

Catapult 2022

year in review

2022 was a fantastic year at Catapult with the ability to return to our in-person summer programs at Acadia University. Online programming during the pandemic was great as a Plan B, but there's nothing like a true overnight camp experience to impact a youth's perspective and life trajectory. So much growth and connection happens when we are together, during free time as well as program sessions. Not to mention the growth from having the courage to get on our Catapult bus, leave home for a week and head to something they've never done before.

2022 was also somewhat of a re-building year. Our PLUS Conference was completely revised to allow our alumni from the last 2 years to experience some of our signature camp sessions that they missed out on while participating online. The conference was such a success that we plan to increase its annual budget going forward in order to mirror the world class quality that we deliver at Camp. The Camp program itself remained relatively unchanged; however we had to rebuild our staff and speaker team after a 2-year hiatus. Typically we benefit from a 60-80% retention rate, but the covid window resulted in a loss of returning university-aged counsellors who had graduated and started careers. Our 2 returning staff took a more senior position and we were able to recruit the rest despite the hiring challenges most industries are experiencing. We also added a new Youth Support Worker (with education and experience in youth work) to provide one-to-one support to those campers experiencing anxiety or feeling challenged to fully participate. We also introduced 2 new speakers to replace the incredible Mr. Phil who was unable to travel from New Orleans this year.

Despite Covid restrictions being lifted, we remained highly vigilant with protocols in place to avoid any type of super spreader. 12 days, 90 youth, 30 staff, 14 speakers ... and no outbreak. Yet, we definitely still felt the impact of the pandemic. Our newest youth have had their school and social growth impacted since they were in grade 7. During these formative years, they became accustomed to social distancing and online learning and generally being in front of a computer/phone all day. Suddenly they were on our bus with 52 strangers and on arrival we took their phones away, depriving them of access to friends and social media. It was a difficult adjustment for most of them. However by the end of the week, 100% said they felt more confident meeting others, 97% felt more confident in their leadership skills, 91% felt more confident speaking in front of a group, 85% said they planned to get more involved when they started high school and 77% said they planned to volunteer in their community. They stepped far beyond their comfort zone and had a life changing week as a result. This social impact of Covid has reiterated the need for programs such as ours - especially for our students who have the ability to shine but simply aren't afforded many opportunities to do so.

We will continue to offer online learning tools to our youth to help them stay engaged with Catapult and each other until we can be back in person again next summer. We're currently working on an in-person alumni conference - the first in 3 years - to bring our alumni together to learn life skills, connect and grow. Our Catapult youth are spread across Nova Scotia creating ripple affects of their leadership development with their family, friends, schools, and communities.

Once again, we thank all our Donor Partners who made it possible for these shining stars to enjoy an amazing week full of fun, friendship and self discovery.

Ashley Doyle, Chair

Lori Barker, Executive Director



the year in numbers

- 52 new Catapult campers
- 38% visible minorities
- 17% with physical, learning, neurodiversity or gender differences
- 60 schools nominated 84 students (despite the continuing pandemic)
- 40 alumni attended the PLUS Conference
- 45% of our counsellor team were Catapult alumni
- 10 virtual programs during the school year
- 100% graduated from high school
- 73% of 2022 graduates pursued post-secondary education
- 33% of our Board is ethnically diverse
- 14 years, 698 students catapulted from 253 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: Catapult inspires underserved youth to discover and develop their emerging leadership potential.

Our Vision: Launching tomorrow's leaders.

highlights

People may see summer camp as a way to meet new people, but to me it was a way to meet myself. Simply being offered this opportunity made me feel valuable. Catapult taught me my strengths when I was at my weakest. Despite the many barriers in my life, Catapult was the one thing that kept me on the right path. ~ Asiah

- Our usual **PLUS Conference** program was amped up so that our "covid" Classes of '20 and '21 could experience some of what they missed. We added a full day, offered bus transportation and included some camp favourites.
- We continued our **monthly online sessions** (a positive impact of Covid!) on Mission Statements, Wellness, Resiliency, Goals, and Getting Involved.
- Our 6th **Alumni Conference** was held on Zoom. Planned by Catapult alumni, the focus was on personal financial planning, networking skills and how to have difficult conversations.
- Catapult hosted its first ever **Book Club**. The group read 'The Wealthy Barber Returns' by David Chilton and met monthly on Zoom to discuss.
- Destiny was elected **President** of her high school **Student Council** and Asiah was President of her school's Black Student Union. To date, 28 of our students have held this student leadership position.
- Rebecca was our 29th Catapulter to receive a **Lieutenant Governor Award** for her community leadership.
- Asiah was **Youth Volunteer of the year** for HRM while Emily and Vessa received the same award for Cape Breton. To date, 26 of our Catapult volunteers have been formally recognized by NS municipalities.
- Emily created a **SMILE Club** at her high school. Adapted from our Camp session, students interact socially with students of the Learning Centre. 8 Catapulters have taken on this initiative over the years.
- Kayla became the first Canadian to receive a "**Messengers of Peace Heroes Award**" by the World Scouting Organization for creating 'HeART in a Box'. Kayla raised the funds to create personalized boxes filled with art mediums and mindfulness resources, with the objective of helping youth deal with stress and loneliness during the pandemic.
- We introduced **Catapult Community Days** where our alumni were encouraged to do acts of kindness. As an example, Breagh and Isaac joined forces and held a toy drive for Adsum House.
- Our alumni continued to support the **Alumni Fund** they created. This year they raised \$1000 and awarded it to Karleigh for her Business Admin tuition at NSCC.
- Kayley received a Harrison McCain **Scholarship** and a Joyce Family Foundation bursary (SMU). Destiny T received a Donald Sobey Award (NSCC). Destiny H received a Richardson Family Award (Dal).
- **Our Board** held **strategic planning sessions** to revisit our mission, vision and values as well as create an action plan for the next 5 years. We will be focusing on: building on our world-class reputation so we are widely recognized as a youth leadership program of choice, re-evaluating our program offerings post-camp to attract more engagement through post-secondary, developing a more robust summer staff recruitment process, and, strengthening our succession planning and transfer of knowledge. We also began including diversity and inclusion peer learning presentations at every Board meeting.

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.

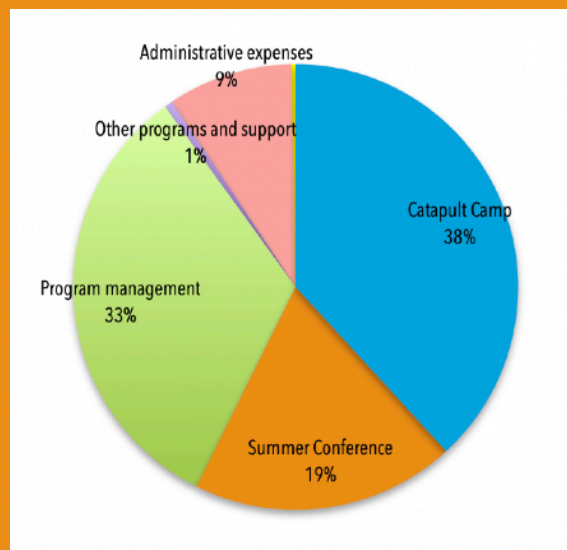
Grad Conference

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

1/2 day learning plus a social element for alumni grade 12 and up, the focus is on life skills such as networking, personal finance, healthy relationships and more. Planned and organized by Catapult Alumni.

the year in dollars



"I don't know what part of Camp or Plus that really struck home for me, maybe it's all of the lessons combined that did it, but whatever it was it worked and I'll be forever grateful. Catapult helped me to come out of my shell in a massive way. I can now give presentations and I can advocate for myself without so much fear. I have so much more confidence as I work through all of the challenges that have been thrown at me since camp and I have so much more faith in myself and my abilities. I now have a massive support group all across the province of individuals like myself



and every time I reach out, they do whatever they can to help me. Catapult is like a family to me and I can't say enough good things about the program. Thank you guys for everything that you do for all of us Catapulters."

Rebecca grew up in South West Margaree. She was a member of her school soccer and cross country running teams and a volunteer tutor in math and science. She was awarded a Lieutenant Governor Award for her leadership, named Intermediate Athlete of the Year and received multiple academic awards. During Grade 12 she transferred to Sydney. When asked for the 3 things that tell people who you are, her response was: 1) I moved out at 16 so I'm very independent. 2) I always do whatever I can to help people. 3) My 2 younger brothers mean the world to me. Rebecca is now in her first year of Nursing at Cape Breton University.

A Snapshot of Catapult 2022:

Camp, Aug 19-26: Motivational sessions: What, ME a Leader? (Tyler Hayden), Confidence (Nancy Regan), S.A.F.E. (Goals/Focus by Will Njoku), Hope & Perseverance (Terry Kelly), Power of Communication (Tom Brophy), Anti-Bullying (Elsie Morden).

Experiential sessions: SMILE (adaptive play with children with special needs), Problem Solving & Teamwork (Dr Scott Hennigar), Rock Night (Always ABBA), High Ropes Course (OnTree), Boot Camp (Coach Cummins), Top Chef Catapult, The Amazing Leadership Race, In it to Win it, Family Skit Night, Informally-Formal Dinner. **Our grade from the students:** 9.2 out of 10. "I just feel so much more confident and alive and that will give me more motivation to reach my goals." ~ Arin

PLUS, Aug 12-16: Motivational sessions: What, ME a Leader? (Tyler Hayden), S.A.F.E. (Goals/Focus by Will Njoku), Power of Communication (Tom Brophy), Public Speaking (Tyler Hayden), Allyship (Shila LeBlanc), Career Coaching (Ashley Doyle).

Experiential sessions: Stress Management (Nurse Bethany), High Ropes Course (OnTree), The Amazing Leadership Race, Family Skit Night, Informally-Formal Dinner. **Our grade from the students:** 9.3 out of 10. "I have more confidence in myself. I've learned that I can be the one to set the tone for how I communicate with others and the way I live my life." ~ Caraugh

Dear Sponsor,

Thank you for donating your money for my seat at Catapult. I had a great time here, and if it wasn't for you, I never would have had this opportunity. I have made new friends, that I feel comfortable with. I got the confidence to be away from my family for a week, which has been something I struggle with in the past. My favourite activity was rock night, where I saw a shy camper face her stage fright and absolutely rock the stage. Will Njoku's session S.A.F.E. was my favourite speaker. I learned so much and really connected with his message.

I am sad to be leaving camp and all the friends and support I've found here. I feel wanted here. I am looking forward to going back to school and being myself without fear of being judged. I am taking communication skills, confidence, and self care skills home with me.

The family shares at camp has inspired me to spend more time with my younger brother and have more patience with him.

Thank you again,
Olivia



Our Key Priorities

1. To provide a safe environment with positive role models to inspire youth to test their comfort zones in order to discover abilities and boost confidence.
2. To provide ongoing support and mentorship for continuous growth, especially during the transitions between high school, post-secondary and adulthood.
3. To facilitate a positive province-wide peer network.
4. To promote regional and cultural diversity, celebrating our unique talents, abilities and backgrounds while also discovering commonalities and stimulating collegiality.
5. To foster a sense of belonging and encourage giving back to community.

Dear Donors of Catapult,

I would like to give you my utmost gratitude to you all for making this opportunity available to me. I have learned many things, met amazing new people, and changed the way I perceive life itself. I feel as though I am coming away from this as a better and more optimistic person. I plan to give everything in life 100%, and do big things in the future. Your donation will not be forgotten.

I want to thank you for empowering me to believe in and fight for my dreams. Catapult has taught me that it's ok to aim high, and has given me the tools to do that. What's more, it's connected me to an incredible group of peers, people who aren't just highly capable but also kind, funny and incredibly supportive. I will cherish the memories we made and the challenges we overcame for a long, long time.

This couldn't have been possible without your support and generosity, so again, thank you for investing in tomorrow's leaders.

And watch out? Cause im not done yet, and im about to stick the landing of a lifetime



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.