

BACKGROUND

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

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

DISCUSSION

The Youth Engagement Report (Attachment A) outlines youth programming, trends, issues, and best practices for the 2022 calendar year as youth services and programs resumed regular operations.

The Youth Engagement Report provides an annual update on youth services in the municipality. It also provides the opportunity for external youth service providers to highlight their programs and services. In addition to regular activities, the Youth Live Program was renamed to the Youth Worx Program (Youth Worx). Youth Worx opened The Café at Sackville Sports Stadium serving a quick grab and go food service to the local community.

The Municipal Youth Services Plan began implementation in 2022. This included the creation of a youth Instagram account (@hfxnextgen) to ensure all youth are aware of the programs and services being offered. An overview of the implementation plan and intended outcomes are included in this report.

Current data on youth programs and services was collected from various HRM business units and divisions including Parks & Recreation, Municipal Clerks Office, Public Safety Office, and Energy & Environment. It also includes information from Halifax Regional Police, Halifax Public Libraries, and external youth service providers.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Staff engaged with youth to obtain feedback on the trends and issues presented in the attached report. This was achieved by holding virtual and in person workshops when public health restrictions allowed.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2022 Youth Engagement Report

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

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Update for January – December 2022

Attachment A

Youth Engagement Report

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July 2023

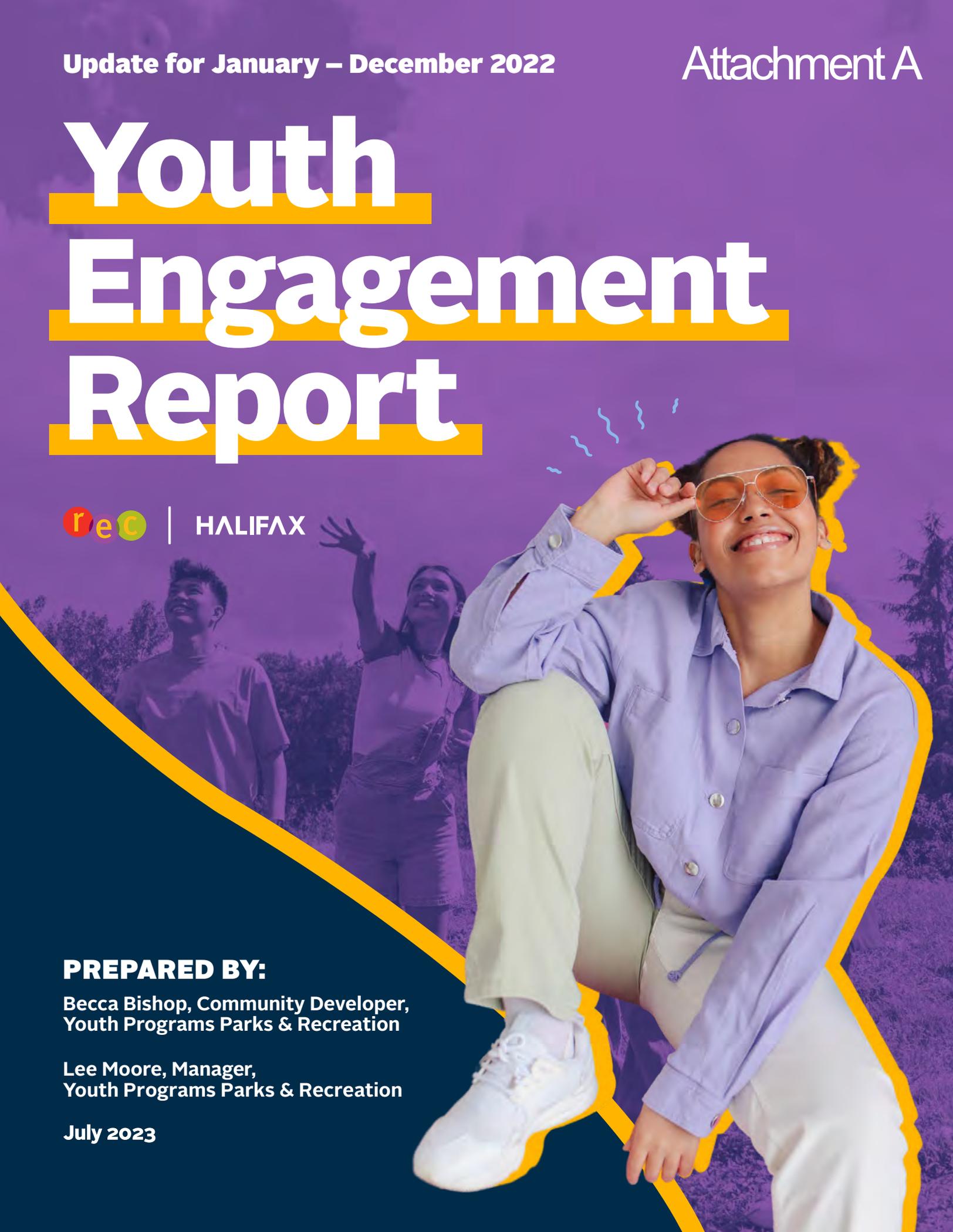




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Purpose



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 to December 2022.

Executive Summary



In 2022, COVID-19 public health restrictions were eased and youth services and programs resumed regular operations.

The Youth Engagement Report provides an annual update on youth services in the municipality. It also provides the opportunity for external youth service providers to highlight their programs and services.

In addition to regular activities, the Youth Live Program was renamed to the Youth Worx Program (Youth Worx). Youth Worx opened The Café at Sackville Sports Stadium offering a quick grab-and-go food service to the local community.

The municipal *Youth Services Plan 2022-2024* began implementation in 2022. This included the creation of a youth Instagram account (@hfxnextgen) to ensure all youth are aware of the programs and services being offered. An overview of the implementation plan and intended outcomes are included in this report.

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

Youth Services Plan

halifax.ca/yjsp

In 2005, the Halifax Regional Municipality's 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.

A municipal business unit 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 large-scale 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 halifax.ca/yjsp.

The Youth Services Plan 2 (2022-2024) 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 youth in the Halifax region through the delivery of programs and services, as well as working collectively with other business units throughout the municipality and community partners.

YOUTH SERVICES PLAN 2022-2024

VISION STATEMENT

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

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.

CORE VALUES

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

- **Diversity and inclusion**
- **Transparency and accountability**
- **Collaboration**
- **Youth voice**

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. Youth have access to spaces in their community where they can take ownership, feel welcome, socialize, obtain support and access services
2. All youth across the municipality feel represented and included in programs, services and committees
3. Youth feel prepared to make a successful transition to adulthood
4. Youth feel empowered to engage in local governance and contribute to shaping their communities
5. All youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality

2022 UPDATE

In 2022, staff began creating a Project Implementation Plan (PIP) and an evaluation framework to roll out to staff. To achieve the desired outcomes of the Youth Services Plan, staff, youth and community partners have identified the activities in the table on page 5.



GOAL	ACTIVITIES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOME	LONG-TERM OUTCOME
1.1. To focus on an integrated youth service-delivery approach.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Multi-Service Youth Centre (MSYC) in Spryfield Select a third MSYC location Conduct partnership recruitment at The Den Coordinate activities between municipal youth spaces Offer youth counselling services and youth outreach worker services to youth 			
1.2. To ensure youth spaces are welcoming, inclusive and accessible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt the Public Safety Office's Women's Safety Audit to create youth audits that assess the "youth friendliness" of municipal youth spaces <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train youth to deliver audits Host design charette for MSYC in Spryfield to ensure the space is youth friendly Deliver accessibility and inclusion training to staff in youth spaces Deliver non-violent crisis intervention, mental health First Aid, harm reduction and anti-Black racism training to staff in youth spaces Continue to deliver Friendly Faces Friendly Spaces to recreation front line staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased number of and access to youth spaces Increased access to social supports for youth (housing, food, employment and other community services) Increased staff skills and knowledge on social supports available for youth within the municipality Increased skills and knowledge of staff regarding inclusion and accessibility practices Improved coordination of youth services among partners Improved sense of belonging for youth 	Youth have access to spaces in their community where they can take ownership, feel welcome, socialize, obtain support and access services.	
1.3. To ensure youth spaces support the mental well-being of youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create and maintain list of services and resources for youth on halifax.ca/youth Work with community partners to develop training for staff referring youth to social services, housing, food, employment and counselling Expand counselling services in drop-in youth spaces Offer community resource navigation support by Youth Outreach Worker Deliver peer support training to youth 			
2.1. To learn more about serving underrepresented youth populations and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct research on best practices for delivering equitable youth programs and services and provide an update in the Annual Youth Engagement Report Identify barriers and challenges youth from underrepresented communities experience Identify training resources for youth staff to participate in Review Multi-Service Youth Centres with an equity lens Review the implementation and evaluation of the Youth Services Plan with an equity lens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved relationship between municipality and underserved youth populations Increased knowledge and skills of staff regarding best practices for engaging underrepresented youth populations 	All youth across the municipality feel represented and included in programs, services and committees.	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.
2.2. To develop and improve programs and services for underrepresented youth populations and communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver youth programming and services specific to underrepresented youth populations including women and girls, urban Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+, African Nova Scotians, immigrants and youth with disabilities Support the Youth Ambassador program for NAIG Ensure rural youth programs and services are aligned with the Rural Recreation Strategy Recruit program staff and facilitators who are reflective of the municipality's youth population Conduct a program review of the Youth Advocate Program including its intake process, boundaries and ways youth are supported in the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased cultural competency skills of staff Increased number of youth participants from underrepresented youth populations in youth spaces 		
3.1. To offer a variety of ways for youth to develop their skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and deliver programming and workshops on basic skills such as budgeting, finances and cooking Partner with external agencies to deliver workshops on science, technology, engineering and computer skills Deliver peer support training to youth Continue to offer recreation and leisure activities to assist in the development of social skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased problem solving, decision making and critical thinking skills of youth Improved access to opportunities for positive youth development Increased leadership opportunities for youth 	Youth feel prepared to make a successful transition to adulthood.	
3.2. To develop job readiness by enhancing employment programs and opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with service providers to offer programming and workshops that increase youth employability skills Conduct a review of the Youth Leadership Program's employment modules to identify opportunities for improvement Open Youth Worx Café at the Sackville Sports Stadium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased transferable and technical skills for youth to success in employment 		

GOAL	ACTIVITIES	SHORT-TERM OUTCOME	MEDIUM-TERM OUTCOME	LONG-TERM OUTCOME
4.1. For youth to gain confidence to effectively engage in local governance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Host youth workshop series youth to learn how the municipal government operates and how they can contribute to local governance • Continue to support the Youth Advisory Committee as an opportunity for youth to learn about local governance • Work with the Office of the Municipal Clerk to support voter education efforts to reach youth from diverse communities and encourage their participation in municipal elections • Use @hfxnextgen Instagram account to raise awareness about the next municipal election 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthened capacity of staff to effectively engage with youth • Improved confidence of youth to engage with local governance • Increased opportunities for youth to take leadership roles in their communities • Increased opportunities for youth to give input and feedback 	Youth feel empowered to engage in local governance and contribute to shaping their communities.	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.
4.2. To provide avenues for youth to give input and feedback on municipal programs, services and projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to invest resources in public engagements and events that collect feedback from youth about their ideas, opinions and needs • Create an online dashboard to inform youth on how their input was used and inform them about the outcomes of their involvements in engagements • Continue to support the Youth Advisory Committee as an opportunity for youth to provide feedback on municipal decisions • Facilitate formal and informal opportunities to connect youth with their local councillors and other municipal decision makers 			
4.3. To prepare youth to become leaders in their communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch 16-week Community Change Cohort program to build the capacity of youth to initiate youth-led community projects • Facilitate How Youth Initiate Change workshops • Support youth in accessing resources that enable them to bring a youth-led project into action • Explore ways to connect youth to the municipal Placemaking program • Increase the number of, and access to, meaningful youth volunteer opportunities • Recognize youth leaders by nominating them for municipal volunteer awards 			
5.1. To target youth with marketing and promotions that are on trend and will catch their attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Corporate Communications to create a youth Instagram account • Review the youth website to ensure content is updated and relevant to youth's needs • Work with Corporate Communications to create an annual youth marketing plan that includes promoting the youth website, Instagram account and program and services • Develop promotional material needed for pop-up engagements including banners and handouts • Create an annual plan for seasonal pop-up engagements in rural communities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced promotion of youth programs and services • Increased awareness and action on youth website (halifax.ca/youth) • Increased awareness and traffic on @hfxnextgen Instagram account • Increased outreach to underserved youth populations and demographics 	Youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality.	

NEXT STEPS

The following action items will assist in the implementation of all the strategic priorities:

1. Continue the use of a Youth Team to guide the implementation of the plan
2. Create a staff working group with representation from multiple business units
3. Organize a partner steering committee
4. Develop a performance measurement framework
5. Continue to provide annual updates in the youth engagement report



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



The municipality offers various programs, events and engagement opportunities for youth. This report highlights the efforts taken by Parks & Recreation, Halifax Public Libraries, Halifax Regional Police, Office of the Municipal Clerk, Public Safety Office, HalifACT and external youth service providers.

In 2022, Parks & Recreation's Youth Section created a youth-dedicated Instagram and web page to support the promotion and marketing of this work.

HfxNextGen Instagram account

During the engagement phase of the *Youth Services Plan*, participants identified the lack of awareness as one of the main barriers to participating in youth programs or services with 73 per cent of survey responses stating the need for an Instagram account dedicated to youth.

This account is one of the outcomes of the new *Youth Services Plan*. Strategic Priority 5 of the *Youth Services Plan* states, "All youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality." Objective 5.1.2 specifically outlines the intention to "Enhance the municipality's social media presence by using youth identified social media accounts, such as a youth-dedicated Instagram account."

The Youth Section and Corporate Communications also completed additional youth engagements to select the name of the account. The name was validated through in-person and social media engagement with youth.

In the first year, the Instagram account has gained and maintained over 500 followers.

"Instagram is so effective for expressing information. We could use it for surveys and questionnaires and get so much youth input. Plus, a lot of youth repost everything they see for other youth!"

– youth engagement participant

"Make an Instagram account for youth only. I feel many youths would follow this as it could contain all the information for youth in the city, and be shared in a way that is easy to understand."

– youth engagement participant



HALIFAX YOUTH WEB PAGE

halifax.ca/youth

2022 web page views: 17,028

To ensure there is a web presence for youth programs and services, staff completed an update to the Halifax youth web page in 2022. The website was updated with new images and information on programs and supports for youth. The page also received a new layout, allowing staff to better showcase new content to the youth.

The halifax.ca/youth area is located under the Parks & Recreation section of the municipal website. It includes the following pages:

- Youth Spaces
- Youth Resources & Supports
- Youth Services Plan
- Youth Programs
- Youth Advisory Committee
- Youth Advocate Program
- Youth Training & Workshops
- Youth Leadership Program
- Youth Worx Program



Youth Advocate Program



halifax.ca/yap

The Youth Advocate Program is a family centered crime prevention program, which works with youth and their families 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.

Youth advocate workers work directly with youth participants and their families, 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. This work is done privately, confidentially and with the consent of the family.

When a youth graduates from the program, 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

2022 statistics

Youth advocate workers collaborate with school representatives to improve school performance, including attendance, behaviour, homework and participation in extracurricular activities.

- 68 youth from across the municipality were enrolled in the program
- 90 per cent of participants remained in or returned to school

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

In 2022:

- Four per cent of participants received support/counselling for sexual abuse/exploitation
- 26 per cent of participants received support/counselling to avoid and/or develop healthy mechanisms regarding dating violence, gender violence and unhealthy relationships
- Four per cent of parents/guardians in the program attended parenting support programs

Youth Worx Program



halifax.ca/youthworx

The Youth Live Program was renamed to the Youth Worx Program (Youth Worx).

The program offers 24 weeks of paid job and life skill building for youth between the ages of 16 to 24 years old who are not in school and facing employment barriers. Youth Worx has two main streams: business operations and mentoring. Business operations is comprised of on-the-job training and coaching at The Café (located at the Sackville Sports Stadium), paper recycling services and green cart delivery and repair. The mentoring stream includes working alongside Youth Worx support staff who provide guidance and coaching on their employability and leadership skills. The youth also receive modules on life skills and job skills designed to prepare them for their future. Youth Worx operates two full programs a year, with one starting in May and the other in October.

The Youth Worx 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 complete self assessments throughout the program to monitor their own perception of these skills. Staff also conduct assessments to monitor behaviour related to their employability skills. The 2022 results of these assessments show that there was an increase in all nine employability skills, which will help the youth obtain and keep a job after completing the program.

2022 YOUTH WORX PROGRAM STATS

The program had 25 youth participants and 21 graduates.

Barriers to employment:

- 90 per cent had lack of job experience
- 28 per cent did not graduate high school
- 64 per cent had mental health concerns
- 60 per cent had a learning disability
- One per cent had children
- 16 per cent had a history of addiction

The youth came to our program from:

- 48 per cent came from Halifax
- 48 per cent came from Dartmouth
- One per cent came from Sackville
- One per cent came from other areas of the Halifax Regional Municipality

YOUTH WORX CAFÉ

In August 2022, the Youth Worx program opened The Café at Sackville Sports Stadium serving quick grab-and-go food services to the local community in addition to creating a safe space for youth.

On average, The Café serves up to 75 customers per day of which 67 per cent are youth who come from Sackville High School.

Expanding the Youth Worx program into the food service industry has provided opportunities for entry-level experience, which helps prepare the participants for employment in the food service and retail industries. Participants who successfully graduate from the Youth Worx program are then able to be hired on at The Café as casual staff for the evening and weekend shifts.



Success Story

Christian began his journey with Youth Worx as a program participant. He successfully graduated from the program and was hired on as a casual staff member at The Café. He continues to be a positive role model for his peers and for the new program participants. He has excelled with decision-making and leadership abilities along with having a positive attitude. Each day Christian showcases his newly learned skills in food service, cash management, inventory control and customer service.

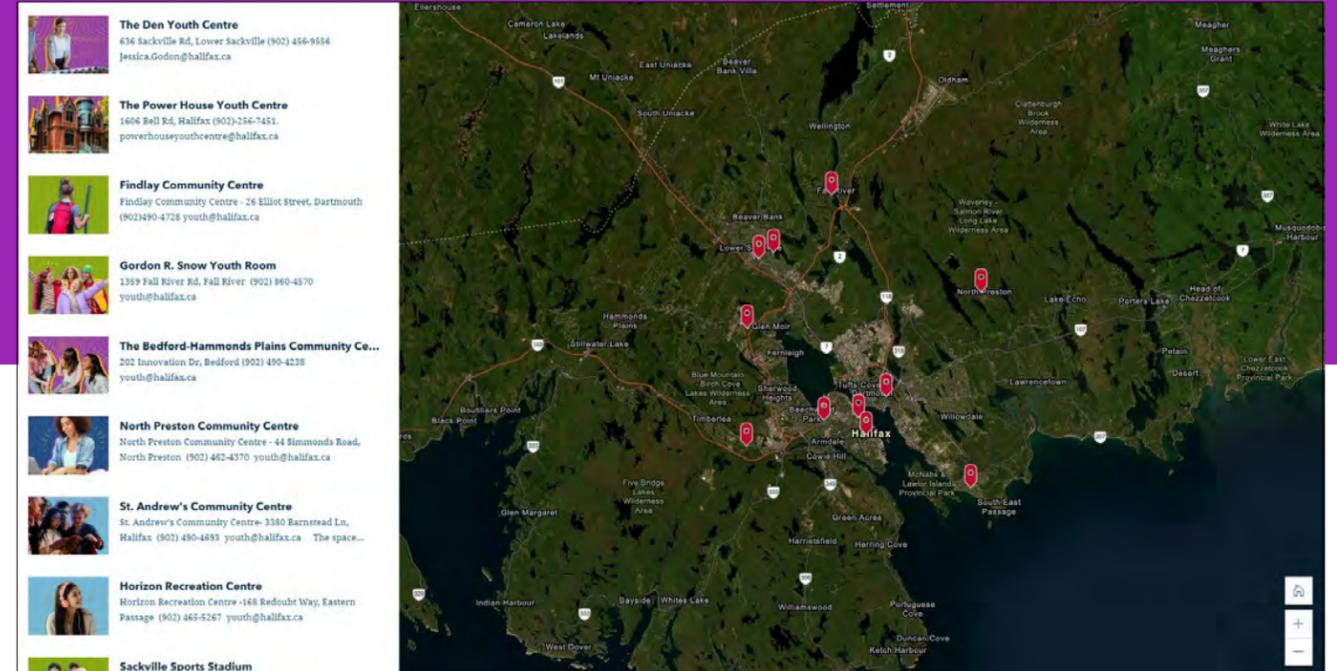


YOUTH SPACES

halifax.ca/parks-recreation/youth/youth-spaces

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.

In 2022, staff worked with Information Technology staff to create an interactive map for the website that helps youth identify the locations and contact information of municipal youth spaces.



POWER HOUSE YOUTH CENTRE

halifax.ca/powerhouse

The 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.

Power House Youth Centre offers multiple programs for youth 13-24 years of age. On average, 150 youth accessed the Power House each month for drop-in activities and registered programs. Participants were typically between 13-18 years old and came from numerous areas of the municipality including the Peninsula Halifax, Spryfield, Fairview, Dartmouth, Sackville and Bedford. While many youth living on the peninsula accessed the Centre on a regular basis, there were high numbers of youth commuting from elsewhere. As a result, they were able to make new friends outside of their home communities and schools and create new relationships. These connections made a positive impact especially for youth who struggle socially.

Registered programs

There were 80 participants per month who participated in registered programs. Registered programs included: school PD day clubs, beginner guitar lessons, improv club, First Aid training, board games club and the most popular program, Dungeons and Dragons.

Program highlight: Dungeons and Dragons

During 2022, Dungeons and Dragons (D&D) brought approximately 40 returning youth into the Youth Centre each week to play a three-hour session of the role-playing game (RPG). This program encouraged creativity and play along with pro-social behaviors, such as cooperation and conflict resolution in a safe and inclusive atmosphere. D&D has become extremely popular among youth attending Power House programs and over time, a tight-knit community was formed around this program. Many participants have seized the opportunity to invest in something that they care about and have contributed ideas and volunteered their time to help shape this program and the space. These youth have also shared their skills and knowledge and have enthusiastically welcomed new participants, making the program appropriate for all experience levels.

Dedicated D&D/tabletop RPG program space "The Lair"

In response to the growing popularity of the Dungeons and Dragons program, staff transformed the basement storage area into a games room. Youth now have a dedicated program space for D&D and other tabletop role-playing games. The new room debuted in the fall of 2022. Staff worked with youth participants to pick a name for the games room, which is now called The Lair. Additional youth engagement led to a list of items that youth would like to see in their perfect games room:

- A wooden table
- Comfy chairs
- Themed artwork
- Old stateroom or tavern concept
- Dimmable lighting

With this feedback, staff worked to ensure the space has a fantasy theme while also being useable for other games and activities.





Drop-in programs

Drop-in programs are held on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Wednesdays from 3:30 - 7:30 p.m. and Saturdays 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. with approximately 70 participants per month.

Youth spent time unwinding and socializing at the Power House during drop-in hours. Many participants tried a variety of activities, the most popular being button making and playing Smash Bros and Mario Kart on Nintendo. Creating pride-themed, pronoun, and anime character buttons were especially popular. Participants also enjoyed movie nights, playing board games, doing art activities like shrink art and painting and seasonal activities like pumpkin carving. Some youth also used the space to study and do homework and took advantage of academic support offered by staff and youth volunteers. Additionally, as youth have become comfortable in the space and found community there, they have formed genuine relationships with staff and have come to rely on the Power House as a safe space to ask questions, express emotions and share their struggles without fear of judgment. One youth who attends after school drop-ins on a weekly basis said the following about their time at Power House:

“I find it (The Lair) really cool; the ambience is really nice. It gives the 'feeling' of D&D.”

– Power House participant

“This place is like therapy; it’s helped me way more than I ever thought it would.”

– Power House participant

Program highlight: Garden Club

During the summer of 2022, youth planted and cared for a vegetable and herb garden in the yard of the Power House Youth Centre. One participant reported that the experience was “very fun and that food really tasted better when you grew it yourself!” At the end of the summer, youth harvested their vegetables and enjoyed a tasty picnic.

One memorable event from the Garden Club was when youth and staff had the pleasure of witnessing nature in action when a turtle from the neighbouring Public Gardens made its way onto the Power House property. The turtle was appropriately named Yoshi and spent several hours exploring the green space in search of the perfect site to lay eggs. This was a great opportunity to speak with participants of the Garden Club about the importance of observing and respecting nature at a distance.

These youth have also shared their skills and knowledge and have enthusiastically welcomed new participants, making the program appropriate for all experience levels.

“It’s awesome! I remember one day we had the (normal) lights dimmed and the special effects lights on, and it was cool!”

– Power House participant

Multi-Service Youth Centres

Multi-service youth centres (MSYC) take a collaborative approach to the delivery of youth programs and services. Parks & Recreation and community-based organizations work together to achieve common goals, including:

- Removal of barriers of access around mental and physical health
- Provision and implementation of various drop-in programs
- Creation of youth services that are inclusive for all youth
- Design of physical spaces that are open and welcoming to youth
- Policies and best practices for service delivery of youth programs
- Use of partnerships to deliver on non-municipal programs and services

These dedicated youth spaces offer young people a place to find support and services and a place to hang out with friends.

THE DEN YOUTH CENTRE

halifax.ca/TheDen

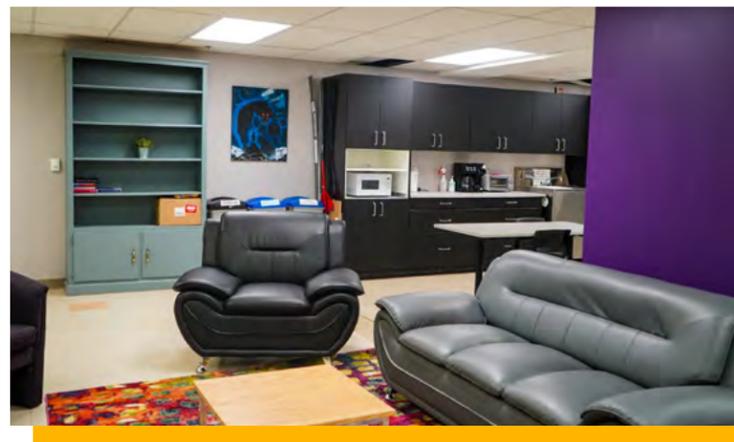
The Den Youth Centre is a safe, inclusive space for youth ages 13-18 from the Bedford/Sackville communities. Working collaboratively with different organizations and groups, The Den provides services and a weekly drop-in space for youth to hang out.

The Den expansion

In 2022, The Den was renovated to expand the space and develop an area for a kitchenette and a second lounging area. The expansion allowed for an increase of youth in the space. The number of drop-in nights participants increased 10 per cent from the previous year.

New intakes: 290

Average youth per drop-in night: 18-20



Partnerships at The Den

Staff held an open house for youth-serving organizations to tour the space and learn more about how to become a partner organization at The Den. Several community organizations toured the space and discussed possible ways to collaborate.

The Den continues to seek partner organizations to help deliver programs and services identified as a need by youth in the community. Interested in learning more? Please contact youth@halifax.ca

New partnership with Cobequid Youth Health Centre

Part of the multi-service youth centres expansion included the development of a new office space for the Cobequid Youth Centre social workers. Youth can now access free, drop-in counselling services within The Den from Monday - Wednesday from 3:30-8 p.m.

Cobequid Youth Health Centre provides a place for youth and their families to turn for help and support in an environment of respect and confidentiality. Social workers advocate, navigate and collaborate with community partners while providing counselling, support and referrals for young people aged 13 to 25, with or without their families.

In 2022 The Den counsellors provided direct services to 886 youth. Two hundred and sixty-seven of those sessions were scheduled visits and 619 of those sessions were informal, drop-in visits.

THE DEN (THREE DAYS PER WEEK)	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	SUB TOTAL
Appointments	17	17	15	28	49	21	32	52	36	267
Informal	47	59	51	70	90	48	92	83	79	619
Monthly total	64	76	66	98	139	69	124	135	115	886

SPRYFIELD, HERRING COVE YOUTH CENTRE

Halifax Regional Council authorized staff to adopt the MSYC model in other communities throughout the municipality. Staff designed and conducted a site location process to determine the next location. Based on that assessment, Spryfield/Herring Cove area was selected as the next community to receive a multi-service youth centre, subject to budgetary funding.

The MSYC model requires a dedicated youth space to deliver programs and services. After consideration of rental space, commercial space and a scan of spaces available within the community, staff have concluded the best approach to establish a youth-dedicated space would be to make modifications within the Captain Williams Spry Community Centre.

Staff have put forward a plan through the capital budget to create a dedicated youth space within the Captain Spry Community Centre. Project design is scheduled to start in 2023/24 with construction beginning in 2024-25.

In 2022, staff began initiating a swing space until the dedicated space is complete. This will ensure support is provided to youth until renovations are complete. The drop-in space will open in the spring of 2023.

Youth Leadership Program

halifax.ca/youthleadership

Parks & Recreation's Youth Leadership Program is for youth who want to develop leadership skills through fun and challenging learning experiences. Participants help make a difference in their communities by organizing and taking part in special events and assisting staff with children's programs. The program operates with four pillars: volunteering, social events, community action and training.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2022 YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Youth Leadership Week of Action

Every year during Youth Leadership Week of Action, the youth leaders organize activities to benefit their communities.

Bedford Hammonds Plans Community Centre and Lebrun Recreation Centre

Event: Youth Leadership Carnival and BBQ at DeWolf Park

Result: Collected 447 lbs of non-perishables for Feed Nova Scotia

Musquodoboit and Sheet Harbor

Event: Bottle Drive

Result: Raised \$482 for Pick of the Litter Society

St. Andrew's Community Centre

Event: Volunteering at Titus Smith Memorial Park every Wednesday of the summer.

Result: Various activities with community members including button making, crafts, spike ball, soccer and football

Gordon R. Snow Community Centre

Event: Community Carnival

Result: 72 lbs of non-perishable food for Feed Nova Scotia

Sackville Sports Stadium and Acadia Centre

Event: Really Epic Carnival

Result: Food donations in support of Freedom Kitchen

George Dixon Community Centre

Event one: Supporting the community garden by watering plots

Event two: Repainting a community bench

Dartmouth North Community Centre

Event: Bake sale

Results: \$140 raised for the IWK

Event: Garbage day pick up

Result: Two bags of garbage collected during community clean up

Event: Volunteering at food bank

Result: Eight youth volunteered at food bank at Christ Church

Horizon Community Centre

Event: Youth Leadership BBQ and carwash

Result: \$582.20 raised for Halifax Refugee Clinic

Captain William Spry

Event: Dog walk-a-thon

Result: Items for dogs donated to HFX Dog

Adventure Earth

Event: Trash pick up at MacCormack's Beach

Result: Youth leaders worked with day-camp participants from Fleming Park, Shubie Park and St. Mary's Boat Club to clean up MacCormack's Beach. Once collected, the youth leaders created a masterpiece art piece.

Y.E.S. Camp

Y.E.S. Camp is part of the summer Youth Leadership Program. It provides youth with a unique leadership experience within an overnight camp setting. The focus at the overnight camp is team building, communication skills, skill sharing, event planning and leadership. A maximum of 50 youth who are in the Youth Leadership Program were invited to participate in this overnight camp.

Youth Leadership coordinators are employed by Parks & Recreation to deliver the Youth Leadership Program to younger participants. Y.E.S. Camp is led and facilitated by the Youth Leader coordinators, making it a truly youth-led experience.



National Youth Week 2022



halifax.ca/youth

National Youth Week takes place every year from May 1-7 and is dedicated to the celebration of youth and their active participation in their communities. The 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 & Recreation coordinated several free workshops and activities to provide youth learning and social opportunities.

150 youth participated in National Youth Week events:

- Pizza and party games at The Power House – Parks & Recreation
- Movie night and pizza at The Den – Parks & Recreation
- #Adulting – CUA – Myra Lucia
- Minute-to-win-it night at The Den – Parks & Recreation
- Virtual open house
- Highlight reel vs. reality: unpacking the impacts of social media on body image – eating disorders Nova Scotia
- Button-making at The Power House – Parks & Recreation
- Youth basketball at Cole Harbour High – Parks & Recreation
- Budgeting 101 with Junior Achievement's Brenda Kenny
- Ice cream party at The Den – Parks & Recreation
- Movie night at Needham Community Centre – Parks & Recreation
- Paint night at Horizon Recreation Centre – Parks & Recreation
- Youth basketball at Gordon. R. Snow Community Centre – Parks & Recreation
- Minute-to-win-it at Musquodoboit Rural High – Parks & Recreation
- Youth night at Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre – Parks & Recreation
- Karaoke and pizza at Sackville Sports Stadium – Parks & Recreation
- Youth night at Horizon Recreation Centre – Parks & Recreation
- National Youth Week celebration at The Power House – Parks & Recreation
- Youth open gym at Astral Drive Jr. High School – Parks & Recreation
- Bike ride on BLT trail – Parks & Recreation
- Movie night at George Dixon Community Centre – Parks & Recreation

Accessibility & Inclusion

halifax.ca/rec

Parks & Recreation invites individuals of all abilities to participate in recreation and leisure programs. The municipality is committed to providing safe and accessible programs for everyone to enjoy. Staff recognize that some residents will require assistance to participate via adapted equipment, program modification, and/or through the provision of one-to-one inclusion support.

READY FOR REC

Ready for Rec programs are designed for youth who have diverse needs and require additional supports to be successful in a recreation environment. The focus is on accommodations, adaptations and low ratios to support individual skills and learning styles. This program is supported by community partners and is delivered by trained staff and volunteers. Nine youth participated.

STAFF TRAINING

In 2022, inclusion training was provided for summer staff (specialized inclusion support staff, inclusion coordinators and summer coordinators). Non-violent crisis intervention training was delivered for Ready for Rec summer staff, inclusion coordinators and summer coordinators. Fall/winter staff training was also held at North Preston Community Centre, Dartmouth North Community Centre and Findlay Community Centre.

Registered Youth Programming

halifax.ca/rec

The municipality's Parks & Recreation department offers a multitude of programs directed to youth ages 13 to 18. These programs and activities are advertised on the municipal website, through printed material such as posters, the municipal digital screen network and municipal social media accounts including the new [@hfxnextgen](#) Instagram account.

- Municipal recreation centres offered registered youth programming to 5,341 youth in 2022
- Number of registered youth programs offered: 378



Outdoor Recreation

halifax.ca/outdoorrec

ADVENTURE EARTH CENTRE (AEC)

halifax.ca/aec

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. The Adventure Earth Centre is in Sir Sandford Fleming Park (Halifax) and at Shubie Park (Dartmouth).

L.E.A.D | summer overnight camp

This program is one of the most exciting, engaging and adventurous experiences that a youth camper can undergo in one week. The camp incorporates the four elements of L.E.A.D. (leadership, environment, adventure and discovery) through creativity, exploration and hands-on activities. Participants spend most of the camp outside in nature at Camp Mockingee.

L.E.A.D. is a dynamic, engaging and life-changing experience that gives young leaders a glimpse into the lives of change makers and community builders working to create a more sustainable future. The program empowers youth to define their own vision for the future and helps them develop the skills necessary to turn this vision into reality. Supported by experienced staff, the camp emphasizes leadership, environmental learning, adventure and discovery. It wouldn't be an AEC camp without eating good food and creating magical summer memories of stargazing, campfires, canoeing and swimming. Twenty-four youth participated.

“The people are way nicer than I expected, it only took me a day to feel comfortable talking to people and making new friends!”

– youth participant

H.E.A.T. Youth Action Team

H.E.A.T. stands for “Helping the Earth by Acting Together” and is a “youth-driven” environmental and leadership group that meets regularly throughout the year. “Youth-driven” means that all activities, events, camps and programming are designed and picked by the youth. H.E.A.T. provides great opportunities for youth ages 13 and up who have an interest in the environment, their community and who would like to make a difference.

The H.E.A.T. team's events range from socials (weekend retreats to Camp Mockingee, Dungeons and Dragons nights, etc.), community actions (volunteering at a food bank, making props for programs at the Adventure Earth Centre, awareness nights, community outdoor libraries, etc.), environmental leadership with children (day camps) to skill building workshops. 10 youth per session participated.

H.E.A.T overnight camps

H.E.A.T. camps are youth-driven overnight camps that aim to provide opportunities for leadership, to develop personal skills, to create service and action projects, to participate in active living opportunities and to remain connected to other like-minded youth. Four camps were held in 2022 with 30-35 participants at each overnight camp.



ST. MARY'S BOAT CLUB

halifax.ca/rec/stmarysboatclub

Youth paddle nights

St. Mary's Boat Club paddle nights give youth the opportunity to learn paddling skills and safely explore the North West Arm. Certified instructors take groups of 15 paddlers on the water and show them how to fit into their safety equipment and find the correct sized boat. After practicing basic paddle strokes on land, the instructor demonstrates how to get in and out of the boats safely. After instruction, participants practice their paddling while exploring the shoreline. Sixty-eight youth participated.



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 2022, the Youth Worx program held a bicycle-repair program at the Emera Oval. Youth participants were trained by VeloFix to change wheels and keep bicycles in working order.

YOUTH SURFING

halifax.ca/rec

Cole Harbour recreation staff offered surf lessons for youth ages 13-16. The lessons, surfboard rentals and wetsuits were provided in partnership with the East Coast Surf School. Youth received a 30-minute lesson on land about safety, parts of their board, how to paddle and how to stand. Then they moved to the water and practiced paddling and standing on the board with the help of the East Coast Surf School instructors. After their one-hour lesson they had another hour of free time in the water while supervised by staff.



Halifax Public Libraries (HPL)



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.

YOUTH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Community consultants at Cole Harbour Public Library

The purpose of this program is to offer more volunteer opportunities, allowing youth to meet new people and to connect to their communities, explore future careers, gather work experience, learn new skills and fulfill school volunteer requirements. The community consultants help to ensure that the Cole Harbour Library reflects and welcomes all communities. In 2022, three recent newcomers maintained a calendar of international holidays to help recognize and celebrate these holidays. The Queer youth consultants planned an interschool GSA (genders and sexualities alliances) club with monthly meetups and workshops. Fifty youth volunteers participated.

Teen chefs at Alderney Gate

Once a month a group of youth helps prepare snacks for the Coffee Corner mornings program. Coffee Corner is a time for vulnerable adult patrons to socialize around coffee and snacks and address some of the challenges of food insecurity and homelessness in the community. Youth learn basic cooking methods in a fun atmosphere. Cooking skills programs for youth build their food knowledge and literacy, self-confidence and self-esteem.

Teen cooking class at Family SOS Greystone

This program is a collaboration between Family SOS Greystone and Captain Spry Library's Youth Services department. This program teaches basic cooking skills to youth ages 12 and up who live in the Greystone community.



CULTURALLY REFLECTIVE PROGRAMMING

In the kitchen – African Nova Scotian cooking series

The Preston Township Library Office team as well as other library locations offered a new culturally reflective cooking program to several historical African Nova Scotian (ANS) communities within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The eight-week series incorporated African Nova Scotian inspired recipes of traditional foods and easy home cooked meals. Participants received food bags weekly with fresh ingredients needed to create their dish. The idea of the project was to address food-insecure families while engaging the broader ANS community and to bring the element of home cooking where laughter, conversation and where ANS history can shine through to the viewing audience.

The instructional videos were produced by KekeBeatz Films, a videographer from the Preston Township community. The videos were community-led and supported by Nova Scotia Community College, HPL's Community Specialist, alongside several African Nova Scotian red seal chefs and home cooks from African Nova Scotian communities.

Drama Llamas at Woodlawn Public Library

Drama Llamas was developed in consultation with 2SLGBTQIA+ youth at the Woodlawn Public Library. Youth made it clear that they needed a safe space free of judgment and assumptions to hang out with other youth who identify as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Each meeting youth did something fun and engaging such as painting, drawing and crafts. Drama Llama's recently received funding from the Halifax Public Library Pride Committee to promote and engage more youth in the program.

African Heritage Month youth quiz at Halifax North Public Library

One of the signature programs for Youth during African Heritage Month was the youth quiz. The quiz was established as a partnership between the Cultural Awareness Youth Group and the Halifax North Memorial Public Library. Teams of African Nova Scotian students from schools in the municipality were asked a series of questions related to African Nova Scotians, African Canadians, African Americans and African history. The team which accumulated the most points won!

Newcomer service for youth

Keshen Goodman Library continued its partnership with the YMCA Centre for Immigrant Programs to provide social opportunities and academic support through the weekly Homework Help Club. The branch also ran a fall session of Young Newcomers English Club where newcomer youth volunteered with the program to support younger newcomer children with their English.

DROP-IN PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH

Teen Night at Cole Harbour Public Library

Teen Night at Cole Harbour Library was offered once a week on Tuesday nights. Each week had a different activity, ranging from glow-in-the-dark bingo to *Fear Factor* food challenges. The aim was to appeal to teens with many different interests, to ensure that each month there was at least one night focused on crafts, one on food and one on competitive games. Typically hosted 23 youth per week.

Teen Night at Woodlawn Library

Teen Night at Woodlawn Library was offered once per week from September to June for teens in grades 7-12. The program ran from 7-8:30 p.m. every Thursday night and provided a safe space for teens to come and hang out with friends, have some snacks and participate in an activity. Typically hosted 15-18 youth participants per week.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Fostered teens & families program

In collaboration with Foster Care Outreach and Therapeutic Services of the Department of Community Services (DCS) the Woodlawn Public Library established a monthly virtual Teen Night with fostered youth and their foster families to connect them to safe, nurturing relationships. The first program attracted 23 teens from foster families residing within the Halifax Regional Municipality. Together, they provided programming bags for each participant which included the necessary supplies for that evening's virtual program. Program offerings ranged from art-related programs to food-related programs and everything in between.

Autism Nova Scotia supported youth program at Sackville Public Library

In collaboration with Autism Nova Scotia, eight youth volunteered at the library to better understand how to work in a library setting. These youth also joined Teen Zone and, over three weeks, helped with crafts and activities.



Musquodoboit Harbour Youth Employment and Skills Strategy program

The Musquodoboit Harbour Library branch partnered with the YESS (Youth Employment and Skills Strategy) program which focuses on enabling youth in the local community to find gainful employment, particularly those who face barriers to employment, to develop their work and life skills and to transition successfully into the labour market. Participants worked in their placement for at least five weeks which took place after several weeks of classroom and group exercises. In their work placements, youth learned about the basics of the workplace which included workflow, procedures and safety, chain of command and reporting among other things. Staff coached the participants in a variety of tasks to enable them to participate in the library work environment.

Technology

"It Came from the Second Floor" Teen Talk at Sackville Public Library

In 2022, the library piloted a virtual teen volunteer program (Teen Talk). Youth read books or watched films and recorded their thoughts on it. Afterwards, youth visited the recording studio at the Central Library and made eight episodes of a podcast.



Halifax Regional Police (HRP)

HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE YOUTH PROGRAM

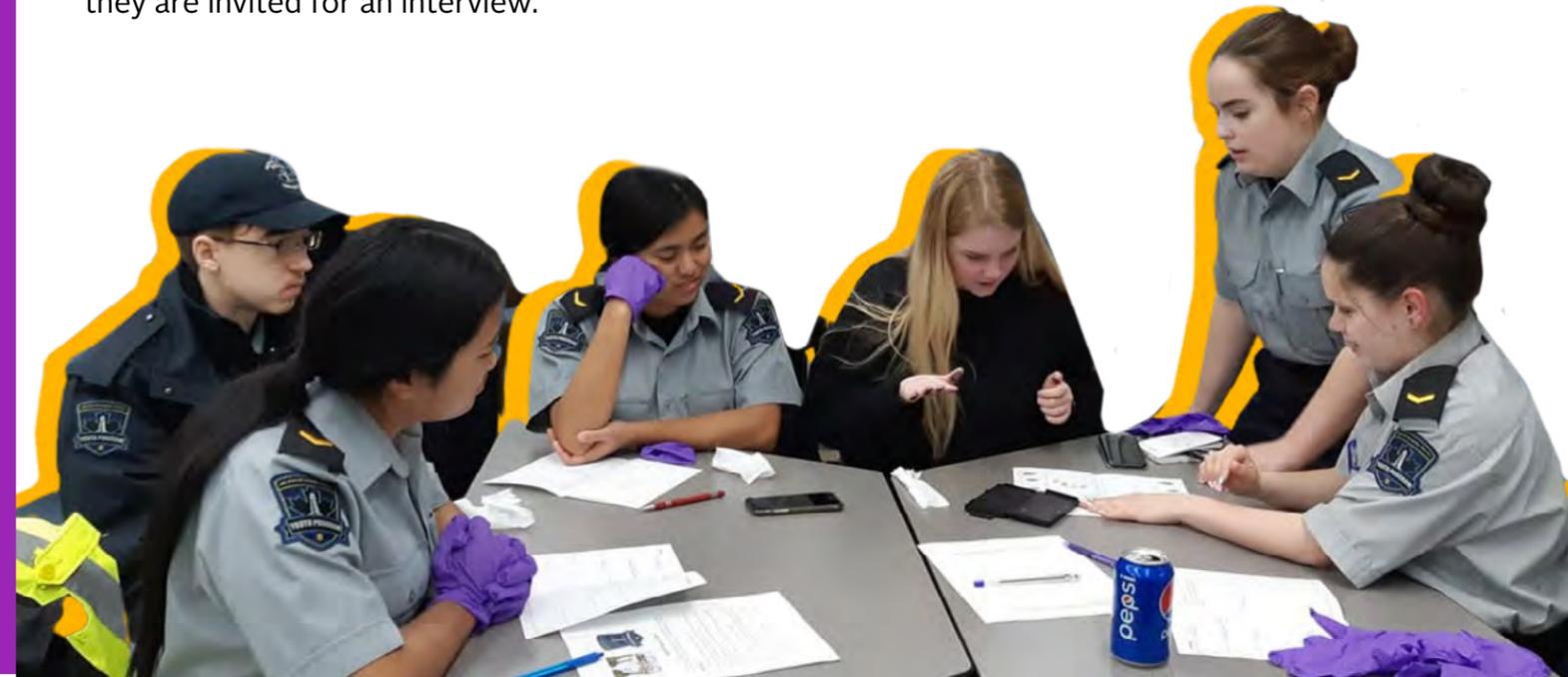
halifax.ca/HRPYouthProgram

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 program had 22 youth volunteers.

The HRPYP engaged in a variety of youth-driven crime prevention initiatives within the community. Activities were educational, community-service related or just plain fun, and included 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 and more. Youth members learned leaderships skills, the importance of civic engagement, public speaking and teamwork, to name a few.

There were seven program elements explored during the program year: health, environment, community, vocation, justice, education, and ethics. These key elements made the program unique and allowed for exploration beyond policing, making participation in the program a much broader experience for all members. Regular Thursday evening meetings were held throughout the school year (September to June) and took place at the Northbrook Training Facility, 2 Chapman Street, Dartmouth.

Youth also participated in community events and activities throughout the entire calendar year, within the Halifax Regional Municipality. 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.



Office of the Municipal Clerk



YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

halifax.ca/yac

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) was created to give youth a voice at Regional Council. The committee advises council on how municipal policies, programs, and services affect youth and challenge the areas where we can do better.

In 2022, YAC identified three priorities to guide their work plan:

- Priority 1:** Youth perspective and engagement on the municipality's social policy priorities with an emphasis on food security, housing and the Public Safety Office
- Priority 2:** Climate action - advise Executive Standing Committee on how to continually incorporate input from youth of all races, genders and abilities in HalifACT, Halifax's climate action plan
- Priority 3:** Support youth self-reliance – raise awareness about and advocate for sustainable and affordable resources for youth in the municipality, especially when transitioning to self-reliance

Meet and greet event at City Hall

In September 2022, the YAC and Regional Council had a meet-and-greet event hosted in City Hall. Members had the chance to get a tour of City Hall and chat with the Mayor and Councillors about how youth can better inform the work of Regional Council.

Public Safety Office



halifax.ca/publicsafety

Safety of Muslim women and non-binary residents

In collaboration with the Office of Diversity & Inclusion, the Public Safety Office hosted community engagements with Muslim women to inform a report to Council regarding the safety of Muslim women and non-binary residents in public spaces. Approximately 20 youth participated in these conversations.

Building Safer Communities Fund

In 2022, the Public Safety Office received funding from the Federal Government through the Building Safer Communities Fund. The Building Safer Communities Fund provides eligible municipalities and Indigenous communities with funding to support prevention and intervention initiatives that address gun and gang violence in their communities. The funding is for four years.

The Public Safety Office is working with Parks & Recreation to assist in the delivery of the Building Safer Communities Fund. Parks & Recreation, through the Youth Section, is providing additional supports to youth (ages 13-24) to help prevent youth from getting involved in gun and gang violence. Recreation Programming has hired a Youth Counsellor and Youth Outreach Worker to provide support to young people in municipal youth spaces. Additionally, the Public Safety Office and Recreation Programming are collaborating on a review of programs and services which consists of analyzing supports available to youth between the ages of 13 and 24 who are at an increased risk of gang involvement and gun violence in the Halifax Regional Municipality. Based on findings, strategies will be recommended that the municipality can use to reduce barriers to accessing these programs and services and to improve coordination and collaboration across the community safety and violence prevention system.

HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together

halifax.ca/climate

HalifACT is one of the most ambitious climate action movements in Canada. It's the municipality's community response to the climate crisis that will build a more resilient and healthy future in Atlantic Canada while preparing for current and future climate impacts. HalifACT encourages youth to take climate action.

HalifACT highlights 2022

- Clean Leadership Summer Internship Conference: 100 youth engaged
- Adventure Earth Center summer camps: 50 youth educated on renewable energy, the benefits and barriers and discussed what youth can do to use fewer fossil fuels
- Dalhousie University CAPSTONE – worked with a group of six young students on nature-based solutions and green infrastructure project
- Participants in the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Wild Outside youth leadership program worked with municipal staff on a public education event in Shubie Park. The event was part of the municipality's Canines for Clean Water program and flagged dog waste left behind in the park to show a visual of the impact of dog waste on fresh water. At this event youth had the opportunity to do some water sampling and analysis of their own, using water rangers kits from the Atlantic Water Network. Ten youth participated



Clam Harbour Beach Sandcastle Competition

clamharboursandcastle.ca

The sandcastle and sand sculpturing contest attracts over 10,000 people every year to the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. The competition offers cash prizes for children, youth and adults.

Five youth teams entered the 2022 competition. The winning group was the Bowyer Clan who created a dragon sculpture.

The information and merchandise booth is operated by the Musquodoboit Harbour Youth Leadership Program.

Volunteer Awards



halifax.ca/volunteerawards

Each year during National Volunteer Week, the Halifax Regional Municipality holds an award ceremony to acknowledge and honour the contributions of volunteers and volunteer organizations in our communities. While the celebration had to be postponed this year, staff would like to recognize the volunteers and community groups who were selected to receive a 2022 Volunteer Award. Congratulations to these exceptional youth volunteers and organizations.

Individual awards

Jackson McNeil	Zoya Hussain
Lauren Peveril	Sarah Finkle
Olivia Matheson	Micaiah Aladejebi
Shabad Kaur	Sean Bowes
Aarushi Patil	Luke Webb
Asiah Sparks – volunteer of the year	Abby Nagar

Group category awards

Multicultural Drummers (Malaria Warriors)

Multicultural Drummers is a family of drummers devoting their lives to carry on their baby sister's memory. The group was founded by Dr. Olugu Ukpai after he lost his 16-month-old daughter, Goodness, to malaria unnecessarily in 2016. The family drums to raise and create awareness across schools and communities. They were the local stars at the 2018 Tattoo and received the Heroes & Legends recognition from the Canadian Armed Forces.

Volunteer of the year

Asiah Sparks – youth

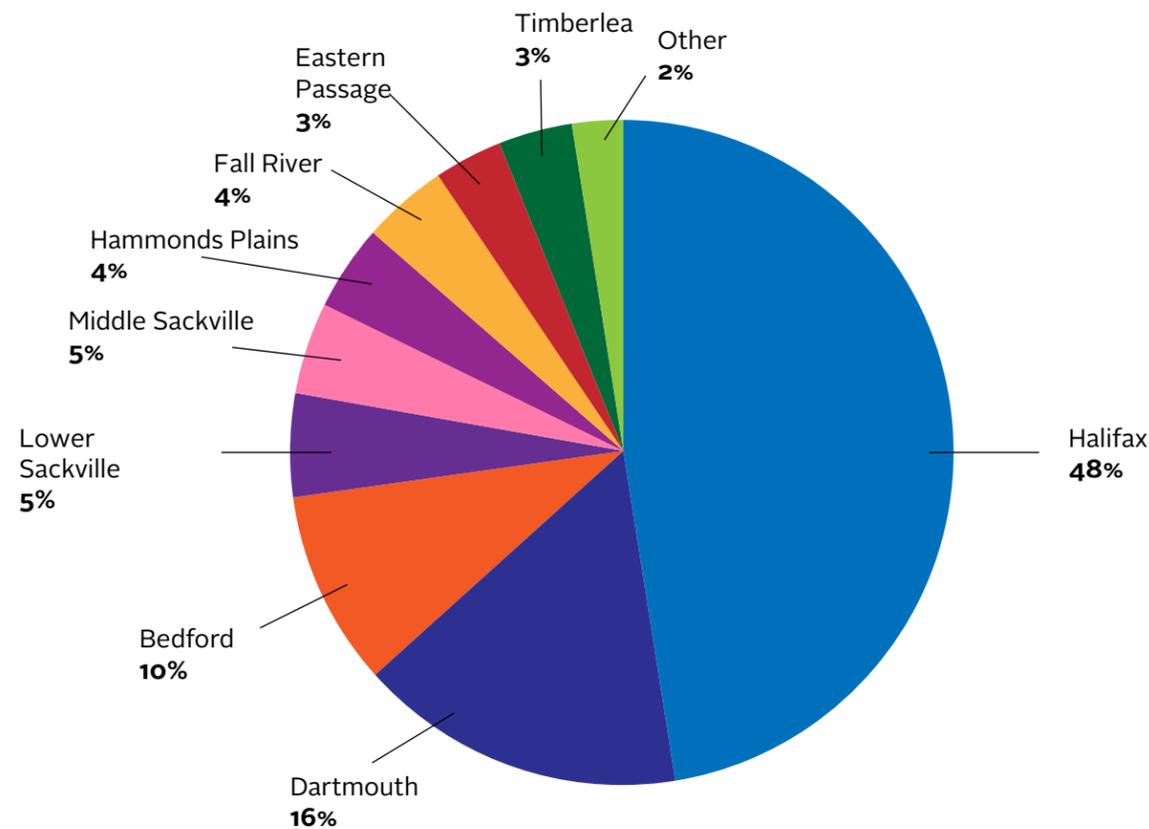
Asiah is a vibrant, passionate, and deeply caring individual who has turned her negative life experiences into opportunities to get involved in her community to make it better for those who follow behind her. She cares about cultivating a sense of community and inclusion to seek out opportunities to play multiple roles to make her community better. Our community is a better place because of the thousands of hours Asiah has committed to the Boys and Girls Club, Prince Andrew High Black Student Union, Darren Fisher's Youth Council, Imoni Tutoring Program, School and Community Committee and to the community of Dartmouth North. She is a powerful advocate for social justice and the first on the ground to lend a helping hand. Asiah is truly a community builder.

Youth Employment Statistics

The following section provides an overview of the number of youth (16-24) employed with the municipality during 2022:

AREA	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
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 well-being of youth. This section highlights the work of several youth serving organizations in 2022.

HALIFAX ROAD HAMMERS

hfxroadhammers.com

Junior Hammers running program

Running program for youth that focused on building overall athleticism and introduced the sport of athletics (cross country and road running). The program ran from eight to 10 weeks and progressed through a series of drills, form work and increasing volume of workload. Forty youth participated.

SACKAWA CANOE CLUB

sackawa.ca

Summer Paddling Program

The Summer Paddling Program is an eight-week program. Youth participants were grouped according to age (U10, U12, U14, U16). No prior paddling experience was necessary for any of the paddling levels. Beginners were given the opportunity to learn sprint canoeing and kayaking in both single and team boats. More experienced paddlers improved their skills to compete locally, regionally, nationally and beyond. The program had 225 youth participants.

NUMA CLUB

teamnuma.com

NUMA club offered a weekly schedule of Judo classes for every level. Classes included:

Judo 1: Monday and Wednesday ages 5-8 with a focus on fun, Judo and fundamentals

Judo 2: Tuesday and Thursday ages 9-11 started to focus on Judo competitions

Judo 3: Tuesday and Thursday ages 11-13 focused on competition and preparing for Canada Winter Games

Competition Judo: Sunday ages 12 and above

Fifty youth participated.

BUSINESS IS JAMMIN' (BIJ)

businessisjammin.ca

BIJ is a charitable youth initiative of the Black Business Initiative (BBI). BIJ strives to build the next generation of leaders. This initiative grows and nurtures the minds of Black youth across Nova Scotia, providing a foundation and helping youth create a life plan. BIJ exposed youth to entrepreneurship, social enterprise, education and personal development through experiential learning. BIJ provided free programming for youth ages 8-30, which enabled them to influence their communities and contribute to economic growth.

- **Experience in Program:** The Experience in Program directly introduced African Nova Scotian youth to viable career opportunities in disciplines in which they were underrepresented. Experience in Program allowed youth to explore and identify their passions and future career possibilities while they received a hands-on learning experience through an experiential learning model. The Experience in Program has been a success, introducing African Nova Scotian high school students to careers in green energy, ocean tech and computer science, to name a few.
- **Role models on the road:** BIJ provided opportunities for Black entrepreneurs, career professionals and post-secondary students to inspire youth in junior high and high schools. These interactive sessions allowed the role models to share their professional and educational experiences to interact, connect and inspire the next generation of leaders.
- **Youth Summit:** The BIJ Youth Summit brought hundreds of Black youth together to develop their leadership abilities in a supportive, interactive and fun environment. This year's summit saw 170 Black youth in Nova Scotia ages 15-18 take part in a day of experiential learning.
- **March/summer camp:** The free business camps focused on leadership and entrepreneurship through education and personal development, while in an energetic and interactive environment. Youth explored how their passions could become innovative business ideas. In 2022, over 100 youth attended free business camps

THE NORTH GROVE

thenorthgrove.ca

Cooking and gardening youth program

In 2022, the North Grove hosted four Grade 7 classes from John Martin Junior High School in a cooking and gardening youth program. There have been 15 sessions delivered with a total of 70 students. In September and October, the students harvested vegetables such as parsnips, carrots, kale and radishes, and planted garlic and tulip bulbs. They learned about how different vegetables and berries grow at The North Grove community farm.

During the winter months, youth went inside to learn about food in the kitchen. Each week, the students helped package meal kits which were complete with recipes to distribute at the weekly affordable markets. The students have really loved participating and were interviewed by Jeff Douglas from *CBC Mainstreet* about the program.

CATAPULT LEADERSHIP SOCIETY

catapultcamp.com

Catapult Leadership Society is a registered charity that provided leadership programming for youth who demonstrated natural leadership qualities but lack the opportunities to participate in this type of programming. Catapult's mission is to cultivate new leaders who will make a positive difference in communities across Nova Scotia.

In 2022, in-person leadership camps were enjoyed by staff and youth alike. The flagship Catapult Camp had a successful season and staff enhanced the programming and transportation for the Catapult Plus Conference. Participants met like-minded youth to connect with and formed life-long friendships. They challenged themselves and each other to step outside of their comfort zones in a safe, supportive environment to build their toolbox of strengths and accomplishments.

EATING DISORDERS NOVA SCOTIA

eatingdisordersns.ca

Eating Disorders Nova Scotia (EDNS) is a community-based organization that offers peer support for individuals with eating disorders and their families, friends and partners. They provided: education for caregivers, clinicians, school staff and others; assistance navigating the mental health system and advocacy for the prevention, treatment and support of eating disorders. Programs are free of charge and do not require a referral or diagnosis.

In 2022, Eating Disorders Nova Scotia partnered with Parks & Recreation to deliver a workshop during National Youth Week. The workshop aimed to unpack the impact of social media on body image, taught skills to build boundaries and created a safer social media experience. ten youth participated.

HOPE BLOOMS

hopeblooms.ca

Through innovative agricultural and culinary programs, Hope Blooms engaged youth to become change agents who positively impacted the community. Hope Blooms 2022 highlights are as follows:

- **Youth culinary arts:** Youth learned how to cook from the basics to culturally relevant food from all over the world.
- **Music camp:** In the summer of 2022, two alumni youth taught children in the community about music production. Youth raised funds to build their own youth-led music studio.
- **Business camp:** Business camp guided youth from project ideation to prototypes and budgets. The camp ended with a Dragon's Den style pitch where the winner was awarded money to start their own social enterprise.
- **Urban agriculture:** Youth and staff used Hope Bloom's 10,000 square foot garden and greenhouse to learn about sustainable organic agriculture.
- **Greenpreneurs:** This is a collaboration with the MacPhee Centre for Creative Learning where children 7 to 12 from the Uniacke Square got together to explore all kinds of art forms: sculpture, screen-printing, watercolors, dance and more.
- **Fair food farmers market:** Twelve subsidized farmers markets with members from Uniacke Square. Residents came together, enjoyed live music, sold their own products, and/or shopped for fresh local produce and local prepared food.
- **Community suppers:** Bi-monthly community suppers took place in our Global Kitchen for Social Change.
- **Partnership with Parks & Recreation:** Hope Blooms partnered with the municipality's Recreation Programming team to offer basic cooking skill programs to the George Dixon Community Centre Youth.



SPORT NOVA SCOTIA

sportnovascotia.ca

Sport Nova Scotia is a non-government, non-profit organization focused on supporting the sport system for all participants. Sport Nova Scotia offers youth the opportunity to develop fundamental life skills, such as leadership, problem solving skills, time management and accountability. Sport Nova Scotia has over 55 provincial sport organization members. Members include:

- Alpine Skiing (Ski Nova Scotia – CADS NS)
- Archery (Archery Nova Scotia)
- Artistic Swimming (Nova Scotia Artistic Swimming)
- Arm Wrestling (Nova Scotia Arm Wrestling Association)
- Athletics (Athletics Nova Scotia)
- Badminton (Badminton Nova Scotia)
- Baseball (Baseball Nova Scotia)
- Basketball (Basketball Nova Scotia)
- Biathlon (Biathlon Nova Scotia)
- Bicycle (Bicycle Nova Scotia)
- Boxing (Boxing Nova Scotia)
- Canoe (Atlantic Division, CanoeKayak Canada)
- Cheerleading (Cheer Nova Scotia Association)
- Cricket (Nova Scotia Cricket Association)
- Cross Country Ski (Cross Country Ski NS)
- Curling (Nova Scotia Curling Association)
- Diving (Nova Scotia Amateur Diving Association)
- Equestrian (Nova Scotia Equestrian Federation)
- Fencing (Fencing Association of Nova Scotia)
- Field Hockey (Field Hockey Nova Scotia)
- Figure Skating (Skate Canada – NS Section)
- Football (Football Nova Scotia)
- Freestyle Ski (Freestyle Nova Scotia)
- Golf (Nova Scotia Golf Association)
- Gymnastics and Trampoline (Gymnastics Nova Scotia)
- Hockey (Hockey Nova Scotia)
- Judo (Judo Nova Scotia)
- Karate (Karate Nova Scotia)
- Lacrosse (Lacrosse Nova Scotia)
- Lawn Bowls (Lawn Bowls Nova Scotia)
- Orienteering (Orienteering Association of Nova Scotia)
- Pickleball (Pickleball Nova Scotia)
- Powerlifting (Nova Scotia Powerlifting Association)
- Rhythmic Gymnastics (Nova Scotia Rhythmic Sportive Gymnastic Association)



- Ringette (Ringette Nova Scotia)
- Rope Skipping (Rope Skipping Association of Nova Scotia)
- Rowing (Row Nova Scotia)
- Rugby (Rugby Nova Scotia)
- Sailing (Sail Nova Scotia)
- Shooting (Shooting Federation of Nova Scotia)
- Snowboarding (Nova Scotia Snowboard)
- Soccer (Soccer Nova Scotia)
- Softball (Softball Nova Scotia)
- Speed Skating (Speed Skate Nova Scotia)
- Squash (Squash Nova Scotia)
- Surfing (Surfing Association of Nova Scotia)
- Swimming (Swim Nova Scotia)
- Table Tennis (Nova Scotia Table Tennis Association)
- TaeKwonDo (Maritime TaeKwonDo Union)
- Tennis (Tennis Nova Scotia)
- Triathlon (Triathlon Nova Scotia)
- Volleyball (Volleyball Nova Scotia)
- Water Polo (Nova Scotia Provincial Water Polo Association)
- Water Skiing (Water Ski Wakeboard Nova Scotia)
- Weightlifting (Nova Scotia Weightlifting Association)
- Wrestling (Wrestling Nova Scotia)

Current Best Practices, Trends and Research

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

- Best practices for including youth in municipal community safety efforts
- Trends emerging in youth work

Why municipalities are including youth in community safety efforts

Municipalities need to include youth in community safety efforts for several reasons. Young people are directly affected by the safety of their communities. Their perspectives and experiences can provide valuable insights into the issues that need to be addressed.

Youth are among the most vulnerable members of a community and more susceptible to being victims of crime and/or violence. Including youth in community safety efforts can help ensure that their voices are heard and that their needs are considered when developing policies and programs.

Engaging youth in community safety efforts can help build trust and mutual respect between young people and law enforcement. When young people feel that they are part of the solution to community safety issues, they are more likely to feel invested in their communities and less likely to engage in risky or criminal behavior.

Equity and risk profiles are critical considerations that need to be at the forefront of youth programming. An equity-focused approach ensures all young people have equal opportunities to participate in programs and benefit from them. Programs should be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the young people they serve. By considering the unique challenges and opportunities faced by different groups of young people, programs can be designed to maximize their impact and effectiveness.

The role municipalities play in promoting community safety and empowering youth

Ensuring community safety is a collective responsibility that requires the cooperation and collaboration of all stakeholders, including the youth and municipalities. The safety of a community is vital for the well-being of its residents, the growth of businesses and the overall quality of life in the area.

Municipalities can make a significant impact on community safety by investing in youth programs. Youth are the future of any community and it is essential to empower them to become active participants in building safe and prosperous communities. Municipalities can provide resources for youth programs that focus on education, recreation and civic engagement. These programs teach youth valuable life skills, provide them with positive role models and help them become responsible and engaged citizens. Other programs build up protective factors while also reducing risk factors for youth made more vulnerable to violence and harm.

Municipalities can also work with community organizations, schools and businesses to create safe spaces for youth. These safe spaces can provide opportunities for youth to participate in positive activities, such as sports, music and arts programs. Safe spaces can also serve as a place for youth to seek support, guidance and mentorship. Municipalities can also work with community organizations to address intergenerational trauma and other forms of harm that impact youth safety and put some youth at risk of coming in contact with the criminal justice system.

Municipalities can work to ensure that their policies and programs are inclusive and equitable. This means taking steps to address issues such as poverty, discrimination and social exclusion that can put young people at risk. By promoting social justice and equity, municipalities can create a more welcoming and supportive environment for all young people in their community.



Including youth in community safety efforts is an essential step towards creating safe and inclusive communities. To ensure that their perspectives and experiences are effectively incorporated into community safety efforts, municipalities can follow these best practices:

- **Provide opportunities for youth to participate:** municipalities should provide various opportunities for youth to participate in community safety efforts, such as community meetings, focus groups and advisory boards. They can also create youth-led initiatives and projects that address community safety issues. Municipalities should develop plans to engage youth less likely to participate in programming so barriers to their participation in youth programming are understood.
- **Create a safe and inclusive environment:** municipalities should ensure that the environment is safe and welcoming for youth to participate. They should provide opportunities for youth to express themselves and provide feedback without fear of retaliation or judgment. Also, municipalities should create an inclusive environment that respects and values diverse perspectives and backgrounds.
- **Incorporate youth perspectives into decision making:** municipalities should actively seek out and incorporate youth perspectives into decision making processes related to community safety. Youth can provide unique insights and solutions to community safety issues that may not be apparent to adults.
- **Provide education and training:** municipalities should provide education and training opportunities for youth to develop their knowledge and skills related to community safety. This can include training on topics such as conflict resolution, emergency response, non-violent crisis intervention, bystander intervention, child and youth sexual exploitation and mental health first aid.
- **Recognize and celebrate youth contributions:** municipalities should recognize and celebrate youth contributions to community safety efforts. This can include acknowledging their efforts through awards and recognition programs or by highlighting their achievements through social media or community events.

By following these best practices, municipalities can effectively include youth in community safety efforts and ensure that their voices are heard and valued. By working together, we can create safe and inclusive communities where youth feel empowered to make positive changes and contribute to the well-being of their communities.



Trends emerging in youth work

In 2022, the Youth Section of Parks & Recreation came together to identify key trends and themes they are seeing within their youth work. This session included staff from the Youth Advocate Program, Youth Worx Program, staff from youth drop-in spaces and outdoor recreation staff.

Staff aligned the current trends with the Municipal Youth Services Plan strategic priorities and identified actions to take moving forward.

TREND	ACTIONS TO TAKE
Higher level of drug use among youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide harm-reduction training to youth staff • Provide staff training to build skills for making referrals to external social services and supports • Engage with community partners to deliver mental health programming • Offer more low-barrier, youth-friendly drop-in spaces
Increased food insecurity among youth and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide staff training to build skills for making referrals to external social services and supports • Use halifax.ca/youth webpage to connect youth to food resources • Further explore Halifax JUSTFood plan to connect youth with community gardens
COVID-19 negatively impacted partnerships within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-establish community partnership in multi-service youth centres
Increased use of using emergency services i.e., mobile crisis, probation offers, Department of Community Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work collaboratively with the Public Safety Office to support youth violence prevention initiatives • Provide staff training to build skills for making referrals to external social services and supports • Engage with community partners to deliver mental health programming
Decline in youth accessing services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide more drop-in programs and youth dedicated spaces • Offer more social services and supports in spaces youth are currently accessing
Increased need for accessibility and inclusion supports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct audits of existing youth spaces to gauge level of accessibility and inclusiveness
Racism and discrimination experienced by youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase programming specific to underrepresented youth populations including women and girls, non-binary youth, urban indigenous, African Nova Scotians, newcomers and youth with disabilities • Build skills of staff in learning how to provide services to youth populations, including how to adapt framework, strategies, lens tools and other resources

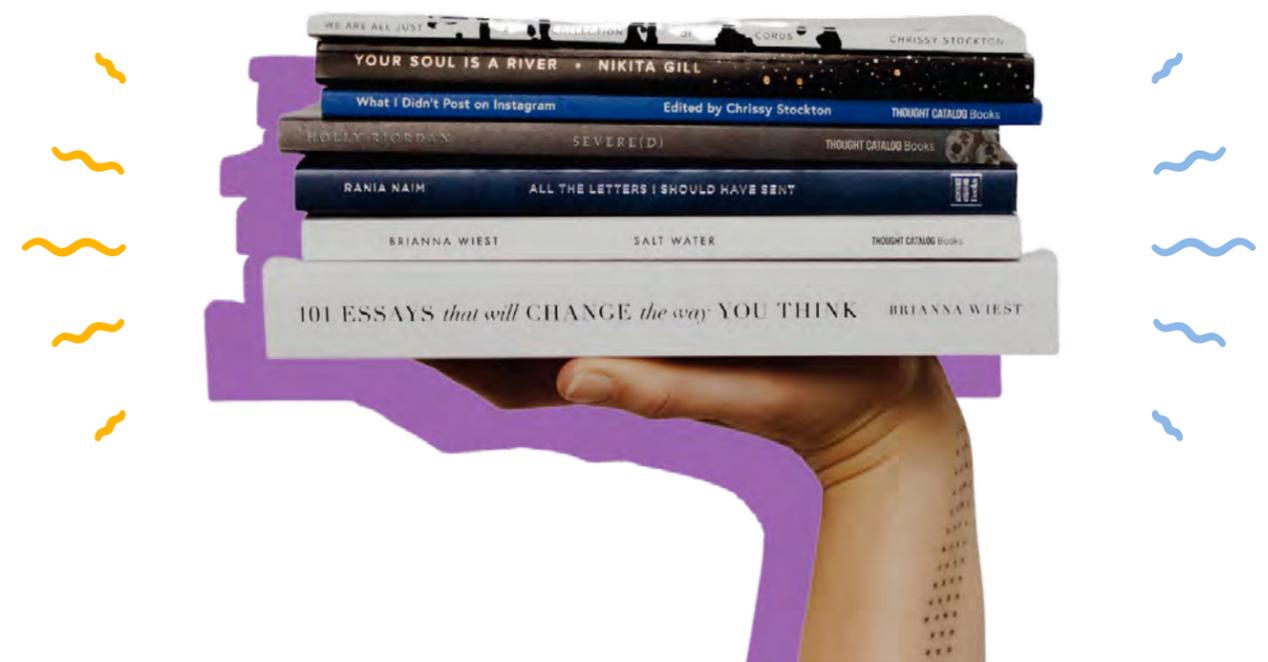


Conclusion and Next Steps

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 its partners, are having on the youth in communities throughout the Halifax region.

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 Continue to work with staff, partners and youth to implement and evaluate the *Youth Services Plan*
- 3 Recognize and celebrate National Youth Week (May 1-7, 2023) by offering programs, activities and resources for youth
- 4 Continue with the implementation and support of youth-dedicated spaces
- 5 Explore further resources and programs to support youth at risk of gun and gang violence



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