



YouthOTTAWA

2020 Gratitude Report

Thank you for showing youth the **LOVE**



YouthOTTAWA

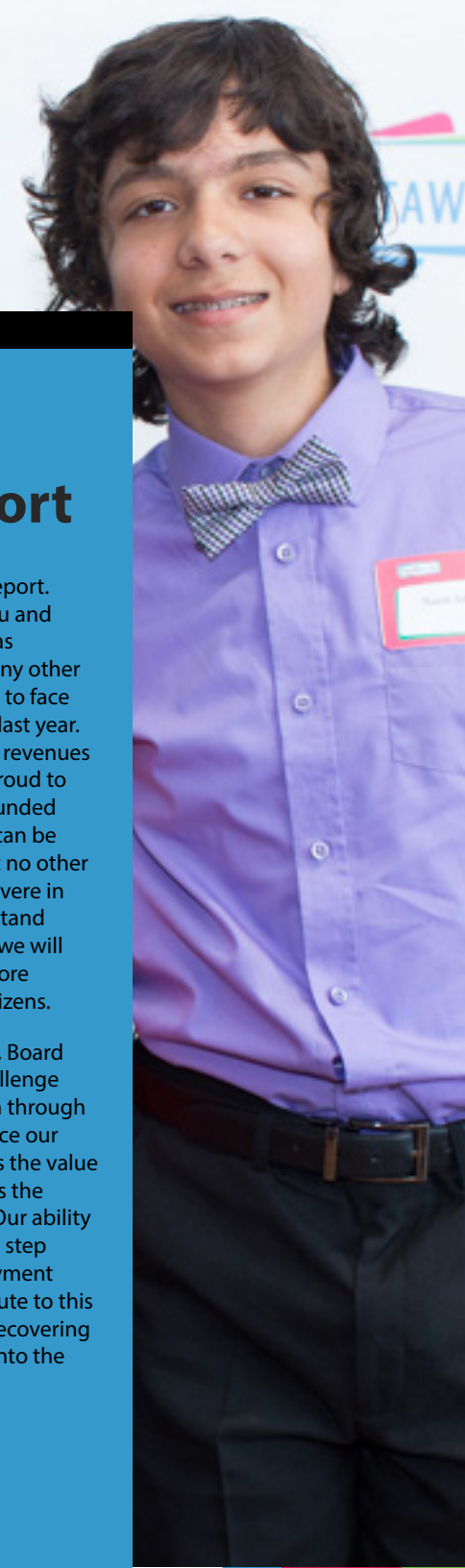


YouthOTTAWA



YouthOTTAWA





CONTENTS

Welcome to our 2020 Gratitude Report	3
Youth Ottawa Ecosystem	4
Covid-19 A new Model of Education	6
Key Projects	7
Youth Champions	10
Collaborating for Community Impact	12
A Year of Growth	14
Community Supporting Youth	16
Events	18
Our Commitment	20
Thank you to our Supporters	22

Welcome to our 2020 Gratitude Report

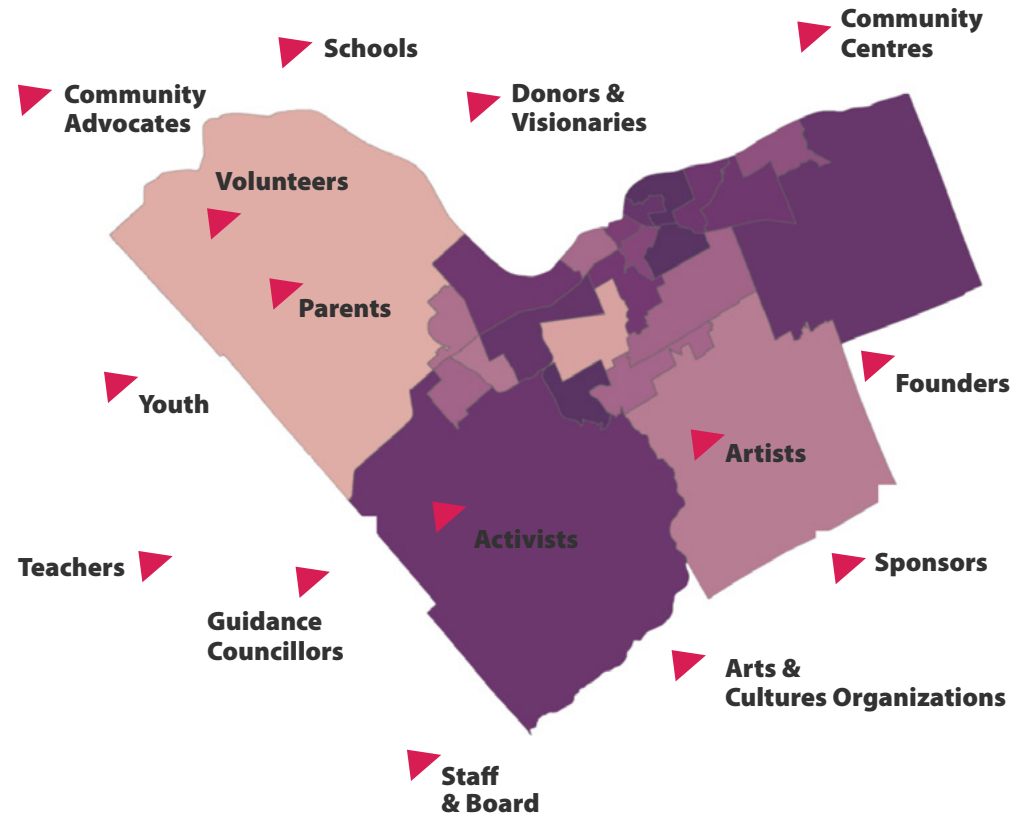
Hello and thank you for reading our 2020 Gratitude Report. First things first, I hope you are doing well and that you and your family are keeping safe and healthy. The world has changed significantly since our last report and like many other organizations, industries and businesses, we have had to face many challenges and difficult circumstances over the last year. Although the non-profit sector recorded a 40% loss in revenues in 2020 and Youth Ottawa was no exception, we are proud to say that we are still standing. Our organization was founded on the belief that our city can be greater, our citizens can be more effective, and our youth can show us the way. At no other time in recent history have our youth needed to persevere in the face of adversity like they have in 2020. We understand the importance of our work now more than ever, and we will continue to carry out our mandate to help produce more resilient, confident, empathetic and globally aware citizens.

We are extremely proud of our Youth Facilitators, Staff, Board of Directors and trusted partners. They rose to the challenge and adapted marvelously to help see the organization through this challenging time. We are grateful for the confidence our stakeholders have shown us. They have truly shown us the value they believe we provide, and they continue to show us the value they believe young people have in our society. Our ability to reach youth through our school programs, the next step opportunities we provide through our various employment programs, and the thought leadership we can contribute to this space gives us great hope for the future generations recovering from this crisis, re-shaping our values and leading us into the future.

Sincerely,

Jesse Card - Deputy Executive Director

Youth Ottawa Ecosystem



Youth Ottawa was founded in 1997 as Child & Youth Friendly Ottawa with a mandate to meaningfully involve children and youth in the civic lives of their communities. Since then we have expanded and are focused on a B2B model building into pre-existing public infrastructure.

Here is a snapshot that Youth Ottawa's work exists within. It not only shows the unique roles we all have to play - it highlights all of the incredible way our work and our communities are fundamentally interconnected.

Each and every person, group, and organization is integral to Youth Ottawa's community. It is through our connected efforts that we will advance our mission of youth engagement within Ottawa.

COVID-19

A New Model of Education

Working in partnership with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board

In 2020 we continued our partnership with the OCDSB with a goal of reaching more students and classrooms. 2020 started with some exciting projects, but when the first cases of COVID-19 were announced and virtual learning began for students, we knew we needed to quickly adapt.

We rallied our program to a fully digital model to ensure that students were not left behind. We were successful in adapting our Youth Active Media, our Civics Program and our Rainbow Bridges Program. In spite of the challenges 2020 brought, our students continued to amaze us by shifting their projects to an online format.

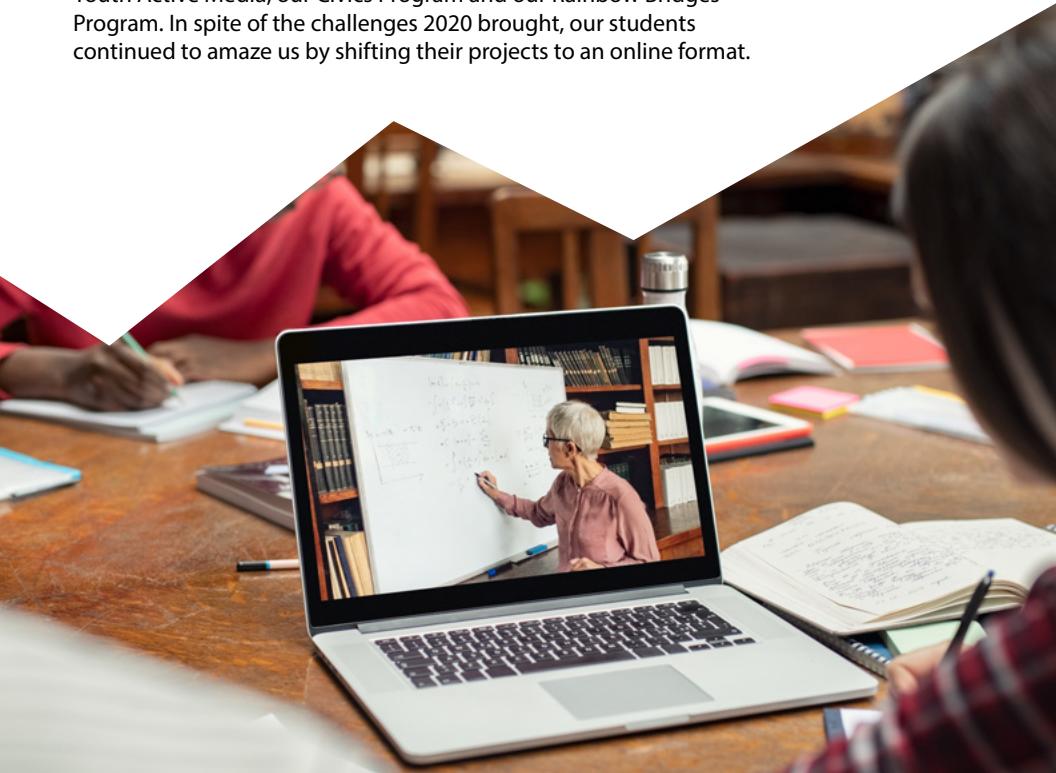
Youth Active Media

As virtual learning began, the importance of our Youth Active Media program and the use of technology in schools became clearer than ever. Youth Active Media teaches youth the art of filmmaking and empowers them to create short films about community issues that matter to them.

Overall Goals

- to create deeper, meaningful community connections with youth
- to provide workshops to learn about storytelling and production
- Students build skills they can use both in school and in their careers
- To provide mentorship opportunities and a platform to showcase their work back to their community

450+ youth/year trained in filmmaking in 2020



I really enjoyed the YAM program. All the instructors and people I've met within the program were kind and accommodating to our ideas and helping us try to expand and capture our ideas. The courses are definitely something I would recommend to my peers who have an interest in film and who are still in school. It's a great way to learn the field with some hands-on experience and great instructors." - DAMIEN HEBERT (Norman Johnston Alternative, student)

Key Projects

CBC Ottawa Storytelling Lab



We partnered with CBC Ottawa to give students an opportunity to craft their own personal narrative stories and develop scripts into videos. CBC Ottawa hosted a one-day workshop on topics such as shot sequencing and crafting a story from scratch. CBC videographers, photographers, promotional producers and radio hosts visited Richard Pfaff Alternate and provided workshops about discovering your story and developing your personal narrative.

Sir Guy Carleton



At Sir Guy Carleton, we worked with students from the Physical Support Program to design an accessible kitchen in which students would be able to learn life skills and participate in independent living activities such as cooking for themselves. YAM Facilitators taught students filmmaking skills by working with them to document the new kitchen project.

Woodroffe High School



Our YAM Facilitators worked with a group of deaf Syrian immigrant students at Woodroffe High School who were learning ASL (American Sign Language). During the YAM project, these students learned about planning, structuring, and editing a film. They showcased their final video project, that documents what school is like for someone who is deaf, to fellow students.

Setting an Innovative Course for the Future of a Music Program

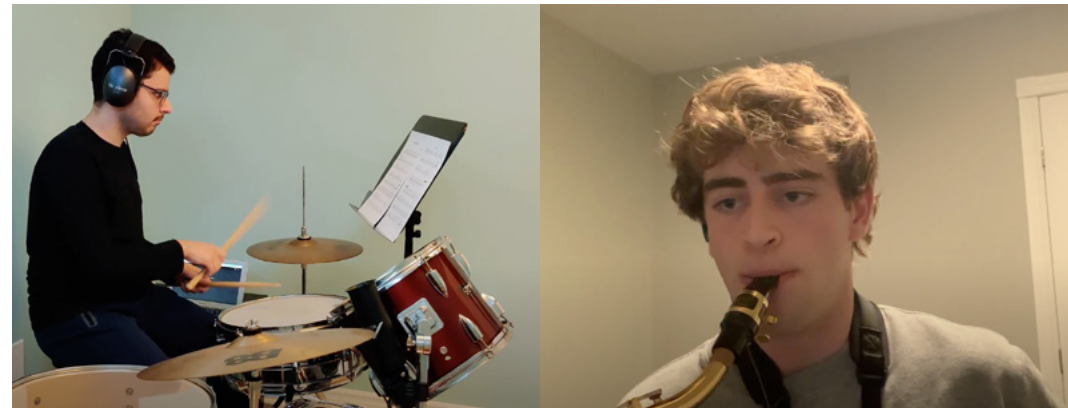
Written By John Yemensky - Music Teacher at St. Francis Xavier

"In 2019-20, my Grade 10-12 Instrumental Music Class and I partnered with Youth Ottawa to conceive, plan and execute an event under the Artistic Mentorship Program. For 8 weeks students were guided through the entire process of putting on an elaborate event in our community. As students moved through this process they learned the real world transferable skills that would prepare them for life outside the classroom, built character, confidence and determination. I can think of no better example of deep learning.

Cut to 2020-21 and doing such a collaboration with Youth Ottawa was pandemically impossible. But when I asked Youth Ottawa about the possibility of collaborating with this year's music class to put together a music program promotional video, the creative sparks flew! We were able to involve not just my one music class, but all of our music students as well as many professional musicians and music educators in our community and beyond. This year through Youth Ottawa's initiative the students learned media literacy in numerous forms, promotional skills, creative skills and interpersonal skills, as they confronted their fears to try things they had never done before - again, deep learning at its finest.

The students have a learning experience that they will remember for the rest of their lives and can draw upon that experience in all of their future endeavors. As a music teacher, I too have been able to expand my horizons. In the future, I can continue to engage students to take ownership of their music program by promoting it to peers and the next generation of students not just through video, but through all manners of promotion. In short, our partnership with Youth Ottawa has provided students with opportunities rich in deep learning and set an innovative course for the future of the Music Program at St. Francis Xavier High School.

Sincerely, John Yemensky - Music Teacher at St. Francis Xavier High School



Teaching Pride Rainbow Bridges Program

While many initiatives have popped up over the years to support 2SLGBTQ+ students as they navigate intersecting forms of oppression at school, the struggle for safer schools continues. For this reason, in 2020, we partnered with Sue Rice, Equity Instructional Coach of Inclusive Education at the OCDSB, and Dorothy Baker, Superintendent of Curriculum Services, to offer the Rainbow Bridges Program at participating schools across Ottawa.

The Rainbow Bridges Program - now fully digital - is an experiential, for youth-by-youth program in which secondary students work alongside GSA's and equity clubs (gay-straight alliance or gender and sexuality alliance) to create short films aimed at welcoming Grade 9 students entering high school.

"A grade 9 student from Bell has been having a tough time - challenging to find connections at a new school, especially in a year like this. She had a particularly tough day today.. she attended the Virtual GSA and it was really great to see her making connections with others" - Shannon Mills - Teacher at Bell High School

Celebrating Pride

On November 19th, 2020 we held our first ever Rainbow Bridges Film Festival (virtually, of course!). The short films made by student participants in the Rainbow Bridges Program addressed a variety of themes related to diverse 2SLGBTQ+ life experiences, with an underlying message of support from older students to younger students. The program, along with the film festival, focuses on how we work together to recognize the inherent dignity and worth of each person and ensure that every student's right to education is respected and realized.

RAINBOW BRIDGES FILM FESTIVAL

November 19 @ 7:00 p.m.

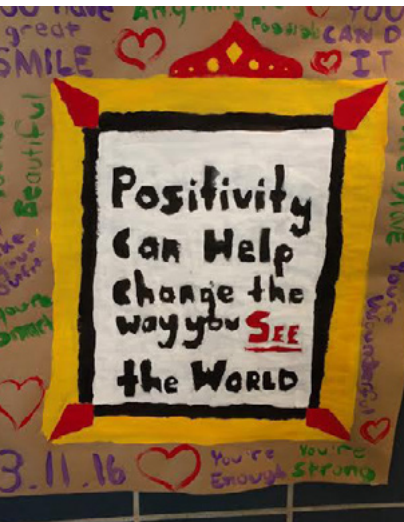


A program in partnership with the OCDSB.

For Youth Ottawa, collaborating with partners is critical to achieving lasting impact. We are grateful for the partnership we've developed with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board. Over the past year, with their support, we've been able to leverage resources and extend our reach, to nurture the capacity of youth and to widen the impact of our programs. Working together, and developing long-term relationships allows us to achieve far more than we could achieve alone.



Strengthening Democracy with a Modern Civic Education



Canada's education system prepares students for college, their career, and the future of work, but it's also important for students to be prepared to participate in their democracy. Youth Ottawa's Active Citizenship Initiative (ACI) is an 8-step program that guides and empowers youth through taking action on a social or environmental issue in their community. In the fall of 2019 and early into 2020, Youth Ottawa was preparing for the most productive and impactful year yet for our Active Citizenship Initiative.

We had begun delivering the program within the OCDSB with projections to serve more than 1,500 youth. Not surprisingly, COVID-19 had a significant impact on our civics program, due to lockdowns and school closures.

Projects from the Classroom

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 at their school.

Using Community Challenges for Learning

As a result of COVID-19, Youth Ottawa, with the tremendous support of our partners at the OCDSB, turned its focus to adapting the ACI program to a blended and interactive online delivery method. Out of this redesign came the innovative concept of Community Challenge Videos. In the Community Challenge Videos, a local non-profit organization, grassroots group, or elected official will issue a specific, tangible, and local community challenge to students who participate in our programming. These videos will be used across all of our programs to better connect student projects to their communities.



Youth Champions

Ben's Youth Ottawa story

For Ben Bergeron, filmmaking was always a passion. He was introduced to our Youth Active Media Program and his life changed. The program allowed Ben to express himself creatively and eventually led him to a job as Program Manager for a media company.

"Youth have the interest and the aptitude but not necessarily the access to equipment or the skills that might be required to go into video. I know I certainly myself when I was in the program received the opportunity to actually work with equipment and learn skills I wouldn't have been able to learn elsewhere. Along with learning video, we are taught employable skills that we can take into a job."
- Ben Bergeron



"Some skills I've learned through Youth Active Media are: video taking, filmography, audio, and communicating with clients. It's a lot of transferable skills that would apply to any kind of workplace which is really amazing."

- Rosena Zhuang - YAM program participant

Collaborating for Community Impact

Youth City Mic with the National Arts Centre

Creating opportunities for young emerging artists is something we strive to do. In 2020 we partnered with the National Arts Centre to launch Youth City Mic - an event for young artists ages 14-21 to showcase their talent at the NAC Fourth Stage. Bands, singers, poets, dancers, improv artists and DJ's were given five minutes on stage to showcase their talent in a supportive open mic format.

The goal of the event was to run once a month. Due to COVID, we were only able to hold one event, but it was a great success! We welcomed over 20 artists, family, and friends for a great night of art, fun and energy. We hope to bring this event back in the future!



**Dear Grads
of 2020 with
CBC Ottawa**



With classes moved online, proms postponed and graduating ceremonies off the table, we wanted to do something special for the class of 2020. We partnered with CBC Ottawa to create a series dedicated to high school graduates in the community.

We asked the class of 2020 to share their experiences graduating during a pandemic, thoughts on the future, and reflections on their unusual last year of high school. We received many thoughtful messages of hope, reassurance and gratitude from high school graduates across the city.

Dear Grads of 2020...

"Dear Grads of 2020, Congratulations, you finally made it! This is our time to enjoy this moment of an amazing achievement and milestone. We are all uncertain about the future and what it will be like, but I want you to enjoy the celebration and possibilities for the future despite COVID-19."

Kimara Mar - Sir Guy Carleton
Secondary School

A Hole in One for Youth Ottawa



Thank you to the 2020 event supporters:

Mattamy Homes
Mayor Jim Watson
Glenview Homes
United Way
Caivan Communities
Algonquin College
Thomas Cavanagh
Cistel Technologies
Cricket Home Comfort
Ken Gordon Holdings
NCHCA
Royal LePage
Soloway Wright LLP

Ottawa Printing Services
Rogers Radio
Arnon
Kilrea Denture Clinic
Bell
Minto Communities
Huawei Canada
D-Squared
SS Bolton
Carp Road BIA
Don Masters
Ottawa Embassy West
ASL Contractors

Ottawa Professional Firefighters
Mackenzie Investments
Rideau Transit Group
Hot Shoe Productions
Tomlinson Group
Spectrum Kitchens
Urbandale Corporation
Tartan Homes
Rogers Communications
PCL Construction
Stantec

19th Annual Mayor's Charity Golf Classic

On September 30th, teams teed off for the 19th Annual Mayor's Charity Golf Classic. The tournament held at Stonebridge Golf Course welcomed over 100 golfers for a socially distanced event. Special protocols were put in place to ensure that physical distancing measures were respected.

We thank all of the event sponsors and attendees - together we were able to raise over \$46,000 for our youth programs. Special recognition to our title sponsor Mattamy Homes and Honorary Host Mayor Jim Watson for making this event possible.



Empowering the next Generation of Leaders

RBC Spirit of the Capital Youth Awards

In 2020, we welcomed another remarkable group of RBC Spirit of the Capital Youth Awards recipients. These youth are tackling challenges across technology, civil rights, education and more. The awards are something we look forward to each year because it recognizes and empowers youth in our community who are on the frontlines leading social movements, making a difference and re-envisioning culture, society, the future and the present.

This year the awards ceremony that normally takes place at City Hall was live streamed on Facebook and YouTube. 16 young changemakers were celebrated through a virtual awards series. The series took place over 3 weeks in October and welcomed youth, parents, teachers, community members, city councilors and the Mayor.



My work within Ottawa began from my time within student politics. From a young age, I've always found myself involved in leadership roles with the continued goal of supporting my community and providing a voice to the many of us who are silenced, rather than the misconception that we are voiceless. I have aspirations of becoming an educator and playing a role in advocating for Black youth within our public school system. As children, these are amongst the vulnerable members of our community who will be subject to discrimination throughout their time in elementary and secondary school. At that age, although I couldn't describe it using equity terms, one thing was for sure, I could tell that it didn't feel fair, nor right."- Jason Seguya



Jason Seguya
Student Leader & Activist
Strength through Diversity
award recipient

Thank you to the 2020 Sponsors:



A Year of Growth

Would not be possible without you.

Thank you for your continued support of Youth Ottawa despite all of the challenges caused by the pandemic. Your support made last year a period of significant strategic growth and development. You continued to step up, making it possible for us to quickly adapt our programs. By leveraging technology to meet students where they are - you helped us keep youth empowered.

Your support during this crisis has been **incredible!**

At the end of 2020, we launched a fundraising effort to support our youth empowerment programs. Two anonymous donors stepped up with a matching gift of \$5,000. We were thrilled to surpass our fundraising goal of \$10,000 - with your support, we raised \$14,000!

Your contribution to our mission means so much to the youth we work with. As the pandemic continues, there is still a long road ahead to ensure that youth are supported. Thank you for walking beside them during this difficult journey.

"Youth Ottawa's platform brings together an incredible community of young people rich with a diversity of experiences and visions. By supporting youth programming, we hope to help give voice to a new generation of ideas and be part of the change that they are sure to inspire." - Maple Wishes - Donor



Community Supporting Youth

Thank you to Shaw Communications for supporting our Youth Active Media program in 2020.



We are grateful for the support we receive from all. Every email opened, every story shared and every donation made helps us in so many ways.

This year we're dedicating special recognition to Shaw Communications who in 2020 stepped up to the plate to support our Youth Active Media Program - providing more youth with access to video equipment and skills.



Our Commitment to addressing EDI

We Commit to Action on Anti-Black Racism

As leaders of Child and Youth Empowerment Programs in the city of Ottawa, we have a responsibility to ensure our work contributes to ending anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism which cannot be done without critical self-reflection, education, and dialogue.

Since Youth Ottawa's inception, its mission has been to create opportunities, resources, and skills in order to foster youth engagement and potential. However, we acknowledge that since the organization's beginnings the disproportionalities and disparities impacting Black youth, children, and families have always existed. Addressing Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity is critical to the empowerment of the youth we represent.

In 2020, Youth Ottawa board and staff were challenged to raise the bar in our response to how we work and collaborate with Black and Indigenous youth in our community. We will listen to the voices that have come forth to speak on the issues that need more attention. We would like to recognize the lived experiences of Black and Indigenous people and it is our duty to address Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity and do our part for change.

Our Commitment to addressing EDI

In response to the feedback from the community, we are committed to ongoing learning, reflection, and action within our own walls. We will continue to work with Black and Indigenous community members, service users, educators, leaders, policy-makers and organizations to ensure our programs and services are barrier-free.

We support the calls from Black leaders and organizations and in 2021, Youth Ottawa, Staff and Board of Directors will promote the following EDI initiatives.

- A commitment and deep examination of internal practices related to hiring, program structure, promotion and retention.
- Examining and restructuring leadership hierarchy
- Ensure that the voices of Black and Indigenous people in the community are actively listened to, and that feedback is acted upon
- Enhance accountability infrastructure by creating an EDI position to be fulfilled by a Black person
- Include EDI training for all Staff and Board of Directors
- Strengthen Youth Ottawa's Directorate with a clearly articulated, targeted and systemic anti-Black racism policy

More than just words

We must always acknowledge the courage and resilience of the Black youth actively promoting and seeking change in their community. Rather than talking about a solution, we will be active in ensuring that the plans put forth in this statement are realized. We are committed to moving beyond words and implementing real long-term solutions.

Thank you to our Supporters

Funding Partners



Long Term Supporters

Mattamy Homes
Major Jim Watson
Shaw Communications
Carleton University
CUSA
Glenview Homes
United Way
OSSTF
Caivan Communities
CBC Ottawa

PCL Construction
ASL Contractors
Rogers Communications
Algonquin College
Minto Communities
Ottawa Professional Firefighters
SS Bolton
NCHCA
Cricket Home Comfort
Cistel

Soloway Wright
Spectrum Kitchens
Tartanland Consultants
University of Ottawa
Telus Foundation
Thomas Cavanaugh
Urbandale Corporation
Michaelle Jean Foundation
CSED

Individual Supporters

Eva Bohusova
Dan Jewell
Christine Tym
Kate McCarthy
Judith Maxwell
Richard Maclure
Julie Meloche
Michele Koensgen
Unicorn Labs Inc
Luke Simoneau

Lindsay Wyllie
Janet Bentham
The Ensoms
Victoria Steele
Maele Bourdeau
Jennifer Paton
Christine Taschereau
Justin Winchiu
Tong Xu
Samuel Amoah

Doug Bates
Maple Wishes
Peeranut Visetsuth
Virgelina Castro
Oriana Ngabirano
Aniyan Abraham Paul
Matt Morash
Linda Newman
Richard Fransham
Manu Sharma



**To all our supporters who
have been with us since our
inception, and to everyone
who has joined us along the
way - we appreciate you!**



WWW.YOUTHOTTAWA.CA

@YOUTH_OTTAWA 

@YOUTH_OTTAWA 

/YOUTHOTTAWA 

YOUTH OTTAWA 

info@youthottawa.ca 