

# Vital Signs

Workbook: November 2016

Sport and Belonging in the Bow Valley



The 2013 General Social Survey on Social Identity asked Canadians aged 15 years and older to describe their sense of belonging to Canada, their province and their local community... Results suggest that Albertans ranked the lowest in their sense of belonging to their local community at 29% and residents of Newfoundland and Labrador ranked the highest in their sense of belonging at 47%.

## Project Goal: To benchmark and find ways to measure our community's sense of belonging through sport.

### What is belonging?

Simply put, belonging is being part of a collective “we.” It’s about how much we believe we fit into a group or a place and how much that place or group welcomes or includes us.

### What is sport?

For the purposes of the survey, we defined sport as: all forms of physical activity that contribute to physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction, such as play, recreation, organized or competitive sport, and indigenous sports and games.

In the Spring of 2016, with funding support from Community Foundations of Canada and The True Sport Foundation, we asked the Bow Valley True Sport and Recreation Council (BVTSRC) to help us start the conversation. BVTSRC hosted two workshops and in summary, their findings were:

### **What does belonging mean to you?**

- It's about meeting our needs as a person and as a community
- It's about inclusion
- It's about our relationship with others
- It's the end result

### **How has sport and recreation increased your sense of belonging?**

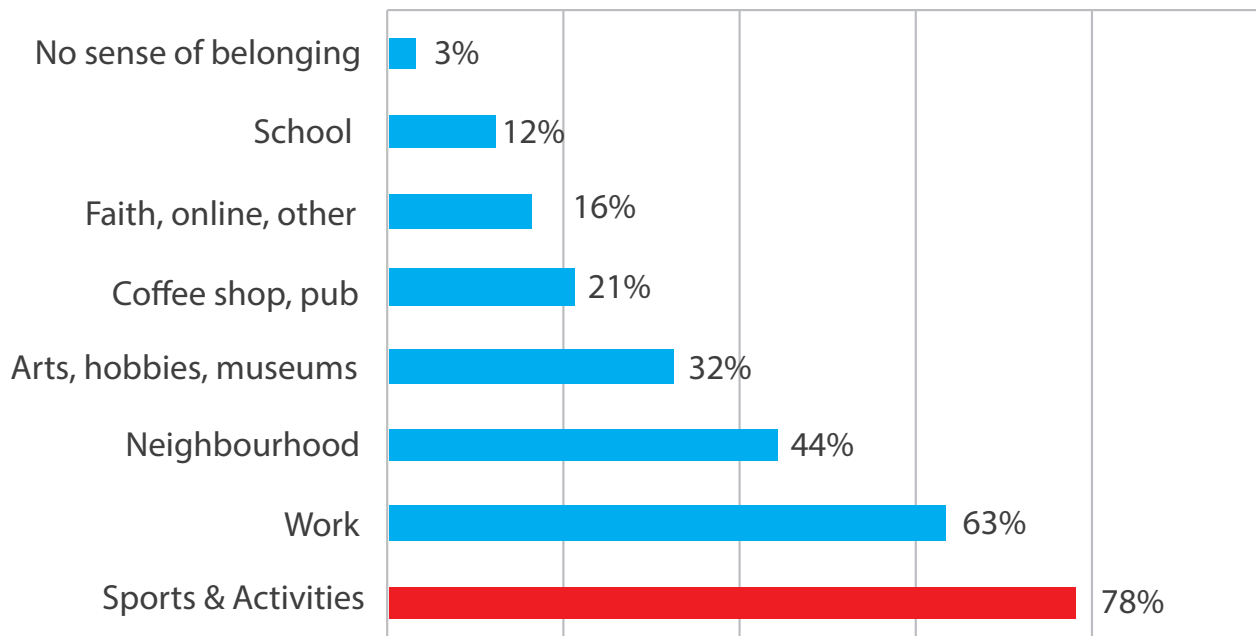
- By being a coach, mentor or technical official, I feel I am giving back
- By working as a facility operator, administrator or leader
- By contributing to my personal development

### **What would help increase your sense of belonging through sport?**

- Remove barriers to participation
- Enhance information, improve communication
- Provide better education: coach the coaches, learn the etiquette, learn about risk
- Enhance programs and activities
- Provide better funding for communities and groups

We then asked all Bow Valley residents to join in the conversation through an online survey... now is your opportunity to join in!

# #1. Our survey asked people to “Choose up to three ways you find your sense of belonging in the Bow Valley.” Here are the results:



**SUMMARY:** Thanks to the 350 people who responded and selected 950 ways of belonging! Results reveal that sport and physical activity is the most common way for people in the Bow Valley to find their sense of belonging. Work (paid and unpaid) is an equally important way for people to find belonging. Three percent of the respondents do not feel a sense of belonging.

What do these results tell you? Please provide your feedback here.

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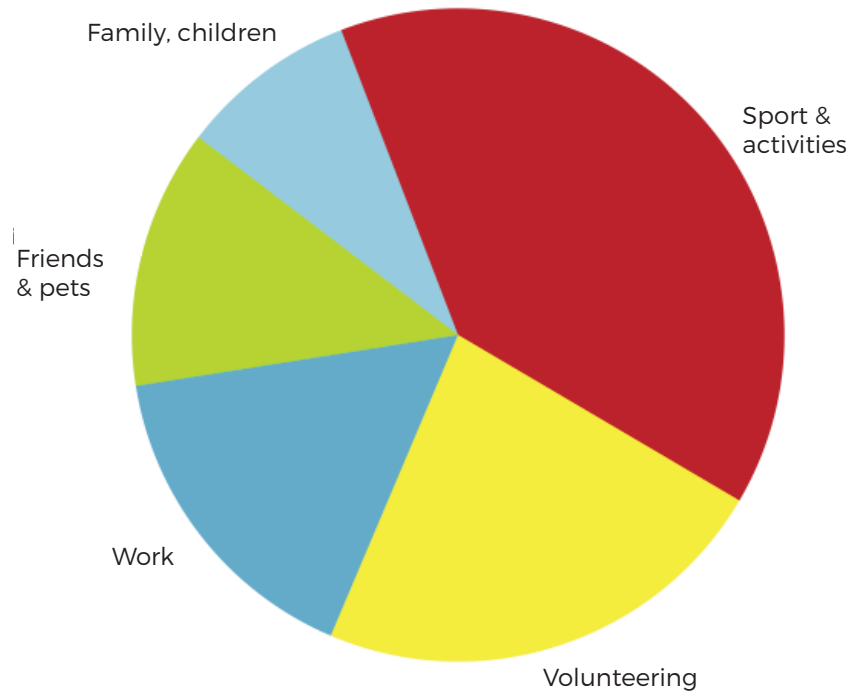
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## #2. The survey also told us that the best way to meet people in the Bow Valley is through:

*"We're a very activity based community. I don't identify with what part of the valley I live in as much as what I do. You need to get out and "find your tribe." Once you've found your group there is always volunteering that results in a richer group and a richer community as a whole."*



**SUMMARY:** Sport and Activities are the number one way people like to meet people. When we combine both paid and volunteer activities, work is found to be an equally important way to meet people.

What do these results tell you? Please provide your feedback here.

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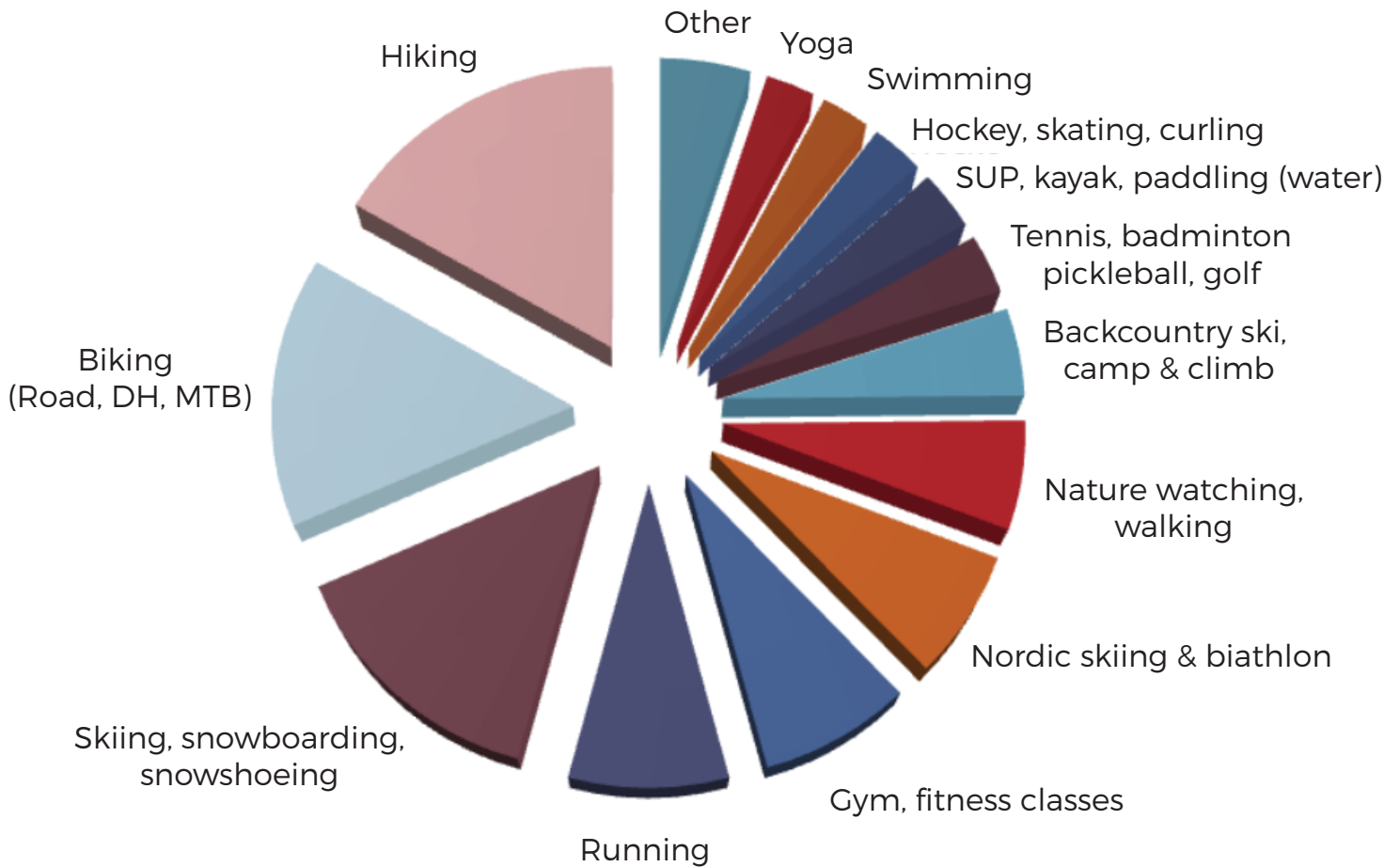
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### #3. When asked about their favourite form of physical activity, people said:



**SUMMARY:** Our favourite places to play are: all outdoor trails and crags in Banff National Park, Kananaskis Country, at the Canmore Nordic Centre as well as Lake Louise, Sunshine and Norquay ski areas. In addition, respondents like to meet friends and be active at Elevation Place, Sally Borden Building, the gym or fitness studio, outdoor playing fields, tennis courts or the ice arena.

What do these results tell you? Please provide your feedback here.

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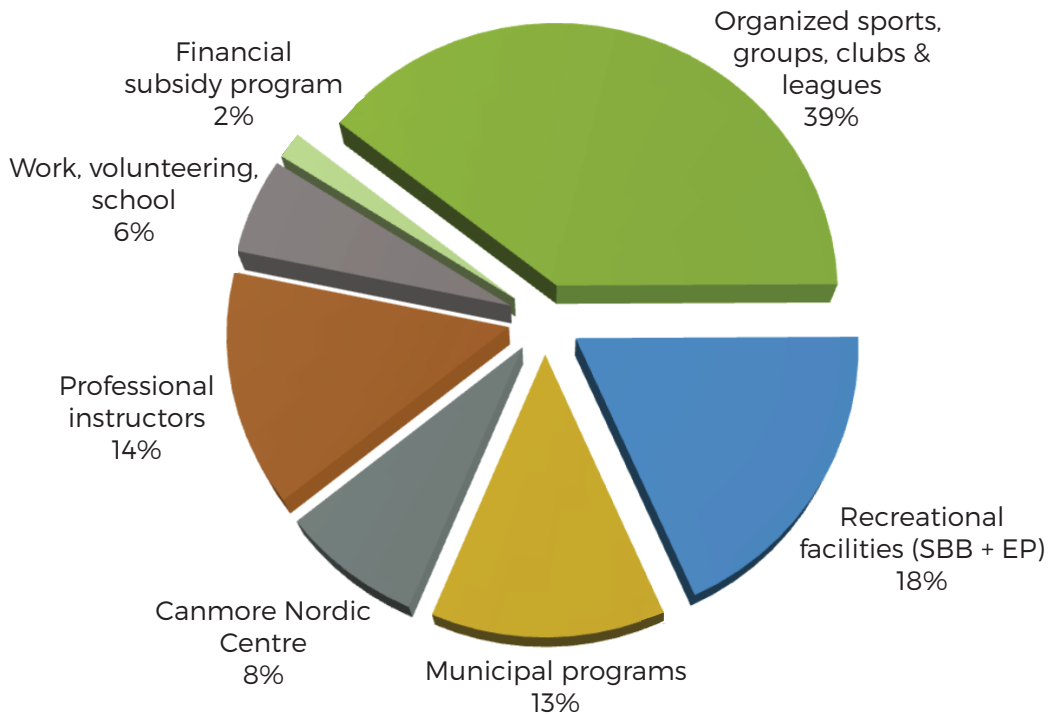
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## #4. We asked which programs and services residents are using to stay active, and we heard:



**SUMMARY:** Organized classes, leagues, clubs and group activities help us stay active. Canmore Senior's Association, Meanderthals, Canmore Trail Culture, Canmore Cycling Culture, Dirtbag Runners, Banff Ski Runners, Canmore Nordic Club, Rocky Mountain Cycling Club, Lululemon, Yoga Lounge, Primary Care Network, Master's Swim and Alpine Club of Canada were a few of the helpful organizations mentioned.

When asked why residents were not as physically active as they would like to be, their top response was that they were too busy, followed by too tired, too expensive, too shy, frightened or lacking confidence, lacking knowledge about where to go or had no ride, had no equipment or had other physical limitations. Respondents recommend that when it comes to sport and belonging we need to think about affordability, accessibility, inclusive programming, and attracting the inexperienced beginner.

What do these results tell you? Please provide your feedback here.

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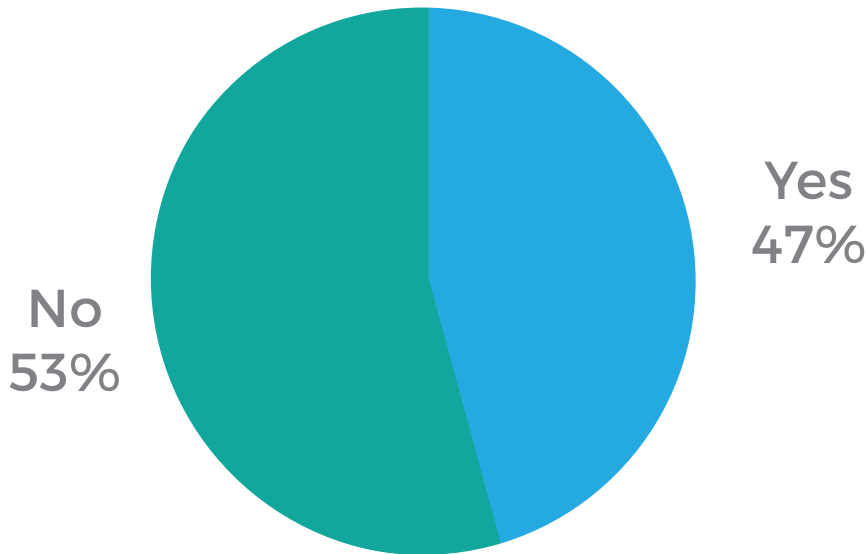
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## #5. We asked whether residents felt that income level affected their sense of belonging, and they said:



"I have lost friends because I didn't have the same lifestyle as them and couldn't afford to recreate in the same fashion."

**SUMMARY:** "Affordability is a key to community sustainability, individual empowerment, and health promotion." - John McLaughlin, Professor in the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto

In addition to issues related to wage and affordability, respondents mention barriers due to transportation systems and personal time. In order to build belonging and connections, we should be mindful of community diversity and think about mentorship opportunities, communications strategies, and scheduling options.

"As my income level has increased, so has my sense of belonging here. Home ownership made the difference."

What do these results tell you? Please provide your feedback here.

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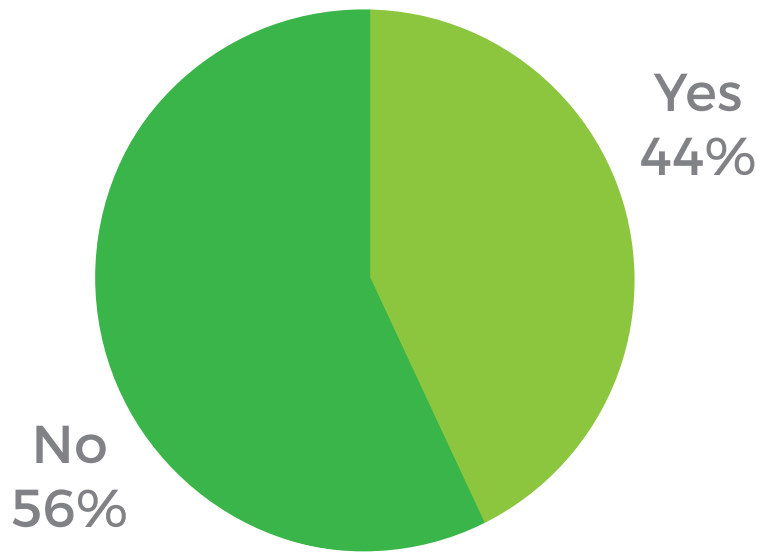
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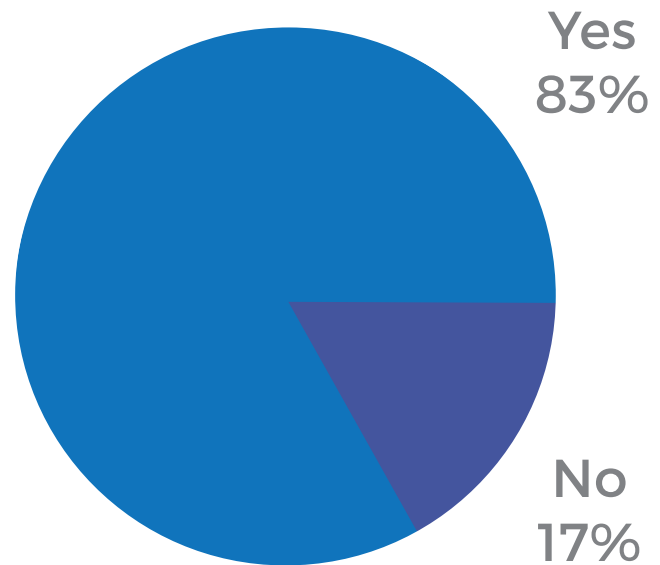
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#6a. When asked whether residents felt income level affects their ability to volunteer, they answered:



#6b. When asked whether they had volunteered in the community in the last year, 83% answered yes.



**SUMMARY:** Many volunteers say that their time is limited because of work. Work does not allow staff to have additional time, or flexible schedules to volunteer. Many people need to work long hours or more than one job in order to get by in the Bow Valley, which limits them from being able to get out and feel a sense of community involvement.

What do these results tell you? Please provide your feedback here.

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# Why care about belonging?

## When we feel that we belong:

Our children learn better - Our communities bounce back better after emergencies - Our neighbourhoods are safer - We have better employment opportunities - We are healthier - We are more likely to donate money and volunteer our time - Life has more purpose

## In other words...

Thanks to all of the survey respondents who took the time to share your honest and candid opinions on the topic of Sport and Belonging. As we continue to think about belonging, being active and building a smarter, more caring community, here are some additional comments:

### VOLUNTEERING

- "When I volunteer, I feel like I make a difference in the community. I feel I have direct impact on the success on the organization"
- "When we had kids, a whole new social world opened up. I think the best way to connect with others is through something that you care about, be it a community garden, children, sport, artistic passion, or volunteering"
- "Volunteering is social, I feel my contributions are valued and I'm proud to be a part of what I'm doing"

### AFFORDABILITY

- "The Bow Valley has become so expensive that I will likely have to sell my home and move even though I don't want to"
- "Buying a house in Middle Springs made me feel like I was being welcomed into a secret club. Couldn't have done that without adequate income"
- "It is very difficult to be rooted in this community when I can't afford a house or condo of my own"

### SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES

- "Find space for kids to remain in a casual, friendly supportive exercise environment through to the teenage years"
- "Concentrate on getting people out in our natural surroundings with other people (hiking, walking, skiing) rather than creating opportunities to don uniforms and participate in competitive team activities"
- "We need more social recreational opportunities - like social dancing"
- "Create a series of 'intro to' sports nights for adults and people aged 20 - 40. Something like the 10-week courses that artsPlace offers, but for mountain biking, cross country skiing, downhill skiing, etc."
- "I think Banff and Canmore already do exceptionally well in creating a culture of belonging and being active. It's who we are. It's why we live here. Small communities in the mountains - it doesn't get any better!"
- "I would love my kids to play at a rec level and 'try it' sports instead of always having to compete"
- "Transportation is a limiting factor. So is safety - invest in training for outdoor leaders and encourage people to join in, feel safe and share a ride to the trailhead"



# Thanks to our Funders



COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATIONS  
OF CANADA

**TRUE  
SPORT  
FOUNDATION**

## Thanks also to our Community Partners:

**Nancy Lewis, Town of Banff Community Services**

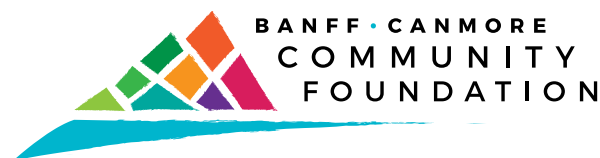
**Bow Valley True Sport and Recreation Council**

As a member of Community Foundations of Canada, the Banff Canmore Community Foundation facilitates collaborative philanthropy. We leverage our love for community with investments that will support local priorities and make meaningful connections. The foundation envisions a future where all people can reach their potential with a focus on 'smarter, more caring' ways of helping each other.

Why "Vital"? Funding support for this initiative has been secured under the Community Foundations of Canada and True Sport Foundation "Vital Focus on Sport and Belonging" initiative, part of the larger Vital Signs program a signature conversation lead by Community Foundations of Canada to look at community health and wellness.

The foundation works with our Bow Valley partners from Lake Louise to Exshaw. We encourage you to learn more, get involved or find a way to give back. You can make a one-time or monthly donation online or invite us to hear how you incorporate belonging and philanthropy into your organization.

You make your community. Your community makes you!



**Banff Canmore Community Foundation**

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