Music student Andrea Pedro plays the new donor-funded Steinway concert piano at Convocation Hall.
What does the future look like if we build it together?

More than 100 years ago, our founders and first students launched the University of Alberta to help build a city, a province and a country, citizen by citizen, and to solve the problems we face together.

This year, donors joined U of A students, faculty and other partners to continue to imagine and build a future of healthy, safe, resilient and vibrant communities.

As the examples on these pages show, your generosity fosters potential, brings ideas to life, breaks down barriers and lifts people up.

Your gift helps address the needs of today and builds a better society for tomorrow.

Thank you.
This year you helped reinforce research

Ringette player Megan Ogle was racing down the ice when she collided with a bigger player. She fell, her head snapping backward as she slammed against the ice.

Her memory of the incident is hazy, a sign she sustained a moderate concussion. In the weeks after the injury, lights and noise bothered her and carrying on a conversation was exhausting. Ogle counts herself lucky her brain injury wasn’t worse. Soon she was back to work on her research — coincidentally — on the biomechanics of head and neck injury.

There is no helmet certified to protect against concussion. Donor-funded research aims to change that.

One in five Canadians has had a concussion diagnosis, but it’s estimated 50 per cent of concussions are never reported. The effects — including chronic pain, diminished neurological capacity and depression — can add up to a lifetime of challenges and missed opportunities.

There is no helmet certified to protect against concussion. At the U of A’s Biomedical Instrumentation Laboratory, where Ogle is a master’s student, donor-funded research aims to change that. The lab’s research includes looking at helmet protection from combat blasts, learning about the brain’s chemical response to impact, and measuring a helmet’s degree of protection.

Thanks to donors, this research will lead to improved design and testing of protective gear, safer games and better lives.
This year you helped students stay strong

Nicole McMillan’s journey from heartache to resilience mirrors that of her hometown, Fort McMurray, Alta. In less than a year, her mom was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, her dad was laid off and a wildfire devastated the northern city, forcing a mass evacuation. After they returned, McMillan took on four jobs to help her parents. Going back to school seemed impossible.

The U of A Disaster Relief Bursary, funded by nearly 100 donors, helped McMillan get back on her feet and into class. The business student returned to Fort McMurray for an internship in human resource management — experience she wants to apply to a future career in employment law.

“Life doesn’t stop because I get sick.”

NICOLE McMILLAN, DISASTER RELIEF BURSARY RECIPIENT

Thanks to the bursary and another donor-supported award, McMillan’s mom was able to see her daughter pursue her dreams. “My mom always told me, ‘Life doesn’t stop because I get sick.’” Her mother passed away in May 2017, one year after the wildfire.

McMillan has seen the impact of collective generosity — from her donor-funded bursary to the outpouring of support for Fort McMurray. She hopes to pay it forward by returning home after graduation to start her career and help her community rebuild.
Opening in June 2018, the spectacular new Aga Khan Garden, Alberta will draw people from all backgrounds together in the largest Islamic-inspired garden in North America — an environment where cultural acceptance and understanding take root.

Located at the heart of the University of Alberta Botanic Garden near Devon, the Aga Khan Garden, Alberta embraces the local climate and landscape and forges a connection between contemporary Alberta and the traditional Islamic world. People from around the world will come to retreat, gather and celebrate.

Islamic gardens feature paved surfaces and geometric design that contrast with the natural world and explore human creativity. Visitors to the new garden will encounter forest paths, orchards and reflective pools. In the central courtyard, a fountain system will flow over terraces and past sunken gardens and plants that change colour with the seasons.

The garden is a gift to Albertans from His Highness the Aga Khan, the spiritual leader of the Ismaili Muslim community.

His Highness has stated: “The garden is a central element in Muslim culture, a symbol of a spiritual ideal — a place where human creativity and divine majesty are fused, where the ingenuity of humanity and the beauty of nature are productively connected.”
U of A dentistry student Connor Grimes was doing his regular volunteer shift at a community clinic in Edmonton’s inner city when a 17-year-old girl arrived in severe pain. Her tooth was decaying and infected, and part had broken off. There was no way to fix it, but Grimes was able to pull the tooth, giving the teen some much-needed relief.

“Working at the clinic opened my eyes to the barriers people have.”

CONNOR GRIMES, DENTISTRY STUDENT

Many patients who come to the Boyle McCauley Health Centre dental clinic face obstacles such as homelessness, mental illness and substance abuse. They may not be able to access dental care when they need it most.

“Working at the clinic opened my eyes to the barriers people have,” Grimes says. He plans to continue giving back to this underserved community once he has his own dental practice.

A major expansion is underway at the Boyle McCauley dental clinic, thanks to a community partnership with the U of A School of Dentistry and generous ongoing donor support.

Soon, the clinic will become a teaching site for dentistry students, doubling its current capacity and increasing access to dental care for vulnerable populations — and creating more qualified, compassionate dentists in the process.

Bridging a Gap

This year you helped communities smile

Low-income patients and families get access to care, and U of A dentistry students get hands-on experience through a community partnership.

3,000+ Patients each year who will receive dental care because of the donor-funded expansion of the Boyle McCauley dental clinic

140 Days each school year that dentistry students will provide services at the clinic — supporting the community and gaining invaluable experience

755 Emergency visits to the dental clinic in 2017-18. With dental problems the most common physical health issue experienced by the homeless, one of the goals of the clinic is to lessen the load on hospital emergency rooms.

Examination chairs available in the expanded clinic, doubling the number of patients that dentists and students can accommodate at one time

8 Examination chairs available in the expanded clinic, doubling the number of patients that dentists and students can accommodate at one time
Concerts, recitals and master classes presented by the U of A music department this year.

Students enrolled in music programs at the U of A. Many go on to perform nationally and internationally.

Arts lovers who took in U of A music, theatre and design shows in 2017-18, illustrating the university’s impact on the arts community.

Watch and listen to music student Andrea Pedro (above) play the new concert piano at uab.ca/steinway.

A Note of Thanks
This year you helped make music

Master pianist and U of A music professor Jacques Després knows playing on a great piano is key to his talented students giving their best performances. U of A music students have access to renowned instructors and many opportunities to perform, but the concert pianos have aged.

Wear and tear on older pianos changes how they feel and sound, preventing students from playing to their potential. “It’s like listening to music on earbuds with a laptop,” Després says. “The music is there but not at the best possible quality.”

“When you play on a piano of this quality, you realize things about the music you would not realize on another piano.”

JACQUES DESPRÉS, MASTER PIANIST AND MUSIC PROFESSOR

Thanks to a dedicated group of donors, a Steinway Model D concert grand piano made its debut at Convocation Hall this spring. It will be an invaluable learning tool for students.

A Steinway takes more than a year to build and is made almost entirely by hand. “When you play on a piano of this quality, you realize things about the music you would not realize on another piano,” Després says. “You’re not held back by the instrument.”

The new Steinway will enrich Edmonton’s vibrant arts community by attracting more visiting musicians, whose master classes and performances will benefit students and music lovers alike. “It is truly a special instrument,” says Després.
Every gift uplifts our students and researchers — and improves the many lives they go on to touch

“Your support builds bridges that create opportunity and reveal possibilities the world might otherwise never have been able to see.”

KATICA NAUDE
FIRST-YEAR CHEMISTRY STUDENT AND DONOR-FUNDED SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT
“Universities endure because of their unique role — to pursue truth, to prepare citizens and to drive change. Donors strengthen that role by helping us tackle complex problems, create stronger communities and educate the next generation so that they can build a better future.”

DAVID H. TURPIN
President and Vice-Chancellor,
University of Alberta