



# Donor

## Accountability Report 2019



Rose Garden



*Nature provides human beings with opportunities to have an enviable quality of life regardless of age, language, or culture. RBG enhances what begins in the natural world. Celebrating the beauty and diversity which surrounds us, together with adopting the role of protecting our environment, are examples of the challenges which motivate the dedicated staff at the gardens. By becoming donors, we enable this invaluable work to continue for the benefit of all.*

Joan and Gordon S. – Georgetown, ON  
RBG Members and Donors

## Board Chair and CEO Message

It is with great pleasure to share with our donors, members, volunteers and key funders, the significant impact Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) made in its community and beyond, in 2019. Through your support, RBG made great strides in its mandated areas, of conservation, horticulture, education and science, while continuing to deliver inspiring events and programs to all age groups and offering a one-of-a-kind destination for wedding, private function and tourism audiences.

2019 represented the final year of an Ontario Trillium Foundation supported initiative which was to help grow our volunteer efforts here at RBG. This was a three-year project that supported the formal transition from the long-appreciated and important Auxiliary of Royal Botanical Gardens to Royal Botanical Gardens Volunteers. The group has almost quadrupled in size in short order and has been hugely successful as we have volunteer help in almost every area of our operation.

RBG leveraged the momentum of Canada's 150th celebrations in 2017 as our visitor and membership numbers continued to grow. Our attendance numbers exceeded 2018 which we are very encouraged to see. As seems to be the case each year, the weather continued to challenge us, however, we are learning to adapt as best we can. We also continued to see significant growth in visitors to our natural land areas. The trails were very busy on most weekends which resulted in our trailheads parking revenue increasing. Of course, with increased traffic, there is directly related increased maintenance costs.

In 2019 we experienced another year of record setting high water levels for Lake Ontario that saw our natural lands crew having to work diligently on restoring shorelines, trails and drainage ditches which were already washed out and damaged from the previous year. And while wet weather is good for plants, many areas were too wet to get to, which led to delays in garden area maintenance.

That said, we are extremely proud to report that both our gardens and natural land areas continue to improve each year and our guest and events programming are always expanding. This includes our performing arts offerings along with additional sculpture in the gardens.

Total attendance in 2019 was 366,593 (this number does not include individuals who are able to gain access to certain areas in our natural lands for free), a 5.5% increase over 2018. RBG continues to move forward on solid financial ground. 2019 revenues exceeded target and membership grew to over 20-thousand total members. Our annual fundraising concert featuring the Jim Cuddy Band was a great success both artistically and financially, and overall 2019 fundraising initiatives put RBG in a strong position moving into 2020.

As this report is written, the world is dealing with unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like most other organizations, RBG is adjusting to the circumstances in every way possible for what will surely not be the year as planned. The significant financial losses that we have already experienced indicate that RBG will need to look to our community more than ever in the days and months ahead.

Through the support of Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, Regional Municipality of Halton, City of Hamilton, as well as donors, partners, numerous volunteers and members, RBG continues to implement long-term strategies to ensure financial success while focusing on critical environmental initiatives and showcasing a world-class tourism destination.



Cliff Carson, Board Chair  
Royal Botanical Gardens



Mark Runciman, CEO  
Royal Botanical Gardens

*I have worked with visitors and school groups here at RBG, and I have seen the difference it can make when a class or a children's group gets funding for a visit. For those who are new to RBG, everything in the gardens is exciting and magical in their eyes, and those who have received funded trips before love to show their classmates all the neat little spaces throughout the gardens and trails. Through donations, these children are given opportunities to connect one on one with nature in a way that may not be available to them anywhere else, and it is so wonderful to watch children fall in love with nature. Now more than ever it is crucial to teach children the vital importance of our environment, and donations help more children learn that importance. This is why I am an RBG donor.*



Iona W. – Hamilton, ON  
RBG Staff (former student) and Donor



## Cootes Paradise South Shore Forest – A New Future Begins

RBG is home to many remarkable trees.  
The nature sanctuaries contain 400 hectares  
(1,000 acres) of forest, while the horticultural  
areas have over 500 specimens.

[FULL STORY >>](#)



RBG trail, South Shore



Calebs Walk, boardwalk

Our forests shelter many large heritage trees including Canada's largest Bitternut Hickory, as well as Canada's largest population of the endangered Red Mulberry tree. Our forest ecosystem also provides essential habitat for rare and endangered bird species such as the Wood Thrush and Acadian Flycatcher, and the scope of our forests and wetlands have attracted Bald Eagles to nest each year since 2013, after being absent from the Canadian Shores of Lake Ontario for more than 50 years!

Over the years, our forests have been impacted by a variety of threats such as invasive species, pests such as Emerald Ash Borer and diseases such as Butternut Canker. In addition, visitor off-trail use, dumping, pollution and wildlife imbalances have all contributed to reducing the size of our interior forest, an increasingly rare forest habitat that is a refuge critical for plant and wildlife species to thrive.

In recent years several articles have appeared regarding the diverse challenges of the south side of Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary's forest and the adjacent Churchill Park area, as well as the park's reinvention as a park for the future. The park's masterplan was approved by the Niagara

Escarpment Commission in 2017, and its transition is now underway with the long-term goal to make it accessible, while at the same time establishing a core adjacent forest area, combined with much improved water management.

In September 2019, City of Hamilton completed phase 1 of the park masterplan, adding 1 km of trail, including an accessibility connection from the RBG's former Teaching Garden parking lot, and recontouring the land for water management. The latter aspect of the project extends into the adjacent neighbourhood to reduce sewer overflows into Cootes Paradise Marsh.

The focus can now turn to the existing forest edge. On the south side of the Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary, a reforestation project has been ongoing for several years to improve the fate of the forest. Churchill Park in Westdale is a 20 hectare cultivated RBG park which is managed in partnership with City of Hamilton. The park is adjacent to our Nature Sanctuary's old growth forest, and the park's current edge reaches within 100 m of the Marsh.



The south side of Cootes Paradise Nature Sanctuary includes old growth forest set in ravines on the edge of Cootes Paradise Marsh, making it a much beloved place to visit. The forest contains many extraordinary old and large trees, and a remarkably diverse under storey plant community. However due to its small size and narrow shape – just a ribbon of forest along the edge of the marsh – the cumulative stresses of air pollution, water pollution, unbalanced wildlife populations, and heavy visitation has taken a notable toll over the years and the forest is quite measurably in decline.

Many of the largest trees have fallen in recent years, some among the oldest remaining in Hamilton, and the under storey is being invaded by Eurasian plants that don't fit into the region's natural food web. And due to the narrow strip of forest, unintended environmental disturbance of wildlife and plants from the nature trails and nearby homes is extensive.

The transformation of adjacent Churchill Park is a key piece of the puzzle for changing the forest's future, as the two abut along a 1.5 km-long stretch with multiple indentations into the forest. Thanks to financial support provided by the Patrick J McNally Charitable Foundation, RBG was able to

move forward with the next phase of implementation of the Churchill Park Management Plan. This phase involves the reforestation of a mown field that extends into part of the natural area. This conversion will serve as a buffer and create a core natural area for sensitive species to retreat to. The forested area of the south side of Cootes Paradise stretches over 2 km but it is rarely wider than 100 m, and so the ultimate outcome of reforestation will be the establishment of a three-hectare core forest area with a width of 200 m. While this is a small start, it will establish a core forest area where there has been none for the better part of a century.

This field transition began in November with removal of the field sod, followed by some subtle contouring of the land, a technique known as “pit and mound” restoration. This was followed by removal of the non-native invasive plants in the adjacent forest edge. This re-naturalization will be completed with a large-scale seeding with native plant species in 2020.



David Braley & Nancy Gordon Rock Garden

*I am thankful that we have a facility such as RBG in our midst. To me nature and all its beauty is a sight to behold. I find special solace as I wander through Rock Garden spending moments of meditation which to me is most relaxing. The new Rose Garden with its various species exemplifies to one and all the beauty of nature. Therefore, it is incumbent for all us to continue to support RBG for future generations to enjoy.*

Martin B. – Burlington, ON  
RBG Member and Donor



# YES Alliance Then and Now

The five-year-old Young Environmental Science (YES) Alliance is Royal Botanical Gardens' youth-centred education program for high school aged teens.

[FULL STORY >>](#)



YES Alliance, shoreline clean up

What began as a pilot in 2015 has grown into a fully-fledged offering, allowing space for the region's youth concerned with the state of the world's natural and ecological spaces to gather and unite. It took years of dedication and planning to get this stage, however with positive reviews and word of mouth testimonials, we can say it has been a success.

Up until 2015, RBG had steady youth enrollment in programs like the Junior Naturalists Club (7–12 years old) and Discovery Camps (4–16 year old), offered monthly or when school was on a longer break (summer, Christmas and March Break respectively). RBG determined that a stand-alone youth program was needed, which is where this story began. The goal of YES is to reach environmentally minded teens who are already keen on the outdoors and provide them with the space to be among what they love, alongside other like-minded peers, while they meet experts who act as success stories for those wanting to make a hobby a career. It is through these experts that youth hear of methods, tactics and post-secondary programs that can help them along the schooling process. We have currently brought over 70 youth through the ranks of YES, with a handful of past members currently enrolled in Environmental Science programs in post-secondary institutions, well on their way to bolstering “the green industry.”

The bi-weekly, Saturday afternoon approach is appealing to teens who often have jobs, family responsibilities, social lives, and other volunteer commitments. Because it isn't mandatory to attend is noteworthy for its success, since youth feel pressure constantly, they appreciate its laid-back angle. Since many youth have yet to be employed, being able to attain letters of reference from someone in their circles can be difficult. Luckily for them, this programs allows RBG to be a reference to YES members which in the past has helped get many youth find employment (at RBG, Ontario Parks, garden centers, overnight and day camps to name a few), and also achieve success in attaining scholarships for universities (Dalhousie, UBC) as well! We are able to offer a perspective to prospective employers or admin teams that a typical school or employer might not be able to, and thus is a major boost to help keep youth moving through the ranks.

When it comes to scheduling program content, we often allow the members to hand-pick special guests, locations to explore, and/or topics to discuss. Here we can get into what matters to them, and gives them the power to choose who to learn from, or what to learn about.



Some youth took this to the next level by asking RBG to host youth events. After two brainstorming sessions, this led to the creation of HHYPE Nights (Hamilton & Halton Youth Promoting the Environment). Like-minded youth can come together to share in their efforts to make a more stable planet. Together we hosted a documentary screening, a skill-share walk-about and a panel-discussion on sustainable dining. This brought over 100 other youth through the doors, and allowed YES the chance to organize, take leadership roles, lead stations and feel comfortable as front-facing members to attendees. It also raised awareness of the club and RBG, and brought new members to join us for the 2019–2020 round of programs.

RBG has been a jump-off point for many people in their careers, so to do this for youth at such influential stages of their lives helps keep the work we do engrained in their minds. Down the road, we hope they return to as guests or members, but also employees and leaders in the community that will spread the efforts of all organizations who want to make this a healthy and sustainable world for all!

We are grateful to our funders: RBC Foundation as part of RBC Future Launch, and The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation.

*Our family has supported the culture of RBG and its inclusiveness. Believe it or not, it hasn't been just about the plants! All three of our children have gone through years of Discovery Camps during holidays and summer. Our daughter, Celeste, has risen to the role of Camp staff. Every camp season we prepare gift baskets of educational materials to enhance the Discovery Camps library and toy bins.*

*But our strongest connection is with our special-needs son, David. Accepted into camps about twenty years ago, David thrived — rose to Leader in Training, Junior staff and Camp Assistant roles. He grew his involvement with gardening by working closely with RBG volunteers. He ultimately joined the gardening team at RBG Centre, volunteering daily with garden displays. If you've been in RBG Centre this past year during the day, you've undoubtedly seen the smiling David. During Holiday Traditions you might have seen him driving the train — the highlight of his year!*



Wayne & Annette A. – Hamilton, ON  
RBG Members and Donors

*It is an oasis in the heart of a bustling urban area. Wandering through the various venues restores the mind, body, and soul. It is a feast for the eyes and the senses. I love exploring the Gardens with family and friends every chance I have when I visit from Ottawa.*

Janet A. – Ottawa, ON  
RBG Member and Donor



Janet, far left, with friends and her husband, far right

# 2019



**52,395**  
volunteer hours  
(increase of  
1,000 hours)



**5,574** volunteer  
hours of support to  
horticulture activities



**10%** increase  
in revenue from events,  
programs and admissions



**5.35%**  
increase in visitation



**25,000**  
people  
engage in  
RBG's history  
and archives  
programs



**20%**  
increase  
in guests  
connected  
through  
interpretive  
programs



**12,000** memberships  
**20,600** members represented



**72%** more attendees  
to Winter Lights  
at the Rock Garden



**78** endangered plant species  
in RBG's living collections



**52** species at risk of  
extinction live in RBG's  
nature sanctuaries

# Virtual Field Trips

RBG reaches students and teachers from coast to coast to coast and beyond internationally.

[FULL STORY >>](#)





**Kelli Holden** @KelliHolden · Feb 27

Thanks @RBGVC and @cilcorg for a great session today! Our kids went searching for snow fleas outside and were ecstatic to find tons!

#prescottpsd70



Grade 6, Environmental Leaders Program, London, Ontario

As an organization with a strong educational mandate and over 70 years of offering engaging onsite programs, RBG’s hallmark has always been hands-on experiences that forge connections between people of all ages with the natural world. However, since 2007, we’ve also carved out a reputation as a national leader in innovative online learning through our virtual field trips program reaching students and teachers from coast to coast to coast and beyond internationally.

The goal of RBG’s Virtual Field Trips (interactive distance learning) program is to offer engaging curriculum-based environmental science programs via videoconferencing technology to students Canada-wide and beyond. With initial start-up support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation (2006–2008) and then with support from NSERC’s PromoScience Program, first in 2012–2014 and once again in 2018–2021, barriers have been removed to help more students and teachers Canada-wide participate in RBG’s award-winning environmental science education programs. Our adaptability with program delivery and the technology used has enabled us to support teachers using different instructional methods in the traditional school settings, special education programs and institutionalized programs, and now at home. This has also enabled us to address the inequity in Canadian schools’ ability to access distance education compared to schools in the USA and abroad.



Grade K/1, Mine Centre, Ontario

Our programs have been able to, with the help of funders such as NSERC PromoScience, reach an increased number of Canadian students and teachers. In the first two years of our most recent PromoScience funding, we have interacted with over 4000 students from across Canada. We increased our reach to Northern Canadian communities by 50% thanks to the support of partners including Connected North. In addition, interactions with Canadian teachers through introductory workshops has tripled often leading to interest and requests for programs.



*I have been visiting RBG since I was a young child. It is a place that instilled in me a love of nature, community and education. Every moment spent at RBG has been an opportunity for growth and a deeper understanding of our environment. Now, decades later, I find myself still heavily immersed in RBG, but as a volunteer and employee. Staying involved has given me the opportunity to enrich others' lives — as was done for me — by developing and maintaining opportunities for the community to connect.*

Tyler Cunningham  
RBG Staff, Volunteer and Donor





*RBG reminds me that it is important to take a step back and appreciate the beauty that surrounds us, which is nature.*

Gina C. – Dundas, ON  
RBG Volunteer, Member and Donor

# THANK YOU

to all of our donors for  
their continued support >>

The following listings represent **funds received in 2019**. Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of these lists and we apologize for any errors or omissions. Please contact 905-527-1158, ext. 290 if you have any questions.

## Campaigns

The following listing represents the sum of donations made to RBG's Growing up Green Annual Campaign, Green Angels Fund, and Rose Garden Capital Campaign.

### \$300,000 PLUS

Patrick J. McNally  
Charitable Foundation  
Ontario Trillium Foundation

### \$200,000–\$299,999

Environment and Climate  
Change Canada

### \$100,000–\$199,999

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### \$75,000–\$99,999

Burlington Foundation  
Ministry of Heritage, Sport,  
Tourism and Culture Industries

### \$50,000–\$74,999

Fisheries and Oceans Canada  
Anonymous (1)

### \$25,000–\$49,999

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### \$10,000–\$24,999

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Anna Mandula  
Susan Hamilton Lawson Mantell  
Arlene Dianne Marshall  
Thomas Marston  
Judy Martin  
Gladys Lupton McGinlay  
Jane Miller  
Mary Madeline Newell  
Tricia & Nikki  
Margaret Nutley  
Dale Obermeyer  
Marion Pacey  
Marjia Palcic  
Peter Palmer Jr  
Vanessa Pearn  
Bob Quinn  
Gladys Ramsay  
Olga Ramsden  
Robert Raso  
Maria Richter

Mary Lou Rive  
Flora Roberts  
Elsie Waywell Sides Robertson  
Barbara Nancy Roth  
Donald Scott  
Kamleshwari Sharma  
Margaret Shaver  
Leo Sherlock  
Joseph Gordon Sides  
Rose Silbert  
Marion Alice Sims  
Mahadai Singh  
Jane Spears  
Sanda & Ugo Speranzini  
Harriet Sprague  
Esther & Harry Stewart  
Myrtle Stickle  
Barbara Tate  
Mervi "Mary" Toijonen  
Tony Tonge  
Ed Tucker  
Joan Turk  
Bette Vallentin  
Michael John Vancas  
Claire Waldron  
Arthur Webb  
Marie White  
Ron White  
Jim Wilkinson  
Barb Willie  
Al Wilson & Cathy Wilson-Shields (Hobbs)  
Margo Wilson

## Benefit Concert Sponsors, The Jim Cuddy Band and Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra

### \$25,000 PLUS

TD Bank Group

### \$10,000–\$24,999

5 Corners Productions Inc.  
incite Foundation for the Arts

### \$5,000–\$9,999

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Brownlow Partners  
IPC Securities Corporation  
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## Member Organizations

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Brantford Garden Club  
Burlington Wellness Tai-Chi  
Central West Specialized  
Developmental Services  
CGM Photo Imaging  
Chartwell Brant Centre  
Long-Term Care Residence  
Choices Association  
Christian Horizons –  
Hamilton Day Program  
Christian Horizons – Hamilton House 1  
Community Living Burlington –  
Daryl House  
Community Living Burlington – Lifeskills  
Community Living Burlington –  
Rubens 2 House  
Community Living Grimsby,  
Lincoln, West Lincoln  
Community Living Haldimand  
Community Living Hamilton  
Community Living Mississauga  
Community Living North Halton  
Conway Opportunity Homes  
Credit Valley Horticultural Society  
F64 Photography Association  
Flamborough Senior Center –  
Hiking Group  
Flamborough Seniors Centre  
Georgian Bay Garden Club  
Haldimand Horticultural Society  
Hamilton & District Chrysanthemum  
& Dahlia Society  
Hamilton Burlington Rose Society  
Hamilton Naturalists' Club  
Harbour Home  
Ikenobo Ikebana Society of Hamilton  
Ira McDonald Construction Ltd.

Lambeth Horticultural Society  
LaSalle Park Retirement Community  
Lively Dragon Club  
London Horticultural Society  
Lynden Horticultural Society  
Mohawk College –  
Continuing Education  
Mount Hamilton Horticultural Society  
OMC Landscape Architecture  
Ontario Daylily Society  
Ontario Regional Lily Society  
Options For Independent  
Living Development  
Paris Horticultural Society  
Pathfinders Hiking Group of Oakville  
Port Dover & Woodhouse  
Horticultural Society  
Queens Garden  
Ridge Road Birders  
St. George Garden Club  
Star Lane Group Home (CWSDS)  
Start It Right  
Stoney Creek Garden Club & Hort. Soc.  
Stratford & District Horticultural Society  
Summit Housing & Outreach Programs  
The Garden Club of London  
Thrive Group - Ableliving Services  
Tillsonburg Horticultural Society  
WEC International  
Winona Horticultural Society  
YWCA Hamilton – East Group Home  
YWCA Hamilton – Mountain Place



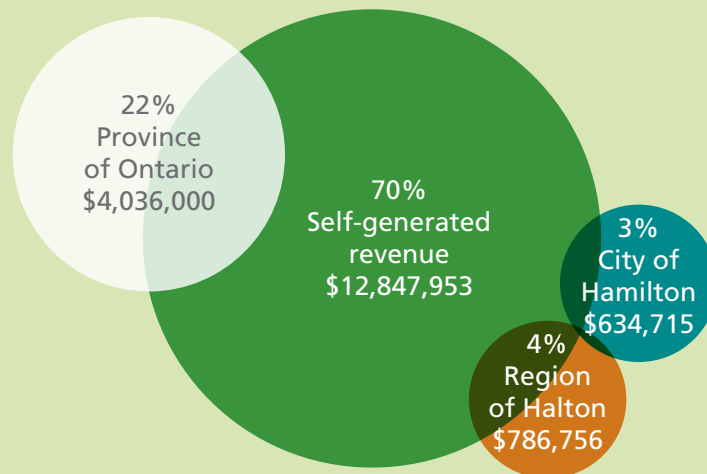
*Our support of Royal Botanical Gardens helps the Gardens to meet challenges that we feel strongly about — conservation, horticulture, science and education about the natural world.*

Terry C. and Donna J. — Toronto, ON  
RBG Members and Donors

# RBG Financials

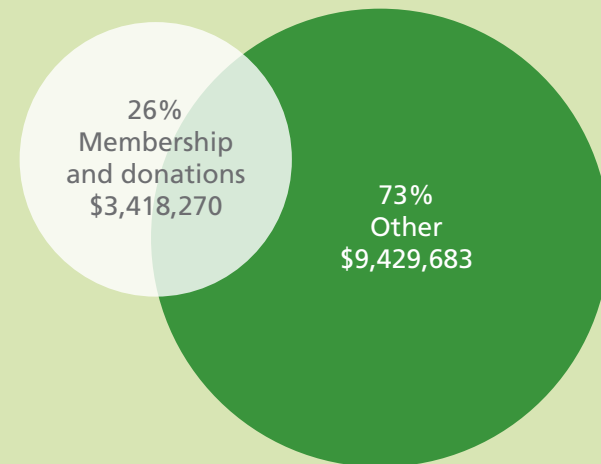
\$18,305,424

REVENUE SUMMARY



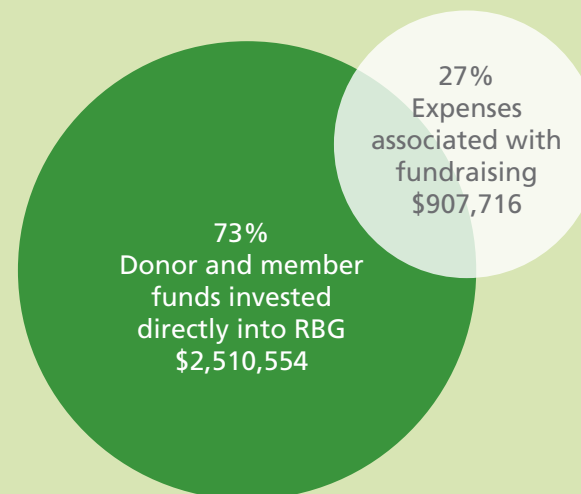
\$12,847,953

SELF-GENERATED REVENUES



\$3,418,270

FUNDRAISING RATIO  
OF REVENUES TO EXPENSES



73% of membership and donations are invested directly back into RBG. Self-generated revenues include areas such as weddings, corporate rentals, children's camps, adult education programs, investment income, etc. RBG's audited financial statements are available online >> [rbg.ca](http://rbg.ca).



**ROYAL  
BOTANICAL  
GARDENS**

680 Plains Road West, Burlington, ON L7T 4H4  
P.O. Box 399, Hamilton, ON L8N 3H8  
905-527-1158 | 1-800-694-4769  
Fax: 905-577-0375  
Charitable Registration: 13350 0850 RR0001



>> [rbg.ca](http://rbg.ca)

*SCHOOL OF FISH*, by Kakkee Negeoseak  
(Nunavut, Canada). Installed 2019

Dan Lawrie  
International  
Sculpture  
Collection

