

## Variety in Ontario's Mission

We will be the leading charity for young people of all abilities and their families. We remain committed to improving their quality of life and integration into society.

## Variety the Children's Charity – How It All Began

On Christmas Eve 1928, a baby girl was abandoned by her destitute mother at the Sheridan Theatre in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The Variety Club, a group of eleven show business men, heard the news and decided to “adopt” her by offering to act as the baby’s godfathers.

They named the infant “Catherine Variety Sheridan” in recognition of both the Variety Club and the Sheridan Centre where she was found. Catherine’s impact on the eleven men lived on in the new mission of the Variety Club: to help underprivileged children and their families.

## Variety in Ontario

Variety – The Children’s Charity in Ontario (Variety) was established in 1945 by John J. Fitzgibbons, an American who came to Toronto as president of Famous Players Theatres. He brought the inspiring Variety story along with the strong sense of personal values for which it stood. Ten men joined him to form an initial Toronto Eleven, similar to the Pittsburgh group.

More than 60 years after Fitzgibbons’ establishment of the Toronto Variety Club, his vision lives on. Variety in Ontario strives to provide programs and services of the highest standards to help young people and their families feel integrated in their community.

## Variety in Ontario's Commitment

By offering specialized programs and services, Variety creates a level playing field without intimidation or other obstacles. Variety encourages all children to reach for their goals and feel comfortable to participate in a team sport, learn how to swim or participate in a life skills workshop.

- Play, learn, grow and develop to the best of their abilities
- Obtain the support and resources needed to succeed
- Achieve and maintain good health and well-being
- Have their physical, emotional, social and economic needs met
- Be fully included in active, healthy lifestyles within their community

## Variety's Three Pillars of Expertise

- **Integrated sports and life skills programs**  
Variety delivers sports and life skills programs at Variety Village and throughout Ontario, allowing young people to progress from play to sports to competition.
- **Applied research**  
Reflecting Variety’s philosophy of inclusion and integration, we develop equipment, games and teaching methods as well as plans that promote access, awareness and adapted activities.
- **Learning programs**  
Variety offers academic and professional certification programs and a popular co-op program. Variety attracts students and teachers from around the world who come to learn and study our best practices and approaches.



## Variety Village

Variety Village, the flagship project of Variety in Ontario, is a unique fitness and life skills facility where children and families of all abilities are inspired to become active and be proud of their accomplishments.

It’s here, amidst a 76,000-square-foot gym and a 200-metre indoor track; three indoor pools for lessons, family swim and competitive swimming; and a 3,000-square-foot conditioning and weight area, that children of all abilities can choose from many programs promoting inclusion and a healthy, active lifestyle.

Variety Village offers team sports, spring and summer camps and special adapted physical education classes for schools and community groups. The Village is the only facility in Ontario, and one of only a handful worldwide, where all ability levels are integrated.

Variety Village has long set the benchmark for excellence in integrated recreational programs and has been offering training to individuals who provide similar services in communities from around Ontario for years. In fact, Variety Village, as the leading facility of its kind, has consulted and partnered with similar facilities worldwide.

## The importance of volunteers

Volunteers have always played an important role in the success of Variety in Ontario. They are vital to the delivery of our services and key to our ongoing success. Our volunteers are involved at all levels including our Board of Directors, event management teams, associate instructors, interns, co-op education students and ambassadors. They range from some of the country's most influential personalities to elite athletes, retirees and even the kids who are always willing to lend a hand.

## What you can do to help our kids

There are many ways you can support our important work, many ways to ensure that our kids feel integrated in their community and have a bright future. Here are just a few:

- You can promote our Outreach program at your school or workplace
- You can join us at Variety Village as a member of our fitness club
- You can volunteer at Variety Village and encourage your family and friends to get involved and get active themselves
- You can make a donation, either dollars or assets, to support our programs and services
- You can sign up as a member of Variety – The Children's Charity (Ontario), Tent 28

Whatever it is you decide to do, you'll find that spending time here will leave you inspired. You'll become part of a community that embraces ability and actively promotes inclusiveness.



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**About Us**  
Making an Impact on the  
Lives of Children with  
Disabilities



Variety – The Children's Charity (Ontario)