

Catapult 2023

year in review



Catapult
ADVANCING
LEADERS

Catapult Leadership Society has been catapulting young leaders for 15 years! As we celebrate this milestone, we reflect on a remarkable journey.

Catapult boosts confidence by providing a welcoming and supportive community for all our youth to be unapologetically themselves while simultaneously challenging their comfort zones. Regardless of background, race, gender, or socioeconomic status, every camper feels seen, heard and validated. Our commitment to inclusivity helps shape their perspectives as future leaders and creates a framework where empathy and understanding flourish.

Our student testimonials have evolved from Catapult being life-changing to many saying it is life-saving. Youth feel more isolated than ever, despite the digital ability to be connected 24/7/365, increasing anxiety and depression levels. Our target group has more responsibilities at home, increased pressures at school, and a greater dependence on part-time work. They become overwhelmed with the decisions required for after high school, the expectations of adulthood, and they carry a weighty feeling of financial insecurity. Last summer, our nomination process saw socio-economic barriers soaring to the highest levels we've ever seen with nominees facing all 5 of our identified barriers doubling to 45% from our 21% YTD average. By carefully selecting youth with natural leadership qualities and a drive to overcome, Catapult helps them see beyond their barriers and set goals with strategies for success. In addition to the skills development provided in our core programs, Catapult is available for one-on-one support such as reviewing personal budgets, writing reference and scholarship letters, and working with organizations to help access funding for academic dreams.

For 15 years, our youth have referred to Catapult as family. How many summer camps can boast that they remain in touch with participants well into adulthood? Many remain best friends with each other, some live together, one couple even got married. The bonds made at summer camp are genuinely special, with our 'no cell phone' policy fostering even deeper connections. Catapult campers have come full circle, volunteering as summer counsellors, planning conferences, and sitting on our Board. Some have even supported us with donations.

What do we see ahead? We're currently focused on 3 priority areas to ensure we stay relevant and impactful: purposeful programming, world class staffing, and fundraising for sustainability. An in-depth program review will focus on meeting the changing priorities of today's youth. Our summer staff are the heart of Catapult and integral to the effectiveness of what we do, so we must continue to prioritize recruiting processes. Although we successfully weathered the challenges of the pandemic years, Covid left a lasting impairment on fundraising during an economic climate of rising costs. Thankfully, 15 years of cautious financial management meant our programming was not impacted. But we'll be augmenting our efforts to ensure Catapult remains available to youth for years to come.

As we celebrate our anniversary, we look ahead with unwavering commitment to our mission. We strive to continue to inspire, challenge, and empower Nova Scotian youth who may otherwise be overlooked, recognizing that they hold the key to a brighter, more inclusive and compassionate world. Thank you for making Catapult possible.

Kristen Tyne MacEachern, Chair

Lori Barker, Executive Director

the year in numbers

- 50 new Catapult campers
- 100% reported greater confidence
- 100% felt more confident in their leadership abilities
- 55 alumni at the PLUS Conference
- 5 sessions held during the school year with 89 participants
- 100% more confident with post secondary goals
- 98% set personal goals
- 100% volunteered in the community
- 93% joined school organizations
- 91% stronger at public speaking
- 98% more comfortable meeting new people
- 35% diversity among our summer youth, 30% of our summer staff, 50% of our Board
- 15 years, 740 students catapulted from 263 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

Being able to participate in Catapult is one of the most enriching experiences I have ever had and I am glad to have been given the opportunity. Catapult helped me break my own boundaries and face my fears. I learned to better communicate and collaborate with others, delegate so I don't become overwhelmed, ask for help when I need it, and inspire others so that they themselves can become leaders. ~ Tarelle, Catapult 2020

- We welcomed **new Camp (and Conference) Director** Nate Goudreau, who is excited to spend the next several summers with us. Nate is a PE teacher with the AVRSB, an assistant coach with Acadia's men's basketball team, and has extensive experience overseeing summer camps in NB. *"My experience with Catapult was extremely rewarding. I'm proud to be a part of an organization dedicated to providing such a positive life experience."*
- Our **PLUS Conference** had its highest registration ever.
- Jenna and Paige were both elected **President** of their **Student Councils**. So far, 30 alumni have held this position. Emily and Chloe were elected Vice-President.
- Caragh and Marissa both received a **Lieutenant Governor Award** for their community leadership. Emily and Ethan received the LG Respectful Citizenship Award. 33 alumni have now earned these prestigious honours.
- Tarelle was named **Youth Volunteer of the Year** for HRM, our 27th catapulter to be recognized as such. Among his volunteerism, Tarelle served on the **NS Minister of Education's Student Advisory Committee**.
- Vessa received the **Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal** for her volunteerism in Cape Breton.
- Our alumni continue to support the **Alumni Fund** they created. This year they raised \$500 and awarded it to Emily for her Health degree at UNB.
- Naequan is our second nominee to receive a full scholarship to attend **Sacred Heart School**. Naequan told us it's like he's living a teenage dream!
- Asiah was selected as 1 of 2 inaugural HRM Youth **Poet Laureates**. Her goal is to inspire and engage youth through written and spoken work.
- Chloe received a Donald Sobey Award (NSCC), Emma and Cale received a Richardson Family Award (Dal), and Neleah was awarded the Trades and Technology **Scholarship**. Kayley received an award to attend a field school in Italy on global social justice issues.
- Vanessa was a **key note speaker** at the National Black Canadians Summit. Kayley was invited back to Dartmouth High to speak to the Class of 2022.
- Kelby and Tyler, just 2 of at least 7 alumni who are now **volunteer firefighters**, helped fight Nova Scotia's wildfires last June. Kullen was named Trenton's Volunteer Firefighter of the Year.
- A new Catapult **Textbook Fund** was created by the Durland Family Foundation to help alumni with the high cost of post secondary textbooks.
- **Our Board** welcomed Leykey Beals as our newest alumni representative. Leykey attended camp in 2017 and has twice volunteered as a counsellor. Now working at LOVE Nova Scotia and as a web developer entrepreneur, Leykey brings a unique perspective to help us make Catapult the best it can be.
- Catapult and its founder Jane were recognized by the **Governor General of Canada** with the awarding of a Meritorious Service Medal.

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.

Online Sessions

Sessions to learn and connect through the high school year: goals, resiliency, mission statements, getting involved.

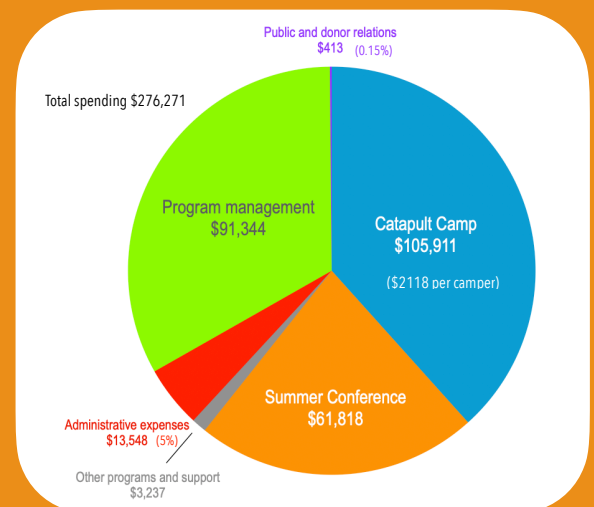
Grad Conference

An online Q&A opportunity for grade 12 students with older alumni in university.

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, managing money, healthy eating and more.

the year in dollars





"Growing up, we see leaders all around us, whether we recognize it or not. Leaders have taught me that leading is not about self validating or praise, but about the importance of showing others that change and improvement are both possible when you assert yourself and stay true to your values. I have always been willing to help others but

I never had enough confidence to do all of the things that I wanted to. At Catapult we connected, we created memories and we learned from each other. Catapult helped me build up my confidence, be my authentic self and distinguish my goals and values. I now feel effective at creating change and can make a difference in my community."

Emily received the 2023 \$1000 Catapult Leadership Award. As Vice-President of student council at Etoile de l'Acadie, she was highly involved in student events. She was also a member of the School Advisory Committee, Headstrong Committee, played volleyball and hockey, mentored healthy relationships to the Grade 9's through animation, and even assisted a child with special needs to get to school each day. Her lasting legacy at the school is the greenhouse that she made possible through planning and funding applications. Science classes now use it to plant vegetables and study photosynthesis while also providing food for the cafeteria. In addition, Emily helped create Project Uplift, that created a calming space for students to de-stress during lunch and breaks, and she organized a new multi-cultural easter egg hunt to promote inclusivity among the international students. Emily's volunteerism was recognized with a Lieutenant Governor Award. Emily is now studying Hospitality & Tourism Management at CBU.

Dear Sponsor,

My name is Erika and I attended catapult camp in 2015 and plus in 2016 & 2017. This year I am back for my second year as a camp councillor. Now that I am 23, I can honestly say that Catapult has changed my life more than I ever imagined. As a kid, my family was not always a stable environment, and we struggled with mental health, and finances. Coming to catapult showed me that I have the power to change my life, my community, and my perspectives. Your donations allowed me to develop the leadership skills and confidence I needed. I am grateful and proud to say that I recently graduated from the University of British Columbia with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Electrical Engineering (I was the valedictorian of my class) and throughout my degree I volunteered for a bunch of clubs and initiatives on campus, my favourite being GOENIG GIRL which introduces young women in underserved communities to STEM. Currently, I live in Maine and work at Ocean Renewable Power Company where we develop clean power generation solutions for remote Indigenous Communities. Coming back to plus this year has given me the opportunity to see the growth and leadership development from last years campers. I'm so excited to support our youth in their journey, the same way my Councillors supported me. Thank you for your donations, you truly are helping change campers lives, and helping them learn how to change the world. Thank you.

-Erika Pineo (2015)



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.

Hi Lori! I hope this message finds you well. Your reference letter has opened up a few opportunities for me in the work space and I would like to pay that forward. I absolutely believe in Catapult. The time you took for me and my ambitions is something that I will not forget and even though I have not been as active as I would have liked lately, I would still like to contribute. After spending sometime outside of high school and learning more about who I want to be, I realize how important it is to have people like you in this world (and my mom lol). Your ability to really connect with each and every single one of us and to put our problems and goals before your own is something I truly admire and this world needs more people like you to keep helping people and to be that voice and guidance this world needs. I would like to start making anonymous donations periodically to Catapult as a small way to help, is there anyway I can go about doing that? It would mean a lot. ... Radwain, Class of 2020

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



Catapult builds leaders with a strong community conscience. In 2023, our PLUS participants paid our Donors' generosity forward by helping **131** organizations, raising **\$26,120** and giving **8428** hours of service!

Abby volunteered in the school cafeteria. **Akeelah** baked brownies and muffins with little notes as gift to seniors. **Amanda** decided to speak to the junior high students about what high school is like. Her teacher ended up asking her to deliver her presentations to several more classes and so her project grew to include much more than she had planned. **Arin** played a significant role in expanding her school's GSA Club and focused much time on educating other students in order to reduce bias against non-traditional gender identities and sexualities. **Autumn** volunteered at the NAIG games. **Batoul** decorated SMILE cookies. **Brayden** helped teach basketball skills at the elementary school. **Cameron** taught mini masters taekwon-do. **Caragh** and **Keira** helped out at their church. **Cherish** volunteered twice weekly at the early years centre. **Chloe** raked leaves and mowed lawns around town. **Dani** helped organize a Mi'kmaq traditional event at school. **Daniel** offered

to help an elderly man move. **Daniel** helped out at YMCA's family day. **Eli** and **Robyn** picked up trash. **Eunice** was a kettle volunteer and made lollipops containing facts about gender inequality. **Ewen** created a recreational basketball league. **Graeson** upgraded his school's breakfast program. **Haden** worked with his dad repairing chimneys to raise money for a young girl living with a rare medical condition. **Haidden** organized a female hygiene fundraiser. **Ishmam** organized a 3x3 basketball tournament. **Issac** decorated and acted at a haunted house to support the local hall. **Jakob** donated blood and picked up trash. **Joey** and **Olivia** organized book drives and created a little library. **Kai** visited seniors in senior homes, interviewing them about their life. They then chronicled the stories into newsletters that the homes proudly shared. **Kayla** volunteered at the local hospital. **Kayla** sold orange t-shirts and donated the profits to help indigenous youth. **Lai** held a clothing drive for BBBS. **Landon** organized a bottle drive. **Maddy** wrapped Christmas present at the mall for Kids Help Phone. **Maddie** applied for a grant to build a greenhouse at her school. **Marisa** became a volunteer firefighter. **Meaghan** volunteered as an international student ambassador. **Naequan** helped grade 4 students with their reading. **Neveah** did a food drive. **Paige** provided free babysitting. **Parker** helped neighbours with garden & yard work. **Peter** organized a fundraiser featuring Nintendo's Mario Kart games. **Rhianna** helped elementary students shop for Christmas gifts for their families. **Robyn** tutored a 4th grader. **Rylan** made art and decorated his school's hallways. **Sahika** helped make and serve food at temple. **Scarlette** volunteered at a seniors home.

"It is really awesome to see just how much small call-to-actions can help out." ~ Chloe, Class of 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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... and everyone else who donated.
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Catapult Leadership Society

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