



Boys & Girls Clubs
of Canada



The value of increased investments in Canada Summer Jobs

Thank you for this opportunity

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada was pleased to see increased investments in 2016 summer jobs for youth—we know first-hand how much those jobs matter to young people. With the support of Canada Summer Jobs Grants, Clubs across the country more than doubled the number of youth they employed from an estimated **243 youth in 2015** to an estimated **508 youth in 2016**.

Youth have learned a tremendous amount

- They are better leaders for other youth in their community
- They have a sense of direction for their studies and their career options
- They saved for postsecondary studies and gained financial stability
- They took pride in giving back to their community
- They developed marketable skills and confidence in their abilities

Investing in Canada Summer Jobs has ...

- Increased young people's chances of being employed in the future
- Enhanced young people's attachment to the labour market, contributing to a more prepared workforce
- Helped ensure young people are making good use of their summer months, contributing positively to their community and avoiding negative behaviour

Employer readiness

A bolstered Canada Summer Jobs program had an overwhelmingly positive impact on young people in communities across the country. Youth were proud to share their experiences of working at Boys and Girls Clubs and we were inspired by the stories shared on Twitter and Facebook using #LeadersToday.

We have, however, heard that several Clubs saw the number of weeks allocated to youth positions reduced. Some Clubs reported having received more CSJ positions, but a smaller grant overall. This news, which came at a late date considering that hiring of summer staff was already underway, created a financial burden for some of our Clubs who had to find additional funds to meet their program needs. Boys and Girls Clubs understand that high youth unemployment requires all of us to do more—that said, we have a few recommendations.

Recommendation – Allow flexibility for non-profit organizations to use the total weeks approved to hire the staff their programs require, rather than fix the number of youth that must be hired regardless of employer needs.

Recommendation – Send a call out for applications earlier in the year (perhaps even in November-December of the preceding year) and provide a timely response to applicants so that they are able to adjust and budget accordingly. It will also make it easier for youth to confirm employment early on, reducing the job insecurity they face each year.

Program effectiveness

While the CSJ program is extremely valuable to young people, with 70% of youth benefiting from the Youth Employment Strategy doing so through Canada Summer Jobs, little is known about the long-term impact of the program.

Recommendation – Government already gathers data on the medium to long-term outcomes of other YES programs such as Skills Link and Career Focus. We encourage the government to do the same with CSJ, to ensure that the program is delivering results for Canada’s young people.

Opportunities for youth

A two-month summer job for high school students is a wonderful opportunity, but postsecondary students benefit from employment that will take them from May to August. Four months of employment helps them save up for the next school year and gain the experience they will need when they graduate.

Recommendation – Ensure a range of CSJ allocations that meet the needs of postsecondary students and high school students, from short work experiences (2 months) to longer opportunities (4 months).

Recommendation – Consider allowing recent graduates to benefit from CSJ program. i.e. April 2016 grads would be eligible for 2016 CSJ.

Recommendation – Consider providing incentives for employers to keep youth employed during the school year and/or make grants available outside of summer months.

Summer job experiences

Local Members of Parliament play an important role in the CSJ program by helping identify regional priorities and in some cases helping select grant recipients that will meet local needs. Youth hired at Boys and Girls Clubs across the country took the opportunity to write to their MP to tell them about their summer job experience. This effort helped promote their civic engagement, making a link between their summer job and federal decisions and investments in youth employment. Below are a few testimonials from young staff.



Yam C.
Recreation Leader
Education Assistant

My summer adventure as a camp leader was an interesting experience on how to plan, design, organize, and run a summer camp program. My whole approach this summer was focused on making a difference by supporting children’s development. Most of the activities I facilitated focused on cooperation, creative thinking, leadership, social responsibility, and other important life skills.

The children at the camp were each of a different life situation, age, and ability. I had to use various strategies, many of them developed on the spot, to keep the group engaged and learning in a safe manner. I found myself laughing, consoling, encouraging, and guiding the children. Admittedly, some days were difficult, but I still loved every minute.

On one of our walks to the beach, a child complained that she didn’t want to carry her backpack. She asked that I carry it. After ensuring there was no physical or emotional condition preventing her from the task, I explained that I was already carrying more than enough in my giant day pack. Plus, I was also carrying my ukelele. Still, she gave it to me. So, I put it on the ground and kept walking. I explained she must take responsibility for her possessions and everyone must do their part. Once she realized the backpack was going to be left there if she didn’t do something, she picked it up and carried it. Of course, I wouldn’t have left the backpack behind had she made a different choice, but I was proud to see her understand her responsibility.

My experience at the Club taught me a lot, and was very valuable for my work in children’s education. I loved getting to know the children—their passions, their troubles, and their dreams—and I will treasure it for years to come.



Robert B.
Youth Employment Worker
Aboriginal Studies student

Every day is something new at the Boys and Girls Club, and as part of that you are learning to engage with all kinds of youth. You're always doing the best that you can to create positive change, and I think it's important to have that mentality wherever you go. Although you can't always help everybody, you can always make a difference.

A youth who struggles with anxiety came to me looking to find a job for the summer. As someone who struggles with anxiety myself, I recognized the courage it took to reach out. I felt a lot of pride after finding out the youth was quick to get an interview and take further steps to challenge anxiety.

I don't think this is surprising, but something that should be appreciated is the level of honesty that you get from the youth; everyday these youth face challenges I think we would all struggle with. To come out the other side understanding the importance of honesty is something these youth can take on their journey.



Alysha S.
Summer Technology Student
Bachelor of Education student

This summer has taught me more than I could write in one paragraph. Working at two Clubs keeps me on my toes, and I have to remain constantly flexible. The biggest thing I've learned, and that I will carry into my education, is that every child needs to be approached in a different way. You can't treat them all the same, and you have to be aware of who they are and how they need you to act. Some kids love being independent and given responsibilities, and others just want to be left alone. This summer has taught me how to build relationships with many children, while also keeping a professional boundary. I want to become an elementary school teacher, so learning how to connect with the kids so that they can feel open with me has been incredibly important.

Helping kids increase their computer literacy is important to because of how technology has become immersed in our lives. This summer, I worked with a boy in kindergarten who was so excited to show his dad how he could get onto his favourite website all by himself. At the beginning of the summer, he needed help even turning on the computer; after the first month, he was able to start it up and get online. Kids being able to use the computer increases their confidence and makes them feel more independent. With that confidence, they're able to learn new things. It's really fun for me to see how they're learning over the summer.

I was surprised how appreciative the kids are for technology time! At the Club, they get to interact with their peers and build their social skills. They're learning computer literacy without it really feeling like learning. They also have a much greater understanding of how the computers need to be treated than I had expected.

My summer job experience...

I was hired at the Boys and Girls Club of Fredericton under the Canada Summer Jobs Program. I wanted to let you know how great this experience has been. I learned how to work in a team, and improve my skills in communication and working with kids. Thank you for supporting youth employment opportunities like this.

-Jon



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Chloe K.
Youth Leader
Human Kinetics student

Being a part of the Boys and Girls Club has been such a rewarding experience for me. I was fortunate enough to work in both the recreation side of the Club as well as the summer camp program. Working in the recreation program with the youth, I was given a lot more responsibility than I am used to which really challenged me to strengthen my organizational skills. You definitely don't realize how much planning really goes into making day plans, calendars, and organizing out trips. I will definitely come out of this summer student position with stronger planning and organizational skills. I also really enjoyed working with the children that attended the Club. They are such awesome kids, and I am so happy that I got to work with them because they made me a more patient and caring person.



Elisabeth A.
Youth Leader
Behavioural Neuroscience student

My position as a student this summer with the Boys and Girls Club was not only a fun experience but a huge learning experience. As a Behavioural Neuroscience student, working with children has expanded my knowledge of behaviour. Our activities day in and day out have also helped me grow my skills and apply them to everyday situations. My co-workers have shared their knowledge and skills and have supported me throughout my summer. With all that, I am so grateful for my experience. Thank you, Canada Summer Jobs!



Nikki H.
Adventure Leader
Nursing student

Being a Bright Red Book Bus Adventure Leader, providing free books to children, was an awesome way to spend my summer. As a Bachelor of Science in Nursing student, it has been great to be involved working within my community. The kids love the books, the bus, and the fun activities. I am very grateful for this amazing experience and job opportunity. Thank you, Canada Summer Jobs!

