



EMPOWERING REMARKABLE YOUTH

Civic Engagement.
Artistic Mentorship.
Social Enterprise.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR OF THE BOARD

A message from our Co-Chairs;

“Youth are not just our future,” said the late Max Keeping, “they are our here and now!” From its formation by Mr. Keeping and others in 1997 as Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa (CAYFO) to its present-day iteration, Youth Ottawa has advanced this vision of youth engagement in our Nation’s Capital, driven by our belief that we can build better communities when youth are meaningfully involved in decision-making.

Our activities have taken many forms as we’ve grown. Some, such as the RBC Spirit of the Capital Youth Awards, have endured since the organization’s inception, while many others like Tools4Schools have been experiences which shaped our present path. Today our programs reach over 8,000 youth per year, giving them ongoing, project-based and mentor-supported learning opportunities. These opportunities mostly involve youth-directed civic engagement projects. However, as Percy Bysshe Shelley once said, “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world,” so we also have added programming for youth-curated artistic events, and youth-produced videos. We’ve adapted to run these programs within high school curricula, using the synergy of working with teachers and within the existing school system to develop strong social return on investment - namely more youth discovering the positive impacts they can have on their communities.

As we continue to grow, we are particularly excited about what lies on our horizons: more and better opportunities to hire exceptional youth, employing them as “levers of change” for other, not-yet engaged youth through social enterprises; working with sector partners on a collective impact model to make Ottawa a world-leader in youth engagement; and innovating further the concept of a Youth Engagement Studio, a place to properly celebrate Ottawa’s world-class, talented youth.

Sincerely,

Joe Veryard, Amit Scheer

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OUR MISSION

At Youth Ottawa, we empower remarkable youth.

All youth have the creativity and potential to spark extraordinary change - to use their skills and take action in their communities. At Youth Ottawa, we believe in activating youth to create solutions to problems they see facing their communities.

We offer support and mentorship to assist youth to be successfully engaged, provide learning opportunities and skill-building and give ownership to youth recognizing that the personal impact resulting from a youth-led initiative can promote ongoing youth participation.

OUR RESULTS

Our Civic Programming produces hundreds of youth-led social and environmental projects each year, helping thousands of youth to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for life-long civic engagement.

Our Artistic Mentorship Programming is breaking ground to grow opportunities and find stages for young artists in schools and the community.

Our Entrepreneurship Program is closing the gap on youth unemployment by hiring dozens of youth who are starting their own social enterprises.

EACH YEAR...

5,000
youth engaged



300+
youth trained in
filmmaking



4600+
employment hours
for youth



1400+
youth mentored in how to
become a professional creative



13
young social
innovators supported





Our Programs

YOUTH EMPOWERING YOUTH TO SPARK CHANGE AND TAKE ACTION

1. Active Citizenship Initiative
2. Artistic Mentorship Program
3. Youth Active Media
4. Rainbow Bridges
5. Amplified Fellowship
6. Social Enterprise Program

(ACI) ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP INITIATIVE

What is ACI?

Citizens aren't born. They are created when individuals are given opportunities to work within collective frameworks to contribute their time, talent, passion and energies towards making their communities better places. Providing such opportunities for youth is the essence of the Active Citizenship Initiative (ACI).

The ACI further provides curriculum-connected, experiential learning interventions for Grade 10 Civics classes. By employing extraordinary, young post-secondary changemakers to facilitate high school student-led civic engagement projects, Youth Ottawa works with School Boards, Schools, and teachers to amplify student's voice, enable innovation, foster collaboration, and activate solutions to community challenges which matter to youth.

Action Plans

The specifics of the projects undertaken by students through the ACI range based on student interests, experiences, and ideas, but past projects include: student-initiated Pride Parades to celebrate 2SLGBTQ+ peers, "Blind Dates" to meet others blindfolded and "judge them by the content of their characters," and even a "Not-Bored with Board Games" event to connect students with intellectual disabilities with their peers and promote social inclusion.

Prejudice? Preju-dont!

A class from Sir Wilfrid Laurier High School hosted an engaging event to counter prejudice and racism in their school. They invited 40 students to participate in a "blind date" where they were literally blindfolded and led through icebreaker activities with fellow students, discouraging the judgement of others based on race or appearance.

LGTBQ2S+ History Mural

At Glebe Collegiate Institute, a Grade 11 Gender Studies class wanted to show their peers that everyone is welcome. Working for 5 months with the Rainbow Club at their school, trans and two-spirit community partners, and a professional muralist, they designed and painted a mural documenting five key moments in North American LGBTQ2S+ history that is now hung in the main staircase of their school.

Rap for OC Transpo

Students at St. Peter Catholic High School felt that OC Transpo fees were too high, so they planned a meeting with the Chair of the City of Ottawa's Transportation Committee to discuss and deliver their thoughts — in rap form.



ARTISTIC MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

What is AMP?

The Artistic Mentorship Program (AMP) is a series of creative development workshops delivered to Grade 10, 11 & 12 students enrolled in arts courses, clubs, or community programs. We know that teachers are already showing their students how to make art, but what happens when they graduate and want to have a career in the arts? Professional artists facilitate 8-10 classroom visits that provide an opportunity for students to plan an artistic community event and learn important professional skills.

Purpose?

To explore the methods involved in producing a curated public art event while gaining expert knowledge from professionals in the industry. Students are challenged to plan, produce, present and reflect on their work using an inclusive team-based approach.



“My visual art students had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the pilot phase of (AMP). Our event created a lot of buzz, and proceeds from it allowed our department to purchase brand new paintbrush sets. There was a boost in self-confidence and pride that students gained from participating in a program that offers personable, one-on-one support.”—Donya Beaton, Bell High School



YOUTH ACTIVE MEDIA

YAM trains youth in priority neighbourhoods on how to tell stories through video. Working with a team of facilitators, young people learn how to make videos using the basics: storyboarding, framing, lighting, sound, and editing. The end result is a group of youth who understand the significance of their own voice and sharing it through an increasingly important medium.

YOUTH ACTIVE MEDIA & THE SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL: YAM has been running in partnership with the Social Planning Council for 4 years. Beginning with a three year Ontario Trillium Foundation grant, it won the Ottawa Community Foundation's 2017 New Leaf Community Challenge to combat youth unemployment.

“I was first introduced to YAM 3 years ago when I took the week-long video course. Previously, I had strongly disliked camps or any organized summer activities, but the YAM video training course was different. It was one of the greatest experiences of my life!” — Nanik Adnani



300+ youth/year trained in filmmaking

25 youth/year employed from training program into videography social enterprise

4600+ employment hours for graduates from the training program

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE PROGRAM

To succeed in any career today, students need much more than a high school diploma. That's why at Youth Ottawa's Social Enterprise Program (SEP), students will go beyond the classroom to learn about the world, the future, and themselves. So that they graduate with the practical skills and the right mindset to thrive in a constantly changing global landscape.

The Social Enterprise Program provides an experiential learning intervention for Grade 10 Careers classes based on student voice and engagement activities. Throughout the SEP experience, students will be challenged to think creatively, be resourceful, and work together with their classmates. It's in this experiential learning environment that students will draw on the diverse backgrounds and experiences of their peers and learn to embrace leadership and career readiness through a truly global lens.

The framework of the program is a four-step inquiry process based on questions linked to four areas of learning:

- 1. Knowing Yourself** – Who am I?
- 2. Exploring Opportunities** – What are my opportunities?
- 3. Making Decisions and Setting Goals** – Who do I want to become?
- 4. Achieving Goals and Making Transitions** – What is my plan for achieving my goals?



RAINBOW BRIDGES

Rainbow Bridges is an experiential, for-youth-by-youth project where high school students involved with GSAs innovate ways to make their schools safer and more inclusive to provide welcoming school transition activities for middle school 2SLGBTQ+ students entering high school.

Rainbow Bridges is a response to the high demand from elementary students and teachers to create more opportunities to engage 2SLGBTQ+ students who will be transitioning into a high school setting next year. By leveraging the impact-amplifier of high school to elementary student mentorship, this program creates an opportunity for older students who have already made the transition to share their experiences in support of younger students. We have partnered with Sue Rice, Equity Instructional Coach of Inclusive Education at the OCDSB, and Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Curriculum Services, to offer this program at participating schools across Ottawa.

Program Objectives

- To engage students in re-envisioning transitions for 2SLGBTQ+ students into high school, in order to provide more equitable and inclusive support for students in elementary sites. As a result, increase student well-being in particular for 2SLGBTQ+ students and in general for all students
- To create professional learning and networking opportunities for teachers embedded within families of schools and with students.
- To provide an opportunity to support students leading and learning, and leveraging the power of high school students to be impact makers for elementary students and demonstrate the care that they have for their community.



AMPLIFIED FELLOWSHIP

In 2019, we launched the Amplified Fellowship with funding from the City of Ottawa's Community Economic Development Fund, the RBC Foundation, the Ottawa Community Foundation and the Canada Summer Job Grants awarded through the Honourable Catherine McKenna's Ottawa Centre riding.

The fellowship amplifies what young social innovators are already doing - creating innovative impact projects in their communities - with entrepreneurial skills, toolsets, and mindsets. Through tailored business-design workshops and one-on-one mentorship with an entrepreneur-in-residence the first cohort of Amplified Fellows built their business models for long-term sustainability in their social impact initiatives projects.

Since working with Youth Ottawa, these Social Impact projects have brought in over \$140,000 to support themselves, employ their peers, and sustain and scale their social impact projects. Amplified Fellows have further been employed in over 4,200 hours spent running Youth Ottawa's school engagement programs.

13

young social innovators



5

tailored, in-depth business development workshops



7

different social enterprise ideas



10

hours per project of dedicated, one-on-one entrepreneur in residence support



4

networking events to put into practice skills learned



SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECTS

Ibrahim Musa is the Founder and Executive Director of the Cuts For Kids Foundation, which promotes dignity through access to equal opportunities by connecting youth to essential services – starting with a haircut or style. Ibrahim's personal mission is to alleviate socio-economic barriers affecting youth, born out of his own experiences arriving to Canada in 2002 as a refugee from Iraq.

Impact of the Amplified Fellowship

- Cuts for Kids has enhanced their understanding of their primary customer segments and beneficiaries to improve their services.
- Developed a balanced business model
- Improved their donor story
- Secured multiple grants



Ibrahim Musa

"Coming as a refugee to Canada and growing up poor, I was increasingly self-conscious about myself and my family, and it was socially isolating. At that point, haircuts were a luxury we couldn't afford, and I remember being so sick of my mom's haircuts that I picked up my teddy bear, grabbed a pair of scissors - cutting his hair and then mine. I was 5 years old when I learned that even as a child, we have a need for dignity. The Cuts For Kids Foundation believes that every child deserves an equal opportunity to succeed. We promote dignity by providing access to opportunities through connecting youth to tailored services - starting with a haircut or style."

HOW WE CAN WORK WITH YOU

Setting up a Youth Advisory Committee

Are you interested in setting up a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) to work within your organization or company? Youth Ottawa offers a consulting service to aid in every aspect of the development of your YAC or similar body, including intention-setting, recruiting, interviewing, convening and organizing.

Supporting youth-led engagement projects

Based on 10+ years of running our DILA Civic Engagement Program in schools & community centres, our staff facilitators can support independent youth-led projects geared towards civic engagement and advocacy. Contact us if you have a project you would like our support on!

Partner with us for upcoming events

Youth Ottawa can help make your next event more youth-friendly by hiring youth performers, visual artists, or DJs. In 2018, we brought a youth speed-painting battle to a One.org Sustainable Development Goals event! Contact us for further details.



CELEBRATING YOUTH

RBC Spirit Of The Capital Awards

The RBC Spirit Awards celebrate the extraordinary accomplishments of youth who are making our community, and the world, a better place. Awards are presented in 7 categories, reflecting the diversity of youth interests. The award categories are: Academic Perseverance, Arts & Culture, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, Service & Caring, Strength through Diversity, Take a Stand, and the Max Keeping Award for Personal Courage.

Youth Action Showcase

What do you get when you cross a speed-dating event and a science fair, but for connecting youth civic engagement projects with community leaders? Youth Ottawa's Youth Action Showcase, of course! Attended by Ottawa City Council, MPs, Senators, and community leaders from the non-profit sector, youth are given a table at City Hall to present their solutions to the world's most pressing social and environmental problems. Leaders circulate to witness their projects, and offer encouragement and next steps.

Mayor's Charity Golf Classic

For the past 18 years, members of the community have been coming together each summer to support the youth of Ottawa through this great event. The day includes golf, networking, entertainment, great food and of course remarkable youth.



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS!

Funding Partners



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