



## IMPACTING LIVES



VARIETY'S  
NEWSLETTER  
SUMMER 2020

## Navigating our “New Normal”



July 2020 — At a Go Baby Go car gifting.

2020 will be a year that goes down in history to mark significant change in our world. With COVID 19, many charities have had to adjust dramatically to how they can continue to support families in need while adhering to social distancing protocol, putting programs and services on hold and managing staff remotely.

For Variety—the Children’s Charity of Alberta, we were faced with some significant challenges with how to continue to deliver our services, while having to suspend others. Fortunately we were not impacted too much with moving to a remote office as all of our staff had been working remotely prior to COVID 19 forcing people into home based offices.

Adversity—though difficult at times to see the positive while in the midst of distress, does bring significant learnings as well as new opportunities. Our charity was able to create new programs and fundraising initiatives while in the middle of the pandemic and have been able to adjust and move forward with minimal disruption to the charity.

We are looking forward to the fall when we will be able to begin running our programs again, and though they may look a bit differently than before, we will continue to support children living with disabilities in our communities.



# Variety's Virtual Extravaganza

This past June, Variety teamed up with two amazing comedians - Cory Mack and John Wing to deliver virtual comedy performances via a ZOOM platform. This was a new event for us and our entertainers had us laughing for their entire 45 minute performances. We also had some of the children we have supported over the years "join" the event through joke telling with which we showcased their talent to all of the online attendees in video format following each comedian. That was a lot of fun! We even had one child tell his joke using eye gazing technology and a speech communication device which did the talking on his behalf.

## Online Auction—

Variety Alberta teamed up with our sister organization Variety—the Children's Charity of Ontario and together hosted an online auction where we had amazing items to bid on ranging from sport hero memorabilia (i.e. Wayne Gretzky and Jarome Iginla autographed hockey jersey's) to Indigenous art.

Advertised through social media and emails, the auction was able to raise funds to support our initiatives while decorating our homes with some very unique and amazing items

We may run another auction this fall so stay tuned for a future announcement.



## Just Like You™ (JLY) Program:



In March of this year, we had to stop delivery of the JLY™ disability awareness education program to elementary students (in both the public and separate school systems). We put this program on during the school closures. Over our summer months we began transitioning our program to a virtual delivery platform and are ready for our fall delivery so we can continue educating students with the important messages our program has around inclusion, acceptance and understanding differences.

## **Billboard Campaign in Calgary and Edmonton—**

This summer we designed 5 different billboards that were on display around Calgary and Edmonton for 6 weeks. Pattison Outdoor Advertising supported our outreach and messaging by giving us free advertising.

These billboards were showcased in 11 locations in both Calgary and Edmonton. We were so happy to have this support and be able to bring more awareness of our charity to the broader community.



Our billboard designs feature children we have supported within the community either through direct support or through our advocacy. These billboards have given us a platform for us to showcase some of our initiatives as well as show the community why these programs are important to children living with disabilities.”

## **Volt Hockey—**

We are gearing up to launch a brand new adapted hockey program in Alberta (in both Calgary and Edmonton) to support children and adults living with upper mobility limitations and/or complex needs. Volt is played in specially designed electric hockey chairs that are operated with a joystick and have a hockey blade attached directly to the chair so children and youth who have upper body limitations do not have to hold a hockey stick. Volt opens the door for more individuals to play the sport of hockey and because of



this, many children get to experience for the first time, the opportunity to play on a team and learn valuable skills - all critical for positive social and physical development. Variety—the Children’s Charity has been given the rights by Denmark to launch Volt across Canada. Visit [www.varietyalberta.ca/volt/](http://www.varietyalberta.ca/volt/) to learn more about the program or to sign up as a participant.

## Go Baby Go—

This summer we gifted 21 Go Baby Go cars to young children living with mobility limitations in our province—15 in Calgary and 6 in Edmonton.

We began our Go Baby Go car gifting in May 2019 and since then have gifted just under 50 cars to young children living with various types of disabilities in our province. In addition, we also gifted a Go Baby Go car to a family with twin 3 year old daughters - both living with cerebral palsy in Regina (thanks to a donation from Saskatchewan).

Go Baby Go is lovely program that originated out of a research program at the university of Delaware and has been used throughout the world. It is a toddler mobility program that supports young children living with various disabilities including mobility limitations. Using battery operated ride on toy cars that are modified to fit a child's specific needs, Go Baby Go gives these children the opportunity to move in ways that they may not otherwise be able to do on their own.

Most of the cars that we gift have remote control functionality so parents/care givers/therapists can help out with steering and direction if needed.

We love this program as it provides children living with disabilities and mobility limitations a fun, less stigmatized way to move around and often gives these young kiddos independence. And in the world of disabilities, independence and inclusion are very important.

**Calgary Gifting**



**Edmonton Gifting**



**Regina Gifting**



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## Our 2020 Go Baby Go Sponsors:



Edmonton Strathcona



**cci wireless**  
perfecting rural connectivity



Club of Edmonton South

**Nickle Family Foundation**



Foundation



Edith Cavell Chapter #25  
Calgary, Alberta



Club of Calgary Chinook

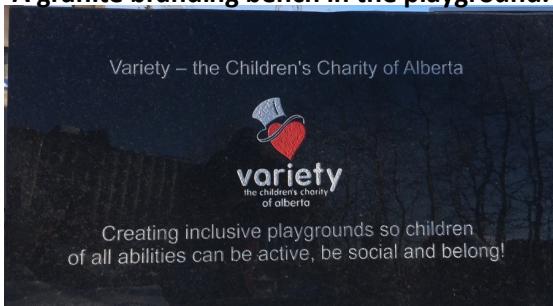


## Inclusive Playgrounds—

This summer we completed the installation of our 4th inclusive playground in the town of Blackfalds AB. Due to COVID 19 we saw a delay with the install of our 5th inclusive playground in the community of Ramsay (Calgary). This is now slotted for a 2021 install along with 5 additional playground builds we are currently fundraising for and will be installing (4 in Calgary; 1 in Cochrane and 1 on the T'suut'ina reservation).

While COVID-19 slowed down our projects this year it couldn't stop us. We completed the fundraising and planning for the Ramsay playground and we opened our latest inclusive playground in Blackfalds. Blackfalds is our fourth Inclusive playground in the last three years. From a barren field to a fully inclusive playground, the Blackfalds Inclusive playground features over 8,000 sq ft of full rubber surfacing that uses textures and colours for ground based play. There are over a dozen accessible pieces of equipment that includes spinning, sliding, zipping, swinging, bouncing, climbing and sensory features, along with a separate toddler hill slide, rest areas, grass, plants and trees to create places to relax and de-escalate. The playground has been packed since the day it opened as the Town's first fully inclusive playground. The support and vision of the Town of Blackfalds and support from local organizations such as the Blackfalds Optimists helped make this project possible.

### A granite branding bench in the playground:



Some playground pieces:



Our sponsor recognition rock:



## Sensory Backpacks—

Variety was looking for ways to support children who live with sensory processing disabilities to help them experience the external world in a safe, positive way when they are out with their families in shopping centres, grocery stores and child friendly establishments.

We have created Sensory Backpacks that we will have available free of charge in many establishments throughout Alberta which will be filled with tools to help children with autism and other types of sensory processing disabilities navigate outings with less likelihood of sensory overload, creating a more positive experience for the child and their family.

We are launching this initiative in the fall of 2020.



**SENSORY BACKPACKS**

Giving a child with sensory processing disabilities the right tools to reduce stimuli and decrease sensory overload will create a more positive experience for the both the child and their family.

A young girl with long hair is smiling and laughing while sitting in a shopping cart. A hand is visible pointing towards her.

## Planned Giving—YOU can help Make a DIFFERENCE in a Child's Life:

### How You Can Give:

1. Name Variety Alberta as a Beneficiary on your investment or savings accounts

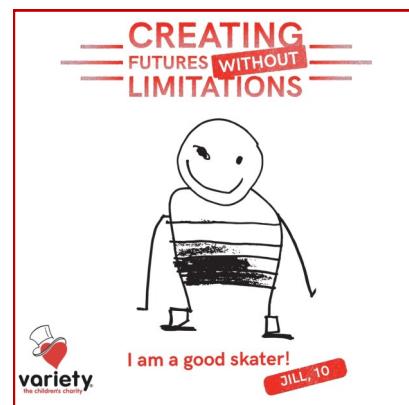
You can name a beneficiary on certain accounts, such as your RRSP, TFSA, LIRA, LIF, and RRIF. You can also invest in specific securities called Segregated Funds that allow you to name a beneficiary on accounts not listed above. By naming a beneficiary, the funds will go directly to the charity and will not have to be processed as part of your estate through your will.

2. Life Insurance

Naming Variety Alberta as the beneficiary on a life insurance policy can provide a valuable inflow of cash to the charity. There are multiple tax benefits that can be utilized for your estate upon your passing or even on your current tax returns.

3. Bequest and amount of your Estate to Variety Alberta in your will

You can set an amount or leave a percentage of your estate to the charity. This gift will also reduce the taxes burden on your estate.



From our collection of "people before disability" t-shirts.  
[www.varietyalberta.ca](http://www.varietyalberta.ca)

If you are interested in receiving more information about legacy giving and the best way you can make a difference to Variety Alberta, connect with us at [info@varietyalberta.ca](mailto:info@varietyalberta.ca) to learn more. Our Board Treasurer (Kris Kibler, CPA, CA) can talk to you more about how you can support through planned giving.

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**Thank You to all our Volunteers and Sponsors who support our charity in so many ways!**



@varietyab\_

@VarietyAlberta

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@Variety - the Children's Charity of Alberta

### CONNECT WITH US

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