



Roots of Empathy  

---

Racines de l'empathie



Roots of Empathy 2018 - 2019 Annual Report



"I think it could help the world because it teaches students to care and notice other people's feelings. **I think it could literally stop war.**"

Grade 5 student, Kingsville, Ontario



"Roots of Empathy can teach all of us no matter the age, no matter the size, that **we all need to care for each other.** If we don't care for each other then how will we accomplish things like moonbases, ending global warming, and finding world peace?"

Grade 6 student, Kelowna, British Columbia



"Roots of Empathy can help teach our future adults to become contributing members of society and care for each other. It may also **contribute to a society in which racism, discrimination, and hatred are not tolerated.** I believe that Roots of Empathy can make a difference for our next generation as it teaches children the importance of empathy and considering other people's feelings."

Parent of a Roots of Empathy baby,  
JK/SK, Napanee, Ontario

"This relationship with our Roots family gives my students a point of reference that is positive and a shared experience for everyone to relate to. Students may come from strained family relations, but **this experience becomes familiar and accepted as a positive model for relationships.**"

Grade ¾ Teacher, Souris, Prince Edward Island



At the end of every school year, thousands of children write a wish for their Roots of Empathy baby. These wishes are pure altruism. There is no altruism without empathy. The empathy that develops from within the Roots of Empathy children is the best peace pill we have and it can go beyond the classroom to the Boardroom and the War Room.

The children sitting in our classrooms today are the citizens, leaders and parents of tomorrow. We are witnessing a rising tide of inequality and a pandemic of loneliness, which touches even our young children. It is within our grasp to turn this around.

Over the course of the year long Roots of Empathy program, children come to appreciate that our differences may define us but our similarities connect us, and in an increasingly disconnected world with growing inequalities and marginalization, these children will be able to sustain relationships.

Students in Roots of Empathy classrooms have the unique opportunity to experience a participatory democracy; they learn to trust their own opinions, find their voice and understand their feelings while they become skilled at reading the emotions of others. As children navigate the fault lines of growing up, we need to ensure that all children have the opportunity to develop empathy.

We are grateful for many things – the hope we see in children, the generous contribution of our donors, be they individuals, foundations, corporations or government, and the hundreds of scientists who cite Roots of Empathy in their research. I am especially grateful to our staff, Board members and the sea of volunteer Instructors who work with our families to bring the gift of empathy into the lives of young children.



*The Hon. Christy Clark*

Christy Clark  
Chair, Board of Directors

*Mary Gordon*

Mary Gordon  
Founder President



## 1

### Develop empathy

- Roots of Empathy program for elementary school age children
- Seeds of Empathy program for 3 – 5 year old children in childcare
- Nurturing Empathy in Children – a parenting program for parents of children K to third grade

## 2

### Learn and share

- Independent research
- Annual program evaluations
- Centre of Excellence
- Professional development

## 3

### Inspire the Empathy Movement

- Research Symposium
- Speaking engagements
- Media mentions
- Community building through social media



## About Us

Roots of Empathy is an international children's charity established in 1996 by social entrepreneur, educator and author Mary Gordon. It operates in 14 countries in seven languages and has reached nearly one million children.

## Our Mission

Roots of Empathy's mission is to build caring, peaceful, and civil societies through the development of empathy in children and adults.

## Our Goals

- To foster the development of empathy
- To develop emotional literacy
- To reduce levels of bullying, aggression and violence, and promote children's pro-social behaviours
- To increase knowledge of human development, learning, and infant safety
- To prepare students for responsible citizenship and responsive parenting



# 2018 - 2019 Impact



# of programs

**2,685**



# of children  
reached

**67,125**



# of volunteers

**10,740**



Romario brought the audience at the 2019 Symposium to tears and then to their feet when he spoke about the impact of Roots of Empathy on him and his classmates at Market Lane Jr and Sr Public School in Toronto

**"Every time Roots of Empathy happens in our class I am happy.** I start to feel softer, happier, calm, and just joyful. I look around our classroom and everyone is happy. It's like Roots of Empathy changed us. All our anger, and all our stress, it goes away. We feel like little kids again. We talk together and we feel like family. Nobody's scared to express their ideas and nobody hides their feelings. They let it out.

Playing together with our baby Max is just wonderful. You learn a lot about love in Roots of Empathy. You find out about people's feelings and how to be able to understand how and why they might be feeling that way.

Sometimes people my age might feel like they're not cared about. **But this program helps us understand that we are ALWAYS loved, which is the most important thing about love.** This is why Roots of Empathy is such a good idea, for any school.

**Roots of Empathy helps me and A LOT of other people see the good in themselves and others.** You feel a part of the group with everyone in our class coming together like a family. That's one of the best things about this program, cuz it always makes you feel like smiling and being happy. And I would love to have Roots of Empathy every year."



Hear Romario's speech





Grade 1 children at Art Smith Aviation School in Cold Lake, Alberta greet Baby Emily

Parents posted overseas for long periods of time. Families relocating from one military base to another. Children worrying about their parents, saying goodbye to friends and having to make new ones. Studies show that children from military families experience double the rate of mental health issues compared to civilian children. These statistics show how the unique stresses of military life can sometimes affect a child. This is why it's so important that children from military families have a safe space where they can identify and share their emotions. Children in military families benefit greatly from spending a year with a Roots of Empathy baby and parent from their community, guided by the Instructor to observe and talk about the baby, their feelings, and the baby/parent relationship.



*I was sad because my dad flew away to the desert.*

"I was sad because my dad flew away to the desert"

-Grade 1 student, Cold Lake, Alberta

"Many of our kids have parents who are deployed frequently for a variety of reasons. Watching our little Roots of Empathy baby grow and develop they see the impact of attachment even though their parents have to leave."

Mireille Greengrass, Roots of Empathy Instructor, Cold Lake, Alberta

"The impact of Roots of Empathy has been a wonderful addition to my health class this year. It has brought consistency and sense of community into my classroom by having us all work together to watch baby Emily grow. Students who can struggle with behaviour light up during our visits and show caring and respectful behaviour during her visits. In addition to this, we have been able to use what we learned from this program, in our daily school routine by referring back to all the valuable lessons this program has offered us."

Alicia, Grade 1 teacher, Art Smith Aviation Academy, Cold Lake, Alberta





Often there are times in Roots of Empathy when a student hangs back, and doesn't want to participate fully. We're fine with that – we respect a child's wish. But we know they watch. And they watch carefully. Such was the case with a Grade 5 student during our 6th family visit in the year.

Having hung back during the first visits, out of the blue, he decided he wanted to sing a nursery rhyme to the baby. The Instructor invited him on the blanket to sing one on one to the baby. He chose to sing a round of "All Around the Mulberry Bush." The baby didn't look up. The boy paused. He started singing the song again and the baby looked up. The boy sang it a third time and this time the baby was enthralled. And then he smiled at the boy.

"This is perhaps one of the most heartfelt moments I have had throughout ANY of my programs."

Darcy, Roots of Empathy Instructor



HundrED.org selects Roots of Empathy for the second year in a row as a global innovation in education



**26**  
speaking engagements

NYTimes columnist David Brooks wrote about Roots of Empathy as a solution to our Crisis of Connection

Mary Gordon received an Honorary Degree from the National University of Ireland, Galway for her work as a social entrepreneur



"Kinderen die het Roots of Empathy doorlopen vertonen minder agressief gedrag in de klas"

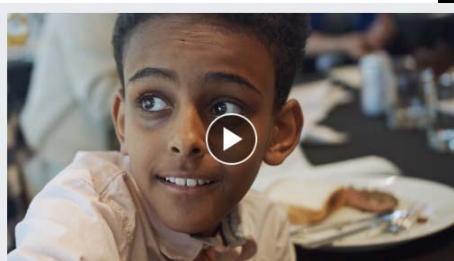


Feature article in Charlie from Belgium

Mary Gordon was in stellar company – chosen as one of "10 most important ideas" in this CSR journal from Poland



Feature article in the Christian Science Monitor



Roots of Empathy Research Symposium 2019 video reaches 51K viewers on Facebook



Mary Gordon spoke at the Spirit of Humanity Forum – livestreamed from Reykjavik

**24%**  
increase in social media followers



Our program's launch in Norway made national news.



# 2019 Research Symposium



**The 2019 Roots of Empathy Symposium**, set in the spectacular Globe and Mail Centre overlooking Toronto, brought together renowned international women neuroscientists for two days of learning and connection. The neuroscientists addressed a wide range of topics including epigenetics, altruism, self-regulation, the impact of digital technology, perspectives on empathy, the connection between sleep and emotional processing and the importance of human touch.

"I was really excited about a talk yesterday by Dr. Frances Champagne who spoke about epigenetics and environmental factors on mothers and how that affects children. This was really interesting to me because we see a lot of intergenerational trauma being from an Aboriginal reserve so I was excited to learn about that and bring the information back to my community and my program to help us learn how to better support mothers and families and give us more hope for the future for our children."

**- Becca Hill, Roots of Empathy Instructor, Family Wellbeing Program, Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Ontario**



# Where is Roots of Empathy mentioned?

Over the past three years, Mary Gordon and the Roots of Empathy program have been cited



in a wide range of disciplines

- psychology
- education
- business
- economics
- psychiatry
- neuroscience



in a wide range of sources

- scholarly articles
- research studies
- government reports
- conferences
- training documents
- annotated bibliographies
- dissertations
- white papers
- books





“They can not only teach you about how the baby develops and learns, it helps learn about yourself. It teaches you to understand your own feelings and signals. It helps you learn about how to help and communicate with others.”

Grade 7 student, Landmark East School,  
Wolfville, Nova Scotia

“I think it could help the world because it teaches students to care and notice other people’s feelings. I think it could literally stop war... I am very grateful it began and I got to be a part of it.”

Grade 5 student, Kingsville Public  
School, Kingsville, Ontario

“How to understand what someone else is feeling, and how to understand yourself and your feelings. I personally think that Roots of Empathy really helped me when I was stressed or nervous, to understand what to do in that matter.”

Grade 4/5 student, Quispamsis, New Brunswick

<b>Roots of Empathy Canada</b>		
<b>Year ended August 31</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2018</b>
Revenue		
Government Grants	<b>\$ 2,615,788</b>	\$ 3,534,602
Foundations	<b>452,083</b>	595,958
Lead Agencies	<b>350,558</b>	312,001
Community/School contributions	<b>242,130</b>	198,229
Corporations	<b>205,400</b>	186,481
Empathy Enterprise	<b>173,817</b>	97,517
Individuals	<b>147,776</b>	158,354
Interest and other Investment Income	<b>53,608</b>	40,893
	<b>4,241,160</b>	5,124,035
Expenses		
Program Delivery	<b>\$ 1,736,121</b>	\$ 2,315,059
Program Integrity and Quality Assurance	<b>912,073</b>	1,026,774
Empathy Movement and Awareness	<b>903,452</b>	927,014
Research	<b>126,308</b>	152,941
Administration	<b>1,131,397</b>	1,353,454
	<b>4,809,351</b>	5,775,242
	<b>(568,191)</b>	(651,207)
Recovery from Roots of Empathy subsidiaries	<b>661,088</b>	674,033
Excess of revenue over expenses	<b>\$ 92,897</b>	\$ 22,826



## Roots of Empathy wishes to thank our key global supporters and partners

### \$1000+ Donors

Beiersdorf/Nivea	Province of Alberta
Cenovus Energy	Province of British Columbia
Chadwick Brown	Province of Manitoba
Christopher Southam	Province of New Brunswick
Christy Clark	Province of Newfoundland and Labrador
Esmée Fairbairn Foundation	Province of Nova Scotia
Fidelity Charitable Giving Program	Province of Ontario
Federicton Community Foundation	Province of Prince Edward Island
Future Directions Foundation	Rachel Davis Fund at Victoria Foundation
Globe and Mail	RBC
Hawaii Community Foundation	Rotary Club Richmond Sunrise
Helderleigh Foundation	Rotorua Energy Trust
International Order of the Daughter of the Empire	Royal Ontario Museum
John and Nancy Sabol Fund at the Seattle Foundation	Scotiabank
Laurie Cavanaugh	Shari Watson
Lunenburg Community Health Board	Sisters of Charity: Charity Alive Foundation
Mario Nigro	Sisters of Mercy
Martine Celej	Sisters of Presentation
Mary Gordon	Stikeman Elliott
Mary MacNeil	Sussex Area Community Foundation
Maureen Ilich	Talud Foundation
Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia	TELUS Community Board: Atlantic
Miramichi Steering Committee	TELUS Community Board: Edmonton
Murray R. O'Neil Charitable Foundation	The Fund for Innovation and Public Service
My Tribute Gift Foundation	The O'Neill Foundation Inc.
Nancy Barker	Trico Foundation
Nelson Arthur Hyland Foundation	True Patriot Love Foundation
Neo City Cafe	United Way of Newfoundland and Labrador
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association	VOCM Cares Foundation
Nicholas Colloff	Woodcock Foundation
Noah John Winston Miles Foundation	Wright Family Foundation
Palix Foundation	

and our Anonymous Donors

Roots of Empathy also wishes to recognize the contributions of Lead Agencies

Action for Children Scotland

Barnardos Republic of Ireland

Pre School Learning Alliance UK

Public Health Agency Northern Ireland

University of Oregon - Center for the Prevention of Abuse and Neglect

## Canadian Board of Directors

### **The Hon. Christy Clark**

Chair, former Premier of British Columbia

### **Dr. Jean Clinton**

Director, Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, McMaster University

### **Martha Durdin**

Director, President and CEO at Canadian Credit Union Association

### **Garry Green**

Director, Senior Manager of Business Development and Community Services for the Toronto District School Board

### **Mary Ito**

Director, Producer/Host CBC Radio

### **Mario Nigro**

Director, Partner, Stikeman Elliott LLP

### **Jonathan Ross Miles**

Director, Director of Tax and Treasury for G Adventures

### **Lyle Viereck**

Founder of Lyle Viereck Consulting Services

## International Board of Advisors

**Gwynne Dyer** is an author, journalist, filmmaker, lecturer of international affairs and historian

**Dr. Bruce Perry** is Senior Fellow, The Child Trauma Academy, Houston and an author, lecturer and researcher

## Research Advisory Board

**Dr. Allan Schore**, Department of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, UCLA David Geffen School of Medicine

**Dr. Dan Batson** is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Psychology at the University of Kansas

**Dr. W. Thomas Boyce** is Professor Emeritus of Pediatrics and Psychiatry and heads the Division of Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics at the the University of California, San Francisco

**Dr. Susanne Denham** is an applied developmental psychologist and Professor of psychology at George Mason University

**Dr. Lise Eliot** is Professor of Neuroscience at the Chicago Medical School of Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine & Science

**Dr. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl** is Applied Developmental Psychologist, Professor, Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology, and Special Education at UBC



## Donate

You can donate easily online through our website. We are a registered charity. Whether a one-time donation, a monthly contribution, a gift in the name of a loved one or friend, or a legacy gift, your support will make a difference - [rootsofempathy.org/donate](https://rootsofempathy.org/donate)



## Volunteer your time

You can become an Instructor or a Roots of Empathy family with your newborn. If you are a school, we would be happy to talk to you too! We have more information for each group on our website - [rootsofempathy.org](https://rootsofempathy.org) under Participate



## Get & stay in touch

We have many ways to contact us. For a list of people to contact regarding particular programs or regions, please visit [rootsofempathy.org](https://rootsofempathy.org).

Follow us on social media @rootsofempathy

Sign up for our newsletter on our website and learn with us. Or call us (1) 416.944.3001





Changing the world, child by child



Roots of Empathy  
Racines de l'empathie