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ABOUT CITYKIDZ

Our Mission:

We exist to increase resiliency and inspire BIG dreams for Canadian children living in low-income communities by providing inspirational experiences and nurturing personal relationships, one child at a time.

Our Big Dream:

That one day, in the not so distant future, we will see the end of child poverty in Canada and every child would have equal opportunity to thrive, to dream big and to reach their full potential.

Our Values:

We are a people of faith, a community of hope, and servants of love.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

"I first heard about CityKidz through a teacher I knew. She said, 'When a child comes in and they mention CityKidz, I know right away that they are going to do well.' That made an impression on me. Then at Church, I saw that some of the children who came through the program became mentors and that's how I knew it was successful. Because of my background teaching in Hamilton, I realize the necessity of a program like CityKidz in this city. I saw first-hand the things that some of my students had to deal with. The program is essential, and I like knowing that my donation stays in the community."

Mary Jackman,
CityKidz Supporter



This year, things looked a bit different for our Roadmaps to Dreams graduation. In the past, we would all get together for games, speeches, and a tasty spaghetti dinner.

The pandemic made any hope of a group gathering impossible. But failing to celebrate the graduates of our youth mentorship program was not an option. They had worked too hard and come too far to be forgotten.

So on June 17th we loaded up one of our big red buses and drove out with a small handful of mentors to deliver a graduation gift and lasagna dinner to each of our 13 graduates' homes.

Our Roadmaps graduates hold a very special space in our hearts. The moments we got to share with them at their front doors were joyful, but also bittersweet. This is the end of their CityKidz journey, and many of them have been with us since they were preschoolers. For some, CityKidz has been the one constant in their chaotic young lives.

Because of your unwavering support, we've had the privilege of walking with them through their happiest and hardest moments. Through years of Saturday programs, Home Visits, birthday celebrations, summer camps, volunteering and mentorship, we have been blessed to watch and guide them as they grow into incredible young adults.

Each of their journeys has been unique. None of them have been easy.

All of them have faced untold challenges, hardship and heartbreak along the way.

The hurdles these youth have had to overcome to get to where they are today are harrowing. Abbie lived through homelessness, Amelia grew up with domestic violence, Emma lost her mother. Makayla pushed through depression, anxiety, and addiction.

They have all endured painful setbacks and tumultuous upbringings. They have survived unimaginable traumas and yet continue to face the world with their heads high and filled with ambition.

They are fierce, focused, and full of potential.

They are hopeful. They are resilient. There were countless times in their short lives when they could have given up, believed the doubt and low expectations too many people had for their futures. But they didn't.

They have grown and learned from their difficult childhoods. They are dreaming big, finishing high school, starting post-secondary education, holding down jobs, and helping their community. Each of them, in their own way, is thriving and striving for a brighter future.



SUMMER HIGHLIGHTS

Through the third wave of the pandemic we found new and exciting ways to support and connect with our kids and, as things began to open up, we were able to engage in some favourite CityKidz traditions. Here's what that looked like:





CITYKIDZ BY THE NUMBERS

Programming continued to look a little different this year, but that doesn't mean we didn't get up to some pretty cool stuff this spring and summer. Here are just some of the highlights:

3,295

Lunches were prepared for our CityKidz children

2,480

Family Meal Kits have gone out to our families since March

253

Birthday gifts went out to our kids between June and August

190

Youth packs filled with treats and snacks were sent out to our teen participants

152

Care Kits were delivered to families in our community

44

Youth graduated from our CityYouth and Roadmaps to Dreams programs

Kate first sent her twins, Cory and Louise, to CityKidz when they were just three years old.

"They were really scared. They'd never been away from me," remembers Kate.

But once they got back from their first Saturday program, they were eager for more. CityKidz quickly became a growing part of the family's life. The kids loved to sing and dance, and to learn about God. Kate loved the weekly Home Visits from her Captain, Susan, and the strong community support that CityKidz brought with it.

"CityKidz came through at a very challenging time for us," says Kate.

It was well over a year into the pandemic when Kate's son caught COVID-19. The six-year-old's diagnosis meant that the whole family would need to quarantine, and that Cory would have to stay alone in the bedroom he normally shared with two sisters.

"Cory was frightened because he'd never been in his room by himself," remembers Kate.

Throughout the quarantine, Kate would be up all night with Cory, trying to comfort him, and then, when he'd finally fall asleep in the early daylight hours, she would spend the whole day caring for her daughters. Every

free minute was spent sanitizing their home. It was exhausting.

"I was at my wits' end," remembers Kate, "but our CityKidz Captain, with her phone calls - it was a ray of hope."

Finally, the family's quarantine came to an end. And the very next day, CityKidz was there.

"It was a celebration. They came through at just the right time," says Kate.

Kate and her kids received a meal kit, activities and, most importantly, were greeted with a fresh but familiar face.

"They loved getting the visits. Seeing a familiar face during the week, someone other than the people they are constantly with, was so good for them."

More than anything, the pandemic has shown us just how important the relationships we nurture with our children and families are. They build the kind of trust that makes families feel safe to share their struggles and the opportunity for us to support our kids and families through any challenge that may come their way - whether it's a difficult day or a global pandemic. Your support makes this possible. Thank you!

VOLUNTEER WITH US



"From the first time I volunteered, I got to see how the impact that CityKidz has is amazing. Having someone a little bit older who you can look up to, having someone that you can ask questions and will show up for you is super important. I know that from my own life. Even throughout COVID, where it's been difficult to see people, you can still see the long-term impact, from day to day and week to week."

Lennart
Volunteer Route Captain
since 2020

We're looking for volunteers to join folks like Lennart on Home Visits. If you've got a couple hours to bring some faith, hope and love to our kids' front doors, we'd love to have your help! Home Visits are how we at CityKidz build relationships and trust with our community. They're a great way to have fun, connect with amazing kids, and transform lives!

Interested in this or other volunteer opportunities with CityKidz?

Connect with us to get started:
volunteer@citykidz.ca
905-544-3996 x 225



Things have been hard for Sarah and her family for some time, though you might not guess it at first encounter based on her outgoing and upbeat attitude.

She's faced more than her fair share of hardships, especially in this past year, to make sure her daughter, Sophia, has a happy and healthy childhood. It's an uphill battle when money is in perilously short supply and life seems determined to test your resiliency at every opportunity, as it did earlier this year when her husband started having seizures and became unable to work.

"Things have been very tight," says Sarah.

Just putting food on the table became a challenge. Normally, school programs would help by keeping Sophia fed during the week. But with classes online, Sarah suddenly had to provide a lot more food at a time when her resources were more limited than ever. Wanting to give her child the world, but struggling to meet one of her most basic needs, Sarah was often overwhelmed.

"With no money and nothing really in the house, sometimes I get to the point where I don't know what I'm going to make," she explains.

So when the CityKidz team started showing up with a Family Meal Kit each month, a weight was lifted from Sarah's shoulders.

"Those kits have really helped us out," she says. "They've come in between cheques when we're down to barely nothing."

With all the ingredients needed to make a nourishing meal, the meal kits gave Sarah a small reprieve from the stress of making ends meet and a unique opportunity to connect with her daughter.

"Sophia loves them. She helps me prepare the meal and tells me what to do next," Sarah continues. "She's my little sous-chef."

"It just brings us closer together," Sarah concludes. "The meal kits have been awesome for our family. I just hope it keeps going for everybody."

Thanks to the generous support of folks like you, it will. This summer, we successfully raised enough to provide 650 CityKidz families with a monthly Family Meal Kit from July through to December. Your donations will ensure amazing, resilient parents like Sarah can spend a little less time stressing about how to feed their children, and a little more enjoying time with them.

WHEN WE CAN DEPEND ON YOU,
OUR KIDS CAN DEPEND ON US.

**BECOME A
 MONTHLY DONOR.**

Join our *Community of Hope* to
 transform lives, one child at a time.

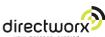
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