

2026/ SUCCESS STORY

# Lupus Canada

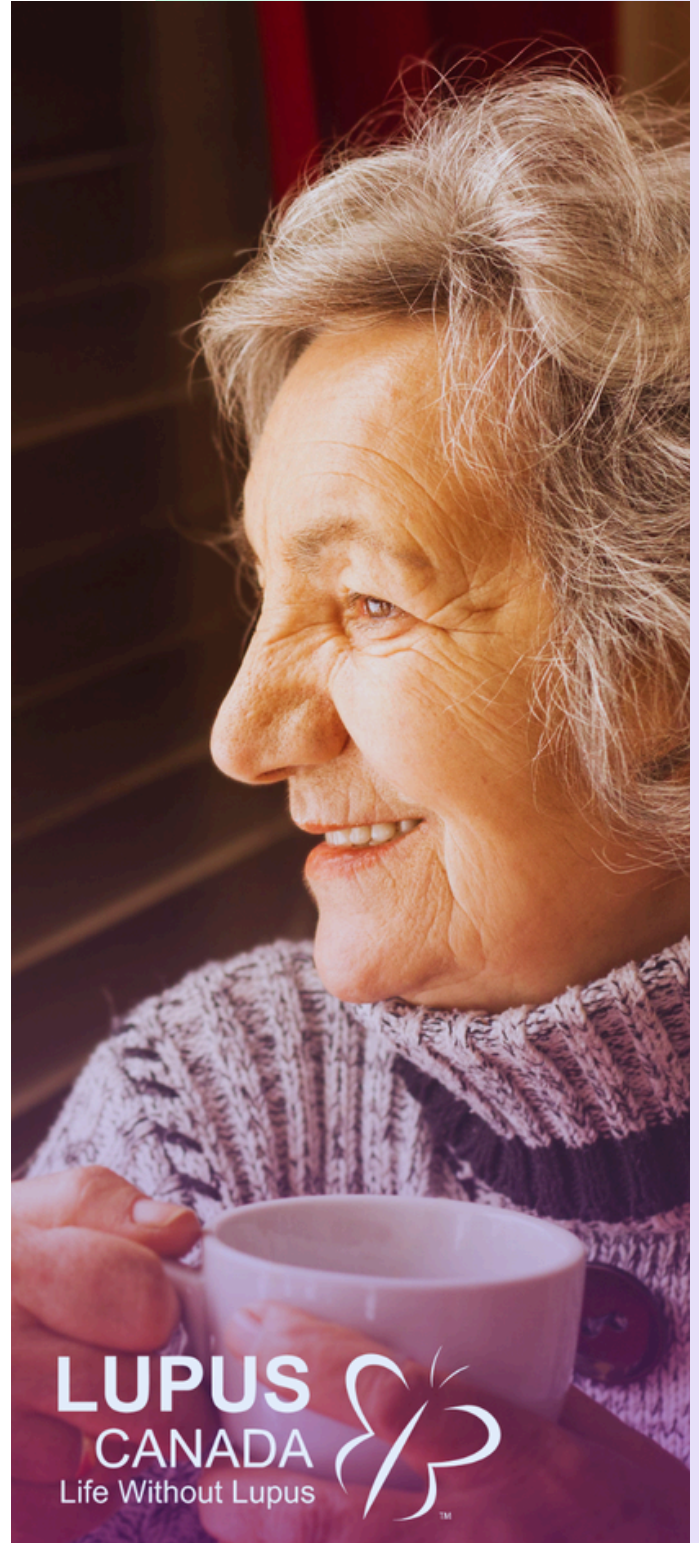
## About Lupus Canada

Lupus Canada is dedicated to the mission of improving the lives of people living with lupus through research, advocacy, public awareness and education. **It is the only national Lupus-specific charity in the country.**

## Uses CanadaHelps for

- Custom Donation Forms (CDF)
- Peer-to-Peer (P2P) campaigns
- monthly giving, and more

**With CanadaHelps, the charity has seen a 38% increase in monthly revenue via CDF and a 32% increase in single donations through Charity Profile, as well as exceeded their P2P campaign revenue goals by 100%.**



# PROVIDING HOPE

Raising Awareness, Inspiring Change



**“We are here to improve the lives of Canadians impacted by lupus, through research, advocacy, and trusted support.”**

— Heather Coates, National Fund Development & Engagement Officer, Lupus Canada

## ABOUT LUPUS CANADA

Lupus Canada is dedicated to improving the lives of people living with lupus and supporting the broader lupus community across the country. Their mission encompasses research, advocacy, patient education, public awareness, and support. **As the only national Lupus-specific charity in the country, Lupus Canada plays a critical role in connecting individuals and families living with this complex autoimmune disease to trusted information, peer support, and national initiatives.**

Lupus, often called ‘the disease of a thousand faces,’ can manifest differently in every person and impact any organ in the body, making it incredibly challenging to diagnose and manage. The organization collaborates closely with healthcare professionals, researchers, volunteers, and community partners to advance lupus research and promote earlier diagnosis and improved care.

Community engagement is at the heart of Lupus Canada’s work. From national awareness campaigns to community-led fundraising initiatives, the organization relies on the generosity of donors and supporters to fund programs that create real impact for people living with lupus.

## RELATIONSHIP WITH CANADAHELPS

Lupus Canada has partnered with CanadaHelps since 2003 to enhance their digital fundraising and has been utilizing the platform for donor management since 2023.

The charity utilizes CanadaHelps for:

- Custom Donation Forms (CDF)
- Peer-to-Peer (P2P) campaigns
- monthly giving
- automated tax receipting, and more.

*“It has been very efficient to be able to centralize digital fundraising on one platform. CanadaHelps has been a really reliable and easy platform for us to manage online donations and peer-to-peer campaigns,”* shared Cora Novacut-Lee, Manager, Donor Relations/Special Programs at Lupus Canada.

**The organization has seen a 38% increase in monthly revenue via CDF, exceeded P2P revenue goals by 100%, and experienced other fundraising growth.**

# Overall Fundraising

Lupus Canada engages in a diversified fundraising strategy that blends national campaigns, community-led initiatives, and special events to support its mission.

## Peer-to-Peer Community Campaigns

The **Lupus 1000 Challenge** represents Lupus Canada's signature peer-to-peer fundraising initiative, hosted via CanadaHelps P2P tool. Born from two Quebec swimmers living with lupus who wanted to swim 100 laps a day for 10 days during Lupus Awareness Month in May 2024, the campaign evolved into a broader challenge, inviting community members to complete 1,000 repetitions of any activity.

**In 2025, the Challenge exceeded its \$10,000 fundraising goal by more than 100%.** It saw participation from individuals, teams, swim clubs, and various organizations across Canada. The final day of the challenge coincided with World Lupus Day on May 10th, creating a celebratory culmination that sparked national awareness. *“For a small team like ours, results like these are very meaningful. They demonstrate how our community continues to grow year over year, and how willing people are to get involved and support events like this,”* shared Ariana Ranjbar, Manager, Web & Digital Media Strategies, Lupus Canada.

## Annual Giving & Direct Appeals

The organization maintains consistent donor engagement through year-round direct mail appeals and monthly newsletters. Their giving campaigns include seasonal appeals and Giving Tuesday initiatives, with messaging extended throughout November and December rather than concentrated on a single day.

## Monthly Giving Program

*“Monthly giving has become a key priority for our fundraising strategy. It’s a slow climb, but we’re definitely seeing traction,”* shared Heather. *“As a small team, we have to be intentional about where we focus. Converting one-time donors to monthly supporters helps create stable, predictable funding and that stability allows us to better serve Canadians living with lupus. Every new monthly donor is truly a team, and community, win.”*

## Digital Fundraising

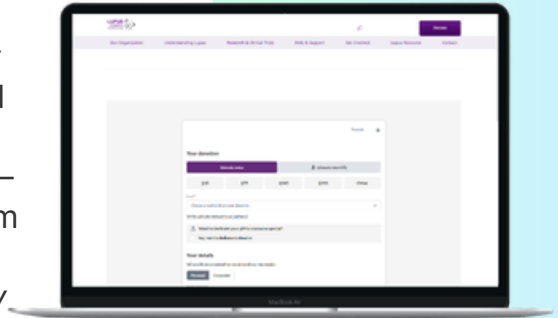
Digital fundraising plays an important role in Lupus Canada’s overall strategy, enabling the organization to reach supporters across the country. Through online donation tools such as custom donation forms, campaign pages, and the P2P tool, the team makes it easy for donors to contribute and stay engaged year-round.

# Digital Fundraising with CanadaHelps

CanadaHelps plays a central role in Lupus Canada's digital fundraising strategy, enabling the organization to run campaigns efficiently while delivering a seamless donor experience.

## CUSTOM DONATION FORMS (CDF)

Lupus Canada creates customized donation forms for various purposes, from general donations to memorial campaigns. When community members approach the organization wanting to fundraise for specific causes – such as memorial campaigns for loved ones – the team can quickly create dedicated forms to consolidate donations. *“The customizable donation forms are very easy to set up and launch, without requiring a lot of back-and-forth,”* shared Cora. **These forms allow easy allocation of donations to specific campaigns and provide donors with a streamlined giving experience directly on the Lupus Canada website.**

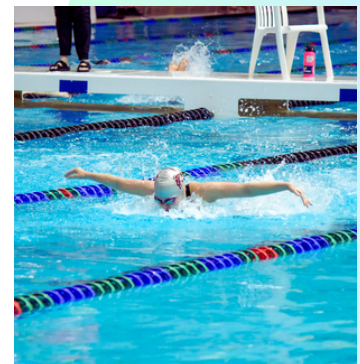


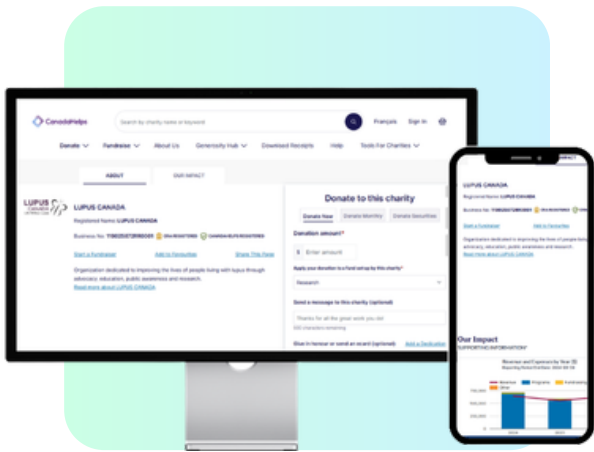
## MONTHLY GIVING

Monthly giving is an important component of Lupus Canada's fundraising model, helping provide more predictable support for long-term planning. CanadaHelps' custom donation forms have been very effective for Lupus Canada, contributing to a 38% increase in monthly revenue via these CDFs.

## PEER-TO-PEER FUNDRAISING

The peer-to-peer (P2P) tool proved essential for the Lupus 1000 Challenge's success. The platform enabled participants nationwide to create individual fundraising pages, rally their networks, and track progress toward their goals. This approach allowed the campaign to reach beyond Lupus Canada's immediate community, with participants sharing stories that educated others about lupus while raising funds.





## CHARITY PROFILE

Lupus Canada maintains a charity profile on the CanadaHelps platform, which generates substantial revenue annually from donors, both single and monthly donors, who discover the organization through the platform. The team recognizes this as a valuable discovery tool for potential donors searching for health-related causes.

## SMART SUMS & FEE COVERAGE

Lupus Canada appreciates features like smart sums, which uses donor history and device information to suggest appropriate donation amounts. The fee coverage option has proven particularly valuable, with many donors choosing to cover processing fees despite initial concerns that donors might resist being asked to give more beyond their donation. *"Once we turned on that feature, we saw that although not everyone opts to cover the fees, a significant number of people do – making it a worthwhile and impactful option,"* shared Cora.



## DONOR MANAGEMENT & REPORTING

Through CanadaHelps' multi-purpose system, Lupus Canada can easily access donation data tied to specific campaigns, forms, and fundraising initiatives. This visibility helps the team understand how different campaigns are performing and ensures donations are allocated correctly.

Having all online donations centralized in one system has made tracking and reconciliation significantly more efficient for a small national team. *"It's wonderful that we were able to centralize digital fundraising and donor management on one platform,"* shared Cora. The donor self-management features allow supporters to update their information easily, reducing administrative work for the team.



**"It's wonderful that we were able to centralize digital fundraising and donor management on one platform,"**

— Cora

# Results from Using CanadaHelps

With CanadaHelps as its primary digital fundraising platform, Lupus Canada has been able to see enhanced results.

- 21%** increase in revenue through CDF
- 38%** increase in monthly revenue via CDF
- 23%** increase in revenue through charity profile
- 32%** increase in single donations revenue through the charity profile
- 100%** exceeded in Peer to Peer campaign revenue goals

*\*% increase over the past two fiscal years*

## INCREASED FUNDRAISING

With CanadaHelps digital fundraising tools – including custom donation forms (CDFs), P2P, and Charity Profile – Lupus Canada has seen an increase in revenue. This includes a 21% increase in revenue through CDF as well as a 23% increase in revenue through their CanadaHelps Charity Profile that exemplifies the expansion in the charity’s donor base and reach via the platform.

## INCREASED CAMPAIGN EFFECTIVENESS

Campaign-specific donation forms and peer-to-peer tools have enabled Lupus Canada to run more targeted and engaging fundraising initiatives. The Lupus 1000 Challenge, for example, exceeded its initial fundraising goal by 100% while also driving strong community participation and storytelling.



## STRONGER DONOR EXPERIENCE

Donors benefit from a familiar, trusted giving experience through CanadaHelps. Features such as suggested donation amounts, the option to cover processing fees, and immediate receipting help remove friction from the donation process while giving donors flexibility and transparency. ***“CanadaHelps is widely recognized in the charitable sector, and that level of familiarity and credibility can help provide confidence at the point of giving,”*** shared Cora.

## REDUCED ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN

For a small national organization like Lupus Canada, having streamlined systems in place is key. CanadaHelps’ centralized processing and automated receipting simplify administration, giving them greater ability to concentrate on serving their community and advancing their mission.



## Why Lupus Canada Recommends CanadaHelps

For Lupus Canada, CanadaHelps is more than a donation processor – it is a trusted fundraising partner that supports the organization’s ability to operate efficiently and professionally.

The customizable donation forms provide flexibility for different campaign types, while the peer-to-peer functionality enabled their signature Lupus 1000 Challenge to succeed beyond expectations. ***“It’s just a platform that works, and that’s really important for a small but national team like ours,”*** shared Heather.

The team appreciates the excellent customer service. *“Whenever I’ve reached out to CanadaHelps, the customer service has been exceptional – whether it’s a technical matter or a donor-related issue, such as receipt re-issues or corrections. The team is knowledgeable, efficient, and consistently responds within a reasonable timeframe with the right information. I really appreciate that level of support,”* shared Cora.

**“As a Canadian charity, supporting Canadian companies matters to us. When we moved from our previous platform, it was much easier to communicate the change, knowing our donors were indirectly supporting another Canadian organization.”**

– Cora

For an organization operating nationally with limited staff, having a reliable, Canadian-based partner that supports their diverse fundraising needs while protecting donor data has proven invaluable.

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# Impact on the Community

Lupus Canada’s work directly supports individuals and families affected by lupus while advancing broader awareness and research efforts nationwide.

## EDUCATION & AWARENESS

The organization provides critical education to multiple audiences, including healthcare professionals, patients, caregivers, and the general public. **They've launched a global collaboration featuring approximately 20 medical experts discussing lupus research and treatment developments worldwide, with videos captioned in both English and French.**



## PATIENT SUPPORT & COMMUNITY BUILDING

Many lupus patients report never having met another person with the disease outside of doctor's appointments. Lupus Canada addresses this isolation through several avenues, including online groups and other channels where people can anonymously ask questions and find support. The organization recently secured two-year funding for a national support group pilot program. *"This represents a significant opportunity for us. We will be co-designing this support network alongside individuals impacted by lupus to ensure it truly reflects and meets the needs of the community,"* shared Heather.



## RESEARCH FUNDING

Lupus Canada funds Canadian research grants to advance understanding and treatment of the disease, working toward better outcomes for patients across the country.

*"Lupus shows up so differently in every person. There isn't a single test that you can do to diagnose lupus – tests might give you an indicator at most. That makes it really difficult for people who are trying to either get diagnosed or manage it once they are,"* shared Heather. ***"The Catalyst Grant is designed to kickstart new research projects focused on discoid lupus or systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). This grant complements traditional Canadian funding mechanisms—including CIHR, SSHRC, and NSERC—by helping investigators launch innovative ideas that can grow into future large-scale studies."***



## ADVOCACY INITIATIVES

The organization advocates for patients with government officials and regulatory bodies, particularly as new treatments begin emerging in the pipeline. The team emphasizes inserting the patient voice into all advocacy work, ensuring that people living with lupus are represented in policy discussions rather than having others speak on their behalf.



## Goals Ahead

### Expanding Fundraising

Lupus Canada plans to explore planned giving, securities donations, and other giving vehicles more intentionally in 2026. With a small team, they're prioritizing which opportunities to build out in ways that serve a genuine purpose rather than simply checking boxes.

### Growing the Lupus 1000 Challenge

*"The Lupus 1000 Challenge was so uplifting and so community-centric,"* shared Heather. With one successful year of the Lupus 1000 Challenge completed, the team is excited to fuel the campaign's growth in 2026. *"Because we're national, we want to ensure that we inspire hope across the country. Our goal is to tell people that no matter where you are, you can participate in this campaign,"* shared Ariana.

### National Support Group Launch

The newly funded national support group pilot represents a significant opportunity to provide direct patient support at scale.

### Enhanced French Language Resources

Lupus Canada recently translated their website into French and is working to ensure French-speaking communities have equal access to resources. This commitment to bilingual service reflects their national scope and dedication to serving all Canadians impacted by lupus.

For more information about Lupus Canada, visit [www.lupuscanada.org](http://www.lupuscanada.org)

# Meet the Team

## **Leanne Mielczarek, Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

Leanne joined Lupus Canada in 2008 and, over the years, has demonstrated exceptional leadership and expertise in various capacities. In 2016, she was appointed Executive Director, and most recently, she took on the role of Chief Executive Officer. Throughout her tenure, Leanne has been a pivotal figure in the organization, consistently showcasing her dedication and strong leadership abilities, advocating for those impacted by lupus.



As CEO, Leanne provides strategic direction and oversight for Lupus Canada's operations, ensuring the organization's continued success across all areas, including community engagement, fundraising, research, and advocacy. She is deeply committed to raising awareness of lupus and ensuring that individuals living with the condition have equitable access to care and treatment. With over 30 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector, Leanne's previous roles at Lupus Canada exemplify her unwavering commitment to advocating for those impacted by lupus.



## **Heather Coates, National Fund Development & Engagement Officer**

Driven to create meaningful change for people living with lupus, Heather Coates serves as Lupus Canada's National Fund Development and Engagement Officer. Since joining the team in 2023, she has supported initiatives in fund development, advocacy, and community engagement, building strong connections with supporters, partners, and the broader lupus community.

## **Ariana Ranjbar, Manager, Web & Digital Media Strategies**

Ariana Ranjbar is a digital marketing and communications specialist with over four years of experience in non-profit health advocacy. Since joining Lupus Canada in 2019, she has led national campaigns that amplify patient voices, engage donors, and raise awareness about lupus. A graduate of Queen's University with a Bachelor's Honours Degree in Sociology, Ariana specializes in creating inclusive, accessible content that resonates with diverse communities. Her work is rooted in the belief that strategic storytelling can drive social change and build more connected, informed communities.



## **Cora Novacut-Lee, Manager, Donor Relations/Special Programs**

Cora joined Lupus Canada in 2013. Cora's dedication to the organization has been instrumental in furthering our initiatives. Cora holds the role of Manager, Donor Relations/Special Programs and reports to the Chief Executive Officer.

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