you are one of 17,775 donors who gave to the University of Alberta in 2018-19*

When you gave to the U of A, you became part of a community of donors dedicated to a better future. A future inspired by your individual story and the positive change you want to see in the world. You realized long-term change comes from giving to students who become leaders, ideas that become solutions, and research that deepens understanding and saves lives. A better future is unfolding now, because of you.

thank you

Get to know our featured donors at uab.ca/thanks.

On the cover: Everett and Fletcher race toward their grandmother, U of A donor Val Blanch

*This report highlights donor impact from the University of Alberta’s 2019 fiscal year: April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019.
together, you gave $167.8 M to create a better future

$82M research
You advanced research and discovery, and helped attract talented faculty.

$41M programs
You enhanced teaching, experiential learning and student research opportunities.

$39M student awards
You reduced financial barriers for students and helped them achieve their potential.

$6M facilities
You transformed campus through new and enhanced buildings, labs, libraries and learning spaces.
After living with diabetes for 29 years, Colin Blanch (with son Fletcher, above) may soon be able to avoid continually monitoring his blood glucose levels, thanks to donor-funded research at the U of A.

Val and Morley Blanch give to research in hope of a diabetes cure — whether for their son Colin, for their grandchildren who may be at risk, or for someone else in the same situation.

4,721 donors supported the U of A each year for the past 5 years
Research brings answers for next generation

Val and Morley Blanch remember getting the devastating news. Their seven-year-old son, Colin, had been unwell for days. Answers came with an intense stay in an Edmonton hospital: Colin had diabetes. Life would never be the same.

Young Colin had to learn how to monitor and adjust his blood sugar levels. Val had to learn the nutritional content of everything she put on the table. “We learned to live on the edge,” says Morley, recalling the unpredictability of Colin’s blood sugar “lows.”

But Colin never let his diabetes restrict his experiences, despite his parents’ apprehensions. The day a 17-year-old Colin left for a year-long student exchange program in Australia, Val looked at Morley and wondered, “What have we done?”

As Colin, ’06 BCom, determined to live his life, his parents determined to help researchers find a cure. Ten years ago, Val, ’73 BA, ’78 BCom, and Morley, ’73 BSc, ’81 MAg, created a fellowship at the U of A’s Alberta Diabetes Institute to fund one graduate student trainee in diabetes research each year. These students work with the world-leading team that developed Canada’s first islet cell transplant process, known as the Edmonton Protocol.

The Blanches support students because they are the researchers of tomorrow. “If we really want a cure, we need investment in people, equipment and resources,” says Peter Light, research chair and director of the institute. “Val and Morley’s gift is vital to this goal.”

Since Colin was diagnosed in 1990, huge strides have been made at the U of A toward understanding, monitoring and controlling Type 1 diabetes. Colin is now an adult with a family of his own, including two little boys who may be at greater risk of developing diabetes. Val and Morley remain hopeful for a cure.

“Donating to research is our way of trying to have a larger impact,” says Morley. “That’s what drives us.”
peace of minds

Donors want students to know they're not alone

Catherine Silzer died by suicide in August 2015, at the age of 37. "She hit a place where she couldn't find her way," says her father, Brian Silzer. "We were aware of some of her personal challenges but we couldn't recognize the depth of the pain she was feeling."

Today Brian, 69 BSc, 71 DipEd, 79 MEd, and Cecile Silzer, 71 BEd, '91 MLB, want to help lighten the load other students are carrying. The couple's generous support of four U of A health initiatives gives more students access to services when they need it most. One of those initiatives is a series of student-made videos that highlight mental health challenges and campus resources for students, faculty and staff.

Education student Kayla Gulka helped produce the videos. The Silzers' story touched her personally because she faced similar struggles to Catherine. A car accident in her second year of university brought Kayla's existing anxiety to a breaking point. She was afraid to leave her house and withdraw from social interaction.

"I didn't want people to know how bad it was, so I dug myself into isolation," Kayla says. "The Silzers' gift brings light to so many students on campus. I want students to watch my video and know that they aren't alone, that it's OK to struggle, and that there's a whole campus and community here to look after them."

Helping students is a familiar and cherished role for Brian, who served as U of A registrar for close to 20 years. He and Cecile see their gift as an extension of his longtime work in support of student success.

"The goal of these programs is to help students rebound, so they have the motivation to go and seek help," says Cecile. "I like to think that if Catherine were at university now, all of these things would help her."

the brains and the bees

Student team creates a buzz thanks to donors

Inspired by the global movement #SaveTheBees, a team of U of A students has engineered a probiotic that targets a deadly infection in honeybees, APIS, short for antifungal porphyrin-based intervention system, can help ward off Nosema ceranae, a parasite infecting bees around the world and contributing to the death of bee populations.

The student team presented their discovery at the 2018 International Genetically Engineered Machine (iGEM) Competition in Boston, where they won first prize for Real Food and Nutrition Project. But they wouldn't have made it to the competition without the generosity of 32 donors, who helped cover the team's travel costs. The students' innovation couldn't have come at a better time, since the previous treatment for Nosema ceranae was no longer available.

your generosity creates a better future

3,067 undergraduate students were helped by a donor-funded bursary or scholarship in 2017/18*

16,789 students benefited from donor-funded mental health services this year

10,242 desks are in place at new academic building

2,136 donated lab equipment for current U of A faculty and staff

active kindness

Donor lifts up students in need

Wendy Jerome, 38 BPE, was a painfully shy teenager. Then one day a teacher convinced her to try out for her high school's cheerleading squad. She made the team and soon became head cheerleader.

Wendy went on to become an Olympic-level coach and pioneering sports psychologist — success she attributes to a network of supportive mentors. "I was lucky to have people who cared about me when I had no self-esteem and no support at home," she says.

One of her mentors was a U of A dean who encouraged her to apply for a bursary that allowed her to finish university. After graduating from the U of A, she returned to her high school to thank the teachers and principal who inspired her. "One teacher said to me, 'Do the same for someone else.' And so she did, by setting up a bursary to help U of A students facing financial barriers."

"I want to help that student who's having a tough time trying to make ends meet," Wendy explains. "That student who is like me, who may go and do the same for somebody else in the future."

Thanks to Wendy's bursary, which is awarded to one kinesiology student each year, third-year student Eric has been able to focus less on financial stress and more on helping others.

Eric came to the U of A to study adapted physical activity, with the dream of one day helping people like his sister, who has cerebral palsy, lead a fulfilling, active life — no matter what their impairments might be, but paying the bills hadn't been easy.

"Getting a bursary was a huge relief," says Eric. "I have so much gratitude for what Wendy has done. It really hits you when that generosity impacts you directly."

the students' cause — to fight a disease that's hurting the bee population — is a simple thing that has a huge impact down the road. It makes me feel inspired and sincerely happy to see these kids solve real-world problems."

Wilmer Maria Francisco, one of 32 donors to the project

ethan Agnes, a third-year engineering student, is one of the student team members working to bring the APIS probiotic to market with the help of Alberta beekeepers, who are eager to start field trials.

4,189 donors gave for the first time this year

731 research projects funded by donors this year

*The most recent data available of undergraduate financial supports administered by the Office of the Registrar.
“your generosity creates opportunity

I see it every day. Because of you, more students have extraordinary learning experiences and our researchers have greater capacity to tackle complex problems. Your support changes lives and advances discovery — now and in the future. Thank you!”

David H. Turpin
President and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Alberta