



P.O. Box 1749  
Halifax, Nova Scotia  
B3J 3A5 Canada

**Information Item No. 2**  
**Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee**  
**August 21, 2025**

**TO:** Chair and Members of Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee

**FROM:** Brad Anguish, Commissioner of Operations

**DATE:** August 21, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Youth Engagement Reports for 2023 and 2024

---

**INFORMATION REPORT**

**ORIGIN**

Motion of Regional Council – April 30, 2019:

MOVED by Councillor Austin, seconded by Councillor Smith:

THAT Halifax Regional Council authorize the Chief Administrative Officer or their designate to:

1. Continue to engage youth, both in their communities and online, to better understand the current trends and issues of youth across HRM; and
2. Provide an annual report to the Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee regarding trends, issues, best practices and actions taken.

**MOTION PUT AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The 2023 & 2024 Youth Engagement Reports provide an annual update on municipal youth services and programs within the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM). This report highlights achievements, trends, and collaborations aimed at enhancing youth engagement, inclusion, and empowerment across the region.

Key milestones from 2023 include the first anniversary of the Youth WORX Café, a municipal employment initiative supporting youth with barriers to employment, and the expansion of multi-service youth centres (MSYC), including a new facility at Captain William Spry Community Centre. These centres provide integrated support for young people, including mental health resources, employment readiness programs, and social opportunities.

2024 marked several key milestones in youth engagement and service delivery, including the expansion of the Youth Advocate Program and increased access to mental health supports through the Mobile Youth Support Team pilot project. The Youth Worx Program graduated 20 participants and launched a

new Café at the Zatzman Sportsplex. Over 7,000 youth accessed registered recreation programs, and more than 1,100 teen programs were offered by Halifax Public Libraries. The Youth Advisory Committee passed its first formal motion and hosted a youth town hall, while major events like Youth Leadership Week, YES Camp, and climate action initiatives engaged hundreds of youth across the municipality.

The Youth Services Plan (YSP2), launched in 2022, was completed in 2024. It provides guidance to municipal efforts in five strategic areas:

1. Providing accessible youth spaces where youth can gather, access support, and build community connections.
2. Ensuring inclusion and representation by addressing barriers for underrepresented youth populations.
3. Preparing youth for adulthood through skill-building, employment training, and leadership opportunities.
4. Encouraging civic engagement by empowering youth to participate in local governance and decision-making.
5. Enhancing awareness of available municipal youth services and programs.

Notable Programs & Initiatives:

- Youth Advocate Program: A crime prevention initiative supporting at-risk youth and their families.
- Youth WORX Program: A 24-week paid employment program focusing on skill development.
- Multi-Service Youth Centres (Power House, The Den & Spryfield Multi Service Youth Centre): Safe and inclusive spaces for youth offering social, cultural, and educational activities.
- Adventure Earth Centre Outdoor Recreation Programs: Including canoe/kayak programming at St. Mary's Boat Club and adventure-based leadership programs.
- HalifACT & Climate Action: Engaging youth in sustainability efforts through education and participation in climate initiatives.

## **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 (see Attachment A).

## **DISCUSSION**

The attached Youth Engagement Reports (Attachments A & B) outline youth programming, trends, issues, and best practices for the calendar years of 2023 and 2024.

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

### **Note on the timing of the 2023 report:**

The annual Youth Engagement Report is typically completed and released on a yearly basis to highlight progress, trends, and emerging priorities. However, the 2023 report was delayed due to staffing vacancies that impacted the capacity throughout the year. Despite the delay, the report continues to reflect the important work carried out in 2023 and serves as a valuable record of youth engagement



efforts during that period.

### **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.

### **LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY**

*Halifax Regional Charter*

Section 79A

1. Subject to subsections (2) to (4), the Municipality may only spend money for municipal purposes if
  - a. The expenditure is included in the Municipality's operating budget or capital budget or is otherwise authorized by the Municipality.

### **ATTACHMENT**

Attachment A – 2023 Youth Engagement Report

Attachment B – 2024 Youth Engagement Report

---

Report Prepared by: Lee Moore, Manager, Youth Programs, Parks & Recreation 902.222.9897

ATTACHMENT A

Update for January – December 2023



# Youth Engagement Report

**Prepared by:**

Adam Huffman, Community Developer  
Lee Moore, Manager, Youth Programs  
Parks & Recreation

April 2024





# Table of Contents

Purpose .....	01
Executive Summary .....	02
Youth Services Plan .....	03
Municipal youth programs, events and engagements .....	11
Youth Advocate Program .....	13
Youth Worx Program .....	17
Youth spaces .....	20
Power House Youth Centre .....	20
Multi-Service Youth Centres .....	27
Youth Leadership Program .....	29
National Youth Week 2023 .....	31
Mobile Youth Support Team .....	34
Accessibility and inclusion .....	35
Registered youth programming .....	35
Outdoor recreation .....	37
Halifax Public Libraries .....	41
Halifax Regional Police (HRP) .....	46
Municipal Clerk’s Office .....	47
HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together .....	49
Municipal Volunteer Awards .....	51
Youth employment statistics .....	53
External service provider updates .....	55
Current best practices, trends and research .....	61
Conclusion and next steps .....	66



# 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 Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM).

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 information presented in this report provides an overview of the services and programs offered to youth, from January to December 2023.



# Executive Summary



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 WORX Program celebrated the first anniversary of The Café, open daily on the main level of the Sackville Sports Stadium. The Café serves various hot and cold beverages, sandwiches, pizza, bagels, cinnamon buns, muffins and continues to expand their menu to better serve the local community.

The *Youth Services Plan* began implementation in 2022. This included the creation of a second multi-service youth centre at Captain William Spry Community Centre. An update on the Youth Services Plan is included in this report.

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



# Youth Services Plan

[halifax.ca/yjsp](https://halifax.ca/yjsp)

In 2005, the 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.

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 survey to gather information on the municipality's youth services. 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](https://halifax.ca/yjsp).

The *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 our region's youth 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; and
5. all youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality.

### 2023 update:

In 2023, staff began implementing actions outlined in the *Youth Services Plan*. The activities on page 5 highlight the actions completed from January- December 2023.



ACTIVITIES		ACTIONS COMPLETED
	Immediate outcome 1: Youth have access to spaces in their community where they can take ownership, feel welcome, socialize, obtain support and access services	
Output 1.1	To focus on an integrated youth service delivery approach	
Activity 1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>establish Multi-Service Youth Centre (MSYC) in Spryfield</li><li>select third MSYC location</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Spryfield Youth Space opened</li><li>The Den partnered with Boys and Girls Club Greater Halifax to provide Outreach Worker services during Tuesday night drop-in.</li><li>The Den and Spryfield youth space staff participated in staff training to develop staff manuals for youth spaces</li><li>Mobile Youth Support team began offering services at The Den, Spryfield Youth Space and other municipal youth spaces</li><li>Downtown Dartmouth youth service providers round table created</li></ul>
Activity 1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>conduct partnership recruitment at The Den</li></ul>	
Activity 1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>coordinate activities between municipal youth spaces (rooms)</li></ul>	
Activity 1.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>promote youth counselling and youth outreach worker services to youth</li></ul>	
Output 1.2	To ensure youth spaces are welcoming, inclusive and accessible	
Activity 1.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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"><li>train youth to deliver audits</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention (NVCi) training delivered to all youth centre staff</li><li>friendly faces friendly spaces training delivered to four more recreation centres</li><li>accessibility and inclusion training for front line youth centre staff is being designed</li><li>setting healthy boundaries and conflict resolution training delivered to youth centre frontline staff</li><li>engagement done at Alderney Gate to get youth feedback on creating a safer environment in the building</li></ul>
Activity 1.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>host design charette for MSYC in Spryfield to ensure the space is youth friendly</li></ul>	
Activity 1.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>deliver accessibility and inclusion training to staff in youth spaces</li></ul>	
Activity 1.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>deliver Nonviolent Crisis Intervention, mental health first aid, harm reduction and Anti-Black Racism Training to staff in youth spaces</li></ul>	
Activity 1.2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>continue to deliver Friendly Faces Friendly Spaces to front line staff</li><li>revamp the training to be more trauma-informed</li></ul>	
Output 1.3	To ensure youth spaces support the mental well-being of youth	
Activity 1.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>create and maintain list of services and resources for youth on halifax.ca/youth webpage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ongoing</li></ul>
Activity 1.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>work with community partners to develop training for staff referring youth to social services, housing, food, employment and counselling</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mobile Youth Support Team began offering counselling services and community resource navigation support in youth spaces</li><li>duty to report training delivered to all youth centre staff at The Den, Powerhouse and Spryfield</li></ul>
Activity 1.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>expand counselling services in drop-in youth spaces</li><li>offer community resource navigation support by Youth Outreach Worker</li></ul>	
Activity 1.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>deliver peer support training to youth</li></ul>	
	Immediate Outcome 2: All youth across the Halifax region feel represented and included in programs, services and committees	
Output 2.1	To learn more about serving underrepresented youth populations and communities	
Activity 2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>conduct research on best practices for delivering equitable youth programs and services and provide an update in the annual Youth Engagement Report</li><li>identify barriers and challenges youth from underrepresented communities experience</li><li>identify training resources for youth staff to participate in</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>research on best practices for supporting black youth was conducted</li><li>work being done with the ANSAIO and the D&amp;I offices to create training further training for staff</li><li>review of Youth Engagement Strategy (Y.E.S.) Camp to identify barriers to participation</li></ul>
Activity 2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>review Multi-Service Youth Centres with an equity lens</li><li>review the implementation and evaluation of the Youth Services Plan with an equity lens</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2024 priority</li></ul>
Output 2.2	To develop and improve programs and services for underrepresented youth populations and communities	
Activity 2.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>deliver youth programming and services specific to underrepresented youth populations including women and girls, urban Indigenous Peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+, African Nova Scotians, immigrants and youth with disabilities</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Den and Powerhouse continue to offer specific programming for underrepresented youth populations.</li><li>the Ready for Rec Program for youth with disabilities delivered in Spryfield and Dartmouth</li></ul>
Activity 2.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ensure rural youth programs and services are aligned with the Rural Recreation Strategy</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2024 priority</li></ul>
Activity 2.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>recruit program staff and facilitators who are reflective of the municipality’s youth population</li></ul>	
Activity 2.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>conduct a program review of the Youth Advocate Program including its intake process, boundaries and ways youth are supported in the program</li></ul>	
	Immediate Outcome 3: Youth feel prepared to make a successful transition to adulthood	

ACTIVITIES		ACTIONS COMPLETED
Output 3.1	To offer a variety of ways for youth to develop their skills	
Activity 3.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>design and deliver programming and workshops on basic skills such as budgeting, finances and cooking</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Community Recreation Coordinators (CRCs) implementing programming in spring 2024</li><li>Youth Week 2023 offered various skill-based programs and workshops</li></ul>
Activity 3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>partner with external agencies to deliver workshops on science, technology, engineering and computer skills</li></ul>	
Activity 3.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>deliver peer support training to youth</li></ul>	
Output 3.2	To develop job readiness by enhancing employment programs and opportunities	
Activity 3.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>collaborate with service providers to offer programming and workshops that increase youth employability skills</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Youth WORX continue to build employment opportunities for youth as the café model expands</li><li>summer 2023 review of Youth Leader Modules was conducted by Youth Leadership Coordinators</li></ul>
Activity 3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>conduct a review of the Youth Leadership Program’s employment modules to identify opportunities for improvement</li></ul>	
	Immediate Outcome 4: Youth feel empowered to engage in local government and contribute to shaping their communities	
Output 4.1	For youth to gain confidence to effectively engage in local governance	
Activity 4.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>host youth workshop series youth to learn how the municipal government operates and how they can contribute to local governance</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>the Youth Advisory Committee recruited new members</li><li>the committee hosted a town hall to get input from other youth on how the municipality can better support youth</li><li>Youth Advisory Committee passed their first motion requesting a staff report on By-law M200</li></ul>
Activity 4.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>continue to support the Youth Advisory Committee as an opportunity for youth to learn about local governance</li></ul>	
Activity 4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>work with the Municipal Clerk’s Office to support voter education efforts to reach youth from diverse communities and encourage their participation in municipal elections</li></ul>	
Activity 4.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>use @hfxnextgen Instagram account to raise awareness about the next municipal election</li></ul>	
Output 4.2	To provide avenues for youth to give input and feedback on municipal programs, services and projects	
Activity 4.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>continue to invest resources in public engagements and events that collect feedback from youth about their ideas, opinions and needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>youth engagement completed at Alderney Gate – received youth input on damages being done in the building</li><li>youth engagement complete at The Den with feedback received on Youth WORX Café menu</li><li>youth engagement completed by YAC at Youth Week brunch with the Mayor</li></ul>
Activity 4.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>create an online dashboard to inform youth on how their input was used and inform them about the outcomes of their involvements in engagements</li></ul>	
Activity 4.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>continue to support the Youth Advisory Committee as an opportunity for youth to provide feedback on municipal decisions</li></ul>	
Activity 4.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>facilitate formal and informal opportunities to connect youth with their local Councillors and other municipal decision makers</li></ul>	
Output 4.3	To prepare youth to become leaders in their communities	
Activity 4.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>facilitate how youth can initiate change workshops</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>workshops held in spring and fall 2023 on how youth can initiate change</li><li>Youth Community Developer updated the youth website with information on how this position can support youth</li><li>through use of the youth Instagram account, supported many municipal projects including helping to connect youth to the placemaking program</li><li>used the youth Instagram account to help increase awareness of the municipality’s Volunteer Awards</li><li>22 youth nominations were received for the 2023 municipal Volunteer Awards</li><li>20 youth received awards at the 2023 municipal Volunteer Awards ceremony</li></ul>
Activity 4.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>support youth in accessing resources that enable them to bring a youth-led project into action</li></ul>	
Activity 4.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>explore ways to connect youth to the municipal placemaking program</li></ul>	
Activity 4.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>increase the number of, and access to, meaningful youth volunteer opportunities</li></ul>	
Activity 4.3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>recognize youth leaders by nominating them for HRM Volunteer Awards</li></ul>	
	Immediate Outcome 5: Youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality	
Output 5.1	To target youth with marketing and promotions that are on trend and will catch their attention	
Activity 5.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>review the youth website to ensure content is updated and relevant to youths needs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>ongoing marketing efforts</li><li>visual identity for “youth-specific” material has been created</li><li>The Den and Spryfield received new creative and marketing materials</li><li>new banners designed and produced</li></ul>
Activity 5.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>work with corporate communications to create an annual youth marketing plan that includes promotion of the youth website, Instagram account and program and services</li></ul>	
Activity 5.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>develop promotional material needed for pop-up engagements, including banners and handouts</li><li>create an annual plan for seasonal pop-up engagements in rural communities</li></ul>	





**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.**

**MISSION STATEMENT**



# Municipal youth programs, events and engagements



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







# YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM



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

The Youth Advocate Program is family centered crime-prevention program 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 of age.

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

**In 2023, 63 youth from across the region were enrolled in the program, 138 youth were referred and 11 youth graduated from the program.**

## 2023 STATISTICS

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

- 95 per cent of participants remained in or returned to school
- 50 per cent received academic support

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 2023:

- eight per cent of participants received support/counselling for trafficking and exploitation
- 84 per cent of participants received or were connected to mental health supports to avoid and/or develop healthy mechanisms regarding dating violence, gender violence and unhealthy relationships or to receive medical support for diagnosis





## RECREATION PROGRAMMING

The Youth Advocate Program uses leisure education screening tools to determine the best fit for recreation programming for each youth in the program. Where possible, youth are signed up for municipal recreation programs through the Recreation Funding Access Program. If the recreation service is not available within the municipality's programming, outside service providers are used. Staff work with other organizations to provide free or low-cost programming for youth.

Research has shown that recreation can be used effectively in a multi-approach toolkit addressing youth gang involvement and violence and provides protective factors against criminal engagement. Recreation programming provides positive role models, development of resilience and pro-social skills, offers safe spaces and opportunities for supervision outside of school hours and meaningful connection to hobbies. By leveraging the resources within Parks & Recreation, staff can connect youth and families to long-term recreation supports thus decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors.

## GIRLS UNITED PROGRAM

Girls United is a program for female-identifying youth between the ages of 13-15 showing high risk for criminal engagement. Girls United is peer-centered and peer-led, with a focus on building strong positive relationships. The goal of the program is to educate, engage and raise awareness about the supports and services available to female-identifying youth in the municipality. Girls United supports female-identifying youth in cultivating strength and resiliency to form cross-community relationships and support systems.

With participants from four communities across the Halifax region, few of the participants knew each other prior to programming. Some of our current participants were a part of our previous Girls United cohort. Girls United gave participants an opportunity to get to know other youth who may be going through similar life circumstances. Girls United provided youth with the opportunity to have positive new experiences together.

The Youth Advocate Program team remained in contact with the participants outside of the Girls United sessions, meeting them at schools, connecting with their parents and over the phone.

The program operated weekly between July and August 2023 with an average of seven youth attending the sessions. The program included several structured and unstructured activities, including recreational activities, playing board games, arts and crafts, instructional photography, life skills programming and cooking classes.







[halifax.ca/youthworx](https://halifax.ca/youthworx)

The Youth Live Program was recently renamed the Youth WORX Program. (Youth WORX).

The program offers 24 weeks of paid job and life skill-building for youth with employment barriers. The program is for youth between the ages of 16 to 24 years old who are not in school and who are 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, green cart delivery and repair. The mentoring stream includes working alongside program 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



## YOUTH WORX PROGRAM: 2023 STATS

In 2023, 30 youth participated in the program and 20 youth graduated.

## BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:

- 67 per cent had lack of job experience
- 40 per cent did not graduate high school
- 60 per cent had mental health concerns
- 43 per cent had a learning disability
- 0 per cent had children
- 13 per cent had a history of addiction



PERCENTAGE OF YOUTH THAT CAME TO OUR PROGRAM FROM DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE MUNICIPALITY:

- 40 per cent from Halifax
- 37 per cent from Dartmouth
- 13 per cent from Sackville
- 10 per cent from other areas of the Halifax region

YOUTH WORX CAFÉ

In 2023, the Youth WORX Program achieved a significant milestone by opening two new seasonal canteen locations. This development has injected a fresh wave of enthusiasm into the program, providing an immersive platform for young participants to explore the details of operating a canteen.

Situated in downtown Halifax at the Emera Oval and Fleming Park (Dingle Park) areas, the canteen locations serve as more than just food service venues. They have become integral parts of the local communities, fostering a sense of togetherness and connectivity.

The youth involved in the program can use their food-handling and customer-service abilities. Operating at the Emera Oval offers them a dynamic environment where they can interact with a diverse clientele. Operating in Fleming Park provides a contrasting experience, allowing the youth to connect with the community in a more serene and nature-infused setting. This dual-location approach ensures that the participating youth gain a versatile set of skills and experiences.

As the program continues to advance, it is evident that these canteen locations extend beyond mere business ventures; we are evolving into community hubs, where the spirit of leadership meets the warmth of shared experiences.



Youth spaces

[halifax.ca/youthspaces](https://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.

Adopting the Multi-Service Youth Centre (MSYC) model, the Spryfield, Herring Cove youth drop-in space located in the Captain William Spry Community Centre opened in the spring of 2023.

Power House Youth Centre

[halifax.ca/powerhouse](https://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.

The Power House Youth Centre offered multiple programs for youth 13-24 years of age. On average, 225 youth accessed the Power House (PH) each month for drop-in activities and registered programs. Participants are typically between 13-19 years old and come from areas of the municipality including Halifax Peninsula, Spryfield, Fairview, Dartmouth, Sackville and Bedford. While many youth living on the peninsula accessed the centre on a regular basis, there were high numbers commuting from elsewhere. As a result, they were able to make new friends outside of their home communities and schools and create new relationships to recreation and leisure. These connections made a positive impact especially for youth who struggle socially.

Over 175 new youth participants attended Power House for the first time this year.



REGISTERED PROGRAMS

- 105 participants per month participated in registered programs
- registered programs included: beginner and intermediate guitar lessons, intro to improv club, babysitters training, intro to cooking and the kitchen, 3D printing, animation, mindful art and gardening, creative writing, book lovers club and dungeons and dragons

Program Highlight: Mindful art and gardening

Mindful art and gardening gave youth the opportunity to care, tend to and plant a variety of vegetables, flowers and herbs in raised garden beds. This was a safe space for the youth who had never gardened before but also provided the chance for seasoned gardeners to teach the others. Youth in this program enjoyed mindfulness activities like Mindful BINGO, painting the Lorax on the garden beds, going for walks and block printing. At the end of the program, youth were able to enjoy a picnic with garlic bread made from the garlic they carefully grew, harvested and cured. This was by far one of the highlights of the summer according to the youth who attended the picnic. There is also a lot of anticipation among the youth to regrow garlic, harvest the pumpkins and tomatoes come fall!

Program Highlight: Book Lovers Club

This program provided an opportunity for youth to have a quiet and safe space to read and explore literature of different genres. While this club did not focus on one single novel, youth in the program got to expand their knowledge of literature styles with novels, graphic novels, comics and manga. Highlights of the book lovers club were visiting historical locations like the Citadel Hill, mentioned in of the youths’ novel selections, as well as block printing bookmarks and having a general space to return to for silent reading. Some youth even joined PH during drop-in hours after expressing their love for one of the graphic novels and excitement to have a reading space over the summer that was unrelated to school reading.



DROP-IN PROGRAMS

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday from 3:30 - 7 p.m. and Saturday from 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., 110 participants per month.

Drop-in activity examples:

Art	Crochet, screen printing, painting, character design, origami and sign painting.
Cultural	Drumming demonstration and fish cake dinner for African Nova Scotian Heritage Month, film screenings and art activities during Mi'kmaq History Month and Asian Heritage Month, weekly PRIDE-themed art workshops in the summer, holding space for Trans Day of Remembrance with art activities, gender-affirming products and sharing experiences, stories and grieving together.
Educational	Cyber-safety workshops, emergency preparedness and how to make a "go-bag," activism and protest safety.
Skill building	Support with learning about health and hygiene, preparing for an interview, apply-ing for college, finding volunteer opportunities and learning about running programs/facilitating.
Community connections	Mobile Youth Support Team has been a phenomenal support for relieving staff and giving youth much needed one-on-one help. Support navigating gender affirming care with Youth Project, housing and employment support with Phoenix Youth (PLEC).
Food security	Monthly chosen family meals, cookie decorating and cupcake baking, how to prepare food safely and cook different meals, how to make a grocery list and go shopping.
Clothing	Ongoing clothing drive set up with seasonally appropriate offerings. Support and education for accessing gender-affirming gear and clothing.

In addition, the following activities happened in 2023:

- Pride Parade sign-making
- Asian Heritage Month education and awareness
- Power House clothing shop





OVERHEARD AT DROP-IN:

**“I have to schedule in hanging with my friends around Power House, I can’t miss drop-in.”**

**“I can’t wait to show my parents where I spend all of my time; and how cool it is!”**

**“This is honestly the smallest but best youth house because you do not need to sign up for anything, you can just show up and hang out.”**

**“This place is support... it’s like therapy without being therapized.”**



**Program highlight:**  
**How to rainbow noodle jars**

How to rainbow Noodles with local facilitator and social worker, Rae Paul, was the final drop-in Pride event of the summer but arguably the most important and impactful. Mixing food and wellbeing into a drop-in event gathered a group of youth who typically would not get this experience. The skills learned in this workshop were invaluable and demonstrated the importance of chosen family and taking the time to connect with those close to us. Some who attended the program took great pride in remembering what they had learned and went on to make the meal on their own after the program was done!



**“I just went to the store and got stuff to make the noodles you showed us last week!”**  
– youth participant

**POWER HOUSE YOUTH CENTRE: 2023 HIGHLIGHTS**

In 2023 participants have reported the following about their experiences at Power House:

- finding their “besties” and transitioning to hanging out together in community
- feeling like the space was “theirs” and were comfortable to “be themselves”
- PH was a “neurodiverse and queer friendly space”
- enjoyed the “independent and chill atmosphere”

**North American Indigenous Games and The Power House Youth Centre**

During the week of July 15 - July 23, the Power House was a designated safe space for North American Indigenous Games (NAIG) youth. This provided the opportunity for youth from NAIG to join our space, share their experiences and expertise as well as learn from what many youths call home. These spaces encouraged youth to try new things, socialize with one another and grow in a secure, pro-social, inclusive environment.

**POWER HOUSE YOUTH CENTRE: 2023 CHALLENGES**

**Food insecurity**

This year a growing number of youths (many 2SLGBTQIA+ identifying) reported experiencing food insecurity. In response to this challenge, we connected youth with food banks and resources in their communities as well as helping them learn to prepare inexpensive meals on their own. We ensured that there was always access to nutritious food and drinks that all youth could consume. This included options of vegan, dairy-free and gluten-free meals. Several youth struggled to access food during the school days as well as at home and often arrived to drop-in hungry, not having eaten yet that day. In response, PH staff started a new drop-in program called “chosen family meals.” These special monthly meals included a main course with sides and often dessert too! These events continue to make a positive impact and provide an opportunity for conversations around the concept of family and meaning of sharing meals.

**“I would actually really like some food support. I really appreciate that.”**  
– youth participant



**Cyberbullying**

Many participants reported experiencing cyberbullying via social media and communication platforms. Some had photos taken without consent, personal information shared, misinformation spread or hateful comments (racist, homophobic and/or transphobic) made towards them. Many did not know how to navigate the virtual world safely and had no concept of their rights or how laws could protect them. In response to these issues, we began looking into cyber safety education. In the fall of 2023, Power House partnered with researchers Suzie Dunn and Alexa Dodge from Saint Mary’s University to offer two DIY(Digitally Informed Youth) workshops on cyber harassment, security and safety. These workshops were a huge hit both for the youth and the facilitators, providing a safe space to talk about the importance of being aware in media spaces, to learn about previous/current use of media and the internet and to give some crucial information to the researchers to develop future workshops and educational resources.



# 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:

- 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 | LOWER SACKVILLE

[www.halifax.ca/TheDen](http://www.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.

### Community outreach

In 2023, staff focused on increasing their presence in schools to promote The Den. Outreach at Millwood High, Sackville High and the Sackville Sports Stadium was successful in recruiting new youth at The Den.



### Indigenous artwork and smudging ceremony

Staff organized a cultural artwork night with Mi'kmaw artist Quintin Syliboy. Quintin engaged youth in art activities and taught them about the importance of art in Indigenous culture. Youth also got to participate in a smudging ceremony. The smudging took place outside The Den and youth gathered to listen to Quintin share stories and knowledge.

### Partnership with Cobequid Youth Health Centre

Youth can access free, drop-in counselling services within The Den, Monday - Wednesday 3:30 p.m - 8 p.m. and Friday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

Cobequid Youth Health Centre provides a place for youth and their families to turn to 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 2023, The Den counsellor provided direct services to 1,069 youth:

- 323 of those sessions were scheduled visits
- 746 of those sessions were informal, drop-in visits

THE DEN (THREE DAYS PER WEEK) 3-6 P.M.	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	SUB TOTAL
Appointments		55	35	51	41	32	31	35	43	323
Informal		131	132	108	101	53	78	83	60	746
Monthly total		186	167	159	142	85	109	118	103	1069

## SPRYFIELD, HERRING COVE YOUTH CENTRE | SPRYFIELD

[halifax.ca/spryfieldyouthcentre](http://halifax.ca/spryfieldyouthcentre)

Adopting the Multi Service Youth Centre (MSYC) model, the Spryfield, Herring Cove Youth drop-in space located in the Captain William Spry Community Centre opened in spring of 2023. With youth drop-in times of Monday and Wednesday from 4:30 – 7:30 p.m., the space offers video games, board games, TV, art supplies, WIFI, phone charging stations, free snacks and comfortable chairs and has a youth counsellor and outreach worker available to provide one-to-one support.

Since opening in the spring, the youth centre has seen an average of 10-15 youth participating in the drop-in nights.

# Youth Leadership Program

[halifax.ca/youthleadership](https://halifax.ca/youthleadership)

The 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, socials, community action and training.

## YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM: 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

### Youth Leadership Week of Action

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

### Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre & Lebrun Recreation Centre

**Event:** Youth Leadership Carnival and BBQ at DeWolf Park

**Result:** collected 192 kg of non-perishables for Feed Nova Scotia

### Musquodoboit and Sheet Harbor

**Event:** bird house painting with seniors from The Birches

**Result:** 10 birdhouses painted and hung around The Birches

### St. Andrew's Community Centre

**Event:** Adopt A Meal for Shelter NS

**Result:** youth made 30 individual meals for residents at Shelter NS

### Gordon R. Snow community Centre

**Event:** Rad Fest Music Festival

**Result:** 50 community members donated items to Feed NS and Salvation Army

### Dartmouth North Community Centre

**Event:** carnival for John MacNeil Elementary

**Results:** school supplies including backpacks, pencils and crayons

### Lakeside Community Centre

**Event:** carwash for Feed NS

**Results:** collected 5 kg worth of food and \$150 in donations

### Captain William Spry

**Event:** donations for Melville Gardens

**Result:** three large gift baskets that were distributed among senior residents

### Adventure Earth Centre, Shubie Park and Flemming Park

**Event:** donation drive and community mural

**Result:** youth leaders worked with day camp participants from Fleming Park, Shubie Park and St. Mary's Boat Club to create a community mural and collected donations of non-perishable food items; clothing donations were also accepted

### Citadel High and Needham Community Centre

**Event:** community carnival

**Result:** non-perishable food donations for Parker Street Food Bank

### Findlay Community Centre

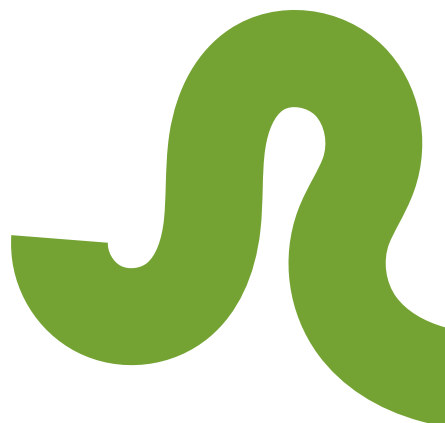
**Event:** outdoor movie night

**Result:** \$300 worth of school supplies for the community

## Y.E.S. CAMP

Y.E.S. Camp is a sub-program of the summer Youth Leadership Program. It provides youth a unique leadership experience in 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 participating in the Youth Leadership Program are 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 2023

[Halifaxyouth.ca](https://halifaxyouth.ca)

National Youth Week takes place every year from May 1-7 and is dedicated to the celebration of youth and their active participation within 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 & Recreation coordinated several free workshops and activities to provide youth learning and social opportunities; 225 youth participated in National Youth Week events held at Parks & Recreation facilities.



- low sensory movie night with puzzles at Power House Youth Centre
- youth drop-in night at Power House Youth Centre Youth pizza night
- sidewalk art and button making at Power House Youth Centre
- after-school hoops at Sackville Sports Stadium
- ice cream social and pizza party at The Den Youth drop-in / basketball at Cole Harbour High School / youth scavenger hunt at Power House Youth Centre / 3 × 3 basketball at Gordon R. Snow Community Centre
- drop-in youth volleyball challenge at BLT Sr. Gymnasium
- pickleball and popcorn party at George Dixon Community Centre / youth paint night at Chocolate Lake Rec Centre / Friday night rocks at Sackville Sports Stadium gymnasium
- movie night at Needham Community Centre
- night hoops at Sackville Sports Stadium
- youth karaoke night at Horizon Rec Centre
- youth night at Findlay Community Centre Youth / painting and pizza at Halifax Common Multi-purpose room
- youth roller skating at Grey Arena
- Star Wars paint night at BLT Rec Office
- Nintendo Super Smash Kart tournament at Power House Youth Centre
- team scavenger hunt at The Den
- youth ops at Sackville Sports Stadium
- Lego Club at Power House Youth Centre
- spring clothing pop-up shop at Power House Youth Centre
- trivia and tacos at The Den



# Mobile Youth Support Team

[halifax.ca/MYST](https://halifax.ca/MYST)

Parks & Recreation is working with the Community Safety business unit to assist in the delivery of the Building Safer Communities Fund. Parks & Recreation, through the Youth section, is providing additional support to youth (ages 13-24) within recreation centres. Throughout 2023, a youth counsellor and youth outreach worker have been providing drop-in and by-appointment support to youth (ages 13-24), at various recreation centres across the municipality.

2023 overview:

- the Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST) had a soft launch in January 2023, which had the team actively working with youth individually and attending drop-in centers
- MYST officially launched their services to the community during the open house on November 21, 2023.
- MYST has met with approximately 40 youth outside of drop-ins on a more regular and case-specific basis
  - these meetings aim to address individualized concerns such as peer pressure, conflicts, family dynamics, self-esteem, violence and mental health
- MYST has provided provincial court-specific support to approximately 19 youth and their families
  - MYST actively engaged with multiple youth at the courthouse, providing them with information on the services MYST offers
- MYST is collaborating with municipal recreation centres to improve youth engagement and youth safety in these spaces
  - MYST has provided support for:
    - peer pressure and crisis situations
    - suicide intervention support
    - drug use/abuse
    - family conflict
    - pregnancy
    - restorative justice and conflict with the law
    - education and employment support
    - relationship issues



# Accessibility & inclusion

[halifax.ca/rec](https://halifax.ca/rec)

Parks & Recreation invites individuals of all abilities to participate in our recreation and leisure programs. The municipality is committed to providing safe and accessible programs for everyone to enjoy. Employees 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

**Number of youth campers:** 11

Ready for Rec programs are designed for youth (13-18) who have diverse needs and require additional supports to be successful in a recreation environment. The program is community-focused and exposes the youth to different community recreation opportunities in a fun and engaging manner. This program was partially funded in 2023 through a grant from Canadian Tire Jumpstart®.

## Employee training

In 2023, inclusion training was provided for summer employees (specialized inclusion support staff, inclusion coordinators and summer coordinators). *Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training* was delivered for Ready for Rec summer employees, inclusion coordinators and summer coordinators.

# Registered youth programming

[halifax.ca/rec](https://halifax.ca/rec)

Parks & Recreation offers a multitude of programs directed to youth ages 13 to 18. These programs and activities are advertised on the Recreation web page, on printed posters and youth-specific information is promoted through social media.

- municipal recreation centres offered registered youth programming to **5482 youth** in 2023
- number of youth programs offered: **454 registered programs**





# Outdoor recreation

[halifax.ca/outdoorrec](https://halifax.ca/outdoorrec)

## ADVENTURE EARTH CENTRE (AEC)

[halifax.ca/aec](https://halifax.ca/aec)

The Adventure Earth team 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 in Shubie Park (Dartmouth).

## L.E.A.D | SUMMER OVERNIGHT CAMP

Number of youth participants: 30

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 leaders a glimpse into the lives of change-makers and community builders working to create a more sustainable future. Supported by experienced employees, the camp emphasizes leadership, environmental learning, adventure and discovery.

Through team building, community service and reflection, youth can develop leadership skills that can be used in their own lives, with family and in community.

This year, 30 participants contributed to the success of L.E.A.D. camp and developed their skills as part of this overnight experience.

## H.E.A.T. YOUTH ACTION TEAM

Number of youth: 15 per session

H.E.A.T. stands for “Helping the Earth by Acting Together.” It 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.”

H.E.A.T. was originally created by a passionate group of like-minded youth that cared about environmental causes and taking action. As our world changes so does our team and what we do but this program is still youth-led and focuses on more than just social programs. H.E.A.T. is a safe, welcoming and caring community and we are growing.

H.E.A.T. plans at least one event per week. These programs are usually weeknights or weekends and run out of our Fleming Park, Shubie Park and St Mary's Boat Club locations. However, we also have the freedom to explore the Halifax region, whether it is a local trail, downtown Halifax or helping a local organization. Furthermore, each season we hold an overnight camp at Camp Mockingee near Windsor. These events are also planned by youth participants.

Throughout the spring, fall and winter, youth participants between the ages of 13-19 participate in our H.E.A.T. youth program.

The youth group comes together each month to plan their activities around the four values of social, health, environmental and community. In 2023, the group participated in beach clean ups, donation events, group cooking, outdoor skill programs, social events and ecology information events.

## H.E.A.T OVERNIGHT CAMPS

Number of camps in 2023: two

Number of youth participants: 40

The group planned and participated in two overnight camps at Camp Mockingee near Windsor, where they spent time practicing their outdoor skills, creating art projects, canoeing and swimming.





ST. MARY’S BOAT CLUB

[halifax.ca/smbc](https://halifax.ca/smbc)

Youth paddle nights

Number of youth participants: 68

St. Mary’s Boat Club paddle nights give youth the opportunity to learn paddling skills and safely explore the Northwest Arm. Certified instructors take groups of 15 paddlers on the water and show them how to fit 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.



EMERA OVAL

[halifax.ca/emeraoval](https://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 on the Halifax orth Common at the corner of North Park Street and Cogswell Street.

In 2023, Youth WORX opened a new seasonal canteen location situated in downtown Halifax at the Emera Oval. This location served as more than just a food service venue; it became an integral part of the local community, fostering a sense of togetherness and connectivity.

CLAM HARBOUR BEACH SANDCASTLE COMPETITION

[clamharboursandcastle.ca](https://clamharboursandcastle.ca)

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

Seven youth teams entered the 2023 competition. The winning group was the "Birthday Crew" who created a fat kitty sculpture.

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





# Halifax Public Libraries (HPL)



## Halifaxpubliclibraries.ca

The Halifax Public Library (HPL) is committed to serving youth and delivering services and programs at all 14 branches and many community locations. The library works with community experts, service providers and partners to offer relevant, high quality, free programming and services.

In 2023, Halifax Public Libraries offered 1,076 programs for youth across the municipality (detailed statistics attached). In addition, youth volunteered more than 6,800 hours at the library. Below are highlights of the types of volunteer opportunities and programs that were offered.

### YOUTH VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

#### **Kids' Newcomers English Club**

Volunteers ages 15-18 assist elementary school-aged students and teens who are new to Canada and keen to practice English skills. For one hour per week, volunteers lead activities, games and conversations with newcomer kids. They create a fun encouraging space for kids to practice their English speaking, reading and writing skills. They lead small groups as well as work together with other volunteers on bigger activities. After each session there is time to debrief and plan. HPL branch: Keshen Goodman

#### **YMCA Homework Club**

This program provides a safe and friendly environment that offers free tutoring in all school subjects as well as a chance to practice fun, conversational English for youth who are new to Canada. The teen volunteers are required to have an enthusiasm for meeting people from different countries and the ability to help with tutoring junior/senior high school subjects, especially science and math.

#### **Teen Advisory Council**

This program is designed for teenagers in the community aged 14-18 seeking a safe and engaging space that reflects their interests and values. For one hour per week, teens meet in person with other members of the Teen Advisory Council to advise library staff on the teen experience at Halifax Central Library. This includes but is not limited to, program/event planning and hosting, youth outreach within the library and creating displays that reflect the diversity of our community.

#### **Leading Readers Support**

In Leading Readers, teens 15-18 are paired with a partner (a child in grades 1-6) to share a love of books and offer reading support and encouragement. Pairs meet once a week for an hour to read together and play literacy-based games. Youth volunteers assist staff in developing program ideas, help prepare materials for the program and work together with participants to plan and implement the end-of-session celebration events.



**Teen Media: Podcast & Blog**

For one to two hours each week, youth 14-18 met with other Teen Media volunteers to create content for Halifax Public Libraries’ youth-run podcast and community blog. Responsibilities included creating and editing segments of audio content, such as interviews, commentaries and essays as well as structuring, writing and editing accompanying blog posts.

**Video Game Assistant**

In two-hour shifts, every month, youth 14-18 assisted children ages 5-14 with playing the library’s video games. Volunteers assisted with video game set-up and troubleshooting. They may play games with the children or help with monitoring the charge/availability of controllers.

**Program Assistant/Program Prep Assistant**

Program assistants, age 14-18 primarily assist employees with children’s programs. One primary example was assisting with summer reading program activities.

Program prep assistants, ages 13-18 assisted library staff in preparing crafts, supplies and programming materials. This is a “backstage” role with no direct interaction with library patrons.

**CULTURALLY REFLECTIVE PROGRAMMING**

**Fruits of Our Labour in the Preston Township**

In partnership with the Boys & Girls’ Club of Preston and Nova Scotia Community College, Akerley, as well as local farms and businesses, Halifax Public Libraries developed the program Fruits of Our Labour, in which community youth spent six weeks learning different culinary skills from the ground up, including gardening, farming, local history and working with community cooking mentors to learn cooking techniques. This culminated in a reception on June 9, 2023, in which participants prepared and served a banquet-style three-course dinner for the community and supporters to enjoy alongside culinary experts to demonstrate their learnings.

**Bold & Beyond: Girls’ Group Engagement in the Preston Township**

In partnership with Schools Plus, our team visited girls’ groups at Nelson Whynder Elementary School (grades 5-6) and Ross Road School (grades 7-9) in the Preston Township. During these monthly visits, our team guided participants in fun activities of their choosing like crafting, cooking and chatting about issues such as personal growth and self-esteem. In the first session, the participants created goals vision boards and named the group the Bold & Beyond.

**GSA Programming in Cole Harbour**

Each month, 2SLGBTQIA+ youth attend the inter-school Gender-Sexuality Alliance (GSA) at Cole Harbour Library and pop-up GSA programming at each of the schools that the library supports through providing space, snacks and fun activities. The name of this club was formerly Reading Rainbow but youth who run the program recently changed the name to Club Queirido to reflect the inclusiveness of the programming.

**DROP-IN PROGRAMS FOR YOUTH**

Teen Night is two hours of fun offered weekly at most Library branches. Each week there is something new planned that gets youth out of their comfort zones in a safe way, from partying at a semi-formal dance, to playing laser tag or hosting guests from local museums. The goal of teen night is to have a space where teens can connect to each other, develop healthy developmental relationships with team members and build connections with the Library and their community.

There are also specific drop-in programs offered for newcomer youth at the Keshen Goodman Library and Woodlawn Library that allow youth to make new friends while practicing the English-language skills.

**Lunchtime Book Club at Musquodoboit Valley Rural High School**

The weekly lunchtime book club for youth continued in the library at the Musquodoboit Valley Rural High School. In addition to reading books together, the youth use this time to socialize and make new friends, play fun literacy games and activities, have snacks and become more familiar with their local library.





COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Youth poetry slams at Woodlawn Library

In partnership with David Zinck, head of Fine Arts Development at Halifax Regional Centre for Education (HRCE), Woodlawn Library hosted monthly open mic nights to help develop local youth poets. Participants would have the chance to observe others and then gain confidence to share their own work.

HRCE HeadStrong Summit

On November 22, Halifax Public Libraries employees attended the HeadStrong Summit at the main building/learning bub on Spectacle Lake Drive in Dartmouth and represented HPL as part of the lunchtime resources fair, which provides mental health resources for about 100 students in grade 8 who are looking to be leaders in mental health at their schools. Staff were able to speak with students about how the Library can assist with mental wellness through resources such as providing hangout spaces, teen programming, volunteer positions, musical instrument lending, eBooks and audiobooks, etc.



Halifax Regional Police (HRP)

HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE YOUTH PROGRAM

[halifax.ca/HRPYouthProgram](https://halifax.ca/HRPYouthProgram)

Number of youth volunteers: 22

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 and tree lighting ceremonies. 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 to 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 the Halifax region. Youth can apply to become a member by applying to the Volunteer Programs Coordinator on the HRP website. Their application is reviewed and, if qualified, they are invited for an interview.





# Municipal Clerk's Office





# Youth

## ADVISORY COMMITTEE



*Bringing youth voices to Regional Council*

## YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

[halifax.ca/yac](https://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 2023, 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 Halifax region, especially when transitioning to self-reliance.

### Youth Week 2023: Brunch with the Mayor

To kick off National Youth Week the YAC held a brunch with the Mayor in City Hall. Youth from across the municipality enjoyed a delicious brunch, learned about YAC and through interactive workshops and gave input on how the municipality can better support youth.



## [halifax.ca/climate](https://halifax.ca/climate)

HalifACT is one of the most ambitious climate action movements in Canada. It is 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.

Total number of youths engaged in 2023: 160

## **HalifACT 2023 highlights: Climate Futures Lab**

HalifACT partnered with Youth Challenge International (YCI) to run the first Climate Futures Lab in Halifax. The program is aimed at training and mentoring 50 youth, aged 16-24, to become local climate champions to create their own climate action projects in line with Halifax's climate action plan, HalifACT.

Number of youths engaged: 50

## **North Preston's Future**

HalifACT provided climate action training to the interns at North Preston's Future on Halifax's climate action plan and the importance of youth's perspective in the climate movement. HalifACT also sponsored the Peace Basketball Tournament through North Preston's Future which aims to promotes peace for at-risk youth, specifically African Nova Scotian and Black Nova Scotian youth.

## **Nova Scotia's Youth Climate Council**

One member of the HalifACT team sits on the inaugural NS Youth Climate Council and engages directly with the youth on the council as well as the youth of the municipality and Nova Scotia more broadly to provide youth-focused climate education and outreach and communicate the youth perspective to the province.

## **A Call to Climate Action: HalifACT Human Library and Ideas Fair**

HalifACT partnered with the Halifax Public Libraries, who hosted a human library event in November. Checking out a "human book" gave attendees the chance to chat with people that have experience with various kinds of climate action, from changing the way we heat and power our homes, to improving the way we get around, to making the ways we grow our food and treat the natural environment more sustainable. While the event was geared towards the general public, many in attendance were youth interested in incorporating more climate actions into their daily lives.

## **Concert for the Climate**

HalifACT had a table at the November 2023 Concert for Climate, organized by the Stage at St. Andrews and Music Declares Emergency. Both musical performers Braden Lam and Moira & Claire were young, climate-active bands/musicians and the audience was primarily young people from across Halifax. In all, there were about 80 people in the audience and about 50 were youth. About 40 youth stopped by the table to find out more about HalifACT and the efforts the municipality is making about climate change. There was a lot of interest in the human library and the sustainability initiatives connected to the JUNOS.





# Municipal Volunteer Awards



[halifax.ca/volunteering](https://halifax.ca/volunteering)

Each year during National Volunteer Week, the Halifax Regional Municipality holds an awards ceremony to acknowledge and honour the contributions of volunteers and volunteer organizations in our communities. While the celebration had to be postponed this year, we would like to recognize the volunteers and community groups who were selected to receive a 2023 Volunteer Award. Please join us in thanking these exceptional youth volunteers and organizations.

## INDIVIDUAL YOUTH AWARDS:

- Cailyn Robinson
- Willa Morvan
- Van Bernard
- Sarah Finkle
- Lilah MacIsaac
- Casey McDonald
- Jane Garnier
- Andrew Brooks
- Benjamin Amusan
- Michael Tynes Jr.
- Lillian Pappas
- Georgia Boutilier
- Mohamed Jabi
- Lauren Hurst
- Tarelle Sterling
- Juliana Bruce
- Rebecca Mannette
- Jack Burton
- Emma Browne
- Ewan Hawley

## YOUTH GROUP CATEGORY AWARD:

**Cheetahs for Change (CFC):** is a collaborative student-led club and organization at Charles P. Allen High School in Bedford. It seeks to advance equity and bring awareness to social justice issues in the community and globally. The group provides a safe environment for students to share their untold and unheard stories, experiences, voices and a place to amplify the voices of historically underrepresented groups. Their mission is to foster open-mindedness, tolerance, empathy and intercultural intelligence, which is essential in empowering voices of young people and members of the racialized and LGBTQ+ communities.

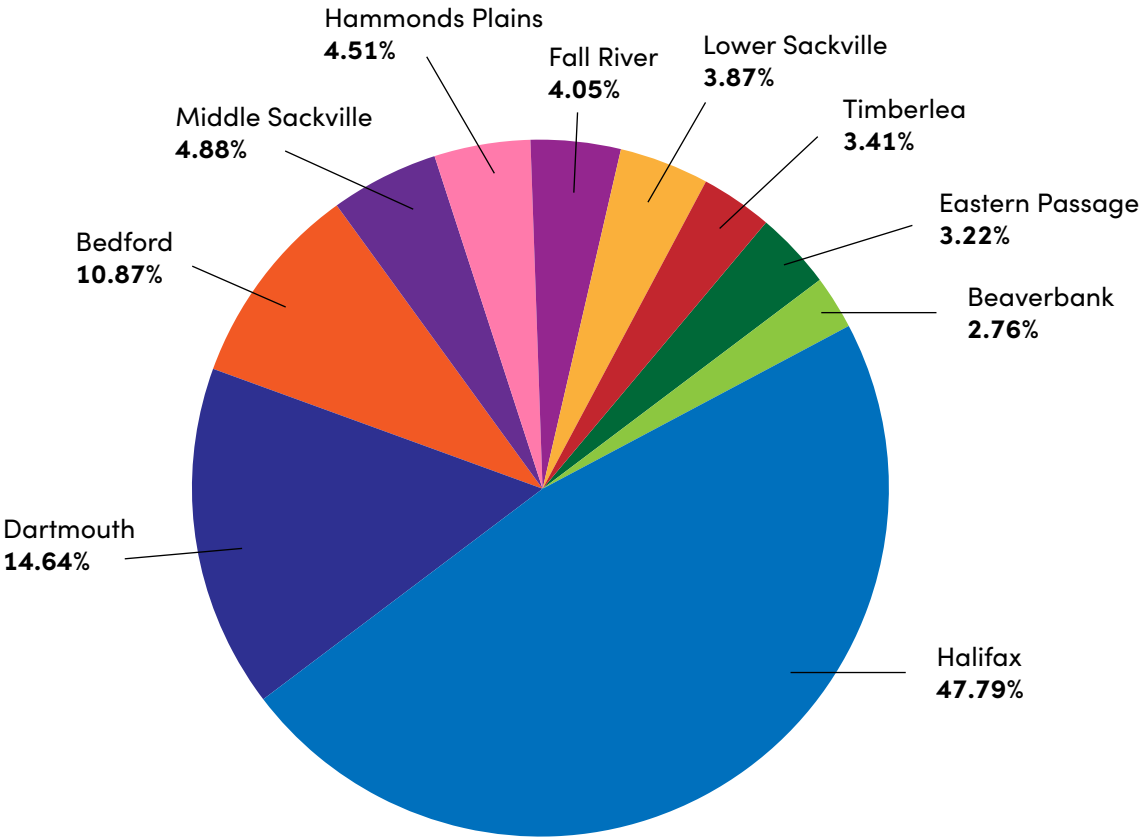


# Youth employment statistics

The following section provides an overview of the number of youth (16-24) employed with the the municipality during 2023:

BUSINESS UNIT	COUNT OF PERS. NO.
Finance & Asset Management	1
Fire & Emergency Services	83
Halifax Forum	22
Halifax Transit Services	10
Information Technology	6
Legal & Legislative Services	2
Parks & Recreation	1195
Planning & Development	8
Property, Fleet & Environment	3
Public Works	30
Regional Police	23
Total	1404

## TOP 10 LOCATIONS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYEES





# External service provider updates



Youth service providers across the municipality played a vital role in supporting the overall wellbeing of youth in 2023. While this is not a comprehensive list, the following highlights feature a selection of organizations whose work reflects the diverse and impactful efforts happening across the region. These examples were chosen to showcase a range of services, geographic areas, and program types that made a meaningful difference for young people last year. To have your organization included in the next report, e-mail [youth@halifax.ca](mailto:youth@halifax.ca).

## BEDFORD BLIZZARDS VOLLEYBALL

[blizzardvolleyball.ca](http://blizzardvolleyball.ca)

The Bedford Blizzard Volleyball Club is a competitive-oriented volleyball club that offers teams for both girls and boys. The competitive season is January to May. In the 2023 competitive season the Bedford Blizzards had 15 teams: 3 × 13U Girls, 2 × 14U Girls, 2 × 15U Girls, 2 X 16U Girls, 1 x 17U Girls, 1 × 18U Girls, 2 × 14U Boys, 1 × 15U Boys, 1 × 16U Boys.

Number of youth participants: 170

## ATLANTIC ACADEMY OF SPACE

[atascubesat.ca](http://atascubesat.ca)

ATLAS (Atlantic Academy of Space), an accredited program by the Nova Scotia Department of Education, offers high school students in Atlantic Canada an exciting opportunity. The two-week ATLAS summer academy provides participants with the chance to delve into space engineering and technology through an intensive CubeSat satellite design program at Dalhousie University. Notably, in 2023, 57 students who took part in this academy can now claim high school credit for their involvement.

This initiative, provided free of charge to students in the region, offers critical guidance and insight into STEM careers and academic opportunities within the space sector.

Number of youth participants: 57

## NOVA UNITED MARTIAL ARTS (NUMA) CLUB

[teamnuma.com](http://teamnuma.com)

NUMA performance Judo is an all-inclusive long-term athlete development program for all ages.

NUMA offers several youth programs including a high-performance program. This program focuses on ages 13-19 and the main goal is for participants to make the National team.



## JUDO4ALL PROGRAM

This program is for newcomers to Canada. This allows newcomers to do judo for free and helps avoid barriers for anyone new to Canada. This helps youth meet new friends, helps with their English language and makes the newcomer feel welcomed and at home.

## ACTIVE YOUTH PROGRAM

This is for youth that want to be active and meet new friends.

2023 club highlights: NUMA had a Ukrainian athlete that joined the Judo4All Program and now is part of the Canadian National Team Program. NUMA helped guide him toward the right path to apply for his permanent residency and helped with any barriers. He is now fighting internationally for the Numa Judo Program and showing huge results.

## YWCA HALIFAX

[ywcahalifax.com](http://ywcahalifax.com)

The YWCA Halifax has continued offering the Open New Tab Program to junior high schools across the Halifax Regional Municipality. In 2023, 320 students in schools across the municipality participated, including Rocky Lake Junior High, Ridgecliff Junior High and Cunard Junior High. During the 2023 summer months, YWCA offered a total of five summer camps. These camps focused on healthy masculinity and sport, advocacy and leadership and openness to guys, girls, non-binary and gender-diverse youth. One brand new camp was added in 2023, called Camp Discovery, which is entirely gender-neutral and focused on experiencing new activities.

## CATAPULT LEADERSHIP SOCIETY

[catapultcamp.com](http://catapultcamp.com)

Catapult Leadership Society is a registered charity that provides leadership programming for youth with demonstrated natural leadership qualities but who lack the opportunities that help youth reach their potential. Catapult’s mission is to cultivate new leaders who will make a positive difference in communities across Nova Scotia.

Each summer, 50 students attend a unique camp at Acadia University and work with local and international leaders who are experts in the field of motivating teens. Teachers and youth workers submit grade 9 student nominations and selection is based on leadership potential and strong character despite life circumstances that could jeopardize their talents. Following camp, youth can elect to join Catapult Plus where they complete leadership development activities throughout

the year. This year 100 per cent of attendees reported an increase in confidence. After Catapult, students reported they gained confidence in leadership 100 per cent, public speaking 90 per cent, getting involved 95 per cent and meeting others 95 per cent. For our Catapult Plus youth, 98 per cent set goals, 100 per cent volunteered, 93 per cent extra-curricular involvement, 91 per cent practiced public speaking and 98 per cent met new people.

## SPORT NOVA SCOTIA

[sportnovascotia.ca](http://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.

## JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENT (JA) NOVA SCOTIA

[janovascotia.ca](http://janovascotia.ca)

JA Nova Scotia provides programming which inspires and prepares youth to succeed, focusing on building workplace readiness, financial health and entrepreneurship skills. Their programming complements the school curriculum, offering teachers and volunteers opportunities to engage youth of various ages. Youth learn from hands-on, interactive activities and develop skills to foster self-efficacy and develop transferable skills to ensure they are confident and capable of making positive decisions for their future.

The JA Company Program provides high school students in grades 9 through 12 with an opportunity to learn about real world business from experienced volunteer mentors. Over 15 weeks, students create a business, complete with an executive team, to design a product and brand, market it, sell it in the community and then dissolve the business. Throughout the program the students take on various leadership roles and gain an understanding of entrepreneurship and innovation. They discover the rewards and challenges of starting a business by creating a business plan, developing performance indicators, maintaining records and completing accountability reports to reflect on processes and improvements. In addition, JA provides all youth with the opportunity to receive awards and scholarships during the end-of year-celebration, which recognizes achievers and advisors in a variety of categories.



NOVA SCOTIANS HELPING NOVA SCOTIANS ASSOCIATION (NSHNSA)

[novascotianshelpingns.com](http://novascotianshelpingns.com)

NSHNSA is dedicated to addressing and preventing challenges faced by youth in Nova Scotia. They aim to achieve this by operating a supervised youth center and establishing a versatile community/recreational facility. Their vision is to cultivate a community-centric wellness hub that serves various purposes, including before and after-school programs, summer camps, community sports, meetings and group gatherings.

ONE Basketball Club

A standout initiative under NSHNSA's umbrella is the ONE Basketball Club. Through this program, they aim to dismantle social and economic barriers by providing free programs that emphasize inclusivity. Their club caters to participants from underrepresented/marginalized communities and is a proud member of Basketball Nova Scotia as well as Recreation Nova Scotia. They have officially signed onto the Anti-Racism Charter in Recreation with Recreation Nova Scotia, emphasizing their unwavering dedication to promoting equity and inclusion.

2023 program recap

In 2023, their program called ONE provided free basketball programs for boys and girls ages five to 16. Activities included weekly training sessions, monthly camps, transportation and a mental health and wellbeing initiative. They are proud to have cultivated essential mental health partnerships, seamlessly integrating mental wellness components into their programs. As part of this effort, they are honored to collaborate with [Dr. Pure](#).

All their meals are halal and they use their taste buds to explore other cultures. They have served several different countries' meals, allowing the kids to learn about cultures through food. Additionally, they are helping with food insecurity by serving meals.

They have also orchestrated field trips, such as watching a professional basketball game. They incorporate a unique focus on entrepreneurship, engaging in activities such as snow shoveling to impart crucial lessons to the children about identifying community needs and exploring avenues for sustainable living. Furthermore, they provided a junior leadership opportunity that allowed their members to learn what it takes to become a junior basketball trainer.

What makes them unique is that they are open and free to everyone, regardless of their financial capability. They take pride in having seen over 100 children actively participate in their programs, fostering a sense of community and inclusivity.

The program utilizes basketball as a vehicle to inspire and engage the youth, providing them with a purpose to stay off the streets, socialize positively and avoid potential trouble. They aimed to identify their interests and create opportunities for them. In their commitment to community wellbeing, they have addressed food insecurity, promoted physical activity and

cultural education and introduced various career options, thus creating comprehensive growth opportunities.

At NSHNSA, their commitment to social determinants of health drives every aspect of their work. They understand the importance of providing safe and inclusive spaces for youth to thrive. They would like to remind everyone that for some of the youth in their programs, this is the only thing they have. Many come from environments where they would face bans due to behavioral issues. Their programs often serve as the only option. They aim to address these behavioral issues and keep them off the streets, preventing trouble and promoting positive growth. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of these youth and build a stronger, safer community.





# Current best practices, trends and research

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

- fulfilling basic needs for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth in the Halifax region

## Under the Rainbow Report: Fulfilling basic needs for 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth in the Halifax region

The Under the Rainbow Report, co-developed by municipal youth centre workers in January 2024, provides an overview of the current situation for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in Halifax. Informed by data from the 2021/22 Student Success Survey, which reveals that 27 per cent of students in grades 7-12 in the municipality identify as 2SLGBTQIA+ and face higher challenges compared to other demographics, the report identifies resources, gaps and needs. The findings, supported by qualitative narratives from frontline workers, underscore the urgent need for safe and inclusive environments for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Subsequent sections will delve into the heightened challenges faced by this demographic, highlighting the pivotal role of youth workers and safe, youth-focused spaces in providing essential support.

### Selected statistics from the Student Success Survey (2SLGBTQIA+ youth)

Feelings of belonging	• only 50 per cent feel like they belong (77 per cent average)
Feeling unsafe	• 36 per cent feel unsafe (19 per cent average)
Discrimination /school response	• 52 per cent experienced homophobia or transphobia and 76 per cent witnessed it • Only 16 per cent who experienced it and 19 per cent who witnessed it felt the school responded well • 81 per cent felt discrimination impacts mental health (60 per cent average) • absenteeism rates: 51 per cent (38 per cent average) due to mental health: 52 per cent (21 per cent average)
Attention	• 80 per cent report difficulty paying attention (61 per cent average)
Eating habits/safe spaces	• least likely to eat breakfast: 43 per cent (61 per cent average)

## QUEER Analysis

The QUEER analysis, derived from the SWOOP framework, offers a comprehensive evaluation of services for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in our community. This holistic approach assesses strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, obstacles and perspectives and emphasizes positive thinking. The analysis aims to identify gaps, enhance support and guide future actions over the next decade. Key recommendations include increased investment in research, employment opportunities (2SLGBTQIA+ support positions), youth spaces and voices, along with updating policies to prioritize the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

### Q - Quality (positive thinking):

Existing programs focus on psychological and self-fulfillment needs. Priorities include safe spaces for socializing, artistic expression and connecting with dedicated organizations.

The Youth Project (YP), a non-profit organization, exemplifies these efforts by providing support, programming, and education for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth under 25 province-wide.

### Limited scan of existing services, spaces and events

Queer-led/Queer-inclusive spaces	• Wonderneath, MacPhee Centre, HeArt, Power House, Queer Creatives Space, Cape and Cowl, North Grove, YMCA, Game Knight, HalCon, Discovery Centre, Halifax Public Libraries, Glitter Bean, St Andrews Church
Queerness plus projects	• WaGE-funded support at YP for queer BIPOC by Rae and Calendula • WaGE-funded Youth Advisory Council pilot through Gender Affirming Care Nova Scotia • Public Health Agency of Canada funded Queer Black mental health support at YP by Kay Mac • YP and South House collaborate for "Crip Club" for disabled queer individuals • Rainbow Refugees supports 2SLGBTQIA+ refugees • Ahrthyh Arumugam, 2SLGBTQIA+ Youth Coordinator at YWCA
Queer/Pride events	• Halifax Pride youth programming, including a youth dance • YP Summer Camps: Seahorse (for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth) and Coyote (for trans youth)
Healthcare	• Halifax Sexual Health Clinic supports queer sexual health, trans healthcare and mental health care • Trans Closet Project: collaboration between NS Sexual Health and YP • NS Guidelines for Gender Affirming Care updated for reduced barriers • Some pharmacys offer testosterone injections and safe space • YP's Gender Affirming Garment Program



U – Unstable (challenge thinking):

The challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals are evident in deficiencies related to basic needs like safety, shelter, warmth, food and healthcare. Disproportionate housing insecurity, disability, food insecurity and mental health issues prevail, impacting crucial life skills. Limited access to inclusive spaces, especially for disabled individuals, poses challenges. Physical spaces, even when accessible, may not be safe for queer and trans people. Disabled students, in particular, face intersections of queerness and disability, affecting their sense of belonging. The lack of mandatory support for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in the public education system leads to higher rates of discrimination. Outdated policies and insufficient funding contribute to this issue. Existing youth spaces often exclude those under 12, creating a programming void for early developmental years. Additionally, there is a shortage of support for 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals over 18, impacting healthcare, employment, social opportunities and resource access. Addressing these challenges is required before focusing on fostering creativity and play.

Barriers to fulfilling basic needs

Health care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Queer-specific healthcare is underfunded</li><li>• informed consent model challenges</li><li>• letters of readiness take a long time and are expensive</li><li>• gender-affirming surgeries require travel out of the province</li><li>• gender-affirming garments are hard to attain and keep</li><li>• hormone injection supplies expensive</li></ul>
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• limited food support hours (open during school time)</li><li>• barriers at food banks (ID, discrimination/safety concerns)</li><li>• inadequate school food programs</li><li>•no dedicated food literacy programs</li></ul>
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• lack of sufficient population data</li><li>• higher rates of poverty and homelessness</li><li>• lack of queer-specific shelters</li><li>• safety challenges with existing shelters</li><li>• gin support programs (specific requirements)</li><li>• impact hinders daily functioning</li></ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• intersection of queerness and disability</li><li>• inadequacies in accessibility standards</li><li>• impact on mental health</li><li>• burden on disabled youth</li><li>• limited information on accessibility</li><li>• limited safe spaces</li></ul>

E – Endeavour (possibility thinking)

Future endeavours should:

**Embrace a holistic perspective**, recognizing the interconnectedness of challenges faced by 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. This approach should consider emotional, mental, socio-cultural, economic, historical and institutional factors.

**Foster equitable support**, adopting an anti-racist, trauma-informed approach, incorporating harm reduction principles and promoting inclusivity. This ensures that support and services are provided equitably to all members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

**Include 2SLGBTQIA+ youth and community**, allowing them to lead and provide essential insight and useful, wanted solutions. This approach fosters not only survival but flourishing.

**Prioritize the basic needs of the 2SLGBTQIA+ youth community**, aligning plans with existing Strategic Priorities outlined in the Youth Services Plan, ensuring coherence and effectiveness in addressing community needs.

E – Elusive (contingency thinking)

Existing services face limitations due to challenges like insufficient data, underfunding, outdated policy and the lack of dedicated support for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth. Immediate attention is crucial, requiring ongoing discussions and proactive steps from government, healthcare, education and community services. Community consultation and participation are advised, with a call for leveraging existing data and involving active youth committees to advocate for action.

R - Reflect and replenish (planting seeds for the future)

This report highlights strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and obstacles for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth in the Halifax region. The QUEER analysis highlights existing positive contributions but exposes critical gaps, emphasizing the urgency of addressing basic needs disparities. The intersectionality of queerness with disability and other identities calls for generalized support and tailored assistance. Looking ahead, the entire municipality must adopt a holistic, youth-led approach, prioritizing support for queer and trans youth. Collaboration with the provincial government is essential for affirming and safe support for all 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals. Establishing a genuinely inclusive environment is imperative for a fair and functional municipality, resonating as a collective responsibility. Fostering inclusivity is vital for the health and prosperity of everyone, ensuring a legacy of understanding and support for future generations.



Conclusion

The following recommendations are limited by the scope and timeline of this project and are proposed as an initial call for further research and action by Parks & Recreation’s Youth section employees. This work must be expanded and improved upon with consultation and collaboration from diverse voices within the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

INSTITUTION/SECTOR	RECOMMENDATIONS
Municipal government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• conduct an environmental scan of existing data/resources</li><li>• targeted survey for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth</li><li>• workshops on 2SLGBTQIA+ identity and trauma-informed practices</li><li>• consultation with the 2SLGBTQIA+ community</li><li>• acknowledge the benefits of supporting the 2SLGBTQIA+ community which will comprise at least 25 per cent of the municipality’s population as younger generations enter the workforce</li></ul>
Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• inclusive curriculum design for all ages</li><li>• multigenerational queer events</li><li>• inclusive policies for addressing 2SLGBTQIA+ discrimination</li></ul>
Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• free hygiene and queer safer sex products in public spaces</li><li>• training for front line staff on how to support queer youth</li></ul>
Food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• identify youth spaces and programs where snacks or refreshments could be provided</li></ul>
Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• conduct facility accessibility audits</li><li>• post public information about accessibility of community spaces</li><li>• increased funding for inclusion support workers</li><li>• recognize universal impact of disability; promoting access benefits all individuals, regardless of current abilities</li></ul> <p>The care that we set up for our community today is the care that will support us ALL in the future</p>



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 our region.

Next steps:

1. continue 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
2. continue to work with staff, partners and youth to implement and evaluate the Youth Services Plan
3. continue with the implementation and support of youth-dedicated spaces
4. implement the final year of the Youth Services Plan
5. begin collecting statistics and information for the next Youth Services Plan











# Youth Engagement Report

Prepared by:

Lee Moore, Manager, Youth Programs  
Parks & Recreation

April 2025







# Table of Contents

Purpose .....	01
Executive Summary .....	02
Youth Services Plan .....	03
Municipal youth programs, events and engagements .....	13
Youth Advocate Program .....	15
Youth Worx Program .....	19
Youth spaces .....	22
Power House Youth Centre .....	22
Multi-Service Youth Centres.....	29
Youth Leadership Program.....	31
Mobile Youth Support Team .....	34
Accessibility and inclusion.....	35
Registered youth programming .....	35
Outdoor recreation.....	37
Municipal Events .....	41
Halifax Public Libraries.....	43
Halifax Regional Police (HRP) .....	49
Municipal Clerk’s Office .....	50
Municipal Volunteer Awards.....	51
HalifACT: Acting on Climate Together .....	53
Youth employment statistics.....	55
External service provider updates .....	57
Current best practices, trends and research.....	61
Conclusion and next steps .....	64



# Purpose

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

In April 2019, the Chief Administrative Officer was 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 information presented in this report provides an overview of the services and programs offered to youth from January to December 2024.

# Executive Summary

The *2024 Youth Engagement Report* highlights the voices, concerns and aspirations of youth across the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), gathered through a variety of participatory engagement sessions, surveys, and youth-led initiatives of the Youth Services Plan wrap-up. This work reflects the municipality's commitment to amplifying youth perspectives in municipal planning, programming and policy development.

Key themes that emerged from the engagement process include:

- A strong desire for more inclusive, accessible and youth-specific spaces.
- The importance of youth feeling heard, respected and supported in their communities.
- Greater opportunities for meaningful participation in decision-making.
- Improved transportation options and expanded recreation and employment programs.

Several engagement formats were used, including pop-up events, school-based sessions, focus groups and online outreach. These efforts successfully reached a diverse cross-section of youth, including those from historically marginalized communities. The report also captures insights from the municipality's Youth Advisory Committee and outlines current youth-led actions shaping local initiatives.

Recommendations centre on deepening relationships with youth through sustained engagement, creating formal channels for youth influence in governance, increasing funding for grassroots youth initiatives and integrating youth perspectives into existing municipal plans and strategies.

This report serves as both a snapshot of youth experience in 2024 and a foundation for future work. By listening to and investing in youth, the municipality is positioning itself as a leader in building equitable, youth-centred communities.

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





# Youth Services Plan

## [halifax.ca/ysp](https://halifax.ca/ysp)

In 2005, 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 for 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 large-scale survey to gather information on the municipality's youth services. 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/ysp](https://halifax.ca/ysp).

This Youth Engagement Strategy informed the development of a second Youth Services Plan. By identifying relevant issues for youth, the YSP2 supported decision-making in how best to address the needs of the Halifax region's youth through the delivery of programs and services, as well as working with other business units and community partners throughout the municipality.

This report captures the final update for the YSP2. During the fall of 2025, staff will begin the process for the creation of the third Youth Services Plan (YSP3).

## 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; and
5. All youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality.





ACTIVITIES		ACTIONS COMPLETED
	Immediate Outcome 1: Youth have access to spaces in their community where they can take ownership, feel welcome, socialize, obtain support and access services.	
Output 1.1	To focus on an integrated youth service delivery approach	
Activity 1.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Establish Multi-Service Youth Centre (MSYC) in Spryfield.</li><li>Select third MSYC location.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Spryfield Youth Space opened.</li><li>Third MSYC on hold until Spryfield space moves into new location.</li></ul>
Activity 1.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conduct partnership recruitment at The Den.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Den partnered with the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Halifax to provide Outreach Worker services during the Tuesday night drop-in.</li></ul>
Activity 1.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Coordinate activities between municipal youth spaces (rooms).</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Den and Spryfield youth space employees co-participated in employee training to develop employee manuals for youth spaces.</li><li>Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST) began offering services at The Den, Spryfield Youth Space and other municipal youth spaces.</li><li>Downtown Dartmouth youth service providers round table created in collaboration with Halifax Public Libraries.</li><li>MYST provided support to various recreation centre youth rooms and youth centres.</li></ul>
Activity 1.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Promote youth counselling and youth outreach worker services to youth (Mobile Youth Support Team).</li></ul>	
Output 1.2	To ensure youth spaces are welcoming, inclusive and accessible	
Activity 1.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Adapt the Community Safety Office’s Women’s Safety Audit to create youth audits that assess the “youth-friendliness” of municipal youth spaces.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Will carry forward to the next Youth Services Plan.</li></ul>
Activity 1.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Host a design night for the Multi-Service Youth Centre in Spryfield to ensure the space is youth-friendly.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Youth feedback gathered in preparation for the opening of the Spryfield Youth Centre location.</li></ul>
Activity 1.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver accessibility and inclusion training to staff in youth spaces.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Accessibility and Inclusion training for frontline youth centre employees is being designed.</li></ul>
Activity 1.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver <i>Nonviolent Crisis Intervention</i>, mental health first aid, harm reduction and <i>Anti-Black Racism Training</i> to staff in youth spaces.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NVCI training delivered to all youth centre employees.</li></ul>
Activity 1.2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Continue to deliver Friendly Faces Friendly Spaces to front line staff.</li><li>Revamp the training to be more trauma-informed.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Friendly Faces, Friendly Spaces training delivered to four additional recreation centres.</li><li>Setting Healthy Boundaries and Conflict Resolution training delivered to the youth centre frontline employees.</li><li>Engagement completed at Alderney Gate to get youth feedback on creating a safer environment in the building.</li></ul>
Output 1.3	To ensure youth spaces support the mental well-being of youth	
Activity 1.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Create and maintain a list of services and resources for youth on the halifax.ca/youth webpage.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Updated 2022, 2023 and 2024.</li><li>Employees completed an annual update on resources presented.</li></ul>
Activity 1.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with community partners to develop training for employees referring youth to social services, housing, food, employment and counselling.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Duty to Report training delivered to all multi-service youth centre employees at The Den, Powerhouse and Spryfield.</li><li>Daily Life Events training was piloted, and employees identified this training as a core requirement for all full-time employees who work with youth.</li></ul>
Activity 1.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expand counselling services in drop-in youth spaces.</li><li>Offer community resource navigation support by Youth Outreach Worker.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Mobile Youth Support Team began offering counselling services and community resource navigation support in youth spaces.</li><li>Navigation support offered to recreation centres that operate youth rooms/drop-ins.</li></ul>
Activity 1.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Deliver peer support training to youth.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Not completed, will carry forward to next youth services plan.</li></ul>
	Immediate Outcome 2: All youth across the municipality feel represented and included in programs, services and committees.	
Output 2.1	To learn more about serving underrepresented youth populations and communities	
Activity 2.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Conduct research on best practices for delivering equitable youth programs and services and provide an update in the annual Youth Engagement Report.</li><li>Identify barriers and challenges youth from underrepresented communities experience.</li><li>Identify training resources for youth staff to participate in.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Research on best practices for supporting black youth was conducted.</li><li>Work is being done with ANSIAO and D&amp;I to create further employee training.</li><li>Review of Youth Engagement Strategy (Y.E.S.) Camp to identify barriers to participation.</li></ul>
Activity 2.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review the Multi-Service Youth Centre model.</li><li>Review the implementation and evaluation of the Youth Services Plan with an equity lens.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>MSYC Model review -- Staff held several meetings that reviewed the Youth Centre Coordinator job descriptions and current trends facing the youth centres.</li><li>Youth Services Plan review will take place before the implementation of the next plan.</li></ul>



ACTIVITIES		ACTIONS COMPLETED
Output 2.2	To develop and improve programs and services for underrepresented youth populations and communities	
Activity 2.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 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.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Den and Powerhouse continue to offer specific programming for underrepresented youth populations.</li><li>• Ready for Rec for youth with disabilities delivered in Spryfield and Dartmouth.</li></ul>
Activity 2.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure rural youth programs and services are aligned with the Rural Recreation Strategy.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Recreation Outdoor Coordinators are reviewing programming in the rural areas, including creating access to canoe/ kayak opportunities.</li><li>• Adventure Earth Centre offered an overnight camp for youth employees at the Chaswood Educational Wood Lot in Middle Musquodoboit, where employees brainstormed and created program ideas for younger youth.</li></ul>
Activity 2.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recruit program staff and facilitators who are reflective of the municipality’s youth population.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Multi-Service Youth Centres have hired specific youth who can identify with the youth who are attending the centres.</li><li>• Collaborated with Human Resources to ensure adherence to best practices for diverse hiring.</li></ul>
Activity 2.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct a program review of the Youth Advocate Program including its intake process, boundaries and ways youth are supported in the program.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A review of the Youth Advocate Program was completed, specifically updating the intake process and guiding processes.</li><li>• Boundary review was completed, and recommendations were put forward as part of the 2025/26 budgeting process.</li></ul>
	Immediate Outcome 3: Youth feel prepared to make a successful transition to adulthood	
Output 3.1	To offer a variety of ways for youth to develop their skills	
Activity 3.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Design and deliver programming and workshops on basic skills such as budgeting, finances and cooking.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Community Recreation Coordinators offered new cooking and meal prep programs in spring 2023.</li><li>• Adventure Earth Centre offered training to the youth leadership participants on outdoor cooking.</li><li>• Youth Worx Program offered budgeting and finances learning course to program participants.</li></ul>
Activity 3.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Partner with external agencies to deliver workshops on science, technology, engineering and computer skills.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not completed, will put forward in the next Youth Services Plan.</li></ul>
Output 3.2	To develop job readiness by enhancing employment programs and opportunities	
Activity 3.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaborate with service providers to offer programming and workshops that increase youth employability skills.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Worx continues to build employment opportunities for youth as the café model expands.</li><li>• Summer 2023 review of Youth Leader Modules was conducted by Youth Leadership Coordinators with updates made for future years.</li></ul>
Activity 3.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Conduct a review of the Youth Leadership Program’s employment modules to identify opportunities for improvement.</li></ul>	
	Immediate Outcome 4: Youth feel empowered to engage in local government and contribute to shaping their communities	
Output 4.1	For youth to gain confidence to effectively engage in local governance	
Activity 4.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Host a youth workshop series for youth to learn how the municipal government operates and how they can contribute to local governance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Advisory Committee passed their first motion requesting a staff report on <i>By-law M200</i>.</li></ul>
Activity 4.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to support the Youth Advisory Committee as an opportunity for youth to learn about local governance.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Advisory Committee recruited new members.</li><li>• Youth Advisory Committee hosted a Town Hall to get input from other youth on how the municipality can better support youth.</li></ul>
Activity 4.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Work with the Municipal Clerk's Office to support voter education efforts to reach youth from diverse communities and encourage their participation in municipal elections.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Advisory Committee received a presentation on the 2024 municipal election and provided feedback on ways to engage with youth.</li></ul>
Activity 4.1.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize the @hfxnextgen Instagram Account to raise awareness about the next municipal election.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recreation employees offered the use of the Instagram account to the election employees.</li></ul>
Output 4.2	To provide avenues for youth to give input and feedback on municipal programs, services projects	
Activity 4.2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to invest resources in public engagements and events that collect feedback from youth about their ideas, opinions and needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth engagement was done at Alderney Gate to get youth input on the damages being done in the building.</li><li>• Youth engagement was done at The Den to get feedback on the Youth Worx café menu.</li><li>• Youth engagement done by YAC at the Youth Week brunch with the Mayor.</li></ul>
Activity 4.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create an online dashboard to inform youth on how their input was used and inform them about the outcomes of their involvements in engagements.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Not completed. It will be brought forward to the next Youth Services Plan.</li></ul>
Activity 4.2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue to support the Youth Advisory Committee as an opportunity for youth to provide feedback on municipal decisions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Advisory Committee received a presentation on the 2024 municipal election and provided feedback on ways to engage with youth.</li></ul>
Activity 4.2.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Facilitate formal and informal opportunities to connect youth with their local Councillors and other municipal decision makers.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth Advisory Committee held a brunch with the Mayor in May 2023.</li></ul>



ACTIVITIES		ACTIONS COMPLETED
Output 4.3	To prepare youth to become leaders in their communities.	
Activity 4.3.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Launch a 16-week Community Change Cohort program to build the capacity of youth to initiate youth-led community projects.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Community Change Cohort was designed but cancelled in spring 2024. Employees instead went to Y.E.S. Camp to provide resources on community action for youth attending this program during the summer of 2024.</li></ul>
Activity 4.3.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Facilitate How Youth Initiate Change workshops.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Offered in 2023 and 2024 at the Power House Youth Centre.</li></ul>
Activity 4.3.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Support youth in accessing resources that enable them to bring a youth-led project into action.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How to Initiate Change workbook was created and distributed to youth centres and youth rooms. Information was also posted on the youth website.</li></ul>
Activity 4.3.4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Explore ways to connect youth to the municipal Placemaking Program.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Employees held meetings to identify ways to engage youth to participate in placemaking programs.</li></ul>
Activity 4.3.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Increase the number of and access to, meaningful youth volunteer opportunities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Youth Leadership Program was promoted, with the training modules updated, to offer youth opportunities to volunteer during the summer months.</li></ul>
Activity 4.3.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Recognize youth leaders by nominating them for the Municipal Volunteer Awards.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Employees identified ways to encourage and support nominations for the Youth Volunteer Awards.</li></ul>
	Immediate Outcome 5: Youth are aware of the services and programs offered by the municipality.	
Output 5.1	To target youth with marketing and promotions that are on trend and will catch their attention	
Activity 5.1.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Review the youth website to ensure content is updated and relevant to youth needs.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The youth website was updated in 2023.</li><li>Branding for “youth” specific material has been created, including posters for youth centres.</li><li>The Den and Spryfield received new branding and marketing materials.</li></ul>
Activity 5.1.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with Corporate Communications to create an annual youth marketing plan that includes promoting the youth website.</li><li>Creation of a new Instagram account.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>A social media marketing plan was created and updated for 2023 and 2024.</li><li>A new Instagram account was created in May 2022 called @hfxnextgen.</li></ul>
Activity 5.1.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Develop promotion material needed for pop-up engagements, including banners and handouts.</li><li>Create an annual plan for seasonal pop-up engagements in rural communities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>New banners have been designed to help promote the youth website and Instagram account.</li></ul>





**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.**

**MISSION STATEMENT**



# Municipal youth programs, events and engagements



The municipality offers various programs, events and engagement opportunities for youth. This report highlights 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.





# YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAM



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

The Youth Advocate Program (YAP) is a family-centred crime prevention program, 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 behaviour. By connecting youth to existing community programs and support, YAP increases self-reliance, resiliency, life skills and social skills by engaging youth in constructive behaviours with family, school and community. The program is directed towards children and youth aged 10 to 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. Program employees also work closely with primary caregivers, and anyone who has the youth’s best interests at heart always works 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 ADVOCACY PROGRAM: 2024 STATISTICS
46 participants
14 graduated from the program
8 exited the program
49 program referrals
7 out-of-area program referrals
42 of 46 participants were in school while in the program
11 participants received academic support through the program
All 46 participants received some awareness, education or support on sexual abuse and exploitation
35 participants and their families received some form of mental health support



## RECREATION PROGRAMMING

The Youth Advocate Program uses leisure education screening tools to determine the best fit for recreation programming for each participant. Where possible, youth are signed up for municipal recreation programs through the Recreation Funding Access Program. If the recreation service is not available within municipal programming, outside service providers are used. Employees work with other organizations to provide free or low-cost programming for youth.

Research has shown that recreation can be used effectively in a multi-approach toolkit addressing youth gang involvement and violence and provides protective factors against criminal engagement. Recreation programming provides positive role models, development of resilience and pro-social skills, offers safe spaces and opportunities for supervision outside of school hours and meaningful connections to hobbies. By leveraging the resources within Parks & Recreation, employees can connect youth and families to long-term recreation supports, thus decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors.







The program offers 24 weeks of paid job and life skill building for youth with employment barriers. The program is for youth between the ages of 16 to 24 years old who are not in school and who are 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, The Canteen at the Dingle and Emera Oval and The Cafe at Zatzman Sportsplex, paper recycling services, green cart delivery and repair. The mentoring stream includes working alongside Youth Worx support employees 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



2024 YOUTH WORX PROGRAM STATS	
24 participants	
20 graduates	
BARRIERS TO EMPLOYMENT:	
All 24 participants lacked job experience	
21% did not graduate from high school	
92% had mental health concerns	
33% had a learning disability	
8% had a history of addiction	
PARTICIPANT LOCATIONS:	
33% from Halifax	
25% from Dartmouth	
21% from Sackville	
21% from other communities in the Halifax region	



PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY

Sukhman came to Canada from India in 2023 to work and study. He struggled to find work in his field as he had no experience and suffered from anxiety. He joined the program in late 2023. He missed some time as he worked through his anxiety, but by the time he graduated in 2024, he had shown significant improvement in confidence and his positive attitude was reflected daily in his performance. He built a high level of trust through his reliability and honesty. After completing the program, he was hired as a casual employee for the Youth WORX program, where he continued to hone his skills and start to focus on his future planning. As a newcomer, he was required to seek work in his field of Pharmacy Technician, for the hours to contribute to his permanent resident status. After applying and attending interviews, he secured employment at a pharmacy in Porter's Lake. Sukhman takes a two-hour bus ride daily to get there and back, which shows his dedication and perseverance.



Youth spaces

[halifax.ca/youthspaces](https://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](https://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 2024, the Power House offered multiple programs for youth 13-24 years of age. There were approximately 1500 youth visits to the space for drop-in activities and registered programs over the year. Participants were typically between 13-20 years old and came from areas of the municipality, including peninsular Halifax, Spryfield, Fairview, Dartmouth, Sackville and Bedford. There were also many youth who were new to Canada attending Power House for the first time this year. Approximately 150 new youth participants attended Power House in 2024.





REGISTERED PROGRAMS

**Details:** Weekly, each season for 6-10 weeks / Approx. 6-12 participants per program

Program Examples:

- Dungeons and Dragons (D&D)
- Craft and Create
- Gardening Club
- Creative Media

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT: GARDENING CLUB

**Details:** 7 weeks | summer | FREE program

Youth attending the drop-in during the Spring had the opportunity to volunteer and help prepare the garden for the summer programs this year! A few enthusiastic youths helped alongside employees to make sure it was ready for the summer program. Gardening Club allowed youth to care, tend to and plant a variety of vegetables, flowers and herbs in raised garden beds. This was a safe space for the youth who had never gardened before but also provided the chance for seasoned gardeners to teach the others. Youth in this program enjoyed activities like building bug hotels, catching and classifying beetles, visiting the public gardens and painting plant pots. At the end of the summer, the youth collected a huge harvest, including giant zucchinis!



DROP-IN PROGRAMS

PERIOD	DAYS OF THE WEEK	HOURS
September through June	Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays	3 to 7 p.m.
July and August	Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays	10 a.m. to noon (breakfast) 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.

DROP-IN ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

Art	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crochet, screen printing, painting, character design, origami and sign painting.</li></ul>
Cultural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Themed Chosen Family Meals program, film screenings and art activities during Asian Heritage Month, Mi'kmaq History Month and African Heritage Month.</li><li>• Weekly PRIDE-themed drop-in programs every week in the summer, Trivia for Trans Day of Remembrance.</li></ul>
Educational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• DIY digital safety workshop, homework help, employment support (resume writing, job application, interview preparedness) and college application support.</li></ul>
Skill building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Youth volunteer opportunities, including gardening, drop-in and program facilitation mentorship.</li><li>• Support with learning about health and hygiene and healthy eating habits.</li></ul>
Community Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mobile Youth Outreach Workers provided support for youth experiencing active crisis or with frequent/higher need for access to community supports, relieving employees and giving youth much-needed one-on-one help.</li><li>• Support by employees and outreach worker navigating gender affirming care, accessing housing and securing employment.</li><li>• Co-hosting drop-in events with the Youth Project, including holiday cookie decorating and summer Pride events.</li><li>• Hosting youth programmers from the Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre and visiting their space to learn about program offerings and available supports for Urban Indigenous youth.</li></ul>
Food Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Monthly Chosen Family Meal program, free breakfast program during summer, support for how to prepare food safely, cook different meals, how to make a grocery list and go shopping.</li></ul>
Clothing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ongoing clothing drive set up with seasonally appropriate offerings.</li><li>• Support and education for accessing gender affirming gear and clothing.</li></ul>







## OVERHEARD AT DROP-IN:

**"I felt safe when I was in the drama program and I'm so glad I came today [for drop-in] because I made new friends!"**

**"This is the most veggies I've ever eaten"**

**"I invited my friend because there are lots of rainbow flags here, so I knew they'd like it"**

**"I don't get lost in thought here because I don't need an escape from reality when I'm here"**

**"Power House is the only place I can 100% be myself"**

**"You are the first person I spoke to about my study permit and it helped me"**

**"Friendship is Magic!!!"**



**2024 Highlight: Chosen Family Meal  
Asian Heritage Month**

Power House hosts a monthly Chosen Family Meal program where employees make a unique or themed dinner for youth. The Chosen Family Meal in May 2024 provided an opportunity for youth to try out new foods while learning about Asian heritage and culture during Asian Heritage Month. Youth were introduced to new and nutritious fruits, vegetables and proteins and created rice paper salad rolls. They also tasted delicious desserts, including mochi. Many youths attending the drop-in experience food insecurity at home and some shared how they don't have the opportunity to try new foods often. The response to the meal was overwhelmingly positive, with youth requesting that Power House offer similar foods in the future and continuing to talk about the meal with excitement long after the event.



**2024 Highlight: Queering The Eclipse**

In April 2024, Power House hosted an eclipse party during drop-in. This rare event provided an opportunity for education, creative expression and social connection. Many youths expressed not knowing much about astronomy. This event encouraged them to look up and away from their phones and technology to the skies! Power House offered free eclipse glasses for everyone and introduced youth to new technologies and activities, including a digital telescope which documented and displayed the total eclipse of the sun, using kitchen strainers to create mini eclipse shadows and designing space-themed t-shirts using bleach art. Youths were also supported in creating their astrological chart which was a fun activity that encouraged discussion about their childhoods and more specifically their shared experiences of growing up queer. Many youths in attendance talked about how their friends were travelling with family or attending events centered around viewing the eclipse. By hosting this event at Power House, 2SLGBTQIA+ youths were given the chance to participate and enjoy this rare event too.





# 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:

- 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 | LOWER SACKVILLE

[www.halifax.ca/TheDen](http://www.halifax.ca/TheDen)

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.

### 2024 at The Den:

With a strong focus on community safety, restorative practices and youth well-being, youth have accessed the drop-in program 3,396 times. While primarily serving the Sackville area, this year saw participation from youth across the Halifax region, engaging in fun and meaningful activities. The space not only fosters connection but also addresses food insecurity by providing nutritious meals and snacks, all supported by a dedicated team committed to meeting each youth's unique needs.



One of the summer's most exciting highlights was the opening of an in-house music studio. This creative space offers youth the opportunity to write, record and produce their music and beats. It has quickly become a favourite, inspiring artistic expression and boosting confidence through the power of music.

Outreach efforts also expanded this year. In addition to maintaining a regular presence in schools, the team launched a new Junior High Night, an evening dedicated specifically to junior high-aged youth. The response was overwhelmingly positive, with younger youth appreciating a night tailored just for them.

Community partnerships were further strengthened over the past year. In collaboration with SchoolsPlus, a weekly cooking program was introduced at The Den. This initiative promotes food literacy, addresses food insecurity and fosters stronger connections between youth and the SchoolsPlus team, making referrals and support more accessible.

A growing relationship with the Sackville RCMP Detachment has also enriched programming. A local officer visits weekly to spend time with youth, answer questions, build connections and help humanize law enforcement, supporting the development of trust and mutual understanding.

Free, drop-in counselling remains available through an ongoing partnership with the Cobequid Youth Health Centre, ensuring youth have access to mental health support in a space that feels safe and welcoming.

Internally, collaboration with the Sackville Youth Advocate Worker and Mobile Youth Support Team continues to strengthen the network of support available to youth in the community.

## SPRYFIELD, HERRING COVE YOUTH CENTRE | SPRYFIELD

[halifax.ca/spryfieldyouthcentre](http://halifax.ca/spryfieldyouthcentre)

Adopting the Multi Service Youth Centre (MSYC) model, the Spryfield, Herring Cove Youth Centre, a drop-in space in the Captain William Spry Community Centre, opened in spring of 2023, well known for the wave pool, local library and skate park.

The youth centre has grown to be a space for youth drop-in times from Monday to Wednesday from 3:30 to 7:30 p.m. and is designed to fit into young people's after-school routine. Youth enjoy grabbing a bite, cooking a meal or saying hi to youth employees.

The space offers various activities such as video games, board games, table sports, TV, art supplies, Wi-Fi, phone charging stations, free snacks and refreshments and comfortable chairs. Additionally, a Youth Counsellor and Outreach Worker are available to provide one-on-one support.

Sports drop-in programs provide a space for youth to engage in physical activities and learn a new sport on Wednesday nights at Rockingstone Heights school (pickleball and multi-sports free play).

Since opening in the spring, the youth centre has seen an average of 10-15 youth participating in the drop-in nights, sometimes reaching as high as 30 on occasions.



# Youth Leadership Program

[halifax.ca/youthleadership](https://halifax.ca/youthleadership)

Recreation programming'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 employees with children's programs. The program operates with four pillars: volunteering, socials, community action and training. In summer 2024, 494 youth participated in the program.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 2024 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.

**Halifax Community Carnival** at the Halifax Common soccer pitch. Youth Leadership Halifax presented a community carnival! Families came out to enjoy games, crafts, face painting and more on the Common soccer pitch. We invited everyone to join us for fun in the sun. Participants were asked to bring a food donation or a donation of women's shirts to take part. Donations were sent to the Parker Street Food Bank and Bryony House.

**Full Backpacks 4 Fall River** at the Windsor Junction Community Centre. Gordon R Snow Community Centre participants organized a school supplies drive in association with the Keloose Kids Parade and Fun Day. NEW donations (including: looseleaf, pencils, erasers, duotangs, backpacks, etc.) were collected throughout the day and at the donation tables. The Gordon R. Snow Community Centre youth were spotted in their blue shirts!

**Community Popsicle Social** at the LeBrun Recreation Centre Playground. All were welcome to stop by for free recreation activities and games! Attendees learned about upcoming recreation programs, facility rental opportunities and Neighbourhood & Volunteer Services supports. The event was brought to the community by LeBrun Centre employees, Youth Leadership program participants, the local Community Developer and 100 youth attendees.

**Youth Leadership Carnival and BBQ** at DeWolf Park. Visitors enjoyed carnival activities with youth volunteers in support of Feed Nova Scotia. Activities included face painting, balloon animals, bracelet making, potato sack races and more! Non-perishable food items were collected in exchange for carnival snacks like popcorn, hot dogs and snow cones. Monetary donations were not accepted. The event was hosted by the LeBrun Recreation Centre and Bedford Hammonds Plains Community Centre, with 400 youth in attendance.

**Bake Sale & Games** at Cornerstone Park, "the hummingbird". Guests stopped by for free games such as badminton, corn hole and giant checkers. Tickets were sold for other games like the fishpond, sucker pull, frisbee toss and minute-to-win-it games (\$2 for four tickets or a donation of a non-perishable food item). The bake sale was cash only. Proceeds from the event were donated to Braeside Nursing Home and food donations were given to the local food bank.



## Y.E.S. CAMP

2024 stats: 36 youth participants

A sub-program of the summer Youth Leadership Program. It provides youth with a unique leadership experience in 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 participating in the Youth Leadership Program are 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.





# Mobile Youth Support Team (MYST)

[halifax.ca/MYST](https://halifax.ca/MYST)

Parks & Recreation is working with the Community Safety business unit to assist in the delivery of the Building Safer Communities Fund. Parks & Recreation, through the Youth Section, is providing additional support to youth (ages 13-24) within recreation centres. Throughout 2024, a Youth Counsellor and Youth Outreach Worker have been providing drop-in and by-appointment support to youth (ages 13-24) at various recreation centres across the Halifax region.

2024 overview:

MYST supported 64 young people outside of drop-in programs, with around 50 participating in Y.E.S. Camp and other recreational activities. This included 24 one-on-one sessions offering personalized support. MYST attended court 13 times to assist youth involved in the criminal justice system or restorative justice processes and was called upon three times to provide crisis support directly to recreational services. Also, the counsellor spent two days at Y.E.S. Camp, creating a welcoming space where youth could drop in, relax, make fidget or stress-relief toys and have conversations.

Topics for support included peer pressure, suicide intervention support, family conflict, drug use/abuse, restorative justice and conflict with the law, education and employment, relationship issues and support in crises and mental health support. MYST has provided support for:

- Peer pressure and crises.
- Suicide intervention support.
- Drug use/abuse.
- Family conflict.
- Pregnancy.
- Restorative justice and conflict with the law.
- Education and employment support.
- Relationship issues.





# Accessibility & inclusion

[halifax.ca/rec](https://halifax.ca/rec)

Parks & Recreation invites individuals of all abilities to participate in our recreation and leisure programs. The municipality is committed to providing safe and accessible programs for everyone to enjoy. Employees 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**  
**2024 statistics:** 11 youth campers

Ready for Rec programs are designed for youth (13-18) who have diverse needs and require additional supports to be successful in a recreation environment. The program is community-focused and exposes the youth to different community recreation opportunities in a fun and engaging manner.

## Registered youth programming

[halifax.ca/rec](https://halifax.ca/rec)

Parks & Recreation offers a multitude of programs directed to youth ages 13 to 18. These programs and activities are advertised on the recreation website, on printed posters, as well specific information for youth is promoted through social media.

- 2024 statistics:**
- Youth accessed municipal recreation programs **7204 times** in 2024.
  - Number of youth programs offered: **650 registered programs**.





# Outdoor recreation

[halifax.ca/outdoorrec](https://halifax.ca/outdoorrec)

## ADVENTURE EARTH CENTRE (AEC)

[halifax.ca/aec](https://halifax.ca/aec)

The Adventure Earth employees provide opportunities for youth to connect with the natural world, pursue a healthy and active outdoor lifestyle, develop personal and leadership skills, give back to the community and connect with other like-minded individuals. The Adventure Earth Centre (AEC) is located in Sir Sandford Fleming Park (Halifax) and Shubie Park (Dartmouth). The AEC also operates the St. Mary's Boat Club. Additionally, the AEC offers overnight camps at Camp Mockingee and youth canoe camps at Graham's Grove in Dartmouth.

## H.E.A.T. YOUTH ACTION TEAM

2024 numbers: 15 participants per session

H.E.A.T. stands for "Helping the Earth by Acting Together." It is a youth-driven environmental and leadership group that meets regularly throughout the year. 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.

H.E.A.T. was created by a passionate group of like-minded youth who cared about environmental causes and taking action. As our world changes, so does our team and what we do but this program is still youth-led and focuses on more than just social programs. H.E.A.T. is a safe, welcoming, caring community, that continues to grow.

H.E.A.T. plans at least one event per week. These programs are usually weeknights or weekends and run out of our Fleming Park, Shubie Park and St. Mary's Boat Club locations. However, the youth also have the freedom to explore the Halifax region, whether it is a local trail, downtown Halifax or helping a local organization. Each season, participants have an opportunity to organize an overnight camp at Camp Mockingee near Windsor. These events are also planned by youth participants.

The youth group comes together each month to plan their activities around the four values of social, health, environmental and community. In 2024, there was a total of 25 events, such as beach clean-ups, donation events, group cooking, outdoor skill programs, social events and ecology information events.

## YOUTH OVERNIGHT CAMPS

Youth benefit from participating in an overnight camp experience located outside the downtown core, providing a unique opportunity to disconnect from digital distractions and urban stress while immersing themselves in nature. This setting fosters independence, builds resilience and encourages deeper social connections as they navigate new experiences, develop outdoor skills and forge friendships in a supportive, screen-free environment.

### L.E.A.D | Summer Overnight Camp

2024 numbers: 28 participants

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 leaders a glimpse into the lives of change-makers and community builders working to create a more sustainable future. Supported by experienced employees, the camp emphasizes leadership, environmental learning, adventure and discovery.

Through team building, community service and reflection, youth have the opportunity to develop leadership skills that can be used in their own lives, with family and in the community.

This year, 28 participants contributed to the success of L.E.A.D. camp and developed their skills as part of this overnight experience.





**H.E.A.T. | Overnight Camps**

2024 numbers: two camps with 30 participants at each session

The group planned and participated in two overnight camps at Camp Mockingee near Windsor, where they spent time practicing their outdoor skills, creating art projects, canoeing and swimming.



**ST. MARY’S BOAT CLUB**

[halifax.ca/smbc](https://halifax.ca/smbc)

**Youth Kayak Paddle Nights**

Number of youth participants: 60

St. Mary’s Boat Club paddle nights allow youth to learn paddling skills and safely explore the Northwest Arm. Certified instructors take groups of 15 youth paddlers on the water and show them how to fit 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 the instruction, participants practice their paddling while exploring the shoreline.





# Municipal Events



## CLAM HARBOUR BEACH SANDCASTLE COMPETITION

[clamharboursandcastle.ca](http://clamharboursandcastle.ca)

The annual sandcastle and sand-sculpting contest attracts more than 10,000 people every year to the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia. The competition offers cash prizes for children, youth and adults. 11 youth teams entered the 2024 competition. The winning group was "The Pharaohs" (#41) with their Sphinx and the Pyramids piece.

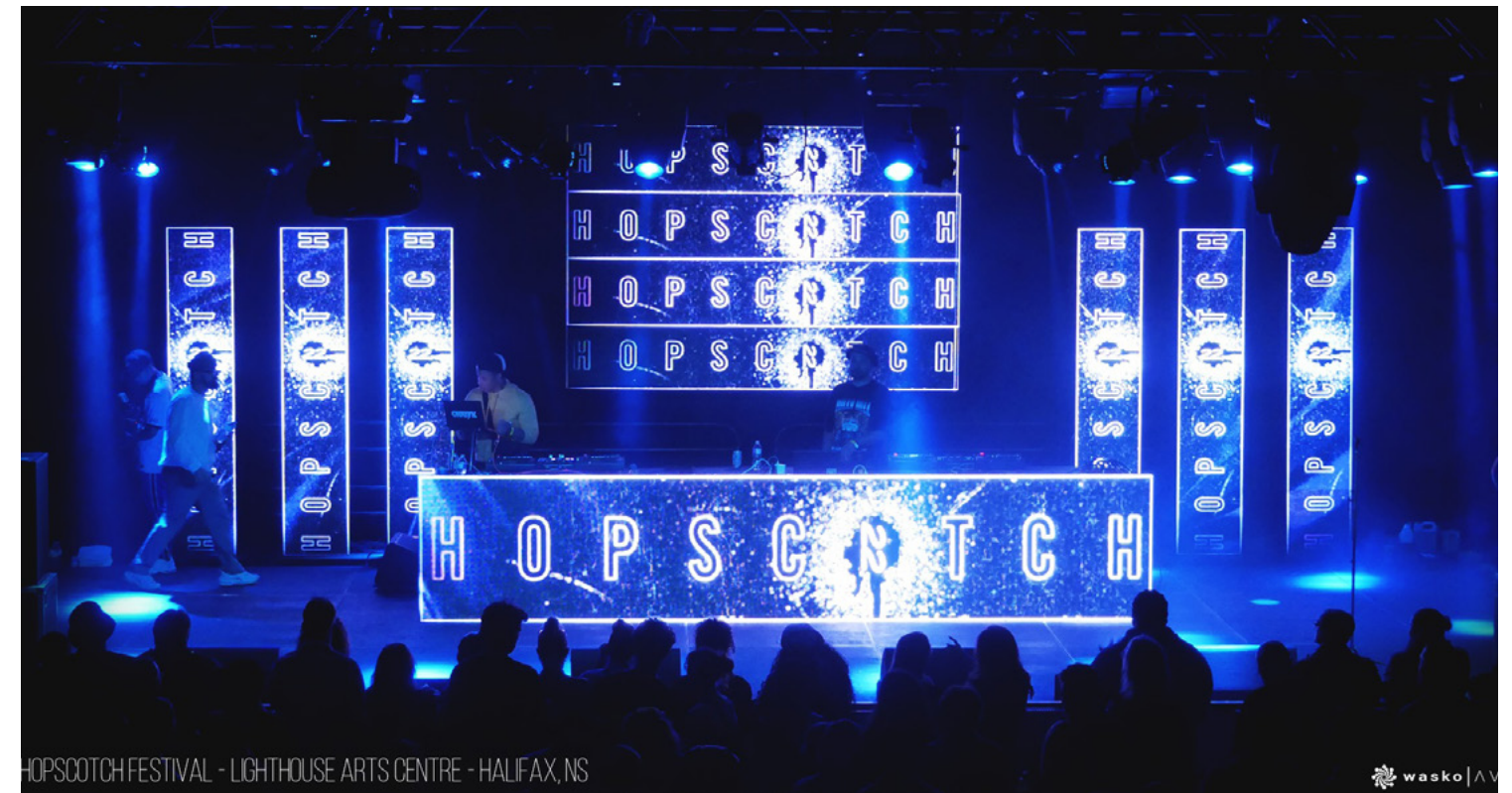
The information and merchandise booth are both operated by the Musquodoboit Harbour Youth Leadership Program.

## HOPSCOTCH FESTIVAL

[halifax.ca/hopscotch](http://halifax.ca/hopscotch)

2024 numbers: The festival employed 10 youth and hosted 2000 participants.

An annual hip-hop event held in Halifax, , recognized as Atlantic Canada's premier celebration of hip-hop culture. Established in 2010, the festival has evolved over the years, featuring a mix of local talent and internationally acclaimed artists. The festival spans multiple days, offering a variety of events such as concerts, dance battles, tribute shows and free community activities. These events celebrate the rich history and evolution of hip-hop culture, fostering both local and international talent and community engagement.



## PRIDE SHOW | DARTMOUTH FESTIVAL SERIES

[halifax.ca/parks-recreation/events/dartmouth-festival-series](http://halifax.ca/parks-recreation/events/dartmouth-festival-series)

2024 numbers: 800 youth attendees

Pride show on the Dartmouth Waterfront as part of our Dartmouth Festival Series, which boasted approximately 800 youth in attendance, as well as Vibrancy Festival with approximately the same number of youth participants as the Pride event. These community-focused initiatives provide youth with a chance to explore music, culture and community in an accessible space.



# Halifax Public Libraries (HPL)



## [Halifaxpubliclibraries.ca](https://www.halifaxpubliclibraries.ca)

Halifax Public Libraries is committed to serving youth and delivering services and programs at all 14 of its branches, two community offices and at other community locations. The library works with community experts, service providers and partners to offer relevant, high-quality, free programming and services to support youth development and reach diverse teens. This can include programs, events and volunteer opportunities for youth.

Halifax Public Libraries' branches offered more than 1,100 teen programs with over 11,000 attendees across the municipality, along with many more all-ages or adult programs open to teens. In addition, youth aged 13-18 volunteered approximately 7,000 hours at the library.

Below are some highlights from the last year.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

### **Unity Sessions: Hip Hop Hub**

Working with Unity Charity, Unity Sessions: Hip Hop Hub provides a barrier-free drop-in space for youth and young adults to experience the elements of Hip Hop through the lens of Unity's values of mental health and resiliency. Guided by multi-disciplined Unity artist facilitators, participants are encouraged to explore the many paths of a Hip-Hop artist and the professional opportunities available to them. The Hub programming includes workshops on DJing, breaking, beatboxing, graffiti and more.

### **Youth Project Housing Help**

Location: Alderney Gate

The Youth Project Housing Support Program is on hand monthly to meet with 2SLGBTQIA+ folks ages 16 - 30 who need support finding housing or navigating housing insecurity. The Youth Project offers many services, including eviction prevention, emergency shelter navigation, subsidy application support, ID assistance, transition support and community health support.

### **YWCA Homework Club**

Location: Keshen Goodman

Run in partnership with the YWCA, this program provides homework support and a social connection for junior and senior high school-aged youth who are newcomers.



## COMMUNITY OUTREACH

### Social Shenanigans

Location: Cole Harbour

Cole Harbour Public Library is hosting a monthly lunchtime program at each of four local junior high schools: Astral Drive, Ross Road, Sir Robert Borden and Graham Creighton. Each month, they bring something different to do, such as bingo, board games or crafts. Youth can also get library cards and request books, DVDs, etc., to be brought to the next monthly event.

### Junior High School Pop-ups

Location: Woodlawn

Woodlawn is hosting monthly lunchtime pop-ups at local junior high schools, similar to the Social Shenanigans events hosted by Cole Harbour. These are taking place at Ellenvale, Caledonia, Eric Graves and Eastern Passage Education Centre.

## DROP-IN PROGRAMMING FOR TEENS

### It Might Get Loud

Location: Central Library

A drop-in program at the Media Studio on the second floor, encouraging youth to get creative and make some noise! Musical instruments, including guitars, bass, drums, keys, synths, mics and more, are available for youth to experiment with. No musical experience is required.

### Dungeons and Dragons

Location: Sheet Harbour and Sackville

In Sheet Harbour, the D&D club for teens has been running regularly at the request of local teens for a while now. In Sackville, the D&D club for preteens has turned into a volunteer opportunity for older teens who have aged out of the club and spawned separate teen D&D programming for the summer months.

### Teen Nights

Location: Various Branches

Many branches run a weekly teen night, usually for ages 13-18. Teen night aims to provide a safe space for teens to come and hang out with friends, develop healthy relationships with employees, build connections with the library and their peers, as well as have some snacks and participate in an activity.

### Chess

Location: Various Branches

Demand for chess programming seems to be growing across branches and across ages. While not all of the chess programs are specifically aimed at teens, they attract a wide mix of ages, making chess a truly intergenerational program. Chess also has a wide appeal across cultures and many participants are newcomers. Most are run as partnerships with local chess clubs, the Nova Scotia Scholastic Chess Association and often also provide an opportunity for teens to volunteer.

## CULTURALLY REFLECTIVE PROGRAMMING

### Club Quierdo

Location: Cole Harbour

Club Quierdo is the monthly inter-school GSA (Gender-Sexuality Alliance) at Cole Harbour Library that the library supports through providing space, snacks and fun activities.

### Drama Llamas

Location: Woodlawn

Drama Llamas is a safe and supportive space to hang out, make new friends and meet other 2SLGBTQIA+ teens.

### African Heritage Month Youth Quiz

Location: Halifax North and other branches

The African Heritage Month Youth Quiz is part of the African Heritage Month programming at Halifax Public Libraries. Originally established as a partnership between the Cultural Awareness Youth Group and the Halifax North Memorial Public Library, the program now involves employees from across the library system. Teams of African Nova Scotian students from schools in the municipality are asked a series of questions related to African Nova Scotians, African Canadians, African Americans and African history. With two preliminary rounds determining who heads to the finals, this competitive and fun event is an annual highlight in African Heritage Month.

### Food-ology Workshop

Location: Preston Township

As part of the Community Eats grant, HPL offered a workshop at the NSCC community kitchen, in partnership with the Preston Area Food Network and NS Brotherhood Initiative, to African Nova Scotian teens ages 13-18. Engaged participants with discussion around food and nutrition literacy, such as the importance of healthy snack foods for teens in sports and quick and easy meal prep. After the presentation, the teens worked in teams to prepare fruit and protein smoothies in blenders and then at the end of the program, each teen got to take home a free blender, which they were so excited about!



## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

### Leading Readers

Location: Various Branches

Leading readers matches teens with elementary-aged children to share a love of books and offer reading support and encouragement. Pairs meet weekly to read together one-on-one and participate in group activities. Youth volunteers assist employees in developing program ideas, help prepare materials for the program and work together with participants to plan and implement the end-of-session celebration events.

### Newcomers English Kids Club

Location: Keshen Goodman

Teen volunteers recruited from the local high school work with newcomer children for fun group activities to practice English and foster social connections.

### Teen Advisory Council

Location: Central

Teenagers in the community aged 14-18 meet to advise library employees on the teen experience at Halifax Central Library. This can include program/event assistance, youth outreach within the Library and creating displays that reflect the diversity of our community. Most recently, the TAC members have been consulting with employees on how best to shape the teen space to reflect the needs and wants of teens using the branch.

### Community Consultants

Location: Cole Harbour

Teens ages 15-18 from underrepresented communities, as well as those keen to learn, meet once a month to discuss what cultural holidays and important events are coming up. They take the lead in recommending ways to highlight or celebrate those holidays within the library, making informational posters for each so that all library patrons can learn about different cultures. They will often suggest ways to incorporate these traditions into other children’s and teen programs, or help with standalone events, create displays and paint the windows.

### Video Game Assistants

Location: Central, Keshen Goodman

Teen volunteers are assigned to the gaming section of the branch to assist younger children and families with the gaming systems.

### Program/Program Prep Assistants

Location: Various Branches

Year-round but especially in the summer, these volunteer opportunities give teens ages 14-18 the opportunity to participate in planning some library programming and assist in other aspects of library work, including program setup and take down, craft preparation and interacting with children of various ages in the library.

### High School Co-op Placements

Location: Various Branches

These are requests coming in from high school students, usually through school programs such as Co-op or O2. Branches will accommodate requests based on employees availability and demand. These give the youth an idea of what library work involves.





## HALIFAX REGIONAL POLICE YOUTH PROGRAM

[halifax.ca/HRPYouthProgram](https://halifax.ca/HRPYouthProgram)

2024 numbers: 20 youth volunteers

Founded in 1996, the Halifax Regional Police Youth Program (HRPYP) is a volunteer-based, non-profit program for youth aged 14 to 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 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 through June) and take place at the Northbrook Training Facility.

Youth also participated in community events and activities throughout the entire calendar year; these can take place anywhere within the Halifax region. 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.



## YOUTH ADVISORY COMMITTEE

[halifax.ca/yac](https://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 challenges the areas where we can do better.

In 2024, YAC identified three priorities to guide their work plan:

**Priority 1:** Youth perspective and engagement on the municipality's social policy priorities- emphasis on food security, housing and the Public Safety Office.

**Priority 2:** Climate action- advise the 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 Halifax region, especially when transitioning to self-reliance.



# Municipal Volunteer Awards



[halifax.ca/volunteering](https://halifax.ca/volunteering)

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 across the Halifax region. We would like to recognize the volunteers and community groups who were selected to receive a 2024 Volunteer Award. Please join us in thanking the exceptional youth volunteers and organizations noted below:

## INDIVIDUAL YOUTH VOLUNTEER AWARD WINNERS

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Lillian Arsenault | • Logan MacLeod     |
| • Lauren Bishop     | • Ella Martin       |
| • Maelle Boudreau   | • Rhyan Pellerin    |
| • Lily Coolen       | • Isabelle Pettipas |
| • Abigail Courtney  | • Gabriel Prest     |
| • Reagan Eagles     | • Sam Rideout       |
| • Mia Hiltz         | • Brady Sampson     |
| • Asha Holmes       | • Ashley Surette    |
| • Claire Hughes     | • Amelia Wentzell   |
| • Alex Logan        | • Henry Zinck       |
| • Margaret Lynch    |                     |
| • Ainslie MacKenzie |                     |
| • Kieran MacLeod    |                     |

## YOUTH GROUP AWARD WINNERS

### JL Ilsley High School Indigenous Student Program

A vital community hub at JL Ilsley High School, uniting Indigenous students and allies. Through initiatives like school supply drives and cultural awareness events, they promote cultural pride and empathy. Their inclusive approach fosters a sense of belonging for all, embodying resilience and generosity. They are a beacon of Indigenous identity and community spirit, inspiring others to embrace their heritage and give back.



[halifax.ca/climate](https://halifax.ca/climate)

HalifACT is one of the most ambitious climate action movements in Canada, and the municipality's community response to the climate crisis 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.

2024 numbers: 935 youth engaged in the program

## HALIFACT HIGHLIGHTS 2024

### Youth Climate Action Fund

Halifax Regional Municipality was awarded \$50,000 USD through the Youth Climate Action Fund, a new initiative by Bloomberg Philanthropies and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). As one of 100 cities selected worldwide, Halifax used the funding to support local youth in developing creative, community-driven, youth-led climate solutions. In partnership with the Halifax Climate Investment, Innovation and Impact Fund (HCi3), HalifACT delivered the program and distributed microgrants to 11 youth-led projects led by individuals aged 15 to 24.

2024 numbers: 400 youth engaged

### Nova Scotia's Youth Climate Council

One member of the HalifACT team serves as Chair on the second iteration of the NS Youth Climate Council and engages directly with the youth on the council. The Chair also engages with the youth of the Halifax region and Nova Scotia more broadly to provide youth-focused climate education and outreach and communicate the youth perspective to the province.

### Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq (CMM) Open House

Members of the HalifACT team attended the CMM Open House in support of the Clean Energy and Equity Network (CEEN) event aimed at encouraging Indigenous youth to join the clean energy sector.

2024 numbers: 30 youth engaged

### Earth Fest

HalifACT, partnered with the Ecology Action Centre, Halifax Public Libraries and Every One Every Day, Earth Fest, was a five-day festival taking place across the Halifax region leading up to Earth Day in April 2024. The festival united residents in a celebration of climate action, energy reduction and their love for nature and clean air and water through over 30 community-led events. Earth Fest events included shoreline clean-ups, guided walking tours about invasive species or birds, bike tours and community garden building. Along with the community-led events, a Climate Action Fair was held at the Halifax Central Library for residents to learn directly from climate experts in earth-friendly activities such as bike tune-ups, learning more about container gardening and e-bike test rides. Youth served as volunteers for the festival and many other events hosted by other organizations and participants.

2024 numbers: 100 youth engaged

### Nocturne 2024

At the Nocturne Festival in October, HalifACT and the Ecology Action Centre hosted the Climate Badge Chalet, an interactive art experience inviting the public to share their climate commitments and contribute to climate-themed poetry. Participants added drawings and messages to stickers, contributing to a collaborative community commitment board. After engaging in conversations about climate-friendly actions, those who committed received a locally-designed enamel pin designed by local artists—*Climate 101*, *Getting Around*, or *Home Energy*—as a symbol of their commitment. The event highlighted the power of individual action and collective creativity in addressing climate change.

2024 numbers: 375 youth engaged

### Mayor's Reception for New International Students

Members of the HalifACT attended the Mayor's Reception for New International Students, which was a welcome event for new international students hosted by former Mayor Mike Savage. The team handed out newcomer resources and connected with first-year students in Halifax.

2024 numbers: the event engaged 30 youth



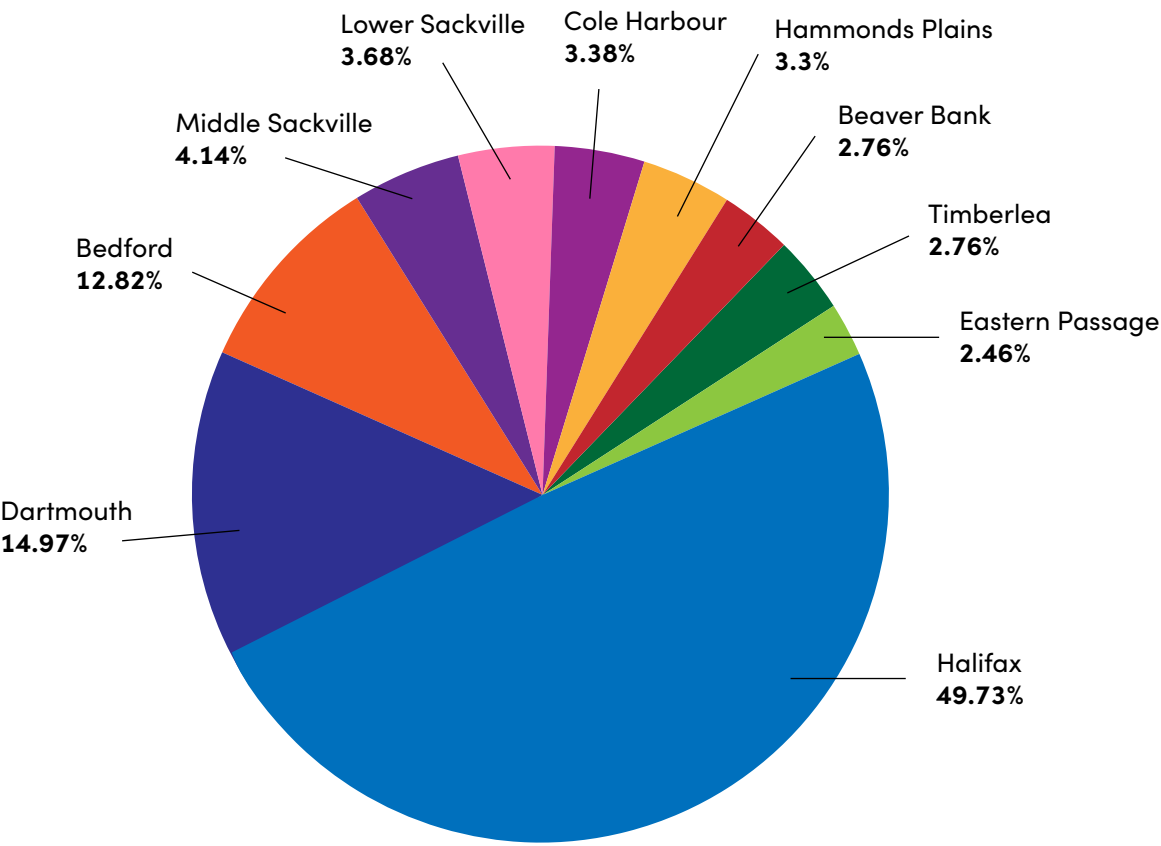


# Youth employment statistics

The following section provides an overview of the number of youth (16-24) employed with the municipality during 2024:

TOP 10 POSITIONS	HEADCOUNT
Recreation Program Instructor	812
Aquatic Programmer	497
Front Desk	40
Adventure Earth Casual Staff - Shubie Park	38
Labourer (Student)	33
SMBC Casual Staff	32
Casual Hourly Staff	22
ESAP Participant	16
Election Worker TERM	13
Specialized Inclusion Support Person	13
Total	1,516

## TOP 10 LOCATIONS FOR YOUTH EMPLOYEES





# External service provider updates



Youth service providers across the Halifax region played a vital role in the overall well-being of youth. This section highlights the work of several youth-serving organizations in 2024. If you are a youth serving organization and want to add your content to this report, email us at [youth@halifax.ca](mailto:youth@halifax.ca), it's free!

## CAMP COURAGE: A LEGACY OF EMPOWERMENT AND LEADERSHIP

### [campcourage.ca](http://campcourage.ca)

A well-established program, nearing two decades of inspiring and empowering diverse young females aged 15 to 19. It opens their eyes to boundless possibilities, expands their minds beyond self-imposed limits and connects their hearts to a lifelong support network.

Graduates leave with a heightened sense of confidence, accomplishment and pride, often calling it the best experience of their lives. Many attribute the camp to shaping their future, with 36 per cent becoming involved in emergency services as firefighters, paramedics, police officers and military personnel. Others break barriers as top students, bursary recipients, community leaders and pioneers in male-dominated fields.

Beyond career success, Camp Courage fosters changemakers — graduates who advocate for suicide prevention, combat human trafficking and champion women's safety worldwide. They return as mentors, board members and even founders of new camps, ensuring the program's impact extends far beyond their journeys.

With nearly 20 years of proven success, the program provides ongoing support, including credentialed education, specialized workshops, bursaries and mentorship tailored to the rigorous demands of emergency service recruitment. Graduates gain access to ride-alongs, junior firefighter programs and volunteer opportunities, equipping them for careers and life's challenges.

As the years pass, the ripple effect of Camp Courage continues to grow. A thriving, supportive community has emerged—one built on empowerment, education and mentorship. The result? A diverse, confident and compassionate future workforce dedicated to the safety and well-being of our communities for generations to come.

Quote from a 2024 participant: The supportive environment, mentors and diverse activities made this camp the best experience of my life.

## CHEBUCTO CONNECTIONS

### [chebuctoconnections.ca](http://chebuctoconnections.ca)

We know from various sources that our youth, especially our male-identifying youth, need additional resources and guidance. The increase in diversity, of gender-based violence, violence between ethnic groups and between groups is rising. All of this is further exacerbated by the context many of our community members are living in, such as poverty and their households



struggling to meet the rising costs of basic survival needs. Our goal from the Mancave program is to increase awareness, build empathy and understanding, as well as build social capital.

Mancave is a program that provides self-identifying young men a safe and supportive space to discuss their feelings without fear of judgment. It fosters an environment where participants can express themselves openly and honestly, exploring topics like mental health, relationships and personal growth. Through guided discussions and activities, Mancave encourages emotional resilience and empathy, helping young men build stronger connections with themselves and others. The program offers mentorship opportunities, allowing them to learn from positive role models and develop essential life skills. By creating a nurturing community, Mancave aims to break down societal stigmas around masculinity and promote a healthier, more inclusive understanding of what it means to be a man.

It all started with a few chin nods and dabs with the alpha males and now we have between 21 and 30 regular weekly attendees. The group set out to bring in topics every week that spur discussion and build the students' self-respect and respect for others. We created a place where these young men could express themselves and feel heard.

Quote from 2024 participant: *"There are a lot of stereotypes about how men are already privileged and have it great. There is also a huge mental health stigma. Finding it hard to be a man lately because I'm getting really lonely and it's starting to hurt, it's starting to get hard to talk to people like women."*

## ST. GEORGE'S YOUTHNET

[stgeorgesyouthnet.ca](http://stgeorgesyouthnet.ca)

In 2024, St. George's YouthNet operated 10 programs and services, cultivating relationships between over 80 youth in the north end, six employees, over 50 volunteers and 25 community organizations and collaborations within the neighbourhood.

We continue to develop our vision of a welcoming and supportive environment which invites kids to learn, play and grow together. We offer educational and recreational opportunities for the youth to participate in various creative and cultural activities. YouthNet fosters a space to support each youth in their development, encouraging and empowering them to be the best versions of themselves.

Program services include: Breakfast Club, Drop-in Day, After-school program, Maritime Conservatory Music and Dance program, King's Tutoring program, Teen program, Junior Leaders Training program, Mindful Horse Program, Summer Camps and YouthNet Wilderness Camps.





# Current best practices, trends and research

This section highlights best practices, emerging trends and youth-related research. This report was focused on youth and the use of artificial intelligence.

## YOUTH AND AI: DAILY USE, ADAPTATION AND EMERGING TRENDS (2024)

### Overview

In 2024, artificial intelligence (AI) has rapidly integrated into the everyday lives of Canadian youth aged 13–24. From education and content creation to mental health support and career exploration, youth are increasingly adopting AI tools like ChatGPT, Snapchat AI, Google Gemini and text-to-image/video generators. This trend reflects a generational shift in how technology is shaping youth culture, creativity and learning, while also raising important questions around ethics, misinformation and digital equity. (MediaSmarts, 2023; Brookfield Institute, 2024).

## HOW YOUTH ARE USING AI TODAY

### Education & Academic Support

ChatGPT and similar tools are widely used for:

- Research summaries and study help.
- Explaining difficult concepts in plain language.
- Drafting essays, lab reports, or reflection pieces.

**Trend:** Students see AI as a digital tutor or 'study buddy', especially helpful when school resources feel limited (CBC News, 2023).

**Challenge:** Educators are grappling with how to balance AI use with academic integrity (University Affairs, 2023).

### Creativity and Self-Expression

AI tools like DALL-E, Runway ML and Lensa AI are used to:

- Create custom art, avatars and memes.
- Edit videos and design social media content.
- Explore fashion design, game development and animation.

Youth view AI as a creative collaborator—an accessible way to explore identity and share their voice (Brookfield Institute, 2024).

### Social Media and Digital Communication

Platforms like Snapchat and Instagram are embedding AI chatbots and filters. Youth use these to:

- Ask casual or existential questions.
- Draft messages or replies.
- Access daily “life hacks” or personalized suggestions (MediaSmarts, 2023).

### Mental Health & Peer Support

Some youth turn to AI (e.g., ChatGPT or Woebot) to:

- Talk through feelings or journal thoughts.
- Receive mindfulness prompts.
- Seek non-judgmental support late at night or in moments of anxiety.

**Caution:** While AI can offer comfort, it is not a substitute for licensed support and may present risks of misinformation (CAMH, 2023).

### Job Preparation and Life Skills

Youth are using AI to:

- Write or edit resumes and cover letters.
- Practice interview questions.
- Explore career pathways and understand workplace trends.

As the future of work becomes more AI-integrated, youth are preparing earlier for tech-enabled jobs and entrepreneurship (Future Skills Centre, 2024).



Equity & Access Considerations

Digital Divide: Youth with limited access to high-speed internet or devices risk falling behind in AI literacy (CIRA, 2023).

- Bias & Misinformation: AI tools can perpetuate harmful stereotypes or produce inaccurate content without proper guidance (UNESCO, 2023).
- AI Literacy Gap: Many youth use AI but lack a deep understanding of how it works or how to evaluate its outputs critically (MediaSmarts, 2023).

Local Implications for Halifax Youth

1. Recreation Programs: Opportunities to integrate AI learning labs or workshops in youth spaces.
2. Youth Centres: Potential to partner with community groups to teach responsible AI use.
3. Digital Equity: Investing in device access and digital training can help close the gap for underserved youth communities.

Conclusion

AI use among youth is no longer a fringe trend, it is a core component of how they learn, express themselves and navigate the world. Halifax has the opportunity to lead in creating safe, inclusive and future-ready spaces where young people can harness AI’s potential responsibly.

References

Brookfield Institute. (2024). AI Futures for Youth.

MediaSmarts. (2023). Young Canadians in a Wireless World – AI and Digital Literacy.

CBC News. (2023). Canadian students use ChatGPT to navigate schoolwork.

University Affairs. (2023). How post-secondary institutions are adapting to AI.

CAMH. (2023). AI and Mental Health in Youth.

Future Skills Centre. (2024). Preparing Youth for an AI-enabled Future.

CIRA. (2023). The Digital Divide in Canada.

UNESCO. (2023). AI and the Rights of Children and Youth.

Conclusion and next steps

This report highlights many I 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.

Next steps:

1. Continue to provide an annual information report to Community Planning and Economic Development Standing Committee (CPED) regarding trends, issues, best practices and actions taken with respect to youth programming.
2. Begin the work on the next Youth Services Plan (YSP3).
3. Continue with the implementation and support of youth-dedicated spaces.

