spanned a wide array of interests.

A lover of the outdoors, and an endurance athlete having completed an Ironman triathlon and two Boston Marathons, Ian has also served as a member of the Board of Directors for both the Share the Road Cycling Coalition and Hamilton Bikeshare Inc. He is also a passionate home cook and a neophyte (read: "hack") guitarist.

What inspired you to get involved with HFSS?

"A request from our Executive Director Amy Leaming Cote!"

What do you hope your impact will be?

"Following in the steps of our predecessors to build a Foundation with a profile and reach as prominent and indispensable as its mission."

What do you enjoy the most about your involvement with HFSS?

"Knowing that I am parlaying some of the privilege I have inherited to help generate a more equitable learning environment for our students."

If you could have an extra hour of free time every day how would you use it?

"Easy. On a bike."

When was the last time you did something for the first time?

"I've been learning guitar over the past year, and earlier this year, on a whim, I took an ice climbing course in Elora, and loved it! I like to remind myself to 'be brave enough to suck at something new.'"

You have your own late night talk show - who do you invite as your first guest?

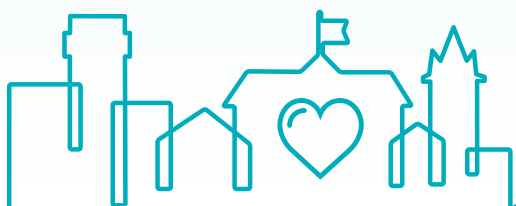
"Dead? Oscar Wilde. Living? Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. Both are polarizing figures, with expansive, hard-won wisdom who ultimately used their gifts to make progressive social change."

If you could give a piece of advice to your younger self what would it be?

"Choose the life you want to live, otherwise that choice will be made for you."



Foundation Faces
Ian Brisbin



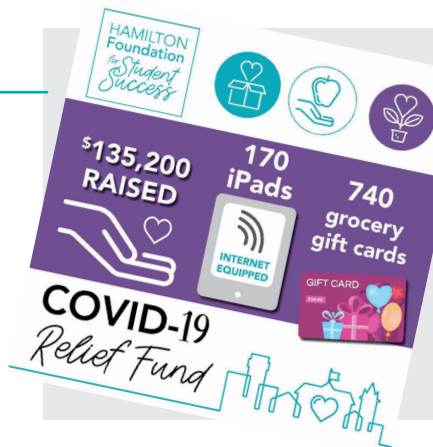
COVID-19 Pandemic Inspires New and Creative Ways to Support HWDSB Students

On March 12, 2020, Ontario closed all publicly funded schools for two extra weeks beyond the March Break in an effort to halt the spread of COVID-19. All of the sudden, life looked and felt different.

Here are some of the signature HFSS initiatives from this pandemic-defined year.

COVID-19 Relief Fund

Students missed their classrooms following the closure of Ontario schools, but many children and youth were deprived of more than their classrooms. Some students were left without meals and technology that was once offered in schools.



On March 27, 2020, HFSS established the COVID-19 Relief Fund to continue supporting students in need during this difficult time.

“As soon as we understood the gravity of the pandemic, HFSS immediately got to work,” said Executive Director Amy Leaning Cote. “COVID-19 presented students and families with an unprecedented amount of worries and we hope we were able to help ease some struggles through the Relief Fund.”

The COVID-19 Relief Fund reached new heights on April 28, 2020, thanks to a generous \$50,000 donation from Hamilton Community Foundation. This act of kindness prompted HFSS to match future donations in an effort to help more students in need.

By the end of the campaign, \$135,000 was raised for HWDSB students! Donations helped HWDSB purchase 170 internet-equipped iPads for students without internet access and provided 740 grocery gift cards to HWDSB families in need. The COVID-19 Relief Fund was an incredible display of our community coming together to support students at a time when they needed it most.

Be Safe Bundles

By September 2020, HWDSB students were back to school and educators were learning about new needs in unfamiliar learning environments. To help keep students and educators safe, HFSS introduced its Be Safe Bundles.



For only \$25, includes an HWDSB branded reusable face mask, reusable water bottle, lanyard, and hand sanitizer.

“My personal favourite feature of the Be Safe Bundle is that people have the option to donate one to a student in need,” Cote explained. “Even if you do not personally need a mask or bottle of sanitizer, we know there are students out there who can benefit.”

Be Safe Bundle proceeds go towards Student Support Grants, which assist students facing extraordinary or emergency financial obstacles during their education journey.

Showcase of heARTS

Throughout the years, HFSS’s fundraising gala has proven to be critical in boosting resources to support HWDSB students to overcome barriers so they can thrive and reach their full potential. This year, the Showcase of heARTS was of particular importance because of the impact COVID-19 has had on our communities.



Unlike other years, HFSS organized the entire gala virtually, where guests enjoyed both live and pre-recorded materials with real time engagements and interactions. The online nature of the event allowed more student participation than ever before. A wide number of schools shared their talents with performances from disciplines such as music, drama, visual arts, and more.

“Hosting a virtual event was a new undertaking for HFSS. After months of planning, it was amazing to see the finished product on screen,” said Cote. “The dinner, silent auction, and gift boxes were all a success, but it was the incredible students who stole the show. HWDSB is home to such talented artists!”

Thanks to the donors, Showcase of heARTS raised \$40,000 this year! The money helps support HWDSB students whose families do not have the financial means to access the resources they need to be successful at school. Hamilton families can find comfort in knowing that HFSS is here to make sure their children have appropriate winter clothing to play outside or access to nutritious lunch. None of this would be possible without the generosity of our community.

Payroll Deduction Program Generosity Starts at the Top

Are you a Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board staff member looking to donate to Hamilton Foundation for Student Success? You could head to our website and use the online form, but did you know there is another quick and simple method that allows you to support our students all year round?

Patti MacArthur is the Manager of Payroll Services at HWDSB. She helped launch the Payroll Deduction Program alongside Amy Leaming Cote, Executive Director of HFSS. Her occupation has allowed her to become quite familiar with the initiative, but that is not the only reason why she is an expert. MacArthur is also one of the staff members who has signed up for the Payroll Deduction Program.

"I always think of the line, 'It takes a village to raise a child,'" said MacArthur. "Well, HWDSB is a village that could help raise some children who could use some clothes, a backpack, or school supplies."

HFSS' Payroll Deduction Program allows staff members to make a meaningful

gift to support HWDSB students by dividing their contributions into smaller portions paid throughout the year. Each pay period, employees' donations are automatically deducted from their paychecks. 100% of donations go towards helping ensure HWDSB students have what they need to reach their full potential.

"Everyone thinks, 'Oh, it's only a few dollars'. But if you have 20 people deducting a few dollars, that's a significant amount," MacArthur told us. "That's how change happens."

Staff members can sign up for the program by submitting the 'Voluntary Payroll Deduction Authorization Form' that can be found on the HFSS website. Donations by payroll deduction will also be reflected on employees' annual T4 statements for income tax purposes.

When asked about her personal motivation to sign up for the initiative, MacArthur was reminded of her children's' experiences in schools.

"I have two grown daughters and I can't imagine them not having the necessary supplies or lunch that they needed to get through the school day," she explained. "I remember going out to buy school supplies ahead of the first day of school and seeing how excited they were to get that new pen or those new pencil crayons. I just can't imagine not being able to do that for them."

On a grander scale, MacArthur understands the impact that the Payroll Deduction Program can have on HWDSB students. It is a way for staff members to donate to a worthy cause and potentially see the change they helped create.

"You're investing into the community that you're a part of as a teacher, educational assistant, or caretaker," said MacArthur. "That community is part of your day-to-day life while you're working. If you're in the schools, you'll see some of the things you're contributing towards."

For more information about Payroll Deduction Program, visit the HFSS website or contact foundation@hwdsb.on.ca.



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We would like to thank our departing Board members and introduce our HFSS Board of Directors for 2021-22:

Departing: Leah Schwenger, Carole Paikin Miller

2021-22 Board of Directors

Chair: Ian Brisbin – *Partner, Martin & Hillyer Associates*

Vice Chair: Carla Ricci – *Manager of Business Development and Partnership, Tandia Credit Union*

Treasurer: Stacey Zucker – *Associate Director, Support Services, HWDSB*

Secretary: Brian Humphrey – *Founder, Climb for Cancer*

Directors:

Heather Beale – *Training & Communications Coordinator, Orlick Industries Ltd.*

Becky Buck – *Trustee Representative, HWDSB*

Manny Figueiredo – *Director of Education, HWDSB*

Brent Foreman – *Partner, SimpsonWigle LLP*

Nair LeCruz – *Associate Dean, Health Studies, Mohawk College*

Joe O'Connor – *Guidance, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School*

Christine Nicolaides – *Principal, Sir Winston Churchill Secondary School*

Peggy Savage – *Freelance Writer/Marketing Director, Retired*

We are looking forward to another year of exciting projects and we cannot wait to share them with you. We know our students still need a helping hand and we are confident that our supporters will continue to answer that call. For now, enjoy our summer 2021 newsletter for a recap of this past year!

Sincerely,
Ian Brisbin, *Chair of the Board of Directors*
Amy Leaming Cote, *Executive Director*

Contact Us

20 Education Court Hamilton, ON L8N 3L1
Phone: 905-527-5092 ext. 2103
foundation@hwdb.on.ca

Charitable Business #: 89089 6046 RR0001

2021-2022 Grant Snapshot

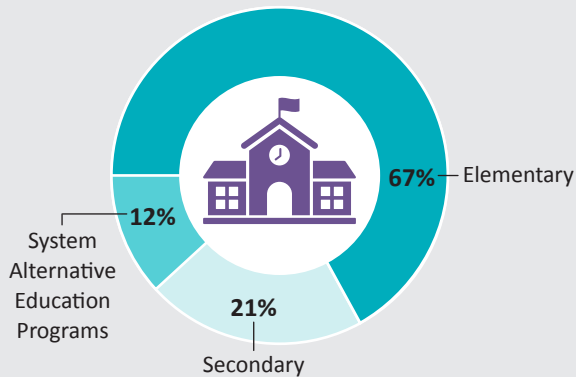
You can view the Foundation's audited financial statements at www.hamiltonfoundationforstudentsuccess.ca or call 905-527-5092 ext. 2103 to request a copy by mail or email.



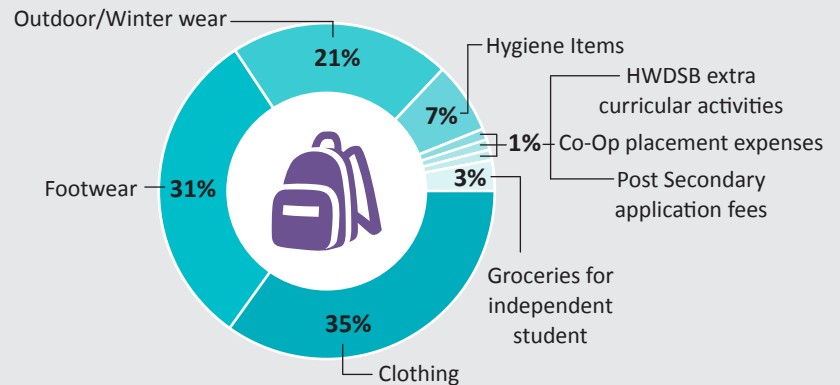
Student Support Grants

From October 1, 2020 to May 30, 2021, 270 Student Support Grants totalling \$52,730 were given out.

School Breakdown



Usage Breakdown



Student Awards

For the 2021-2022 school year, 649 Awards were presented, totalling \$107,206.



Secondary



Elementary



Disbursements by Designation

