



Big Hearted  
Mavericks

[bigheartedmavericks.com](http://bigheartedmavericks.com)



2025

# Impact Report

Thank you to all of our incredible sponsors, partners, volunteers, donors and charities for allowing us to make a positive impact in our community again this year.



## 2025 was a great year for us at The Mavericks!

The Big Hearted Mavericks were founded in 2000 by a group of like-minded local businessmen who shared two passions: celebrating the spirit of chuckwagons and supporting children's charities in our community. Since then, The Mavericks have stayed true to their mission – having fun while making a real impact.

We set a fundraising record this year – and were able to distribute over \$800,000 to charities in our community. Fundraising events include our golf tournament, Stampede "Bulldogger", Big Hearted Cowboys event, a casino hosting event at Deerfoot Casino and direct donations. New in 2025 was our ability to accept stock donations, which have resulted in considerable tax advantages for our donors. New in 2026 will be our inaugural poker tournament.

As businessmen, we want to ensure that charities are chosen according to good metrics. Interested parties fill out a funding package which includes their own mandates, goals and visions along with detailed information including financials and as specific uses for the money as possible. Once an application package is accepted, we carefully review the applications for good strategic fits. Charities must fit our mandate described above; we especially like not for profits who do not receive significant government funding and those with an entrepreneurial bent as well.

The Mavericks also have an annual \$25,000 Families in Crisis Fund, administered by our Society, where we contribute directly to families in need that fit our mandate but aren't directly served by the charities we support. Examples have included helping families cope with the untimely death of a child and extreme financial hardship attributed to a child being diagnosed with terminal cancer.

Our chosen not-for-profits for 2025 included Community Kitchen, PREP Reading Program, Alberta Adolescent Recovery Center, Between Friends, The Calgary Dolphins Swim Club, Rowan House, Food for Thought and Kid Sport. Attached, you will find information on the programs that we have supported within the charities. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions that you may have.

We thank you for your continued support of the Big Hearted Mavericks and our incredible charity partners.

Sincerely,

**Stewart MacPherson**

President

**Big Hearted Mavericks Society**

**Derek Boniecki**

President

**Big Hearted Mavericks Foundation**



**Between Friends offers inclusive and accessible programs that create unique opportunities for individuals with disabilities to engage in social interactions with both peers who may or may not have a disability.**

Thanks to your generous support, Camp Bonaventure had an incredible year in 2025, welcoming 309 campers at our North and South Camp locations. With your investment, campers were able to grow and develop their skills while enjoying activities such as canoeing, sailing, swimming, arts & crafts, and many other exciting adventures. Most importantly, your support helped foster confidence, friendships, and a true sense of belonging that will extend well beyond the summer months.



### **Big Hearted Mavericks Funding Highlights:**

Between Friends provided \$75,448 in fee assistance to 85 campers at Camp Bonaventure.

8 of our graduating campers became volunteers and spent the summer volunteering in the program.

Camp Bonaventure provided new programming through CRATE Art Therapy.

79% of families reported Camp Bonaventure is a safe and inclusive space, 86% said staff care about participants' needs and development, and 86% agreed the camp is fun.

Thanks to the generous support of the Big Hearted Mavericks, Between Friends was able to strengthen our presence in Calgary's North communities. The \$50,000 investment allowed us to provide \$15,000 in fee assistance to families in the North, increase our staff-to-camper ratios to 1:3 with more qualified staff, relocate to the more accessible and larger Thorncliffe Community Centre, and bring in additional subcontractors to enhance our programming. These improvements ensured that more children and youth with disabilities could participate safely, comfortably, and fully in our programs.

**“Camp Bonaventure is a vital program for our kiddos! The counselors are truly amazing! The work is exhausting I'm sure, but I hope they know the positive impact they have and the difference they can make in these children's lives. As parents, we are so grateful to have a summer camp where our child is supported and cared for. As well, he's having so much fun”**

Camp Bonaventure Parent

# PREP

The Mavericks' Reading Program supports students (grades K-12) and young adults with Down syndrome. Our highly skilled reading team modifies each lesson based on the interests and abilities of each student. Reading instructors coordinate goals with families and, when applicable, teaching teams at the child's school. After each 45-minute session a 15-minute debrief with parents on strategies and goals occurs. Last year, we piloted a numeracy program and this year, parents can opt to add numeracy (simple math) into the reading lessons.

## Reading Challenges for Individuals with Down syndrome

For individuals with Down syndrome, their learning can be affected by challenges. Some examples are:

- Difficulty articulating speech due to lax muscles and a small oral cavity make it difficult for others to understand them.
- Approximately two-thirds of children with Down syndrome experience hearing loss (Roizen, 2007).
- Difficulties with short-term (working memory).
- Fine motor control issues may make it hard to grasp a pencil.



## Our Approach

The goal of the Mavericks' Reading Program is to help students develop a love of reading. Being able to read reveals a new world and it can enhance independence for our students. Learning to read can be an extended process for some students. Therefore, the team takes a strength-based approach and strives to have a full understanding of each student. Embracing this holistic view underscores the PREP staffs' belief that all aspects of a person contribute to their overall well-being. Therefore, the reading team prioritizes building a relationship with each student.

Classes are purposefully structured and creatively move each student through their lesson. PREP's teachers are experts in understanding and redirecting behaviour and celebrating successes. The **Maverick's Reading Program** has two levels:

- Developing Readers comprise students who are expanding their reading skills and have already acquired a limited sight word base.
- Emerging Readers are students who may be at an early literacy stage but are ready to start a more structured program.

## Outcome Measures

Each student receives an end of year summary that details their progress towards their goals and sets strategies and goals for the following year. The reading team also regularly debriefs with parents on their child's progress.

## Reach

Currently, the reading program serves 66 students, including one remote student, who is attending school in Yellowknife, NWT. His success has been remarkable!

## Program Budget

The cost of the program is \$183,000. Parents pay a program registration fee, which we strive to keep reasonable. Our fundraising goal is \$105,000, of which the Maverick's generously cover \$75,000. Our current shortfall is \$30,000. A generous contribution to the Maverick's reading program will support our students with Down syndrome to learn to read through approaches based on best practices delivered by our passionate and caring instructors.

**Executive Director**

# Community Kitchen

**The Souper Stars program is designed to build self-esteem in children by equipping them with life skills and confidence in their personal abilities. Group dynamics, social skills, and positive self-image are developed along with their nutritional and safety education.**

In 2025 we attended **45** classrooms in both CBE and CCSD districts. We had the opportunity to teach **11,037** children the importance and benefits of eating healthy. With our Souper Stars program, we were able to provide **28,559** healthy snacks to children in need. The request for our program in schools has been increasing. We now have 18 classrooms waiting for an opportunity to participate in our program for September of 2026. One of the biggest challenges for Souper Stars in 2025 was the teachers' strike. Families and students were struggling to cope during that difficult time. Many of our students rely on school breakfast programs. Daycare was not an option for many of our families that opted to drop off kids at the library where free programs were available. In response to those needs, we were able to pivot and support our students who were attending different day camp locations in the city and provide them with healthy food. Thanks to our generous donors and sponsors, we were able to acquire a new transit van to reach more schools with our resources around the city. That was a "huge" milestone.



## **The Big Hearted Maverick's also supports our children's summer program Tummy Tamers.**

Through Tummy Tamers, we work directly with organizations and agencies who provide camps and child programming while children are out of school. In 2025 we partnered with 5 different Calgary Public Libraries, the Salvation Army and the Immigrant Education Society.

Tummy Tamers provides a food pack or a healthy snack to these local agencies and organizations that are working with vulnerable kids during the summer. Our food is delivered to the sites with high quality standards of food safety and following the Canada Food Guide dietary guidance, which means Tummy Tamers' food packs or snack are healthy food choices and include all food groups to help provide the children the nutrients that they need.

With a total of **7 to 10** sites visited on weekly basis this summer we fed **9,060** children and delivered **12,240** snacks. Tummy Tamers summer program would not be possible without the support of various partners and corporations. As a non-profit organization, we rely on the donations and generosity of others to run such unique programs as Tummy Tamers. A very special thank you to those that so kindly donates to our program.

“

I am so grateful for Community Kitchen program and so amazed with the Souper Stars program and all the good information the kids get, one of my favorite class was stranger and internet safety it a very important topic to share with student as most of them don't know this information. I found out about the good food program and I started sharing the information with the families, also thank you so much for all the snacks, our kids were happy and looking forward to get a healthy snack.

-Corpus Christi Elementary Teacher

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# Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC)

**The Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC) is an accredited and licensed non-profit, long term family treatment centre for adolescents and their families suffering from the disease of alcoholism and/or drug addiction.**

Since its inception in 1992, AARC has graduated over 675 clients and an additional 2550 family members. Treatment fee subsidies are available to all families that require them. No one requiring this intensive program is turned away based on their ability to cover the costs.



Given the devastating effects that substance addiction can have on the physical health of youth and young adults, a key indicator of success at the Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC) is our clients' physical wellness.

**Thanks to funding support for our fitness program from the Big Hearted Mavericks, AARC's clients participate in on site fitness sessions three times a week with a certified personal trainer, ensuring clients can safely perform workouts according to their needs, interests, and fitness levels. These sessions are designed to support physical rehabilitation, improve mental well-being, and build healthy routines that reinforce long-term recovery.**

In addition, all clients and graduates of AARC have access to two workout rooms equipped with strength training machines, treadmills, elliptical trainers, stationary bicycles, yoga equipment, free weights, an outdoor sport court, and an outdoor hockey rink.



Alberta Adolescent Recovery Centre (AARC) has expanded our Community Outreach Program, helping more families find and explore treatment options for their family. Our community engagement team is responsible for public education, social media and media presence, and collaboration with other agencies.

Thanks to Big Hearted Mavericks we attended 26 community education events and hosted a Community Resource Fair in November 2025, ensuring awareness about our life-saving model.



**KidSport supports children who need financial assistance with sport registration fees and no cost equipment through our Calgary Flames Sports Bank. We believe the power of sport participation promotes the development of children’s social, mental and physical well-being.**

### **Celebrating the Mavericks’ Impact on KidSport Calgary**

Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of the Mavericks and the Gordon Family, KidSport Calgary is celebrating a transformational contribution of **\$300,000**. A gift that is already changing lives and will continue to do so for generations.

### **A Gift That Opens Doors for 822 Kids**

With this incredible support, **822 kids** will gain access to sport, an opportunity that brings belonging, confidence, and joy into their lives. This investment ensures that financial barriers never stand in the way of a child’s chance to play, grow, and thrive.

### **A Legacy Through the Endowment Fund**

A significant portion of this contribution has been placed into KidSport Calgary’s **Endowment Fund**, creating a sustainable source of hope for years to come. This long-term investment ensures that the Mavericks’ and Gordon Family’s impact will continue to echo through the community, supporting future generations of young athletes. This contribution leaves a lasting legacy of compassion, leadership, and belief in the power of sport.

### **The Broader Impact in 2025**

In 2025 alone, KidSport Calgary has supported:

- 10,736 kids with sport registration fees
- 4,263 kids with access to essential sports equipment

These numbers reflect a community that rallies behind its youth, and the contribution strengthens the foundation that makes this possible.

### **A Generous Community**

This incredible impact is only achievable because of supporters like the Big Hearted Mavericks and the Gordon Family. Their contribution to the Endowment Fund ensures that KidSport Calgary can continue to meet growing demand, expand access, and create lasting change. This generosity doesn’t just fund sport, it fuels confidence, connection, and lifelong memories.



**“With the help of KidSport, Skylar’s dream of being on a team and having a sport to call her own became a reality. Her first year her team won every game in the minors except one. They then played in the finals and would take gold, with Skylar making the winning catch in the outfield giving her team last at bat and finishing the game. This is a memory we both have for a lifetime.”**

– KidSport Parent

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calgarydolphins.ca

# Calgary Dolphins Swim Club

**The Calgary Dolphins Swim Club is a swim club for youths and young adults with Down syndrome.**

Established in 2005, the Calgary Dolphins Swim Club is a swim club for children and young adults with Down syndrome. Swimmers learn and refine the strokes, improving fitness levels and endurance. Thanks to the Big Hearted Mavericks contribution we can continue to provide swimmers with amazing coaching and opportunities to compete and grow in the sport they love.



**The Calgary Dolphins Swim Club is so appreciative of the funding received from the Mavericks. The “Big Hearted Mavericks Learn to Swim Lane” continues to grow, with seven new swimmers joining our club for the 2025/2026 season. This program is essential for new swimmers learning how to swim and provides an important entry point to our club. The growth in our membership from 43 to 50 members this season required the addition of three new coaches. The financial support from the Big Hearted Mavericks helped to increase our roster of experienced coaches.**

The need for the Dolphins Swim Club has grown substantially in the last couple of years with a long waitlist of young individuals wanting to learn how to swim.

With the support of partners like the Big Hearted Mavericks, the club can continue to expand its reach and make a positive impact on even more young lives in the community.

**On behalf of the Dolphins Swim Club, thank you for your continued support!**

*Calgary Dolphins  
Swim club*