

RENISON UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



AFFILIATED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO









With gratitude, we acknowledge that Renison University College is located on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (also known as Neutral), Anishinaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples, which is situated on the Haldimand Tract, the land granted to the Six Nations that includes ten kilometres on each side of the Grand River. Our active work toward reconciliation takes place across our campuses through research, learning, teaching, community building and outreach, and is centralized within the work of our Truth and Reconciliation Working Group and the University of Waterloo's Office of Indigenous Relations.





NOTES FROM THE BOARD

The theme of this year's Annual Report is "students". I know a fair bit about students, having been one, taught many, and raised some. In fact most of my life has been spent with students, so I am well aware of their absence from campus during the current pandemic. I managed to complete kindergarten, 8 grades, 4 years of high school, BA, MA, and PhD as a student myself. All three of my kids have graduated from university, two with PhDs. I taught at UW for 39 years. My granddaughter recently graduated from Renison. So — what have I learned about students?

They are unpredictable, loud, and overeager at times, but they are often cutting edge for social reform and have much to teach us about the world we live in. While I was a grad student at Yale, and during the early years of my teaching career at UW there were demonstrations and activism related to the Civil Rights movement, strong protests against the Vietnam War, and many conversations about the communist regimes around the world at the time. I recall there was even a so-called Anti-Imperialist Alliance that touted the glories of the brutal communist dictatorship in

Albania! Needless to say, not all of their ventures were successful.

Currently, we are engaging in the long overdue recognition of Canada's ill treatment of Indigenous peoples. Before every public meeting, we acknowledge the original Indigenous occupants of the Haldimand Tract, upon which the Renison campus sits. We've set up advisory committees, set targets for enrolment and hiring, and begun the difficult task of reconciliation; students bring enthusiasm and energy to this effort, and they will help us to succeed.

Students bring a practical realism and energy to our more esoteric approaches to social issues. Two of my grandkids are vegetarian. My eldest granddaughter wants to be a social worker. It will be their world and it is exciting to share this bit of it with them. To all you students reading this: we've missed you and welcome back!

Brian Hendley

Dr. Brian Hendley

Chair, Board of Governors



NOTES FROM THE **PRESIDENT**

Our granddaughter, who is 5, loves
Paddington Bear. You may recall that
Paddington was a young bear complete with
Wellington boots, rain hat and a satchel who
arrived alone one day at Paddington Station in
London. Around his neck was a tag which
read, "Please look after this Bear."

Recently, we welcomed 125 new students into our residence at Renison. Single occupancy rooms, and social distancing with masks is our new normal. Behind the masks are the eyesthe eyes of a whole new generation of young adults which are full: full of vision, full of courage, full of potential and full of fear. They arrive at Renison, their new home for a while, to embark on the next chapter of their journey, seeking an education which will equip and empower them to fly- to be all that they can be and offer all that they can into the hope of the world's best becoming. As I

greeted them, heard them say their names and articulate their aspirations, I thought of their parents. In the COVID world of move-in, I was not able to meet with them as I usually do- to make my promises and give them my assurances, as to how we will be there to support their young ones. But as I heard their young ones speak, I was reminded of Paddington, and I saw their parents' words, unspoken but written across the stories of these young ones, "Please look after my child." These are uncertain, and in so many ways, terrifying times. "Please look after my child." We will. We will.

As the first week unfolded, I saw something else. It was the President's afternoon tea. Classes were two days in. A few dozen students had arrived, uncertain but curious, everyone of course, still behind their masks. Some eyes were more frightened than others.



Students living in residence often gather in Renison's Great Hall for meals and study sessions. This photo, taken pre-pandemic, illustrates the community built by students - one where we take care of one another!

One young woman in particular, an international student far from home, caught my attention. She came in alone. She was too shy to engage me much in conversation. She picked up her tea and scone and walked away. I moved toward a table of young people- full up, lots of chatter. While I spoke with them, one young man (also an international student) stood up and walked away. A moment later he was back. He was carrying a chair, and beckoning that same young woman, alone on the other side of the room, to follow him. She joined the table. He sat down again, and I saw- we will take care of each other. These beautiful young people will take care of each other. It was not only I who could see the messages written in worry and care across the hearts of these young ones- they also saw.

To live in the Renison community is an immense privilege. Even before our students know our motto, "One Sky Over All", I see them live its meaning. What will we teach them that they do not already know? What will they teach us? I am not certain but this is the wonder of Renison; a journey into the unexplored country with amazing companions, learning is guaranteed and a new day is waiting to be born.

With Deep Respect and Gratitude,

Wenly Flitte

Wendy L. Fletcher, President Renison University College

FINANCIAL STATEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

In thousands of dollars

Statement of Financial Position

Cash > 5,440
Investments > 3,147
Capital Assets > 31,846
Accounts payable & accrued liabilities > 1,759
Student deposits & fee advances > 437
Debt > 10,885
Employee future benefits obligation > 2,803

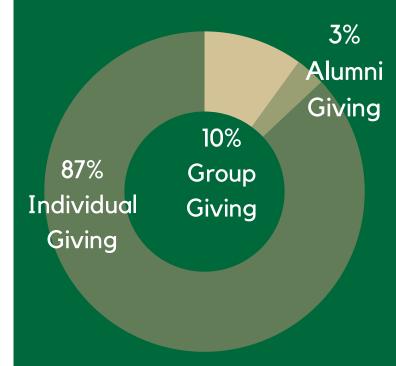
Statement of Operations

Government grants > 5,026
Tuition > 11,571
Residence fees & Conferences > 44
Food Services > 35
Salaries, wages & benefits > 16,426
University services > 1,436
Contracted Services > 111
Utilities, repairs & maintenance > 232
Office, general & admin > 157
Academic support costs > 368

Total Operating Budget = \$24 million

GIVING AT RENISON

May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021



Cash and Pledges total = \$580,095

Total funds awarded = \$300,735

COURSE ENROLLMENTS

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
AND INNOVATION

6,279

Social Development Studies, School of Social Work GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT THROUGH LANGUAGES AND CULTURE

5,145

Applied Language Studies, English for Multilingual Speakers, graduate and undergraduate, English, History, Religious Studies, East Asian Studies, Studies in Islamic and Arab Cultures PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

1,434

Renison Institute of Ministry, Sakura Japanese Language School, Renison International Office, non-credit Chinese, Japanese and Korean language, English Language Institute, Indigenous Studies.



RENISON'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 3: **STUDENTS**

The theme of this year's Annual Report is students. Each year, we are intentionally focusing on one of the key themes of our 5-year Strategic Plan; last year our focus was faculty and staff and the year prior it was programs.

Renison's Strategic Plan can be found here: https://uwaterloo.ca/renison/strategic-plan-2019-2024.

A great deal has changed during the past 18 months as a result of the global pandemic. The way we conduct business has changed. The primary methods of teaching and learning have changed. The use of our facilities and services has changed. What has not changed is our focus on students and our commitment to providing the very highest quality of teaching and learning possible while, at the same time, providing a safe and healthy environment in which to learn.

Another significant change is the increased need for student financial assistance. Many of our students are entering or returning to university without the benefit of earnings from summer or part time employment. Many families have found themselves unable to help their son or daughter with tuition and housing expenses. Financial barriers are difficult to overcome and can restrict a student's ability to reach their full potential. We are not always able to remove these barriers.

With the generous support of our valued donors, Renison has successfully added close to a dozen new awards and bursaries; many of these are specifically in support of equity deserving groups of students. The demands upon our students are ever-changing and ever-increasing. What will not change is Renison's commitment to support, in any way we can, the needs of our students throughout their learning journeys.

The following pages contain some inspiring and moving stories featuring some of our students; we are fortunate to be a chapter in their incredible stories.

Pictured left: Members of the Renison Student Life Team keep spirits high for students throughout the year, both inperson and online! Note: top photo taken pre-pandemic.

BREAKING BARRIERS: SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS STUDENTS

Strategic Planning Goal 3.1 - Expand intentional recruitment in:

- a) Indigenous and other historically marginalized communities,
- b) local, and
- c) targeted international locations, in support of SDS, SSW and ELI programs, leveraging digital means and capacity.

Coming to university can be daunting for any student. Before arriving on campus, there are a number of steps prospective students must go through, as well as significant financial considerations. For Indigenous students, the financial burden that comes with post-secondary education is keenly felt, and has been identified as one of the main obstacles.

In 2020, Renison offered an Indigenous Student Bursary for the first time, as a way to reduce the financial barrier faced by Indigenous students attending university. The bursary, spearheaded by Renison's Truth and Reconciliation Committee, seeks to recognize and address both the systemic barriers to post-secondary education that Indigenous students face, and the additional labour that these students often contribute as a result of their Indigeneity.

The Renison Indigenous Student Bursary in a way that addresses some of the systemic barriers to post-secondary education faced by Indigenous students. In addition to the bursary, Renison is working with the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre (WISC) on the University of Waterloo campus to reach Indigenous high school students in grades 10 or 11 to ensure they are well positioned to apply to university. In some cases, guidance is lacking in high schools and many Indigenous communities do not have the same rigorous academic planning that more affluent communities have.



Renison Social Development Studies (SDS) 2016 alum **Jaydum** is an accomplished student, mother, and recent recipient of the Renison Indigenous Leadership Bursary.

It was at Renison that Jaydum first experienced the University setting; it helped her walk in two worlds by preparing her for the demands of Western academia. As Jaydum developed a stronger sense of her Indigeneity, she quickly realized that her feeling of not belonging in the academic environment was common among Indigenous students. She noticed that the university is not supportive of Indigenous ways of knowing and being, but continues to perpetuate the cycle of colonialism. This experience often extends into most workplace environments for Indigenous employees, which became the focus of Jaydum's Master's thesis.

During her second year at Renison, Jaydum connected with more than one Indigenous student who told her about the soup lunches at St Paul's University College. This is how Jaydum found out about the Waterloo Indigenous Student Centre (WISC). WISC became like a second home, as well as a foundational part of her individual learning journey. The Centre has also become an important part of her career journey, with Jaydum recently stepping into the role of Interim Director.



According to Chloe, Assistant to WISC, bursaries like these reduce the stress of more than just tuition. Chloe explains that there is an assumption that Indigenous students receive free tuition, which is not true. By creating bursaries like this one, specifically for Indigenous students, it serves a secondary function by making it more clear to the general public that finances are a significant barrier. Bursaries designed for Indigenous students can also take into consideration the particular circumstances of individual students, who may have received some funding from their Band, which can exclude them from larger funding pools like OSAP or other scholarships and bursaries. Ultimately, says Chloe, it's all about considering what students need to be well as they study — to thrive, not just survive.

Students who receive the Renison Indigenous Student bursary express feelings of relief. Chloe mentions that often Indigenous students wait until they are scraping by before applying for financial aid. As more of these kinds of bursaries become available and are more accessible, students will be more likely to realize that they don't need to be in dire straits before they access funding. Additionally, the bursary is an expression of Renison's commitment to embracing Indigenous students as part of our community, demonstrating to Indigenous students that they are welcome, supported, and valued on our campus.

CREATING NEW **PATHWAYS:**FROM **SOCIAL SERVICE** WORK TO THE SCHOOL OF **SOCIAL WORK**

Strategic Planning Goal 3.3 Develop greater opportunities for admission and access to our programs through a variety of means, including expanding college pathway programs.

When thinking about a post-graduate degree like the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), many likely think about a student finishing up their bachelor's degree, applying, and moving into the next chapter of their education. But what about the students who are coming to a BSW from a different place? The students who may have begun their education by completing a college program, and want to move into a university program? That's where the new Social Service Worker pathway comes in, streamlining the process for students applying after completing a college program.

In September 2021, Renison welcomed a special group of Social Development Studies (SDS) students. These students are part of a cohort who have received conditional acceptance to the BSW program; Instead of having to complete a 2-step application process, they completed a single application and transferred credits from their Social Service Worker diploma to fulfill some of their SDS credits. The students spend time completing the remaining SDS credits, and proceed directly into the BSW program without having to complete a second application. Though this is the first year it has been offered, the pathway has been embraced by the School of Social Work and has been very popular with incoming students.

This new pathway is part of a larger goal to reduce barrier to members of communities who have been historically marginalized and are often more likely to go to college than to university. The original 2-step admission process can be a real barrier and deterrent, so the streamlined pathway enhances access to college-level students and indirectly reduces barriers for marginalized communities.

Students who are part of this cohort will be connected with the School of Social Work right away, and start building a sense of community as they complete their prerequisites. Andrea Daley, the Director of the School of Social Work, emphasizes that the practical experience that these students bring will benefit fellow students as well. These additional experiences help to ground the Social Work theories and approaches, enriching conversations in the classroom.



Omar is starting at Renison after completing their Social Service Worker diploma from George Brown College. Omar has had a number of various jobs since completing a finance diploma in 2006, but became interested in social work after their experiences with mental health and substance abuse. After a job loss in 2017, Omar's mental health declined and they sought treatment. Through this experience, they recognized that substance use had become a primary coping mechanism, and they were able to complete a successful program at CAMH. Omar identifies this time in their life as the catalyst for wanting to work to help others who had similar experiences. After completing their Social Service Worker program, Omar decided to apply to Renison because they would be able to complete the BSW in as little as 2.5-3 years. Though there were some challenges through the application process, Omar feels fortunate to have been accepted to Renison and looks forward to the road ahead.





Emily A completed her Social Service Worker diploma at Niagara College in Welland. Emily became interested in Social Work after seeking help from a Social Worker when struggling with anxiety in high school. After receiving help, Emily realized she wanted to have a career in a similar field and help others who are struggling. Emily was drawn to Renison because of the School of Social Work's link to Niagara College. Throughout the application process, Emily's SDS buddy and Renison support staff were helpful in answering questions and helped her feel welcome.

For **Emily B**, the new pathway created an easy way for her to pursue her dream of working as a Social Worker. After taking a few years off after high school, Emily knew she wanted a career helping people. She had a few friends attending Sheridan and found their Social Service Worker program, which sounded perfect. As the program came to an end, however, Emily knew she wanted to continue her education rather than move directly into the workforce. After finding and applying through the new pathway, it was a relief to know that she won't have to worry about applying again to the BSW. Though the first term is currently online, Emily has already made friends in her classes and says she can already feel the welcoming community at Renison.



LANGUAGE AND CULTURE CORNER: FINDING WAYS FOR STUDENTS TO CONNECT

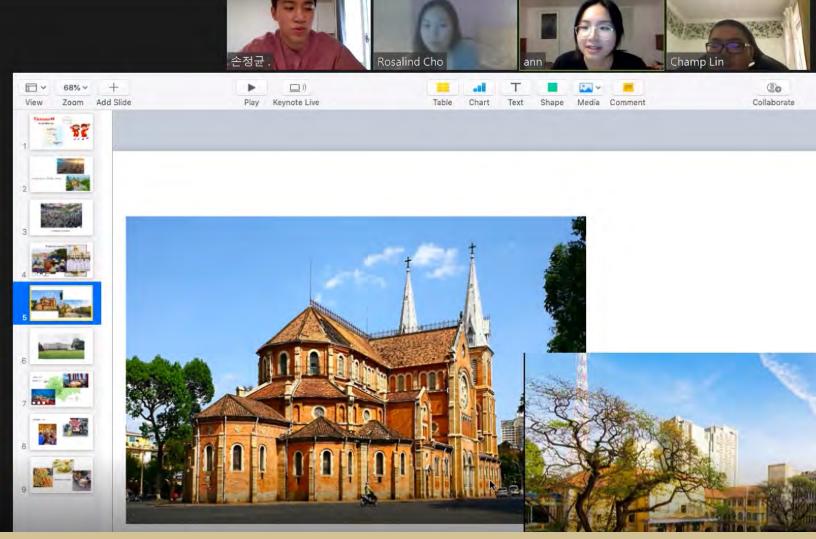
Strategic Planning Goal 3.4 Expand opportunities for peer leadership and student employment at the College.

One of the ways that students taking language courses receive support is from their peers, with whom they can practice their language skills. In the Renison International Office (RIO) unit of Renison, the newly established Language and Culture Corner (LCC) program is a way to provide language learners additional support by connecting them with one another.

The initial idea for the LCC came from CAPE council. The goal was twofold: connect CAPE language learners, and engage partner institutions. During the pandemic, with fewer students on campus, it became more and more important to create opportunities for Renison to engage students and partners in ways that could be easily translated to online formats. Enter the Language and Culture Corner!

The LCC program was piloted in Fall 2020 with CAPE and credit-course Japanese language and culture students, followed by students studying Chinese and Korean in the Winter term. The program is group-based, with students meeting regularly over a 6-week period, giving them an opportunity to apply their knowledge of the language and culture they are studying. It provides a chance for international students to feel empowered to share their culture in Japan, Korea, and China to Renison and Waterloo students. Activities are flexible, and students are able to direct their own conversations, with the Renison International Office (RIO) providing discussion topics, questions, and support.





Son, pictured on the top left, said that one of the best parts about participating in the LCC was getting to know others in the group and learning about other cultures. Here, we see the group is taking a virtual tour of Vietnam, where one of the group members resides.

Reception to the new program has been positive, with students in credit and non-credit Japanese, Chinese and Korean language courses from across Renison participating. Overall, nearly 250 students from Renison and partner institutions have participated in the LCC since Fall 2020!

For Son, a Korean student participating in the LCC Korean program, the attraction of the LCC was that it was an option for developing English speaking skills without travelling, which has not been possible due to the pandemic. To help navigate through the challenges of the pandemic, the LCC was, in Son's words, "the program I was looking for!" Every week, Son's group chose a topic and spent time talking about their culture and experiences. After getting to know each other, the most interesting part for Son was learning about the culture and experiences of each member. The online format means that participants must be motivated to participate and, according to Son, successful engagement means the development of global as well as language skills

This is still a new program, and we are excited to see it evolve. With positive student reception and engagement across Renison - this is a program to watch!

As some things move back on campus, SDS Buddies are able to spend time at some of the in-person events!

SDS BUDDIES: CREATING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Strategic Planning Goal 3.4 Expand opportunities for peer leadership and student employment at the College.

Transitioning into the first year of a university program can be tough, whether a student is entering directly from high school, transferring from another institution, or returning to school after full-time employment. The Social Development Studies (SDS) Buddies program, launched in September 2019, aims to help with this transition, providing peer support by matching incoming SDS students with an upper year SDS student. SDS upper-year buddies provide additional support to new students, as a go-to person for questions or guidance. For upper-year students, it is a great way to engage with new students, connect with other volunteers, and boost their resume. Upper year students are also supported by SDS staff members with regular check-ins and a dedicated website with additional resources, scenarios that might come up, tips/tricks, etc.

SDS Buddies are matched along as many characteristics as possible, with a specific focus on method of entry (direct from high school, transfer, etc.). In its first year, the program included interviews of each upper-year buddy before matching. The ongoing pandemic made individual interviews impossible, so a form was created to collect information to help link students with similar methods of entry and personal experiences. The ratio of buddies depends on the number of upper year volunteers, with upper year buddies getting as few as one first year buddy, or as many as four.

The frequency of communication between buddies is left up to the students, but they are asked to connect with buddies a minimum of once per month. Buddies are also invited to events once per month, another way to create connections among their peers. Throughout the pandemic, events and touchpoints have shifted online, but as some campus events start to become available on campus, in-person events are starting to become possible again.



Meghan joined SDS buddies as an upper-year buddy to make a difference for students who were in the same position as she was, only a year before. She has experienced feelings of anxiety and loneliness, and knows how much of an impact having someone there for you can have. Meghan makes a point to send frequent check-in messages to her buddy, and support them as they navigate some of the important first-year tasks like getting a WAT card (Waterloo's student ID), finding a library or good place to study, and meeting fellow students or professors. She has also made a point to lend a helping had to all firstyear students, and has made even more new friends along the way! Meghan says that her buddies have made as much of a difference in her life as she hopes she has made in theirs. She's grateful to be part of such an important time in a student's life, and thinks all upper-year SDS students should try being an SDS Buddy.

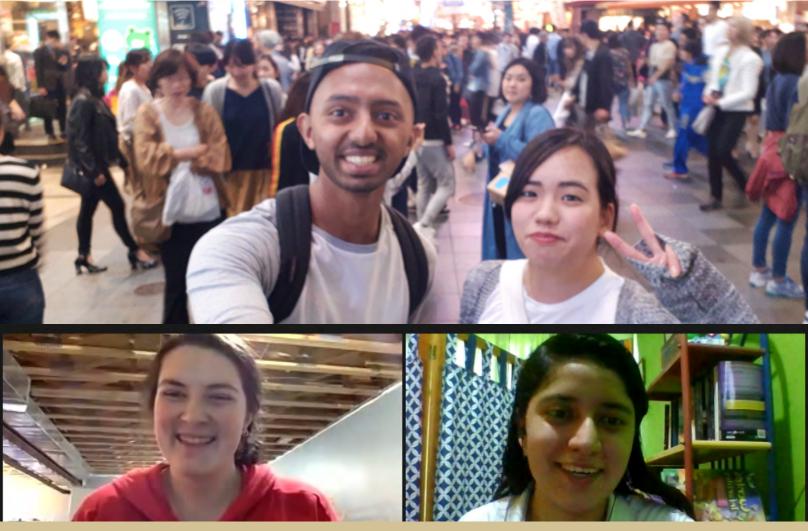
Miriam has participated as an upper-year buddy since the program began and has been a buddy 3 times so far. She thought it was a great idea and said her first thought after hearing about the program was "I wish I had someone like this to ask questions of when I was in first year!" Miriam has found the experience to be very meaningful because of the opportunity to connect and form relationships with different types of people, and she sees it as a learning experience that has been just as transformative for her as her first-year buddy. Miriam says that she often helps her buddy with everyday things like advice on time management, adjusting to the university workload, help with course selection, and direction on how to get involved. The most important thing? Making the connection, so her buddy knows that they are not alone, they have a friend who is there to support them!



STAYING **INTERNATIONAL** WITHOUT TRAVEL: RENISON'S **CONVERSATION** PARTNER PROGRAM

Strategic Planning Goal 3.5 Continue to strengthen our work with international students in support of the University's internationalization goals.

The Conversation Partner Program (CPP) is a mainstay of the Renison landscape, with approximately 650 students signing up each year to participate. The CPP began at Renison during the Fall of 2014, and connects students from Renison's international partners and the English Language Institute (ELI) with students from across Renison and the University of Waterloo. The program fills the need for students to practice language skills outside of the classroom, and is an important element of Renison and Waterloo's internationalization goals. After a relatively small start of 67 partners, the program now typically sees about 150 pairs of students over the course of a year (about 300 students).



The Conversation Partner Program has changed as a result of COVID, with trips abroad like the one taken by Farzaan to visit Megumi in Japan (top) impossible. Students like Natalie and Giezi (bottom) now visit and participate online.



Left, top and bottom: Akari and Gabrielle take some time to connect online. Right: Emma and Luna have a fun experience in-person (pre-pandemic)

As with most things, CPP pivoted as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, with partners now speaking online instead of in person. The biggest benefit is the flexibility for students around the world. Unlike the in-person program, having conversations online means that students are able to participate from anywhere in the world! Though the format has changed, interest in the program is strong. Over the last year, students have connected from Mexico, India, China, Japan, Korea, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan — among others.

Students are paired with each other based on personal and language interests, as well as personal experiences. Before COVID, each student was interviewed and matched individually. This year, understandably, the process moved online and students were matched using responses from an online form. After being matched, participants receive a check in email a couple of weeks into the term to see how things are going. Adjustments and any re-matching usually happens at this time, as well as problem-solving related to things like scheduling. One of the challenges with having participants from around the world is varying time zones, which can make finding a convenient time to connect difficult.

One of the great things about the CPP is how it engages partner institutions. These institutions, located around the world, are connected with Renison and most send students to study in the English Language Institute (ELI). Partner institutions are provided with a set number of spaces in the CPP and they recruit students to be matched. .

The CPP is closing in on a decade of pairing students for conversation and cross-cultural experiences. Going forward, the plan is to engage students to be CPP ambassadors, and continue to ensure students have a positive experience!

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At Renison University College, faculty and students are helping to change the world!

Supporters like you help to ensure that Renison continues its strong presence as a place of education and social change within our community, nationally, and internationally.

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Thank you!

This list includes those who made a contribution to Renison from May 1, 2020 - April 30, 2021. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the donor list. If your name was inadvertently omitted or you believe there to be any discrepancies within the list, please call 519-884-4404, ext. 28591. If a mistake was made, we truly apologize.





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