

Update for January 2021 – December 2021

Youth Engagement Report



HALIFAX



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Purpose

In May 2013, Halifax Regional Council directed Community & Recreation Services (now Parks & Recreation) to engage youth, both in their communities and online, to better understand the current trends and issues that youth face across the municipality.

In April 2019, staff were directed to provide an annual information report to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) regarding trends, issues, best practices, and actions taken with respect to youth programming.

The Youth Services division aims to enrich the quality of life for youth by providing a variety of programs, services, and spaces that are supportive of the municipality's diverse youth population.

The information presented in this report provides an overview of the services and programs offered to youth, from January 2021 to December 2021.

Executive Summary



In 2021, multiple youth services and programs were suspended due to public health restrictions associated with the COVID 19 pandemic. The municipality shifted to increased virtual programs, services, and engagement methods in addition to an increased focus on outdoor programming.

It also provides the opportunity for external youth service providers to highlight their programs and services.

In addition to regular activities and the adaptations associated with COVID 19, staff completed a second Youth Services Plan as an update to the initial plan completed in 2020. The process to update the Youth Services Plan included appointment of a Youth Team, research and internal consultation, and engagement of over 1800 youth. These youth provided feedback through multiple avenues such as virtual workshops and an online survey. An overview of the vision, missions, values, and strategic priorities resulting from this update, are included in this report.

The Youth Engagement Report provides an annual update on youth services in the municipality.

Youth Services Plan

Halifax.ca/ysp

In 2005, Halifax Regional Municipality's (HRM) Recreation Programming Division worked with HeartWood Centre for Community Development to create the municipality's Youth Engagement Strategy. This engagement strategy focused on best practice strategies on youth engagement. Since that time the municipality has worked to ensure youth programs meet the needs of youth.

Reorganization in 2015 led to the creation of a youth focused section of the Parks & Recreation Business Unit. The next step in providing youth services was for this new section to conduct a largescale engagement on what services the municipality offered for youth. The Youth Services Plan was the final product of that year long, youth-led, engagement process.

To see a summary of the first plan, visit ***www.halifax.ca/ysp***

This Youth Engagement Strategy has informed the development of a second Youth Services Plan. The Youth Services Plan 2 (YSP2) provides a broader approach and includes additional business units throughout the municipality. By identifying relevant issues for youth, the YSP2 will support decision-making in how best to address the needs of HRM's youth through the delivery of programs and services, as well as working collectively with other business units throughout the municipality and community partners.

THE APPROACH: YOUTH-LED PROCESS

A youth-led process means engaging youth as leaders throughout the project, from design to implementation and evaluation of outcomes. When using a youth-led methodology, it is critical to engage youth at all levels and to ensure that youth have ownership of the entire engagement process.

Ensuring that this was a true youth-led process was a priority for staff. Staff did not influence the process, rather they supported youth in making decisions regarding engagement workshops, the development of an online survey, and the completion of the final strategic priorities and goals of this plan.

During the development of this plan, 1800 youth were engaged through a team of youth, with an online survey and through in-person and virtual workshops. Through the engagement process six key trends emerged which were developed into five strategic priorities. Each priority has its own set of goals and objectives. Suggested action items on how to implement the YSP2, as well as an evaluation framework will be included in next year's Youth Engagement Report.

VISION STATEMENT

We envision a future where youth have the opportunities and supports to achieve their greatest potential.

CORE VALUES

Core values are the principles or philosophies that guide how we work with youth.

Diversity and Inclusion: We recognize that the experiences, views, and needs of youth may be shaped by intersecting identities, including race, culture, gender, sexuality, socio economic background and disability. Youth are not a homogenous block; therefore, other social aspects need to be taken into consideration when designing programs and providing services. We believe all youth deserve, and have a right to, the same chances and opportunities and strive to ensure equality of opportunities for all.

Transparency and Accountability: We are committed to being transparent and accountable to youth. We have established clear outcomes and performance indicators for each strategic priority and will provide youth with a clear understanding of the progress of this work. Reporting will be clear, timely, youth friendly and focus on continuous improvement. We believe government should be accountable and responsive to youth.

Collaboration: We work together with staff, youth, and community organizations to ensure that youth have access to the supports, programs, and services they need. We believe working together can help improve outcomes and strengthen the support for youth.

Youth Voice: We are here primarily to serve youth and recognize their strengths and voices as assets to our work.

OUR DEFINITION OF YOUTH

Youth Services in the municipality encompasses ages 13-24. For the purposes of this plan, the ages of 13-15, 16-18 and 19-24 have been grouped. Staff recognise the diversity within these age ranges that requires specific and intentional services.

2022-2024 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

Strategic Priority 1: Youth have access to spaces in their community where they can take ownership, feel welcome, feel safe, socialize, obtain support, and access services.

Strategic Priority 2: All youth across the municipality feel represented and included in programs, services, and committees.

Strategic Priority 3: Youth feel prepared to make a successful transition to adulthood.

Strategic Priority 4: Youth feel empowered to engage in local government and contribute to shaping their communities.

Strategic Priority 5: Youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality.



MISSION STATEMENT

We enrich the quality of life for youth by providing a variety of programs, services, and spaces that are supportive of the municipality's diverse youth population.

Municipal Youth Programs, Events and Engagements



YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM

[Halifax.ca/yap](https://halifax.ca/yap)

The Youth Advocate Program is family-centered which means it looks to, and works with, the family of the youth to provide coordinated support. The program's goal is to reduce key risk factors such as isolation, stress, and negative pressures that make young people vulnerable to engaging in criminal behavior. By connecting youth to existing community programs and support, the Youth Advocate Program increases self-reliance, resiliency, life skills, and social skills by engaging youth in constructive behaviors with family, school, and community. The program is directed towards children and youth aged 10–15 years old.

Youth Advocate Workers work directly with the youth and their family, building on the youth's strengths and connecting them with support services in their community. Together they build the skills and confidence required to withstand pressures to become involved in criminal activity. Staff also work closely with primary caregivers and anyone who has the youth's best interests at heart, and always privately, confidentially, and with the consent of the family. When a youth "graduates" from the program it means that they have built enough resiliency to overcome significant obstacles; they are going to school, may have secured employment, and have built healthy life skills and relationships with their peers and families.

This program offers support to youth in:

- Cole Harbour
- Dartmouth North
- East Dartmouth
- Fairview / Clayton Park / Bayers Road / Westwood
- Gaston Road / Woodside
- North End Halifax
- North and East Preston
- Lower and Middle Sackville
- Spryfield

YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM

2021 STATISTICS

Youth Advocate Workers collaborate with school representatives to improve school performance, including attendance, behaviour, homework, and participation in extra-curricular activities.

- 93% of participants remained in or returned to school
- 39% received academic support.

The Youth Advocate Program promotes youth resiliency through an evidence-based wrap around approach that builds constructive relationships and support networks among youth and their families to build protective factors to prevent sexual abuse and exploitation.

In 2021:

- **14% of participants received support/counselling for sexual abuse/exploitation**
- **29% participants received support/counselling to avoid and/or develop healthy mechanisms regarding dating violence, gender violence and unhealthy relationships**
- **37% of parents/guardians in the program attended parenting support programs.**



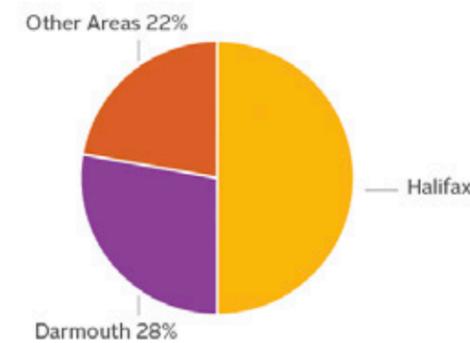
YOUTH LIVE PROGRAM

The Youth Live Program is a supportive work environment that offers up to 24 weeks of workplace mentoring. Youth Live has a focus on life, leadership, and job skill development for youth between the ages of 16 to 24 years old who are not in school and who are facing employment barriers. Youth Live has two main streams: Business Operations and Mentoring. Business Operations is comprised of on-the-job training at the Youth Live Enviro Depot paper recycling services, green cart delivery and repair. The mentoring stream includes working alongside Youth Live staff who provides guidance and coaching on their employability skills. The youth also receive modules on life skills and job skills designed to prepare them for their future. Youth Live operates two full programs a year, with one starting in May and the other in October.

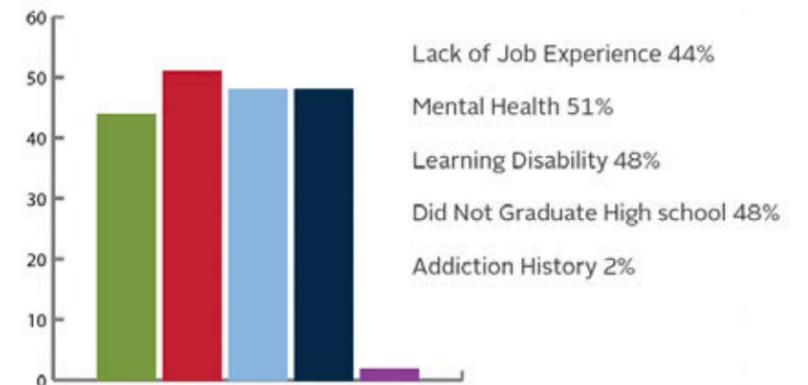
In 2021, 29 youth participated in the program. 22 youth graduated.



WHERE ARE YOUTH FROM?



BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT



YOUTH LIVE PROGRAM

The Youth Live program focuses on the following nine employability skills:

1. Accountability
2. Adaptability
3. Attitude
4. Confidence
5. Motivation
6. Presentation
7. Stress Management
8. Teamwork
9. Time Management

Program participants completed self-assessments throughout the program to monitor their own perception of these skills. Staff also conducted assessments to monitor participants' behaviours related to their employability skills. The results showed that there was an increase in all nine employability skills and that participants completed the program with a more accurate perception of their skills.



YOUTH SPACES

halifax.ca/youthspaces

There are many youth spaces within the municipality offering a variety of activities, programs, and drop-in times. These spaces include dedicated youth centres (including multi-service youth centres) and youth rooms within municipal recreation centres.

POWER HOUSE YOUTH CENTRE

halifax.ca/powerhouse

The Power House Youth Centre serves as a place for youth to gather, to learn, and to connect with others. It is also a meeting space for the municipality's Youth Advisory Committee and the Friends of the Public Gardens.

In 2021, the Power House offered a Professional Development Day (PD Day) Games Club. The Games Club is a recreational program for youth ages 13-24, which is held monthly on school PD Days. The intent of this program is to reduce barriers to participation as it is cost free. During the program, youth and facilitators play board games, card games, and video games as a group. Together, the youth decide what games will be played and take part in shaping the experience for all.

Although the program was initially marketed towards youth in junior high and high school several university students have joined as well, as most PD days take place on Friday's when there are typically fewer classes. This unexpected turnout has helped to create a dynamic social setting where older youth and younger youth can connect over shared interests.

"I have never had access to anything like this before in the communities I've lived in, not in BC or India. What you are doing here is beautiful! I can't wait to come back." – Youth Participant

MULTI-SERVICE YOUTH CENTRE | THE DEN

halifax.ca/TheDen

On March 6, 2018 Regional Council approved a one-year pilot project at Acadia School in Lower Sackville with the purpose of establishing a collaborative multi-agency, Multi-Service Youth Centre (MSYC), which was named "The Den". The Den is a safe, inclusive, space for youth ages 13-18 from the Bedford/Sackville communities.

In 2021, Regional Council approved The Den to operate permanently and allocated funds to establish a second MSYC. Staff identified Spryfield/Herring Cove as the next possible youth centre location.

The Den is currently undergoing renovation in order to expand the MSYC. The additional space will allow for more youth to attend the drop-in times and will give community partners additional space for programming.

Success Story

Melyzza came to the program with significant anxiety about being around new people. In fact, during the first Youth Live information session she could not even bring herself to come inside. She stood at the door with her mom but could not break through her anxieties in that moment. Fast forward 23 weeks into the program and she was able to stand up in front of the entire group of participants and staff to speak about her experiences in the program. Six months later, Melyzza is now a casual staff with Youth Live operations and has been assisting to train and mentor new participants as they enter the program.



YOUTH ROOMS

halifaxyouth.ca

Youth rooms in recreation centres involve the youth in the design and with the operations of the space as well as offering opportunities for youth to connect and engage with their friends.

Overview of Youth Rooms:

Findlay Youth Room:

Designed by youth, this cozy atmosphere offers:

- Youth room + gym access
- Large drop-in group nights
- Smaller group activity nights
- Board games; arcade machine; multiple pc workstations; arts programming; entertainment centre, popcorn machine; retro music collection and equipment (vinyl, tapes)
- Summer youth leadership program + general youth camp

Gordon R Snow Youth Room:

The walls of this space are decorated with bricks painted by youth and is used for various drop-in activities, which includes:

- Foosball
- Video games
- Air hockey
- Lounge area
- Board games
- White boards and art supplies

Bedford-Hammonds Plains Community Centre

The Bedford-Hammonds Plains Community Centre is currently transforming a former preschool space into a Youth Space where youth from the Bedford community will be able to access this room for a quiet/study space during the lunch time and afterschool hours as well as youth drop ins a few evenings per week. The space includes:

- Table tennis
- Foosball
- Smart TV
- Nintendo Switch
- Cellphone charging station
- Board games
- Comfortable seating
- Kitchenette



Horizon Recreation Centre

This youth room is equipped with:

- Games
- Art supplies
- School supplies and space for doing homework
- Video games
- Snacks and drinks
- Wi-Fi

Sackville Sports Stadium

Youth inspired coloured walls, with one wall painted with chalkboard paint, to promote creativity for the Friday Night ROCKS program. The space includes:

- Table tennis
- Small gymnasium and pool access
- Art supplies including a wash sink
- Tables and chairs for group activities
- Activities/games
- TV on stand (Nintendo Wii available)

Lakeside Community Centre

This youth room is equipped with:

- Ping pong table
- Foosball table
- PlayStation
- Comfortable chairs
- TV

George Dixon Centre

George Dixon has a youth room and a youth study and tutoring room. Youth partnered with SHINE tutoring program to paint, plaster ceiling, and build furniture for the youth study and tutoring room. The space includes:

- Computer
- Printer
- Shelving with classroom like materials (scribblers, writing utensils, books)
- Tables to work at
- Large scroll down projector screen

The youth room includes:

- Mounted television
- Television on AV cart
- Television on table
- Game consoles (XBOX, PS4, Nintendo Switch and Wii)
- WiFi access
- Comfortable lounging
- Table for board games/cards
- Two computers
- Connection to the multi purpose room that has air hockey, foosball, basketball quick shot.



YOUTH ROOMS

halifaxyouth.ca

Cole Harbour Recreation Centre

This youth room is equipped with:

- Board games
- Smart TV
- Nintendo Switch
- Lounge area
- Circuit Cutting Machine + Craft Supplies
- White boards and art supplies



North Preston Community Centre

The Youth Wing addition was constructed and opened in 2012. The Youth Wing consists of:

- Art/ Pottery Studio
- Games and Lounge
- Computer Lab,
- Recording Studio.

St. Andrew's Community Centre

The space includes:

- Foosball
- Air hockey
- Ping Pong table
- Video games
- Free Wi-Fi



National Youth Week 2021



halifaxyouth.ca

National Youth Week takes place every year from May 1 – 7th and is dedicated to the celebration of youth and their active participation in their communities. This week is a time to amplify youth programs and services. Whether it is recreation, drama, sport, dance, civic engagement, art, volunteerism or leadership, young people are regularly engaged in meaningful activities in their communities.

The Youth Section of Parks & Recreations coordinated several free workshops and activities to provide youth learning and social opportunities. Due to COVID-19 public health guidelines, 2021 National Youth Week activities were offered virtually.

80 youth participated in National Youth Week

- Youth Grant Writing – Rising Youth
- Intro to Banking - CUA with Myra Lucia
- #Adulting - CUA with Myra Lucia
- Budgeting 101 - Junior Achievement, Brenda Kenney
- Youth Resume Building - Youth Live, Parks & Recreation
- SEED Bombs - Wild Outside
- Virtual Yoga - Parks & Recreation
- How to Stop Hating Yourself: And Other Things You Didn't Learn in School - Eating Disorders Nova Scotia
- Virtual Open House - Youth Project
- Introduction to Computer Programming - SuperNova
- How Youth Can Initiate Change in their Community - Youth Section, Community Developer

HOW YOUTH INITIATE CHANGE IN THEIR COMMUNITY WORKBOOK

halifaxyouth.ca

As a follow up to the Youth Grant Writing for Social Change workshop, a resource manual called 'How Youth Can Initiate Change in their Communities' was created. The manual outlines the necessary steps for a youth driven community project and acts as a project planning document. Since the creation of the manual, youth have connected with staff to receive guidance on their community projects. This manual can be found in the resources section of the Halifax Youth website. The manual was distributed to 50 youth across the municipality.

REGISTERED YOUTH PROGRAMMING

The municipality's Parks & Recreation division offers a multitude of programs directed to youth ages 13 to 18. These programs and activities are advertised in the Parks & Recreation guide, as well, specific information for youth is promoted through social media, a general description flyer/poster and the recreation web page. Municipal recreation centres offered registered youth programming to 1224 youth in 2021.

Outdoor Recreation



halifax.ca/outdoorrec

ADVENTURE EARTH PROGRAMS

halifax.ca/aep

The Adventure Earth staff provide opportunities, for people of all ages, to connect with the natural world, to pursue a healthy and active lifestyle outdoors, to develop personal and leadership skills, to give back to the community, and to connect with other like-minded people. With locations in Sir Sandford Fleming Park and Shubie Park, Adventure Earth has been offering outdoor recreation and earth education programs for over 35 years.

CYCLE SAVERS PROGRAM

Cycle Savers is a hands-on, earth education program for grade 4 students based on a mystery code and club theme. Students participate in challenges and then decipher secret codes to learn to appreciate, understand, and respect the cycles of life (air, water and soil cycles) through an experiential educational day trip at a local park or wooded area near their school.

Due to COVID-19, staff adjusted the program to deliver it virtually.

Adventure Earth staff virtually provided and delivered the cycle savers programs to 4304 students, in 136 classes, in 50 schools.

D.E.A.L LEADERSHIP CAMP

Development, Education, Action, and Leadership (D.E.A.L) was created by taking different aspects of recreation's leadership programming and developing an overnight camp experience. Staff provided opportunities for youth to learn outdoor skills, professionalism, inclusion, earth education, and leadership skills. 21 youth attending this camp led by six youth staff.

REC VAN

halifax.ca/recvan

Two Rec Vans spent the summer visiting public parks, municipal beaches, splash pads, playgrounds, and seniors' homes throughout the municipality providing free recreational sports and activities to children, youth, families, and seniors. The Rec Van program was used by 1436 people this summer. Residents could try something new or take part in their favourite outdoor activity. The Rec Van was stacked with equipment for more than 50 different activities and sports, including baseball, basketball, soccer, washer toss, giant checkers, archery, skipping and much more. The Youth Live Program assisted the Emera Oval staff during Winter 2021. A group of 12 participants had the opportunity to go to the Oval to help and rotated through to support at registration check points. This experience assisted the youth participants in developing their customer service skills.

EMERA OVAL

halifax.ca/emeraoval

The Emera Oval is an outdoor skating surface equivalent in size to three NHL hockey rinks. It is the largest outdoor, artificially refrigerated ice surface east of Quebec City. The Emera Oval is located on the Halifax North Common at the corner of North Park Street and Cogswell Street.

In the Winter of 2021, the Emera Oval had to limit numbers and required pre-registration due to Provincial health regulations. Despite that, the Emera Oval had 13,247 youth aged 13-24 register for a skate time!

The Youth Live Program assisted the Emera Oval staff during Winter 2021. A group of 12 participants had the opportunity to go to the Oval to help and rotated through to support at registration check points. This experience assisted the youth participants in developing their customer service skills.

“

I liked the Oval because I got to meet new people every day! It sure was freezing but you just need to remember to layer up more! Overall, it was a really great experience for me.

”



Multi District Facilities (MDFs)

CANADA GAMES CENTRE *canadagamescentre.ca*

Youth employed: 140

Program Name: Gold Swim Team # Youth participants: 16

Gold Swim Team is structured for those looking to compete, over the summer, who are not involved in year-round swim teams. The Summer Swim Team focuses on proper technique, sportsmanship, and fair play in a positive and encouraging environment. Swimmers will improve their skills and challenge themselves to excel to their full potential with the help of specialized training and expert swim coaching.

We have both participated in diving classes, water polo, lifesaving, and competitive swimming. We feel most at home in the water and can be found cheering each other on 3-4 times a week at practice and dry land training. The coaches have been super supportive and just being able to swim with other team members has brought a sense of normal to this challenging year!

– Program participants

COLE HARBOUR PLACE *coleharbourplace.com*

Youth employed: 50

Program Name: Cheerleading # Youth participants: 13

Participants learn the basic techniques and skills of cheerleading such as stunts, motions/dance, jumps, and tumbling. This program is completely focused on youth fitness, making friends, and learning about teamwork. Athletes also create a routine which they perform for their families on the last day.

I love my cheerleading class because it's fun and it helps me be active.

– Program Participant

Halifax Public Libraries



Halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

The Library is committed to serving youth and delivering services and programs for youth at all 14 branches and community sites. Extensive partnerships with community experts and service providers assist the Library to support youth development and to reach diverse teens.

CENTRAL LIBRARY

Program Name: Teen Night and Other Programs

Youth Participants: ~20

Central Library hosts a weekly teen drop-in program with activities, games, and (when COVID-19 protocol has allowed) cooking. Youth from all over Halifax and Dartmouth attend, with participants traveling from as far away as Woodlawn, Hammonds Plains and Bedford. Teen Night also brings in youth from Chisholm House, a local group home. Activities this year included making tie-dye shirts, creating art, trying out musical instruments (courtesy of our media studio), having outdoor water balloon fights, cooking vegan burgers, and having a dance-off.

Quotes from participants:

- *“Starts with activities, ends with us sharing our deepest, darkest secrets”*
- *“It’s where we spill all the tea.” (Talk about life issues/drama)*
- *“It seems pretty chill.”*

Other Programs

Reel Talk Film Fest - Attendance ~80

A team from Nourish Nova Scotia partnered with the library to host a youth-led film festival. Young people came with their families from all over the province to view their collection of short films relating to food security, climate change, and food justice. The filmmakers were children and teens, and the event was facilitated by members of the Teen Advisory Council. Youth from the Council also hosted and recorded an interview session with the filmmakers.

Teen Volunteers

The Library’s Teen Volunteer program has come back from being online only to being in-person. Volunteer roles included Program Assistants, the Teen Advisory Council, and our youth podcast: “It Came from the Second Floor”. As an unexpected bonus, the year of online-only podcasting opened the door to podcast contributions from youth at other library branches who would not have been able to make it to Central Library in person.

HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES

COLE HARBOUR LIBRARY

Program Name: Paper Bag Lunches

Youth Participants: 15-30

The branch identified a need to provide free healthy lunches to teens and to others experiencing hunger in the community. Pre-COVID-19, these lunches were prepared once a week by participants and enjoyed in the library. With COVID-19, staff pre-packed the lunches for community members to take away.

DARTMOUTH NORTH LIBRARY

Program Name: Warming Hearts Outerwear Drive

Youth Participants: N/A

Three teen volunteers from Dartmouth North applied for and received a grant through Rising Youth to purchase hats, mittens, and scarves for those in need in our community. The youth distributed these items at the library in December 2021.

Quotes from Participants:

• *“Being a teen volunteer gives me a chance to not only work in the Library that I love, but [it] also allows me to make a difference in my community.”*

Other Programs

STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts & Math) Crafts

Five more volunteers were added to the roster. They are currently helping to make up STEAM crafts that are given out each week.

Healthy Lunches

There are also teen volunteers assisting to prepare healthy take-out lunches each Tuesday night to give out on Wednesdays to junior high students who come to the branch. Staff will be working on other initiatives in 2022. Dartmouth North Library has just returned to the newly renovated space and staff are still evaluating the needs and wants of the youth.

HALIFAX NORTH MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Program Name: Teen Night

Youth Participants: 25

Teen Night is a program directed to teenagers featuring a wide variety of activities and social time. At Halifax North Library, the teens have one night a week when the Library is closed, so that they can take-over the library to spread out and enjoy the whole space.

HALIFAX NORTH MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Other Programs

Video Game Competitions

Youth enjoy competitive video game competition and training. (Average attendance: 10)

Afterschool Gatherings

The Library supports daily get-togethers for relaxation, homework and hanging out, at the end of the school day. (Average attendance: 20)

KESHEN GOODMAN LIBRARY

Program Name: Virtual Leading Readers – Teens Mentoring Young Readers

Youth Participants: 20

In 2020 the Leading Readers program was moved online. This program has been offered virtually in 2021 and has had youth volunteering from all over HRM. The program runs weekly for a 12-week long session; with five sessions running in 2021. Virtual Leading Readers provides a more flexible environment for the volunteers and for the children/families that they are working with. Youth volunteers meet weekly on Zoom to help children with their reading and plan innovative, literacy-based group games that can be played online. Together with staff, the teens have adapted a well loved, popular program into a successful new format. Having the program go virtual has given youth an opportunity to volunteer regardless of where they are located; this has brought together teens from across HRM who wouldn't normally work together.

Other Programs

Youth Program Assistants

Teen volunteers helped plan and implement creative and engaging programs for kids. In Fall 2021, some larger programs were able to take place in the library again after having continuous COVID-19 disruptions. The youth developed a Halloween scavenger hunt that included mini games and activities throughout the branch. There were 150 people who came through the program that day. After the program, the teen volunteers mentioned how much they loved getting to spend the day talking and interacting with children and their families. In turn, they received many compliments on how well organized and run the event was.



HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES

SACKVILLE LIBRARY

Program Name: Teen Night

Youth Participants: 23

Changing COVID-19 restrictions over the past year have impacted Teen Night, making it difficult to engage youth in a consistent way. Most recently the Library paused to give the youth a chance to get their vaccinations (when proof of vaccination was required to participate in Library programs). Programs have started up again and staff are building the program's momentum back up.

Youth in the program are looking forward to being able to get together to cook and share a meal as they haven't been able to do this in a long while. Because food in the Library was paused due to COVID-19, new ways to engage the teens had to be found. The game collection was expanded and other ways to entertain everyone was determined. One of the favorites has been "Music Jeopardy, as well as several movie nights".

Other Programs

Teen Volunteers

Participation in the Teen Volunteer program in Sackville has significantly increased. There are now nine teen volunteers, which is more than there has been in a very long time. In the month of November, they contributed 52 volunteer hours. They are helping with everything from snack packing and baking for our Community Cafés to assisting at the Tech Drop-ins.

Teen2Chef

In 2022, Sackville Library will be working with the Library's Food Literacy Specialist to offer the IWK's "Teen2Chef" program; it is anticipated that this program will be quite popular.



**I'm glad to be back.
Nothing was happening for so
long because of COVID.
We couldn't get together with
our friends.**
– Program Participant

WOODLAWN LIBRARY

Program Name: Teen Programming- Youth Night & Home-Delivery Supplies

Youth Participants: 45-55

Teen Night at Woodlawn has been running for 12 years straight, once a week throughout the year. The program offers activity-based programming, a drop-in portion of the night, as well as time for open mic acts and socializing. This program is promoted at surrounding junior high and high schools during the Library's monthly pop-up visits at schools in the community. This program has served thousands of youth over the years and has remained successful; even during COVID-19 when it was necessary to switch to virtual meetups where supplies were delivered to each participant's door.

Quotes from Participants:

- *"Thank you for being one of the only spaces where I could be myself before I came out to my family."*
- *"Thursdays are my favorite day of the week. There's nothing else to do after school in this neighborhood, so we get pretty excited."*
- *"Thank you for everything you guys do. Teen Night really helped with my depression during the lock-down. It was so hard for me to not feel alone during those months. Teen Night really helped."*

Other Programs

Foster Youth Teen Nights - Regional Virtual Program

A virtual teen night for youth in care was offered once a month in partnership with Community Services/Foster Families Central Division. Program kits, snacks, and books were delivered to each teen before the program, they then met on Zoom to do the activity together and then talked about how everyone was doing. (Average Attendance: 10-15)

Pop-Up Libraries

The Woodlawn branch hosted pop-up libraries at junior high schools (EPEC, Ellenvale and Caledonia) once a month. Hot chocolate, snacks, books, LGBTQ2S+ book bins etc. were provided. (Average Attendance: 50-70)

Queer & Trans Book Club

The Library ran a Queer & Trans Book Club for a few months with the local LGBTQ2S+ youth. Two books were read, and a good amount of time was spent talking about the Abigail Shrier book and the controversy at the Library. This program really helped give queer and trans youth a platform to discuss Library policy and how they felt about the content of similar books -- e.g. Conversion Therapy. (Average Attendance: 5-8)

HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES

HALIFAX PUBLIC LIBRARIES - REGIONAL PROGRAM

Program Name: A Room of Your Own

Fall 2021, Halifax Public Libraries partnered with A Room of Your Own to offer a book club to self-identified girls (ages 13-18) in Halifax. A Room of Your Own is designed for girls of all ethnicities, races, and socio-economical backgrounds, with a particular focus on reaching underserved youth. It provides an opportunity to come together to enjoy literature, crafts, and culinary arts. There were a diverse group of girls who joined the first cohort, where the group met in four unique sessions over a three-month period to discuss the book *So Many Beginnings* by Bethany C. Morrow.

The first session took place at Central Library, where the group cooked gourmet grilled cheese sandwiches and the teens received copies of the book to keep, as well as HPL swag (including tote bags, tumblers, notebooks, and pens). This session was designed for the girls to get to know each other and connect with the staff.

In the second session the Sackville Library's kitchen was used to make a recipe featured in the book; Apple Molasses Pie. All of the girls took their pies home to bake and eat with their families.

For the final session, the girls requested a paint night, where local art therapist, Evie Dunville, guided participants through an artistic response to the book using paint and mixed media.

The girls are excited to continue with the program and are looking forward to the next book choice.



Halifax Regional Police (HRP)

Halifax Regional Police Youth Program

halifax.ca/HRPYouthProgram

Youth Volunteers: 32

Founded in 1996, the Halifax Regional Police Youth Program (HRPYP) is a volunteer based, non-profit program for youth aged 14 – 18 who are interested in community service and working with police. The Program offers a structured learning atmosphere and teaches citizenship with an emphasis on leadership and voluntary service to the community.

The HRPYP engages in a variety of youth-driven crime prevention initiatives within our community. Activities can be educational, community service related or just plain fun, and may include presentations by guest speakers, field trips, traffic and crowd control, Police Display Day, child identification record clinics, mascot appearances, bike patrols, parades, concerts, tree-lighting ceremonies, etc. Youth members learn leaderships skills, the importance of civic engagement, public speaking, and teamwork, to name a few.

There are seven Program Elements explored during the program year: Health, Environment, Community, Vocation, Justice, Education, and Ethics. These key elements make the program unique and allow for exploration beyond policing, making participation in the program a much broader experience for all members. Regular Thursday evening meetings are held throughout the school year (September – June) and take place at the Northbrook Training facility, 2 Chapman Street, Dartmouth.

Youth also participated in community events and activities throughout the entire calendar year; these can take place anywhere within HRM. Youth can apply to become a member by applying on the HRP website, to the Volunteer Programs Coordinator. Their application is reviewed and, if qualified, they are invited for an interview.



Municipal Clerks Office

Youth Advisory Committee

halifax.ca/yac

On January 16, 2018, Regional Council authorized staff to conduct a pilot project to establish a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC). The pilot project supported a two-phased approach. Phase one involved working with a leadership team of municipal staff and community partners to develop foundational material, as well as an engagement strategy to recruit committee members who would represent the diversity of the municipality's youth population. Phase two involved setting up the committee, working with the members through several meetings, and carrying out an evaluation of the project. The YAC was appointed by Regional Council on February 12, 2019 and held its first meeting on March 21, 2019.

In 2021 the pilot project was re-approved by Regional Council and recruitment for 12 new members took place in the fall of 2021. The new committee members were selected in January 2022.

Public Safety Office

www.halifax.ca/publicsafety

The Public Safety Office engaged with youth in several ways, including:

- Invited youth to participate in the Community Mobilization Teams projects and training.
- Mental Health First Aid Training - Participants were educated on the many different types of mental health crises and taught how to intervene appropriately. Topics covered: substance-related disorders, mood-related disorders, anxiety and trauma-related disorders, as well as psychotic disorders. Through this training, participants were shown how to properly assess a mental health incident through active listening and empathy.
- Community Garden at George Dixon – Youth assisted with the preparation of the garden in order to be ready for planting. Several youth have been gardening with their families throughout the gardening season.

HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together

halifax.ca/climate

Parks & Recreation Adventure Earth invited Environment and Climate Change staff to participate in the Adventure Earth's summer day camp titled "Sustainable You", where staff gave presentations and demonstrations on alternative energy.

Celebrate HalifACT: Youth Climate Art Contest:

To celebrate HalifACT turning one year old, staff designed a contest for youth to submit artwork that reflected one of the following themes:

1. HalifACT Hero – What does a HalifACT hero look like? What if YOU were a HalifACT hero? What does a HalifACT hero do? What does your community look like with a HalifACT hero?
2. A Future with HalifACT - What does Halifax look like in the future with HalifACT? What will HalifACT change for the community? What will it improve?
3. Your Favourite HalifACT Action - Why is this your favourite action? What does this action look like in action? Who/what is involved? What does it mean for your community?



HalifACT Climate Action Hackathon:

In partnership with ShiftKey Labs, the Halifax Innovation District, and Dalhousie University, HalifACT presented the HalifACT Climate Action Hackathon.

Hackathons challenge participants to create economically and technologically viable solutions for real challenges faced in a variety of sectors and businesses. During this three-day event, participants pitched and presented innovative solutions for environmental challenges that would impact the Halifax community, ranging from subjects in electric transportation, food systems, extreme weather, the sharing economy, and more. For this hackathon, participants focused on creating technology prototypes for the challenges presented by HalifACT.

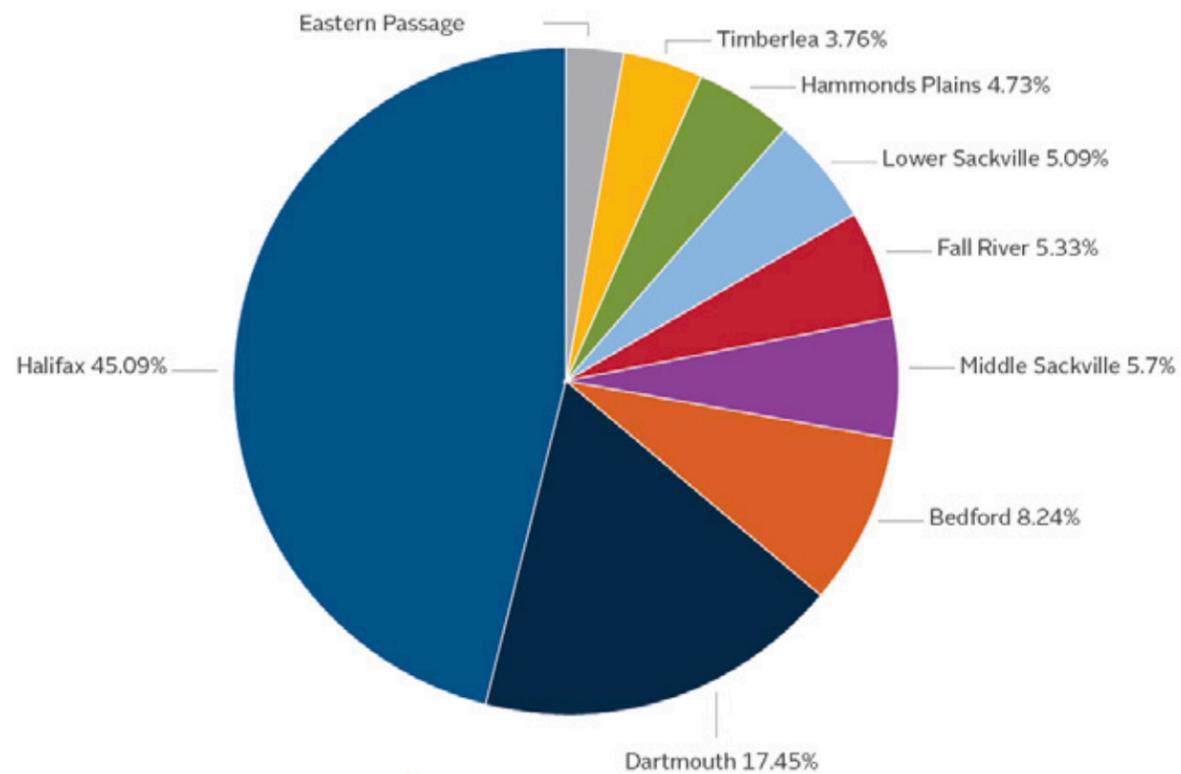


Youth Employment Statistics

The following section provides an overview of the number of youth (16-24) employed with the municipality during 2021:

BUSINESS UNIT	COUNT OF PERS. NO.
Finance & Asset Management	3
Fire & Emergency Services	94
Forum Bingo	11
Halifax Forum	11
Halifax Transit Services	10
Information Technology	3
Legal & Legislative Services	2
Parks & Recreation	889
Planning & Development	9
Regional Police	11
Transportation & Public Works	28
Total	1071

TOP 10 LOCATIONS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYEES



External Service Provider Updates



Youth service providers across the municipality played a vital role in the overall wellbeing of youth. This section highlights the work of several youth-serving organizations in 2021:

BLACK BUSINESS INITIATIVE (BBI)

bbi.ca

Role Models on the Road

This program promotes awareness about entrepreneurship and focuses on the importance of education. 'Business is Jammin' visits schools around HRM with local entrepreneurs, sharing their journeys in their respective fields. Each panelist volunteers their time speaking to youth about their career path, what their work entails, and to offer some words of advice and guidance about the importance of staying in school, setting goals, and entrepreneurship.

This is a very helpful program,
and it has allowed me to
understand more about careers I
had not considered

– Program Participant

ECOLOGY ACTION CENTRE

ecologyaction.ca

'Making Tracks' is an all-ages program which aims to get more people walking, rolling, and cycling through community-based mentorship. People of all experience levels can come to the program and leave with the confidence needed to safely navigate roadways, while more experienced participants will learn how to share their skills with others, as Making Tracks Leaders.

In 2021, the program was delivered to 94 children and youth and trained 11 youth leaders. Two of these leaders went on to summer employment at the local recreation centres, where they in turn delivered the program. Four youth leaders were already employed in a similar capacity and successfully ran summer bike camps in HRM schools.

EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDER UPDATES

HEARTWOOD CENTRE FOR COMMUNITY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

heartwood.ns.ca

HeART is an art and resilience-based program, facilitated by HeartWood Center for Community Youth Development. September 2021 marked the fifth rendition of the program that started in January 2019. This fall, the program was moved to the Power House Youth Centre.

HeART embodies resilience-based strategies with a particular focus on mindfulness, that will help youth learn how to better cope with life's stresses. In 2021, HeART welcomed seven new youth to the program with a total of 15 youth participating each week.

"I found my people" – Program Participant

SUPERNOVA

supernova.dal.ca

Atlantic Academy of Space (ATLAS) introduced students to space exploration, technologies, and artificial intelligence through in-school workshops and intensive two-week satellite design programs.

Twenty-six high school participants were in the first academy cohort of the program, enjoying 70 face-to-face hours of high-level engagement with specialised content, including mentoring from industry experts, and building their own space-ready mini satellite.

Fifty percent female-identifying students took part in the program, this aligns with the gender parity targets from the planning phase. The in-class portion of the program started in November and will continue looking for high school classes across Atlantic Canada to get involved. More information on this exciting project can be found at www.atlascubesat.ca.

"Through ATLAS, I not only learned more about Space technology but grew as a person"
– Program Participant

WISDOM 2 ACTION

wisdom2action.org

Wisdom2Action is a social enterprise and consulting firm that works with civil society and governmental organizations to facilitate positive change and strengthen communities. During 2021, Wisdom2Action worked with the Public Health Agency of Canada on youth suicide prevention through a scoping review, engaging stakeholders in consultations and young people in an advisory committee. To better understand the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities from the Inuit community across the Maritime provinces, staff collaborated with Atelihai Inuit and two young Inuit researchers from HRM.

EATING DISORDERS NOVA SCOTIA

eatingdisordersns.ca

Eating Disorders Nova Scotia collaborated with the Youth Section of Parks & Recreation to deliver a workshop for National Youth Week; 39 youth attended this virtual workshop.

How to Stop Hating Yourself: And Other Things You Didn't Learn in School

This workshop focused on learning and developing the skills of youth to deal with their inner bully. The workshop taught youth how to identify unhelpful thought patterns, how to notice the voice of their inner bully and how to begin separating that voice from their own.

"It was very helpful to learn skills for practicing checking my reality and behaving as if we deserve to take care of ourselves" – Workshop Participant

WONDER'NEATH ART SOCIETY

wonderneath.com

Open Studio: Since 2014, Wonder'neath Art Society has offered Open Studio as a space to gather through artmaking for both personal exploration and collaborative projects: a space in which each person entering will be welcomed as an artist and valued as a community member. It is open to all, with outreach specifically focused on those facing barriers to accessing the arts. Children and youth are at the heart of their practice in the community and are central to their vision.

Art Bikers: The Art Bikers program is a mobile bicycle and trailer-based art program providing free artmaking opportunities in neighbourhoods and communities throughout HRM. The program was designed to provide arts programming at a community level that breaks down barriers and is accessible to all. Additionally, the program provides well paid summer jobs to young artists training them in arts-based community development and community work.

"I love this so much. It was so nice to meet new friends and talk with everyone. I wouldn't change anything about the workshop." – Program Participant

CHEBUCTO CONNECTIONS

chebuctoconnections.ca

Chebucto Connections is a leader in community development and supports for youth by delivering the Pathways to Education Program to students in the Spryfield/Sambro Loop area. The Pathways to Education Program is a national community-based program supporting youth education and helping students to graduate from high school. The goal was to make sure that all eligible youth in the catchment area were well equipped to pursue post-secondary education and/or meaningful employment.

This program provided academic support through tutoring, leadership, group and career mentoring and financial support, such as providing free bus tickets. The program is also able to offer scholarships for all participating youth for their post-secondary education (Up to \$2,000 per student in the program or \$500 per year they participate in the Pathways to Education Program).

EXTERNAL SERVICE PROVIDER UPDATES

YOUTH PROJECT

youthproject.ns.ca

Camp Seahorse is a camp for anyone 25 and under who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

In July and August 2021, Youth Project offered hybrid digital/in-person day camps for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth across the Atlantic Provinces. These camps allow for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to build meaningful connection, skill-share, discuss their lived experience with supportive adults, and engage in community building.

“My camp experience was absolutely amazing. I enjoyed it so much. This is my best day camp experience I’ve had in my entire life.” – Camp Participant

“This experience was so much fun and much needed during this time!!! Thank you so much for making these past few days so amazing!!!” – Camp Participant

NPOWER CANADA

npowercanada.ca

The NPower Canada program provides participants with free, in-demand digital and professional skills, training, and connects them to new and rewarding career opportunities. Youth ages 13-29 can apply for NPower Canada’s Junior IT Analyst training program, which is completely online.

Through consultation with a wide range of employers, NPower Canada’s comprehensive curriculum ensures participants are equipped with the in-demand technical and professional skills most sought after by industry.

NPower Canada offered three cohorts in 2021 and plan to support over 150 participants again in 2022. NPower Canada want Halifax youth to build successful careers in tech.

This program allowed me to branch out my networks and tap into a job market that I had not had experience in before through new tech skills as well as interpersonal skills.

– Program Participant



Current Best Practices, Trends and Research

This section highlights best practices, emerging trends, and youth-related research. For the purpose of this report, staff focused on the following:

- Best practices and lessons learned from creating friendly youth spaces at the Power House Youth Centre
- Generation Z research

THREE TIPS FOR CREATING FRIENDLIER YOUTH SPACES – LESSONS FROM THE POWER HOUSE YOUTH CENTRE

1. FOSTER YOUTH-LED ENVIRONMENTS: Youth want to help shape the programs, spaces, and communities they are a part of. Encouraging feedback and including them in decision making is an important step in creating friendlier spaces and is one that fosters engagement, self-determination, inclusion, and belonging among youth.

Youth attending the HRM programs know what makes them feel welcomed and comfortable, so it has been identified that there is a need to get curious and ask them what they think. What do they want to see in the space? What types of programs do they want? What are their concerns? Being included will help youth develop a sense of pride and ownership in youth spaces and promote feelings of empowerment, mutual respect, and appreciation when they see their suggestions put to action. This process helps staff to form trusting relationships with youth, create inviting spaces, and design and deliver relevant and meaningful recreation opportunities.

What was heard: The most important aspects of youth-led environments are:

- Flags, posters, art, and crafts relating to Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities and 2SLGTBQIA+ identities helped youth feel represented and welcomed.
- Picking up free pre-made pronoun buttons or making their own made youth feel seen and helped other youth get to know them.
- Having plants, superhero/game themed wall art, colourful lights and lamps, and comfy seating created a cozy and fun setting where it was easier to make friends.
- Free food along with a variety of games to play made youth want to come back again.
- Having an orientation tour eased the anxiety of integrating into a new environment and social setting and made youth feel that the space was theirs.
- Gather youth feedback and visually share the results to show the value and respect of their input (printed posters, infographics, buttons, memes, videos, social posts, visual art, youth quotes, etc.)

2. CREATE SAFER SPACES: Staff do their best to make spaces safer for all youth. Below are a few practices that can be started right away. These practices should be followed up by seeking feedback from the specific youth in HRM youth programs to find out what makes them feel safe and secure.

Normalize Sharing Pronouns

- Introduce yourself to youth by name and share your pronouns (she/her, they/them, he/they etc) and invite them to share theirs with you.
- Some youth may not be comfortable sharing pronouns right away. This can make it challenging to refer to them in group settings, but they can always be referred by their name.
- Youth may use different pronouns in school and recreation settings than they do at home so it's best to ask how they would like staff to refer to them in communications with guardians.
- Invite youth to create a button during their first visit. It can have their name, pronouns, and/or an image of something they are interested in. Invest in a button maker, it will get a lot of use in any youth space.
- Create opportunities for youth to share pronouns again in the future. Everyone is learning, growing, and changing constantly, so it's best not to assume a person's identity is static.

Provide an All-Gender Washroom

- Providing an all-gender washroom (single stall if possible) demonstrates respect to and for gender-diverse youth and will help them feel respected and safe/r in our spaces.

Safer Spaces Support Resources

- This can be a printed poster or other visual display which gives youth a way to ask for help without needing to disclose sensitive information in front of others.
- Post information in a visible spot in private/low traffic areas such as washrooms.
- If possible, include a cell number to text. For some youth, this is the least intimidating way to get in touch.
- List the name(s) (consider including a photo too) of the staff member(s) responsible and ready to provide support, so youth know who to talk to.
- The Safer Spaces poster may also outline external resources such as crisis hotlines and community organizations. You can find many local, provincial, and national resources by visiting: www.halifax.ca/youthsupports
- Resources should be selected based on the specific population and area you serve.



CURRENT BEST PRACTICES, TRENDS AND RESEARCH

3. QUESTION OUR PRACTICES: How can service providers make spaces welcoming to all youth? Start by examining physical and social environments as well as programmatic and administrative practices and by asking questions which help to identify gaps in our services. Depending on the capacity and size of the staff, a working group may want to be formed and would include input from youth in the community.

Sample Questions:

- Is the building accessible (approach, enter, and use) for youth with disabilities?
- Is the furniture arranged in a way that wheelchair users can easily navigate?
- Are staff welcoming and respectful of support persons? Service animals?
- Is the space sensory friendly? What is the noise level and lighting like? Are earplugs offered? Sensory fidget toys?
- Are all youth respected and included regardless of their backgrounds and cultures?
- What languages do the youth in the programs speak? Are their needs being met? Is the correct pronunciation of all participant names learned and being used?
- Is cultural humility being practiced?
- Who is coming here and who isn't? Why?
- Are staff confident in resolving conflicts? Supporting mental health and well-being?
- Is harm reduction practiced? (Ex: Nalaxone kit onsite and staff trained in use)
- What are the strengths of the staff? What training is required?
- Can access to WIFI, a public telephone, and device charging stations be provided?
- Can bus tickets be offered to youth when needed?
- Can meals or snacks be provided?

RECRUITING GENERATION Z: HARD TO REACH POPULATIONS

The following summarizes a research paper written by a Parks & Recreation summer student:

The paper provides insight on Generation Z (people born between 1997-2015). The goal of this paper is to communicate the characteristics, preferences, and challenges that Generation Z individuals face in order for organizations to understand, anticipate, and meet the needs of Gen Z youth, especially those of which are considered to be a hard-to-reach population.

The key findings of this paper include:

- Gen Z are very tech-savvy as they are 1.6 times more likely to think that a household must be equipped with the latest technologies and are more likely to be the first to adopt new technologies.
- When it comes to health care, youth today care about convenience, efficiency, and transparency.
- Their generation is one that thrives when given a challenging, fully immersive educational experience in which they can work through problems and really test their knowledge.

Conclusion & Next Steps

This report highlights several youth programs and events that have taken place within the municipality. The feedback received from the youth at virtual and in-person engagement events was positive. This shows the positive impact that the municipality, and their partners, are having on the youth in communities throughout the municipality.

COVID-19 impacted all aspects of Youth Programming in 2021. Programs were suspended, cancelled, or modified as staff worked to adapt and put COVID-19 safety measures in place to properly safeguard youth. The new normal for youth programs includes all public safety measures including mask wearing, hand sanitizing and contact tracing.

Next Steps:

- 1 Continue to provide an annual information report to CPED regarding trends, issues, best practices, and actions taken with respect to youth programming.
- 2 Begin the implementation phase of the YSP2, continue to engage the Youth Team in decision making.
- 3 Recognize and celebrate National Youth Week (May 1-7, 2022) by offering programs, activities, and resources for youth.
- 4 Continue with the implementation of the second Multi-Service Youth Centre in Spryfield.
- 5 Begin transition of the Youth Live job experience from the enviro depot to the café at the Sackville Sports Stadium.
- 6 Review crime statistics and the current model for the boundaries of the Youth Advocate Program.
- 7 Re-open youth drop-in at The Den Youth Centre and Power House Youth Centre when public health restrictions allow.
- 8 Begin orientation and onboarding of new Youth Advisory Committee Members.
- 9 Develop a relationship with youth sport organizations to include their information within the 2022 Youth Engagement report.
- 10 Continue to monitor the public health restrictions due to COVID-19 and adjust youth programming as needed.

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