



SEVEN OAKS
EDUCATION FOUNDATION INC.

Foundation

N E W S

Summer 2026

Celebrating 25 Years of Impact, Opportunity, and Community

This year marks a remarkable milestone for Seven Oaks Education Foundation: 25 years of supporting students, empowering educators, and strengthening our community through the work of the Seven Oaks Education Foundation. The Seven Oaks Scholarship Board, originally established in 1960's transitioned from a Board to new education foundation when the Seven Oaks Education Foundation was incorporated in 2001. The heart of Scholarship Board roots shine in the Seven Oaks Education Foundation with volunteers who have passion to raise money to help students with some of the costs of post-secondary education.

What began as a vision shared by a dedicated group of community leaders, educators, parents and volunteers has grown into a legacy of opportunity. Over the past quarter of a century, the Foundation has helped turn aspirations into achievements by investing in the success of generations of learners in their post-secondary journeys.

Since its founding, the Foundation has awarded scholarships to graduating students to help with some of the cost of post-secondary education. It is a simple but powerful belief: when we invest in education, we invest in the future of our entire community.

The impact of these 25 years is measured not only in dollars raised or scholarships funded but in the stories of students whose lives were changed. It lives in the confidence that everyone deserves to further their education.

This anniversary is also a celebration of the people who made it possible. We extend our

deepest gratitude to the donors, volunteers, educators, staff members, community partners and families who have supported the Foundation over the years. Your generosity, leadership, and belief in students have shaped the Foundation that continues to make a meaningful difference every day.

Anniversaries invite reflection but they also inspire momentum. Together, we can continue building a future where every student has the tools, encouragement and opportunities they need to thrive

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Here's to 25 years of impact and to many more still to come.

Reflecting on 25 Years

Anniversaries provide an opportunity to reflect on where we began, celebrate how far we have come and recognize the people whose vision makes it all possible.

On July 17, 2001, the Seven Oaks Education Foundation was officially incorporated under the leadership of its founding Board of Directors:

- Ramona Gallos** – President
- Claudia Sarbit** – Vice President
- Elizabeth Ash** – Secretary
- Edward Johns** – Treasurer
- Morley Jacobs** – Past President

What began with a dedicated group of five volunteers has grown into a thriving organization supported today by 14 volunteer members of the Board of Directors, each contributing their time, expertise and commitment to student success.

Among those early leaders, founding President Ramona Gallos stands out for her passion, grace and unwavering dedication to both family and community. Her commitment to service has been evident through her many volunteer roles in many organizations over the years and through her belief in the power of education to transform lives.

Ramona has always recognized the hard work and determination demonstrated by students pursuing their educational goals. Understanding that financial barriers can stand in the way of opportunity and with Foundation's mission to help students access the education they deserve.

Ramona also attributes one of the Foundation's greatest strengths to its multi-generational volunteer spirit. The involvement of volunteers across generations has created continuity, fresh perspectives, and a shared commitment to supporting students and strengthening the community.

Current President Irv Simmonds, who joined the Foundation in March 2002, has witnessed the growth firsthand. Looking back, the Foundation held approximately \$100,000 in scholarship funds when he became involved. As of December 31, 2025, those funds together with funds invested with our partner, the Winnipeg Foundation, where we have established perpetual scholarships had grown to approximately \$2.3 million, ensuring that generations of students will continue to benefit from scholarships for years to come.

In his report at the recent Annual General Meeting, Simmonds shared that in the last year two new perpetual scholarship funds were established through The Winnipeg Foundation:

- **The Irv Simmonds & Family Scholarship**, and in memory of Harold, Leonard and Barry Simmonds
- **The Seven Oaks Optimist Club Scholarship**

Irv is the first to acknowledge that this success is the result of the efforts of many dedicated individuals and organizations. He expresses his appreciation for the working board of directors whose members volunteer their time and dedication. Every contribution makes a difference whether you volunteer your time, donate, attend an event, sponsor a scholarship or support one of our fundraisers, you are helping create an opportunity for students. We are grateful.

A Legacy of Giving Continues

In March of 2026, the SOEF received a generous donation of \$10,000 from David Rosner and Beth Kettner, further strengthening the legacy of the Nellie and Ben Zaidman memorial scholarship Fund.

Both Dave and Beth grew up in the Seven Oaks community and attended local schools. Their gift reflects a deep appreciation for the community even though they no longer reside there. This will support future generations of students.

David, the grandson of **Nellie and Ben Zaidman**, shared that the donation is an opportunity to "give back and pay forward". He and Beth feel honoured to be in a position to support students through SOEF while also celebrating the memory and legacy of his grandparents.

Nellie and Ben were longtime residents of the Seven Oaks community. Ben was a dedicated advocate for education, serving as a School Board Trustee, a member of the Seven Oaks Scholarship Board, and contributing to scholarship initiatives that helped students pursue their educational goals. Their commitment to community service continues to inspire future generations of the family.

That legacy is also reflected in the ongoing involvement of their daughter Harriet Zaidman, who has served on the SOEF Board of Directors since March 2012.

This latest gift will fund an additional perpetual scholarship at Garden City Collegiate each year. As a result, the Nellie and Ben Zaidman Memorial Scholarship Fund will now support six scholarships annually.

Through their generosity, David and Beth are helping students achieve their educational aspirations while honouring the values of service, community involvement and educational opportunities that Nellie and Ben championed throughout their lives.

Successful Fundraising: Then and Now

For 25 years, the Seven Oaks Education Foundation has relied on the creativity, dedication, and generosity of volunteers, donors, sponsors, and community members to raise funds in support of student scholarships and awards.

Over the years, the Foundation has organized and benefited from many successful fundraising initiatives. Long-time supporters will remember the popular Seven Oaks Got Talent shows, Bud and Spud Night, raffles, Grey Cup ticket sales, and numerous other community events that helped build the Foundation and expand opportunities for students.

While fundraising methods have evolved over the years, the commitment of our supporters has remained constant.

In 2025/26, the Foundation continued that tradition through several successful fundraising events, including:

- The annual online raffle for **300,000 Avion points** and a **50/50 draw** in the spring
- A special concert event honouring Brian O'Leary held at the Seven Oaks Performing Arts Centre in November 2025
- The inaugural **Seven Oaks Education Foundation Epic Pickleball Tournament Fundraiser** in November 2025

Each event, past and present, has played an important role in supporting the Foundation's mission. More importantly, each event has brought people together around a common goal. We are reminded that pictures truly tell a thousand words. The photographs captured over the years reflect not only successful fundraising events but also the friendships, volunteer spirit, community pride and shared commitment that have defined the foundation since its beginning.

Pictures – then and now – Fundraising, Friendship, and Community

(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2012)



(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2012)



(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2013)



(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2014)



(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2015)



(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2016)



(7 Oaks Got Talent – 2017)



Phantom of the Paradise – Phantompalooza 2017



2022

\$10,000 Scholarship Lives On

Filipino Music and Arts Association of Canada Inc. and Seven Oaks Education Foundation Establish a permanent Music and Arts Leadership Award



ISKOLAR 2022



Pickleball 2025

