

Catapult 2020

year in review

Who could have predicted 2020 would throw so many challenges at us? We are happy to report that we met those challenges head on. We used the leadership lessons we teach our youth to think outside the box and pivot, and we not only survived ... we thrived!

When Covid-19 first closed schools, we worried about our students whose home life was already stressful and who now faced increasing pressures. So we checked in with all 550 alumni on an individual basis just to say, "how are you?" We held several Zoom socials (some lasting 3 hours) and we successfully moved our new 'Grad Conference' online.

When we realized hosting our summer camp was out of the question, we were heartbroken. Too many students deserve the life changing opportunity that Catapult can provide. So we built an incredible 4-day virtual camp instead. Most schools still participated, enabling us to select 42 new student leaders. We stayed focused on our primary objective of boosting confidence and the sessions were fun while also being relevant and professionally delivered. Both our new campers and our Plus alumni were included. It seemed odd going from being totally unplugged to being fully reliant on technology - but we were overwhelmed by our success. We even heard, "Best weekend of my life!" again.

We're happy to report that we also survived financially. With no physical summer camp or conference, let alone rented office space or fixed assets to finance, our operating costs dropped significantly. Much of that shortfall will carry over to next year when we'll welcome our 2020 students to physical camp at Acadia along with our incoming Class of 2021. We are extremely grateful to all our community partners who were able to fund us during this difficult time.

How has Covid affected our future? Very positively! We've learned how effective online platforms can be in achieving our mission by engaging our students throughout the year despite being dispersed across Nova Scotia. Our students have asked for more and we plan to deliver.

And so - this 2020 Annual Report remains one of celebration and strength. We don't have our usual supply of camp photos and student thank-you's, but we still have a lot to share. We are prouder than we've ever been, we are more confident in what we are able to achieve, and we are excited to see what the future holds. Thank YOU for being a valuable part of our success story!


Jane Roy, Chair


Lori Barker, Executive Director

catapult
LEADING
LEADERS
LEARNING

the year in numbers

- 42 new Catapult campers
- 19% visible minorities
- 79 students engaged with Catapult Plus
- 69 students online in virtual Camp / Plus
- 4 virtual socials with 65 participants
- 1 new annual conference
- 100% graduated from high school
- 72% of 2020 graduates pursued post-secondary education
- 43 schools nominated 53 students (despite pandemic closure)
- 50% of virtual camp staff were alumni
- 12 years, 592 students catapulted from 227 communities across NS!



Our Mission: to cultivate new leaders who will make a positive difference in schools and communities across Nova Scotia. We focus on students with natural leadership qualities but limited opportunities.

Our Vision: to inspire, inform and empower Nova Scotian students so they have the confidence to reach their full potential.

Our 3-year program is designed to:

1. inspire and empower our students to become student leaders in high school while also shaping a community conscience, and
2. inspire and support their transition into post secondary education.

highlights

Thank you for giving me this opportunity. This is a big life changer for me, I can already tell. – Emilio, Truro (2020)

- We introduced a **new Grad Conference**. Originally scheduled to be held at SMU, it was moved online due to Covid-19 and was our first virtual program. A panel of older alumni at various colleges answered questions posed by Grade 12's, and guest speaker Tom Brophy provided an overview of the services to be found on any campus.
- Our 4th **Alumni Conference** was held at Saint Mary's University. Planned and organized by Catapult alumni, the focus was on life skills, including debt management & budgeting, navigating the hidden job market, emotional intelligence and responsible use of alcohol.
- Marcel was elected **President** of his high school **student council** while Mika and Sarah were elected Presidents at NSCC Kingstec, and Universite Sainte-Anne respectively. That makes 19 alumni as high school presidents and 3 more at the post secondary level.
- 3 alumni were selected as **Valedictorians** this year, including Makye at Citadel High, Marcel at Dr. John Hugh Gillis High, and Drew for Acadia's Kinesiology Class. Vessa was **Salutatorian** at Breton Education Centre.
- Hunter received a **Lieutenant Governor Award**, bringing our total alumni tally to 27.
- Dylan and Bryanna were named an **HRM Youth Volunteer of the year**. To date, 19 of our students have been recognized as a volunteer of the year.
- Kayla received the **Unsung Hero Award** at Family SOS's Courage to Give Back Awards.
- We added a **2nd Alumni Director** to our Board. Nikki Shahin attended Camp in 2012, has a BSc from Dalhousie and has applied to Medical School. She has remained active as a Counselor for 5 summers and helps organize the Alumni Conference every year.
- Our Board held a special meeting for **Diversity Sensitivity Training** with April Howe, Executive Director of People & Culture with the NS Public Service Commission.
- Our **counselor team** for our Virtual Camp was 50% comprised of Catapult alumni.
- Our alumni staff remain committed to raising funds for an annual **Alumni Fund** to help younger alumni with the cost of post-secondary education.
- The leadership service our youth commit to because of their Catapult experiences often result in outstanding student resumes that attract **significant scholarships**. To name just a few, Maliek received \$50,000 in total for Dalhousie, Vessa was awarded a Terry Fox Humanitarian Award plus a Harrison McCain Scholar Bursary for Acadia, and Mika was awarded the R.G. Sobey Leadership Award at NSCC. Based on our nominations, Anika, Dylan, Maliek & Sarah-Jean each received a \$5000 Richardson Family Award (Dal) and Katheryn & Jacob each received a \$2500 Donald R. Sobey Award (NSCC).
- Covid-19 initiated new **online social gatherings** that not only brought the joy of friendship to many students isolating at home, but allowed us to reconnect on a more informal level.

our programs

Our Signature Camp

7 days at Acadia, the focus is on accelerating leadership potential by boosting confidence so they start high school as active leaders. Students must be nominated. Average age is 15.

Catapult PLUS Conference

4 days at Acadia for high school alumni, the focus is post secondary planning. Students earn their registration with extra-curricular involvement, creating a personal mission statement, setting goals, and paying it forward with community service.

Other

We offer a career coaching program, facilitate connections to professionals in the fields they wish to study, critique resumes, provide job/scholarship references, and distribute information on scholarships, post secondary information, volunteer opportunities and more.

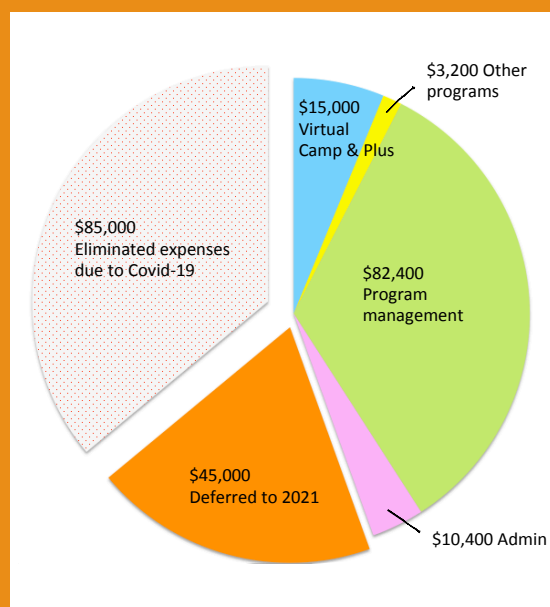
Grad Conference

An online Q&A opportunity for high school students to ask questions of Catapult alumni attending various universities and colleges. The objective is to facilitate a smoother and more confident transition.

Alumni Conference

1 day conference at SMU for alumni grade 12 and up, the focus is on life skills such as networking, personal finance, healthy relationships and much more. Planned and organized by Catapult Alumni.

the year in dollars



Catapult's Commitment to Diversity & Inclusion

Celebrating and respecting diversity is one of Catapult's core values. We are committed to providing a welcoming environment that encourages, supports, and celebrates the diverse voices of our students. The Black Lives Matter movement has reminded us that we must be more intentional in our strategies to ensure that every one of our students feels included and valued regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, neurodiversity, disability, or any other aspect that makes them unique. We believe our differences make our organization better, richer and stronger, helping to advance our mission of creating strong leaders for every community across Nova Scotia.

This summer, our Board received cultural sensitivity training and committed to making 'diversity & inclusion' a regular agenda item.

We also commit to:

- Continuing to intentionally choose diversity from the students nominated.
- Recruiting staff and Board members who will represent the same diversity as our students.
- Ensuring time is devoted to cultural sensitivity during our counselor training every summer.
- Conducting a moderated Forum for our students to share their lived experiences. *(Scheduled for Oct 18)*
- Continuing to provide inclusion-focused programming at our camps.

Visible Minorities:	2020	All Years
Students	19%	20%
Staff	33%	13%
Board	25%	3%



"I love to hear that as a leadership organization in NS, Catapult is using its platform to be active allies."

~ Marcel, Guysborough (2017)

A Snapshot of Virtual Catapult 2020: 40 campers + 29 Plus alumni + 11 staff + 5 speakers = 85 connected online.

Format: 4 days, mornings Camp, afternoons Plus, evenings combined. **Motivational sessions:** Leadership 101, Your Life ~ Your Journey, The Art of Persuasion, Catching the Carrot, Career Coaching, Stress Management, How to be an Ally, Building Resilience & Confidence. **Offline Challenges:** Scavenger Hunt, Group TikTok-style Challenge, KD Cook-off. **Getting to know each other:** Icebreaker games, Family shares, Coffee House, Closing ceremony. **Welcome:** Each student was mailed a box filled with everything they'd need, plus a few extras.

Tech: ZOOM, break-out rooms, polls and chat functions.

Our grade from the students: 9 out of 10. *"It surpassed all my expectations!" ~ Melissa, Joggins (2020)*

"Catapult is my once in a lifetime experience for so many different reasons. My life has been changed for the better. The opportunities that I have found because of Catapult are ones that I probably never would have found. Before camp, I was the kid who sat in the back of a classroom. Now I am helping people learn new things, doing live performances in front of people and even competing in competitions such as Skills Canada! Catapult means more than anything to me because it developed me further than I ever could have on my own, I learned what I am capable of! At Catapult we are pushed to step out of our comfort zones. This is what I've really taken to heart and it is what encourages me the most when I venture into new territories. Leading isn't about doing everything yourself, this is one of the biggest things that I have learned because of Catapult. You can't do everything alone and you shouldn't ignore others and that's how I went into rebuilding our school's club called Warrior's Live. I wanted everyone's opinions and ideas, I did not want to leave anyone out and if anyone ever had any problems or needed help I could always be there to help. Catapult taught me lessons that I didn't know I would use until it came time to using them. Catapult helped me realize that asking for help isn't something you should be afraid of. Catapult is a second home, it's not something I will ever forget and if I ever want to cheer myself up for any reason there is no better way than putting in my camp DVD and rewatching some old memories."



~ Jacob, Halifax (2017)

"It is difficult to describe the impact your vision has had on Acadia. To watch year over year the incredible transformation from the time the campers step off the bus to when they jump back on, a short week later, with newly discovered confidence and a passion to return home to make a difference in their community. The post camp support and 'alumni' component are truly what brings the magic to your vision. Acadia University has been honoured to be part of this vision. We were all heartbroken to see the camp put on hold this summer. However, in true Catapult fashion, you have created a new layer to the experience with the virtual presentation. Congratulations on the success of that effort." ~ Bob Caissie, Acadia University

meet Vessa



Vessa lives in New Waterford, NS and is a 2020 graduate of Breton Education Centre where she was voted Salutatorian. Her high school resume is impressive and includes: Concert Band and Sr. Jazz Ensemble, Tutor & Program Assistant with the Youth Peer Outreach, Student Ambassador for international students, Co-President of BEC Rotary Interact, member of the Rugby team, Co-founder of the Clothing Room, Co-founder of the BEC Christmas Crew, and a member of Student Council. Outside of school and in addition to remaining active with Catapult PLUS, Vessa participated with the Kiwanis Key Leader Camp, Encounters with Canada, Rotary Adventures in Citizenship, fundraised to join a mission trip to Campeche, Mexico, played rugby with the Sr. Capers, coached a mini rugby team, worked 15-25 hours/week as a Pharmasave cashier, and served as our Junior Counselor at Virtual Camp '20. Vessa's achievements have been recognized with a Lieutenant Governor's Medal, Most Valuable Tutor, BEC Bear Award, and Coaches Award. Perhaps most impressive, Vessa was named a 2020 Terry Fox Humanitarian Scholar. This notable national achievement aims to honour Terry's spirit by encouraging Canadian youth who emulate his courage and determination through humanitarian service in their communities. Combined with the Harrison McCain Scholar Bursary she received, Vessa will have most of her costs covered to study Community Development at Acadia University.

"I never would have imagined how much Catapult was going to change my life. It allowed me to grow and develop into who I truly wanted to be. Catapult pushed me out of my comfort zone and taught me many valuable lessons that I carry in my day to day life. I have trust in myself and I can now stand by the decisions I make. Catapult gave me the confidence to not only believe in myself but to be myself. It is truly hard to put into words how much Catapult impacted my life, but I can honestly say without Catapult I believe my life would be completely different. Catapult is somewhere I can be myself and where I'm my happiest. It's because of Catapult I've had the confidence to participate/ facilitate so many clubs, events and programs within my school and community. I want to thank the Catapult Board and the sponsors that make Catapult available to deserving students." ~ Vessa

As they say, "IT TAKES A VILLAGE". We gratefully THANK all our community partners who have helped build our village!

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Catapult Leadership Society

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Catapult is **inspirational** to build hope, **motivational** to build confidence, and **experiential** to build skills.