A young child with curly hair, wearing an orange top and sandals, stands in a classroom holding a large white sign. The background shows a typical classroom setting with a clock, bulletin board, and shelves.

# How can we make a difference?

*Stories of the people and programs  
that benefit from your generosity.*

 **EducationMatters**  
calgary's public education trust

## Q How do you “make” a reader?

ROWAN DAY is a feisty six-year-old whose love of learning is bigger than her smile. Rowan and her family can work on her literacy skills from home because of an innovative program designed by Rowan’s kindergarten teacher Treena. Treena expanded on a concept developed by two teachers from Olds, Alberta. Rowan’s school, James Short Memorial, serves high needs students from economically-challenged homes or homes with limited English language proficiency. Treena saw the vital need for a home-school literacy link and the Kindergarten Literacy Backpack Program was born. “We have an opportunity to make a huge difference in our students’ lives by encouraging and promoting their parents as partners in their children’s education.”

Backpacks are filled with books, poems, songs, games, and activities for families to work on together. They get checked out like a traditional library book. Author Jim Trelease suggests that children need to be read to for approximately 1000 hours before they enter school in order to have the pre-reading skills that make them ‘ready to read.’ This program addresses the issue of improving early literacy in children, and provides a vehicle to include the family in the learning process, creating a stronger connection between families and schools.

As one of EducationMatters’ key pillars, literacy ensures success for students in every aspect of their lives from their academics to their careers, from their self esteem to their contributions in the community. Children who struggle with literacy are challenged throughout their school years and often do not complete high school. There is evidence that a large percentage of youth in the justice system have poor literacy skills.

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A young child with curly hair, wearing an orange top, is smiling and holding a large white sign. The sign has the text 'ROWVA DOY ♡ Age 5' written on it in black marker. The child is standing in a classroom or office setting with various items like backpacks and papers visible in the background.

ROWVA  
DOY ♡ Age  
5

*Kindergarten Literacy Backpack Program*

A

## Q How do you build leaders?

The teachers at Belfast School immediately thought of AMANDA DICKSON when EducationMatters asked to videotape a student who embraces learning. Amanda is a bright, confident, accomplished elementary school student who plays multiple instruments, sings, dances and had the lead in the school's production of Peter Pan. At only nine years of age, it's clear Amanda was born to be on the stage. Programs like Music & Literacy at Belfast, a Calgary Board of Education (CBE) arts-centered learning school, have helped Amanda uncover her skills, abilities and natural leadership potential.

To that end, Leadership is another key pillar for EducationMatters. It can be nurtured and encouraged in students through many forms – be it the arts, sports, clubs and debate teams, school government or volunteerism. We live in a world where it is easy to become disconnected and disenchanting, where it is easy to avoid 'getting engaged.' By fostering values of community engagement and providing leadership opportunities for students, we are supporting future generations of caring, thoughtful citizens who will make a difference on a global scale.

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AMANDA  
AGE 9  
Music And Literacy  
Program




## Q Can you teach beyond the classroom?

ADUT MABIOR would never have graduated from high school if she hadn't attended the Louise Dean Centre at a critical juncture in her life. As a teen mother, Adut needed the expert guidance and support from the school to enhance her learning, life skills and confidence. Born in Sudan, Adut came to Canada at the age of five. Having lived in a refugee camp, Adut never knew her parents. She grew up in numerous foster care situations and eventually came to Louise Dean in Grade 9. Adut has had a hard, but ultimately, successful journey. At only 17, Adut graduated with honours and was accepted to both the University of Calgary and Mount Royal College. Adut also spoke at Kafé12 – a world café event hosted by the Funders for Youth to engage the Calgary community to help improve Calgary's high school completion rate. Adut spoke eloquently about what inspired her to achieve her dreams ... community, friends, teachers and her foster mom. She is determined to create a good life for herself and her son Isaac.

Improving students' life skills is a key pillar at EducationMatters. Helping them transition through school and giving them the tools to do so, is critical to their futures. Often the more vulnerable students need to learn resiliency, self-respect and tolerance. These students can make poor choices which negatively impact their lives. Career development, character education, cultural diversity programs, prevention programs and support for at-risk students helps immeasurably.

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ADUT Mabior

17

LOUIS DEAN School

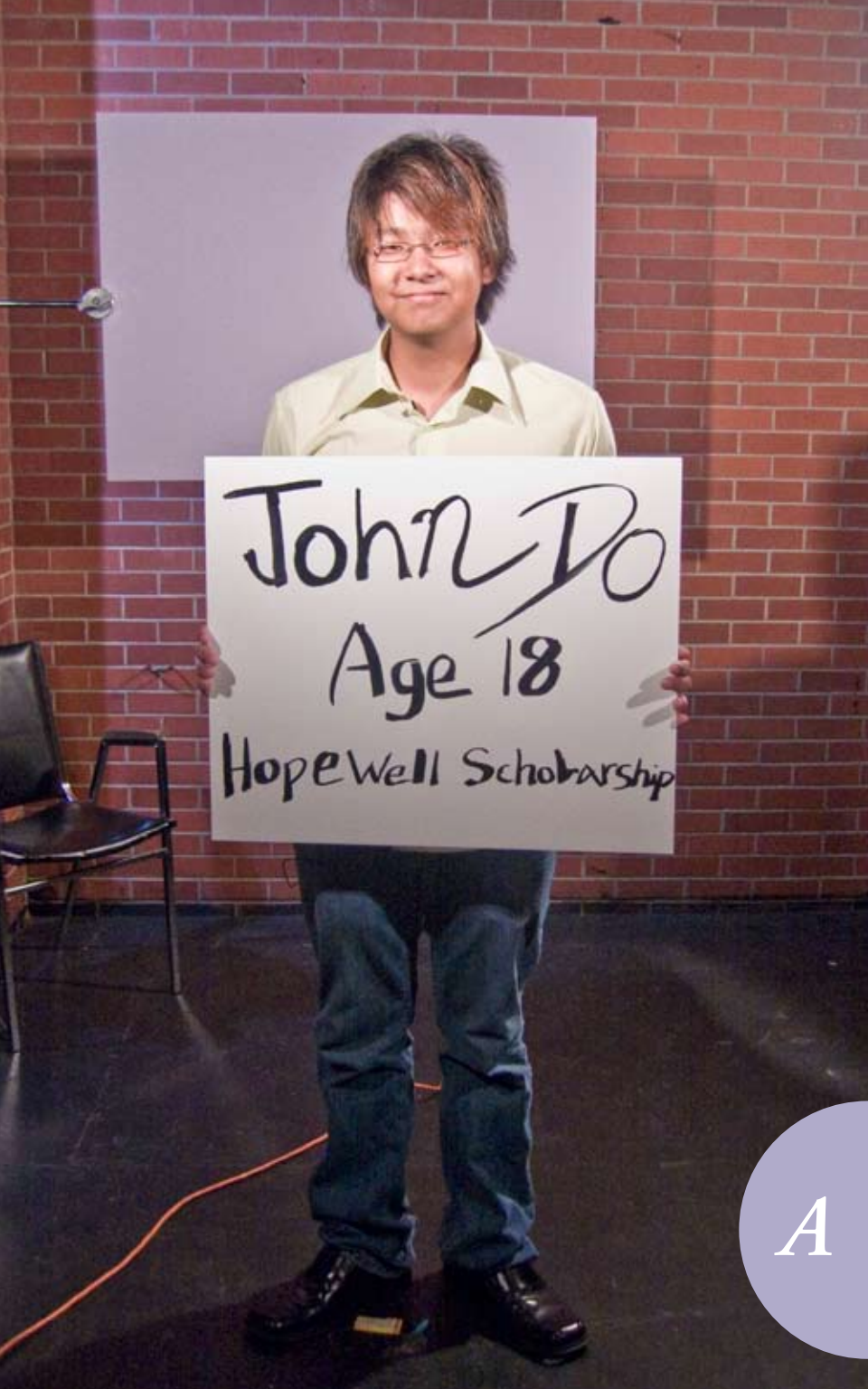
A

## Q Are scholarships more than money?

John Chung-Kwong Do was the 2007 recipient of the Hopewell Scholarship, a generous student award established in 2004 at EducationMatters by the Hopewell Group of Companies. This scholarship is designed to help economically challenged students pay for their education for up to four years depending upon their need. A graduate of Lester B. Pearson School, John's scholarship application was exceptional. Not only did he excel academically but he was an active school volunteer, reading to ESL students and participating in regional debate tournaments. He was a member of the Youth Volunteer Corps and a mentor at Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Calgary. John's winning essay focused on the role of today's youth in meeting future business leadership needs. Now attending the University of Calgary, John is studying commerce and aspires to become an accountant. *Always Learning* is an important motto for John. He attributes his success to the great support he received throughout his life from his schools, teachers and especially his devoted mother.

Education is a journey that can take you anywhere, but for many deserving Calgary students like John, the road ends at their high school doors. One of EducationMatters' top priorities is to provide opportunity for higher education for all qualifying Calgary high school students from a wide range of backgrounds. The field of post-secondary study supported by these awards is as diverse as the students themselves and includes athletics, arts, trades, technology, business, and engineering. To a single student, even one scholarship award can be the plus that makes a difference in their lives. It did for John.

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A young man with short brown hair and glasses, wearing a light green button-down shirt and blue jeans, stands in front of a red brick wall. He is holding a large white sign with black handwritten text. To his left, a black folding chair is partially visible. The floor is dark, and an orange cable runs across it. A white rectangular panel is mounted on the wall behind him.

John Do  
Age 18  
HopeWell Scholarship

A


## Q What contribution will *you* make?

He may be soft spoken, but David Pickersgill certainly isn't shy about life-long learning and getting involved. Having served two terms as Governor on the Board of EducationMatters, as well as serving on boards for Big Brothers & Big Sisters of Calgary, Rocky View Child and Family Services, and Governors for Children to name a few, David sets an example for passionate community engagement. He has made a substantial contribution to the youth of this city, and for EducationMatters, he has played a key leadership role in its development and growth as a young foundation.

As a former CBE Trustee, David and other colleagues at the Calgary Board of Education had a vision of creating enduring support for Calgary students, and wanted to ensure the public education system had a strong, healthy future. Their belief: the best public education happens when the community participates in its development. Public engagement with public education and being the plus for Calgary students were important cornerstones of that vision which became the mission for EducationMatters.

Community Engagement can be as simple as reading to a student, or as complex as inviting a cross section of the community together with the objective of improving Calgary's high school completion rate through initiatives like Kafé12. But the goal is the same - to involve the community in becoming champions for public education. Why? Because as former Alberta Lt. Governor Lois Hole once said, "a strong public education system is the cornerstone to a healthy, vibrant community." And most importantly, because we cannot deny the value of giving all Calgary students an equal chance to succeed at school and to unleash their passions and potential.

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A man with a grey beard and hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and khaki pants, stands in front of a wood-paneled wall. He is smiling and holding a white rectangular sign in front of his chest. The sign has handwritten text in black ink. The background consists of vertical wood slats. To the left, a power outlet is visible with a black cord plugged into it. The floor is covered in a dark red carpet. In the bottom right corner, there is a green circular graphic containing a white letter 'A'.

DAVID  
PICKERSGILL  
68  
Governor

A



## + Giving students more.

Every year thousands of public education students in Calgary need opportunities to enhance their literacy, life skills and leadership potential. You have the power to be the plus for these students and give them a gift they will never lose.