

For Immediate Release

Rick Hansen Foundation Announces Recipients of the 2023-24 Building Without Barriers Challenge

September 26, 2024, Traditional territory of the xʷməθkwəy 'əm (Musqueam) (Musqueam) First Nation/ Richmond, B.C. – The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) is proud to congratulate GWL Realty Advisors, Cadillac Fairview, Choice Properties, Carleton University and First West Credit Union as recipients of the 2023-24 Buildings Without Barriers Challenge. Supported by BOMA Canada, the Challenge recognizes commercial and multi-unit residential property owners and managers as well as municipalities demonstrating leadership and commitment to a more accessible and inclusive future. Recipients were recognized and awards were given out last night at BOMA Canada’s BOMEX National Awards Gala in Vancouver, B.C.

“We are proud to recognize these organizations for their vision and dedication to becoming industry leaders in accessibility and inclusion,” said Sarah McCarthy, VP, Strategic Initiatives, Rick Hansen Foundation. “It’s wonderful to see so many well-established developers and organizations go above and beyond to set the bar higher. We hope their leadership will inspire other property owners, managers and municipalities to follow suit.”

Launched in 2021, participating organizations of the Buildings Without Barriers Challenge are encouraged to accelerate their accessibility journey by having at least 3 buildings rated using [Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility Certification™ \(RHFAC\)](#), a national rating and recognition system that measures the level of meaningful accessibility of buildings from the holistic perspective of individuals with varying disabilities including mobility, vision, hearing and neurodiversity. In addition to the award recognition, Challenge participants receive accessibility awareness training for staff, a full tuition grant for the [RHFAC Professional Training](#) course for one staff member, and exclusive webinars.

Awards were recognized in the following categories.

The Commitment Award for the organization with the most buildings or pre-construction plans rated with RHFAC. With 13 sites rated, the following three organizations tied in this category:

- Cadillac Fairview
- Choice Properties
- GWL Realty Advisors

The Innovation Award for a building with the highest number of innovation points on their RHFAC rating:

- Carleton University - MacOdrum Library

The Accessibility Progress Award for a previously rated building who achieves the highest overall improvement on their RHFAC rating:

- First West Credit Union – Penticton Regional Office

64% of Canadians have a disability, or take care of someone with a disability, or live with someone who has a disability. Improved accessibility benefits everyone, including caregivers and friends of those living with a disability, and our aging population. When people of all abilities are able to access the buildings where we live, work, learn and play, everyone can participate in our communities.

[Recipient Quotes](#)

Cadillac Fairview

“This award is a reflection of our commitment to create more inclusive spaces to better serve our building occupants, shoppers and communities,” said Rory MacLeod, Executive Vice President of Operations, Cadillac Fairview. “We’re incredibly proud of our teams and partnership with the Rick Hansen Foundation to help remove physical barriers in our spaces and create a more vibrant and welcoming environment for everyone.”

Carleton University

“Carleton University is proud to participate in the Buildings Without Barriers Challenge this year and thrilled to receive the Innovation Award for the leadership shown by our MacOdrum library,” said Dean Mellway, Accessibility Advisor of Facilities, Management and Planning at Carleton University. “Carleton is in the midst of completing a campus wide audit using the RHFAC program. We are committed to ensuring that all of our existing buildings achieve Certification, and all new buildings achieve RHFAC Gold Certification. Thank you for this recognition.”

Choice Properties

“At Choice Properties, accessibility is integral to our purpose of creating places where people thrive,” said Claudia Nemi, Vice President of National Property Management, Choice Properties. “As one of Canada’s largest landlords, we play a significant role in shaping our environment and how it is experienced by the community. We are proud to be partners of the Rick Hansen Foundation; and we look forward to continuing our efforts towards inclusion in our portfolio and meeting the diverse needs of the people who shop, live and work at our properties every single day.”

First West Credit Union

“At First West, our purpose is to create a future where everyone can flourish,” said Liz Bailey-Connor, Chief People & Culture Office, First West Credit Union. “When we reflect on this statement, we continuously reach the same conclusion—how can someone flourish when something as foundational as accessibility isn’t meeting their needs? We are immensely proud to receive the Accessibility Progress Award because it shows not only our firm commitment to bettering accessibility across our organization, but it also highlights accessibility as a continuous journey with ongoing learning and adaptation. Through meaningful conversations, dedicated training and resources, and the buy-in of our leadership teams, we are integrating accessibility in all facets of our organization—ultimately furthering our goal to create an accessible environment for all.”

GWL Realty Advisors

“We would like to extend our gratitude to the building owners and our staff who share the vision of enhanced tenant and visitor experiences,” said Steven Marino, Executive Vice President, Portfolio Management. “We also appreciate the tremendous work of the Rick Hansen Foundation. Their dedication to promoting accessibility and initiatives like the Buildings Without Barriers Challenge is truly inspiring. The Foundation’s commitment to creating an inclusive society is the cornerstone of our shared success. Your support and hard work enable us to positively impact the communities we serve.”

To learn more visit www.RickHansen.com/Challenge.

-30-

About the Rick Hansen Foundation

The Rick Hansen Foundation (RHF) was established in 1988, following the completion of Rick Hansen’s Man In Motion World Tour. For over 35 years, RHF has worked to raise awareness, change attitudes, and remove barriers for people with disabilities. For more information on the RHF Accessibility Certification program visit www.RickHansen.com/RHFAC.

RHF Media Contact:

Cynamon Schreinert, Hartley PR

Cynamon@hartleypr.com

604-802-2733