

# Catapult 2021

year in review

For the second summer, Covid-19 required us to pivot from hosting our usual incredible summer camp that had gone relatively unchanged for 12 years. In 2020 we successfully adapted, providing 100% virtual programming. In 2021, we took it to a whole new level.

We are pleased to report that Catapult has continued to evolve and adapt to today's challenges as leaders do - with creativity, agility and resiliency. Our 2021 blended program gave students a virtual learning conference followed by a new 'Catapult Roadshow' where we gathered in smaller groups in Port Hawkesbury, Truro, Halifax and New Minas for a one day in-person camp. We stayed true to our mission of delivering a world class leadership program. The virtual component presented an opportunity to incorporate acclaimed international youth speakers, which is exactly what we did. With students losing out on so much during this lengthy pandemic and the resulting surge in mental health issues, we believe our role is more critical than ever. So with costs lower with no overnight camp, we capitalized on the opportunity to accept 69 new students instead of our usual 50!

In a survey conducted prior to camp, our students said they were most excited to meet and interact with new people; they simultaneously felt it would be their biggest challenge. The virtual segment, bolstered by our dynamic Counselors, created a warm environment that engaged even the most timid youth. To say they enjoyed meeting other student leaders across NS is an understatement. Our virtual team activities grew more meaningful when they finally met in person at their Roadshow. There, we were able to amp up the fun factor while still teaching valuable leadership skills. While virtual learning can be impactful, it's the face to face bonding that truly creates the magic of our Catapult family.

During 2021, we offered new virtual programs to all 600 alumni, including monthly workshops on life skills such as money management, goals and building resiliency that featured professors from Acadia University. We also hosted two highly impactful Forum Conversations that featured our own alumni who shared their experiences growing up Black and Indigenous, while also learning more about the Black Lives Matter Movement and the Path to Reconciliation. By becoming better Allies and engaging in Kinship, we embrace the power of our diverse and inclusive Catapult family.

Although the pandemic has created challenges for everyone, approaching these obstacles with an open mind has enabled Catapult to engage even more frequently. We continue to support our youth in their post secondary planning by connecting them to career mentors and provide referrals for scholarships. The support network we create for our students remains our priority, connecting with each other at a time when it is needed the most. While we hope next year will be 'normal' again with overnight summer camps, the Covid adaptations our team has made will continue to enhance Catapult programs in the years ahead. Best of all, many of our youth continued to excel despite their adversities.

Thank you for believing in Catapult and the youth we serve. Your support comes at a critical point in their development as young adults. As you read this annual report, we trust you'll see just how much your investment is helping to create a bright future for some of the most deserving, yet otherwise under-supported, youth in our province. As stated by community partner Nick Hounsell, "sometimes all it takes is a helping hand and someone to believe in you".

  
Ashley Doyle, Chair

  
Lori Barker, Executive Director

## the year in numbers

- 59 new Catapult campers
- 28% visible minorities, 7% Acadian
- 20% with physical, learning, neurodiversity or gender identity differences
- 50 schools nominated 69 students (despite pandemic pressures)
- 79 students & alumni attended virtual summer conference and Roadshows
- 8 virtual programs during the school year with 135 participants
- 100% graduated from high school
- 76% of 2021 graduates pursued post-secondary education
- 33% of our Board is ethnically diverse
- 13 years, 646 students catapulted from 241 communities across NS!



### 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.

**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.

# highlights

*I always feel super important and understood in the Catapult environment. You get pushed in the best way possible to be your best self. Catapult changes my mindset to push to achieve my goals. It makes me more confident, not care about what others think, and push aside my anxiety/worries. ~ Makayla 2019*

- Covid-19 once again impacted our ability to hold our usual summer programming. Instead, we offered a **blended program with 3 days of virtual learning plus a 'Catapult Roadshow'**, with our staff traveling to Port Hawkesbury, Truro, Halifax and New Minas for a 1-day in-person leadership experience. The virtual component allowed us to bring in new world-class professional speakers while the in-person day solidified friendships and enabled some traditional camp fun and team-building challenges.
- To strengthen our **Plus program** we held new monthly online sessions - on Goals, Getting Involved, Building Resiliency, Money Management and Life-long Learning.
- Our 5th **Alumni Conference** was held on Zoom. Planned and organized by Catapult alumni, the focus was on personal financial planning and tools for online learning.
- We held an online 'Forum Conversation' on the **Black Lives Matter** movement. Moderated by Chanae Parsons of the Buddy Daye Institute, 4 Catapult alumni spoke candidly of their life experiences being Black in Nova Scotia.
- We also hosted an online Conversation about being Indigenous and the **Path to Truth and Reconciliation**. Featuring 3 of our Indigenous Catapulters plus guest speakers Rachel Whitney and Kayla Mansfield-Brown, this session was very eye opening.
- Olivia and Joshua were elected **President** of their high school **student council** bringing our total to 25.
- Victoria was our 28th Catapult to receive a **Lieutenant Governor Award** for her community leadership.
- Martina was **Youth Volunteer of the year** for HRM and Brianna for Annapolis County. Vanessa was named Volunteer of the Year for the Municipality of Shelburne. To date, 23 of our Catapult volunteers have been formally recognized.
- Tamara was crowned **Miss Teen NS International**, a scholarship program where contestants are judged on personality, intellect, and public speaking skills.
- Maria represented Ecole NDA at CSAP in Ottawa.
- **Our Board** welcomed Mika Francis, a Catapult from 2012 with a diploma in social services. Mika works for her Annapolis Valley First Nation where she facilitates cultural and preventative programming for families involved with child welfare. After 12 years, our Founder Jane Roy passed her Chair position to Ashley Doyle (but continues to play an active role!).
- 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 Catapult experience often results in outstanding student resumes that attract **significant scholarships**. Mackenzie received a \$50,000 Sobeys Innovator Award at SMU and Meghan received one of 55 Vanier Canada Graduate scholarships. Based on Catapult nominations, Seph received a Donald R. Sobeys Award at NSCC, Abul, Islam and Victoria each received a \$5000 Richardson Family Award (Dal), and Gracie received one of the first bursaries from the Atlantic Scholarship Organization

## 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.

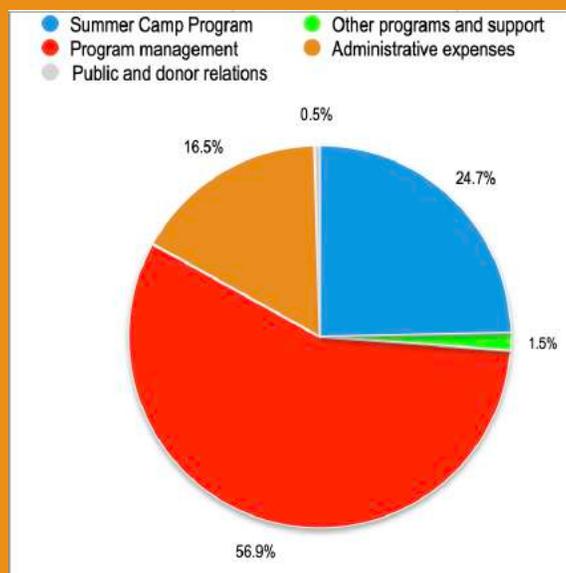
### Grad Conference

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



"To me, Catapult means growth. I grew up timid and lacking confidence but attending Catapult helped me grow more than imaginable. Now when I feel unsure, cautious and shy, I remind myself of the things I've accomplished, including Catapult. After camp, I joined Guysborough Academy's 'Green Team'. I was happy as a volunteer, but I really admired those who were chairing the committee. The next year, they announced they were looking for a Junior Co-Chair who could eventually become Co-Chair. My heart skipped some beats as I was filled with both enthusiasm and nervousness. Then I



noticed the shirt I was wearing - it was my Catapult shirt. In that moment, Catapult reminded me to step out of my comfort zone. So I volunteered, and was voted Junior Co-Chair. In Grade 12, I became Co-Chair. The Green Team projects ignited a spark in me to do my best at achieving

Victoria is now in her first year of Plant Science at Dalhousie Agricultural Campus. In Grade 11, she was awarded a Lieutenant Governor Award recognizing her leadership and citizenship. She also received a Dalhousie Renewable Scholarship, a Dalhousie Residence Scholarship, a Richardson Family Scholarship, and a Dalhousie Entrance Community and Leadership Award. Throughout high school, she held a part-time job at Avery's Independent Grocer and was a high school reporter for the Guysborough Journal. In her spare time, she loves to curl and sing.

**A Snapshot of Catapult 2021:** 59 campers + 20 Plus alumni + 10 virtual staff + 5 Roadshow staff + 5 speakers = 99 connected. **Format:** 3 virtual days plus 1 in-person day at 4 different locations across NS (our "2021 Roadshow"). **Motivational sessions:** Leadership 101, Your Life ~ Your Journey, UPower: Healthy Resilient Minds, Courage to be a Leader, Life After High School, Communicating with Confidence, Dreamers to Doers. **Offline Challenges:** Scavenger Hunt, Group TikTok Challenge. **Roadshow Teamwork:** Out of the Box (product pitch), Desert Crash. **Getting to know each other:** Icebreaker games, Family shares, Coffee House, Boundary Breaking. **Welcome:** Each student was mailed a box filled with everything they'd need, plus a few treats. **Tech:** ZOOM, break-out rooms, polls and chat functions. **Our grade from the students:** 9.1 out of 10. "I loved camp! Meeting so many new people and getting to learn so many new skills in 4 days is crazy to me." ~ Paige 2021

my sustainable goals in my personal life as well. Not only did Catapult help me gain confidence, but it helped me with other skills as well. For instance during Plus, the 'Catching the Carrot' session forced me to take a deep dive into thinking about my values, and what are the most important things in my life. The 'Time Management' session helped me become more efficient than ever and enabled me to take part in a variety of committees and groups. I became a Facilitator for 'Healthy Relationships for Youth', presenting educational sessions for students. I also joined the 'We Will Change' group where I often took leadership positions on projects. Additionally, I was Treasurer of the Guysborough Academy Student Council where I worked towards creating a comforting and inclusive environment and provided new ideas to promote school spirit.

I am thrilled to have been able to take leadership positions at Guysborough Academy. It took hard work, determination and lots of time management. Each and every new project I was a part of helped me grow as a leader, just like Catapult told me I would. I am looking forward to a lifelong journey of growing as a leader, and making positive changes in our world."

As a father of three, Nick Hounsell knows how important it is to encourage kids and provide them with the confidence they need to become strong leaders – leaders who then affect meaningful change within their own communities.



"Kids are bright, energetic, and full of potential, but sometimes they just need the right tools to help them move forward with strength and determination." For over 6 years, Nick and his wife Anna along with their team at Bloom Wealth & Legacy Planning have supported Catapult. They turned their annual donation into hosting singer-songwriter concerts, with all proceeds going directly to Catapult. Nick and Anna believe "that all kids should have the opportunity to learn, grow and achieve success. The lessons learned and experiences garnered from the time with Catapult are transformational, creating a lifetime of impact. Because sometimes all it takes is a helping hand and someone to believe in you."

Dear Sponsor,

Thank you for your support of Catapult! Ever since my first experience with Catapult in 2019, I continue to grow as a person so much. It pushed me to do things I didn't think I could do. I got to meet so many incredible and inspiring people (including fellow catapulters). Catapult has given me so many experiences and memories I will take with me for the rest of my life. I have the staff to thank and especially you for allowing Catapult to continue doing the many great things it does!

-Nova

Dear sponsor!

I'm sure you probably hear the same story with every letter about how life changing Catapult is, but you can never truly understand its impact until you've experienced it for yourself! This camp opens your eyes to your potential and to the wonders that await beyond your comfort zone! Not only does the camp push you to be the best version of you, but you get pushed to make a difference in the world around you. Catapult shaped me so much as a person and I could not thank you, our sponsor, or the staff enough for putting it together. Me as well as my catapult family and immediate family will be forever grateful for this opportunity.

Makyla



I have come to know what I can do to be a leader and how to be less anxious! I met amazing people (staff included), had fun completing challenges, stepped outside my comfort zone by sharing my music and had the best time ever!  
~ Kayla 2021

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

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Every dollar makes a difference!

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