

Ontario Investing \$400,000 to Support Youth Accessibility Leaders Through Rick Hansen Foundation

The Ontario government is investing \$400,000 to support the Rick Hansen Foundation in delivering a national Youth Leadership Summit in 2027 that will empower young people to champion accessibility and inclusion in their communities. The funding follows Premier Doug Ford joining leaders from other provinces and territories today to sign a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) committing to advancing accessibility and reducing physical barriers for Canadians with disabilities.

“For 40 years, Rick Hansen has been inspiring Canadians and people around the world to build a future without barriers,” said Premier Ford. “Our government is proud to support Rick’s mission with this investment to support the next generation of accessibility leaders.”

The Youth Leadership Summit will bring together more than 40 young leaders from across the country to Ontario to learn from accessibility advocates, collaborate with their peers and explore innovative approaches to removing barriers for people with disabilities. Each year, the summit equips new youth leaders with the tools to lead local accessibility initiatives and create lasting change for people of all abilities.

"Ontario is proud to support the next generation of accessibility leaders," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "Today's investment will empower young people to become champions for accessibility, helping build a future where everyone can participate fully in community life. Through this initiative, youth will gain the leadership skills, knowledge and confidence to remove barriers and create lasting change across Ontario and Canada."

Ontario's investment builds on the province's ongoing work to improve accessibility, including through annual Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone (EASE) Grants, which support projects that make community spaces more accessible while promoting active, healthy lifestyles for people with disabilities.

"This Youth Leadership Summit is an investment in the leaders who will shape a more accessible future," said Rick Hansen, Founder of the Rick Hansen Foundation. "As we commemorate the 40th anniversary of the Man In Motion World Tour, I'm inspired by the opportunity to transform that spirit into many in motion. By bringing together young people with diverse experiences and perspectives, we can inspire innova-

tion, foster understanding and empower the next generation to break down barriers and create communities where everyone can fully participate and contribute. When youth are engaged to lead, they have the power to carry this movement forward and create impactful change for generations to come."

Ontario is continuing to lead the way in advancing accessibility and inclusion through strategic partnerships and initiatives that remove barriers, expand opportunities and help people with disabilities, seniors and families fully participate in their communities.

The Rick Hansen Foundation is a Canadian charitable organization dedicated to creating a world where people with disabilities can fully participate in society. The two-day summit will be held in Ontario and is being delivered as part of the 40th anniversary of the Man In Motion World Tour.

The summit will bring together 40 youth leaders aged 12 to 19 from across Canada, with and without disabilities.

Participants will engage in workshops, leadership training and collaborative activities focused on accessibility, inclusion and community leadership.



We are in a tax emergency

By John Meloche
Municipal Candidate for Ward 2 in in Pickering
Canada introduced federal income tax in 1917 through the Income War Tax Act. It was brought in during the First World War and presented as a temporary wartime measure. It was never intended to become a permanent, ever-expanding system that would grow generation after generation. Yet here we are. Today, personal income tax generates more than \$234 billion annually and represents nearly half of all federal government revenue. What began as a temporary solution has evolved into one of the

largest and most powerful financial mechanisms and employers in Canadian society. And the same mindset has spread throughout every level of government, including municipal government. Property taxes rise. Fees rise. Utility costs rise. Development charges rise. The cost of living rises. Every year, governments find new reasons to spend more money, create new programs, launch new initiatives, hire more staff, commission more studies, and expand their responsibilities further into our lives. But taxpayers are not an unlimited resource. At some point, we have to ask a simple question: Can people actually afford this? Sustainability is bigger than one conversation Sustainability is not just about climate change. Sustainability is not just about infrastructure. Sustainability is not just about technology. Sustainability is also about whether families can afford to raise children. Whether seniors can remain in their homes. Whether young people can buy a home. Whether workers can get ahead. Whether small businesses can survive. Whether citizens can maintain their economic independence and keep enough of what they earn to build the future they want. Without economic sustainability, every other form of sustainability eventually fails. Every promise has a cost As we approach this municipal election, voters are going to hear countless promises. New projects. New programs. New initiatives. New spending. But every promise has a cost. The question is not what politicians want to do. The question is whether taxpayers can afford it. For too long, governments have measured success by how much they spend rather than how effectively they spend it. Growth has become the default answer. More programs. More bureaucracy. More regulation. More taxation. Very few people stop to ask where it ends. This is why transparency matters. This is why accountability matters. This is why fiscal discipline matters. Because government was created to serve the public, not to continuously expand its footprint while asking taxpayers to carry an ever-increasing burden. Electing leaders who understand limits We should not be electing leaders based on who can promise the most. We should be electing leaders who understand limits. Leaders who understand that taxpayers are not an endless source of revenue. Leaders who are willing to ask not only "What should government do?" but also "What should government stop doing?" Leaders who recognize that every dollar spent was earned by someone who worked for it. What this election is really about This election is not simply about roads, parks, development, housing, or any single issue. It is about sustainability. Not just environmental sustainability. Economic sustainability. The sustainability of families. The sustainability of businesses. The sustainability of communities. And ultimately, the sustainability of a society where people remain free, independent, and able to keep the rewards of their own hard work. If we fail to have that conversation now, we may eventually discover that the greatest threat to our future was not what government failed to do. It was what government never stopped doing. Most politicians are more than happy to push the gas pedal, but who's got the brass to push the brakes?

Blood supply drops 20%; DONORS NEEDED NOW to replenish lifesaving essentials

Canadian Blood Services is calling on eligible people across Canada to book a blood donation appointment after the blood supply declined by nearly 20 per cent since June 1. There are now limited days on hand of several blood types — levels that are not sustainable for patient care should this trend not reverse itself.

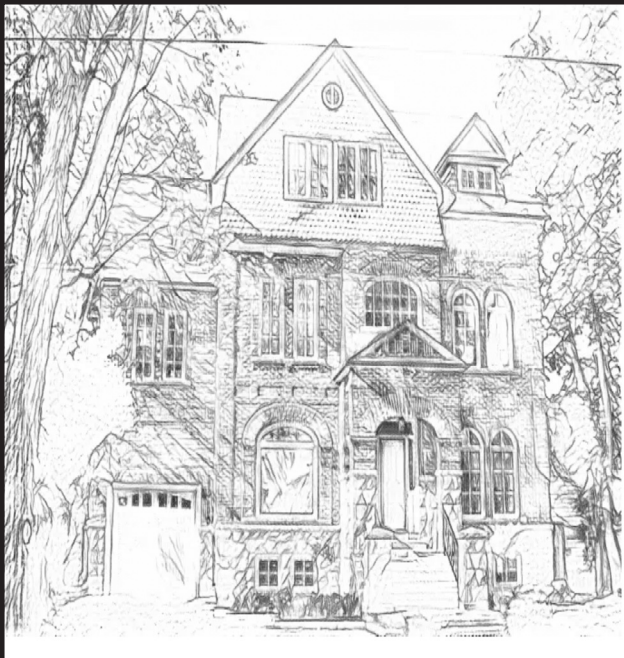
Every week, Canadian Blood Services needs approximately 18,000 booked blood donation appointments to keep pace with hospital demand. Over the past six weeks, appointments have fallen short by 1,500 to 2,500 each week, requiring a draw on existing inventory to meet patient needs. While a seasonal decline in donations is expected during the summer months and factored into planning, appointment bookings have fallen well below typical summer patterns. Donors of all blood types are needed now to help replenish the blood supply and keep pace with hospital demand.

“We've seen the blood supply decline by about 20 per cent in just a matter of weeks and we need more donors to come forward now to reverse this decline,” said Ron Vezina, vice-president, donor engagement and corporate reputation, Canadian Blood Services. “Blood has a shelf life of only 42 days, so today's donation will quickly make its way to a patient. We need to ensure hospitals have the blood they need for everyday care and emergencies, especially as we head into the August long weekend when trauma cases and other urgent care needs could see an increase.”

To provide more opportunities to give, additional weekend appointments have been added at many donor centres and whole blood donation appointments are available at several plasma donor centres.

"A strong, healthy Canada depends on people showing up for one another," added Vezina. "Whether you're a new or returning donor, now is the time to book an appointment. Better yet, bring a friend and experience what you get when you give together. It's a rewarding way to connect during the summer."

If you've already booked an appointment, keeping it is essential. If you can't make your appointment, cancelling in advance allows someone else to donate in your place.



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