

2023 GRATITUDE REPORT



Making Great
Things Happen!





FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Here we are with yet another year to share our gratitude for all the effort and passionate commitment we received at Camp Maple Leaf – from supporters, staff, volunteers, and all the extended groups of people interested in the work of Camp Maple Leaf.

It is with the deepest sense of appreciation that I look back on this past year and see what we have collectively accomplished. Our biggest achievement was the opening of the third location of Camp Maple Leaf, which keeps us on track with our plan to be a truly national charity. The new camp program held at Sylvan Lake in Alberta has allowed us to effectively serve active military and Veteran families in western Canada. With our Jacob Island location in Ontario and our recently established program at Greenhill Lake in New Brunswick, we now have the national presence we have been working to achieve.

All of our supporters have been enthusiastic about our growth and continue to stand behind us as we go forward. A primary reason for that confidence in us is because of our staff. I would like to offer my deepest thanks to our Camp Directors April Young, Tess Rowley and Candice Goncalves, for their continued dedication and leadership. Their stewardship of the camp programs is the reason why campers love to attend Camp Maple Leaf each summer.

I would also like to thank our exceptional Board of Directors, who continue to meet regularly, monitor our progress, and provide valuable assistance to Camp Maple Leaf. Their guidance has been instrumental as we progress through this period of growth and expansion. Of particular note this year was the hosting of a new program called Camp FromAway, which was a uniquely designed online camp experience tailored to kids living with Cystic Fibrosis. I am grateful for our partners at uPopolis for helping make this program a success.

I'm proud to say we have great people who help make all this possible. I'm particularly grateful for our host locations in Alberta and New Brunswick for their cooperation and interest in providing Camp Maple Leaf programs across Canada. When we started in 2016 we hoped to serve 250 to 300 campers. Next year we hope to be serving in excess of 1,500. That's certainly something to be thankful for.



Kim Smith, President



FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Prior to my arrival as the new Executive Director at Camp Maple Leaf, I spent 30 years in another camp organization, starting off as a camp counsellor. It's a privilege now to be coming in as Executive Director at a time when Camp Maple Leaf is experiencing a lot of growth. Camp is such a magical place where anything is possible. I feel with the team that I've met, the people involved, the volunteers, and the funders, we are going to continue to grow Camp Maple Leaf across Canada.

Because I'm so new I'm just starting to learn who the donors are. They are clearly passionate and committed supporters. Most of are very close to the cause. They've helped make it possible to reach more military families across the country, through our New Brunswick program established last year and the new Alberta program launched this past summer. The number of people requesting to participate in our new program has been tremendous, and we hope to offer a second week of camp in Alberta next summer. It's all about spreading Camp Maple Leaf across Canada so that military families, Veteran's families and families who have children living with unique life challenges can access support no matter where they live.

The opportunity for kids to go to camp to meet other kids with similar life challenges is vital. It gives them skills and confidence they need to develop as well as lasting friendships. Not all families can afford to send their children to camp I am extremely grateful to organizations like True Patriot Love and Veterans Affairs Canada, two of our most significant donors, for their ongoing support in helping subsidize military families to ensure that no child is turned away from enjoying a camp experience.

Finally, I'm grateful for the warm welcome I've received since joining the team at Camp Maple Leaf. With the new camp name I was given, Clementine, I officially feel part of the amazing camp culture found at Camp Maple Leaf.



Marci Shea-Perry
Executive Director





CML JACOB ISLAND ONTARIO



There's nothing better than to welcome a new group of campers with unique life challenges to Camp Maple Leaf and be able to offer them a wonderful camp experience. I am so grateful for the opportunities presented this year that allowed us to do that.

For example, this past summer we hosted our first-ever Gilda's Toronto Family Camp, for children and youth under age 18 who have a family member with a cancer diagnosis or who have lost a family member to cancer. To accommodate the campers who enrolled in this program we had to make some adjustments. We call it "modifying," - modifying elements of camp on the fly. We incorporated special elements unique to that group's needs, running programs at a slower pace and adding a unique illumination ceremony that featured the release of painted lanterns that floated on the water. And thanks to Chopper and our amazing maintenance team who made special reflection benches and placed them all around the camp so Gilda's participants could find places to rest when walking around. The program was amazing, and everyone went home with new friends and connections. I'm extremely grateful for groups like Gilda's who also serve children with similar unique life challenges and entrust us with their time and their hearts to deliver programs like this.

Another camp initiative we started this year was an online program called Camp FromAway, which was specially designed for youth living with Cystic Fibrosis (CF). Due to the nature of the disease kids with CF are contagious to each other and can't gather for an in-person camp experience. The idea of hosting a CF camp was born in 2020, when Camp Maple Leaf had to turn to online programming during the COVID pandemic. To deliver Camp FromAway we turned to uPopulus, a group of experts in online programming and technology. We feel we are able to develop a pretty powerful partnership between our CML staff, uPopulus, and the 22 CF kids who got to enjoy camp for the first time.

There were other examples too, including our new Friendship Program and another one called Brave, which empowers kids to have a bigger voice to help defend themselves against bullying. I'm grateful for the flexibility and commitment of our staff and volunteers who, with the support of our donors have helped us introduce these new programs.

I'd also like to give a shout out to everyone who helps refer Camp Maple Leaf to potential new campers, partners, and other organizations. As a result, all of our military sessions are running at close to capacity. I'm also grateful for the children who grow up through our camp family and who have chosen as young adults to spend their summers with us as staff. I'm proud to say our staff and volunteer team is now made up of individuals that cross over every one of our partner groups. Who better than them to have empathy for what kids are going through.

It really *does* take a village.



April 'Calypso' Young
Camp Director,
Jacob Island



CML GREENHILL LAKE NEW BRUNSWICK

One of the biggest highlights for me this year was making the permanent move to New Brunswick – the location of Camp Maple Leaf – Greenhill Lake. It's so close to Fredericton and to the Gagetown Military Base which makes it easy for military families to get involved with camp.

The camp at Greenhill Lake is in a gorgeous location. The camp site is fabulous and a great place to host our programs including Camp 321, our family camp for children living with Down Syndrome. It was really fun to see how families enjoyed the site and to put the facilities to a new use we hadn't experienced here before. We've hosted the Camp 321 program for several years in Ontario, but this was the first time it was offered in New Brunswick. Seven families participated in our first year of the program and we're hoping to host two more family camps in 2024.

Another pilot program that we hosted at Greenhill Lake this summer was Camp Libert , a camp for children living with skin conditions. It was the first time the camp had been offered in New Brunswick and we had six campers who came to our second program session. Since we started the Camp Maple Leaf program in New Brunswick it's been primarily attended by children from military families. But Camp Maple Leaf's programs also serve a variety of campers living with unique life challenges, so it's great to see our camper community expanding.

We're in a unique position here at Camp Maple Leaf – Greenhill Lake because we not only share the facilities with Green Hill Lake Camp, but we also share their staff. I'm so grateful for the staff as they were such a pleasure to work with. They were well trained, capable, and really seemed to have fun working with us. Even though they hadn't grown up at Camp Maple Leaf you could see the enjoyment and their passion for the camp.

Next year we're looking forward to hosting three weeks of children's camp at Greenhill Lake as well as our family camp sessions. We're excited about building new relationship and really looking forward to growing our programs next summer.



Tess 'Mako' Rowley
Camp Director,
Greenhill Lake





CML SYLVAN LAKE ALBERTA

This year marked an incredible milestone in the ongoing evolution of Camp Maple Leaf. After making Camp Maple Leaf history in 2022 with the opening of a second CML program in New Brunswick, our team has done it again. Through the hard work and dedication of everyone involved, we were thrilled to be able to open third location of Camp Maple Leaf, this one at Kuriakos Camp on Sylvan Lake in Alberta.

CML Sylvan Lake was the realization of our goal to have three Camp Maple Leaf programs serving campers across Canada. That has been a driving force of our board and senior staff since we reopened the Jacob Island location. Our primary focus for year one of our Alberta program has been to serve campers from military families, and in that regard, we're delighted with the success we had this year. In total, 62 campers from military families based in BC and Alberta attended the program at Camp Maple Leaf – Sylvan Lake.

Our new Alberta camp location was the missing piece in our expanding Camp Maple Leaf family. The establishment of this new camp program has allowed us to offer a full range of CML activities including rock wall climbing, a fabulous arts and crafts centre, and crystal-clear water for boating and fishing. This third location also allowed us to enjoy a historic opportunity; all three camps hosted the "Red Versus Blue Island Games" on the same day, allowing campers to experience this super-fun Camp Maple Leaf tradition.

With the success of the inaugural program in Alberta, Camp Maple Leaf is now well situated to welcome children of serving military and Veteran's families at three locations across Canada. Having camps in Alberta, Ontario, and New Brunswick makes it much more convenient for campers to make it to camp, and for that we are entirely grateful.

Keep watching the Camp Maple Leaf website for updates on all of our 2024 programs.



Candice 'Cobra' Goncalves
Camp Director,
Sylvan Lake



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS AND PARTNERS



As Director of Development, it's abundantly clear to me that the success of Camp Maple Leaf is directly related to the passionate commitment and ongoing generosity of our donors. We often say that people give in a wide variety of ways. Some donate their time. Some lend their expertise and unique skills. Others make financial contributions that allow us to send several hundred youth to camp every year. On behalf of all the kids who get to enjoy a Camp Maple Leaf experience each summer, we extend our deepest thanks for your contributions.

It's because of our donors we are able to deliver the kind of unique programming offered exclusively at Camp Maple Leaf. Individual donors are foundational to us. It's because of donors that we've been able to realize our vision and expand the camp to three locations across Canada. We truly appreciate the commitment it takes to give to an organization like ours given the number of charitable causes worthy of such support. We wish every donor had the opportunity to see their donations transformed into the smiles and laughter on the faces of our campers each summer.

Of course, there are also many organizations that make significant contributions that allow us to continue to serve youth across Canada. True Patriot Love is one such organization that continues to partner with us, providing Camp Maple Leaf with essential funding so critical to our operation. Veterans Affairs Canada is another vital spoke in the wheel that keeps us rolling each summer. We are truly appreciative of the support of Veterans Affairs Canada and their ongoing commitment to helping us grow the programs.

Attracting new funders and partners is essential to our organization, and I'd like to thank Hydro One for joining our growing family of donors. Through their Energizing Life Community Grant program, Hydro One helped us serve more children than ever before at Jacob Island.

Special thanks to Legion branches throughout Ontario for their significant support over the past year. Donations from Legions are primarily directed to sponsoring individual children of military families so they can enjoy a summer camp experience. Additionally, we want to acknowledge the support we received from the McCain Foundation, which has been instrumental in helping us establish our new Camp Maple Leaf program in New Brunswick.

There are many individuals and organizations that donate through their physical presence and dedicated work ethic. This includes the volunteer members of the 2 Combat Engineer Regiment (2CER), who come out to the camp every fall to help us complete a variety of important projects. We would also like to tip our hat to the 17 members of Sunbelt Rentals, who spent a day working alongside the crew from 2CER to help ensure the camp is in tip top condition to welcome campers next summer.



Jay Hooper, Director of Development

To see the complete list of donors in 2023 click [here](#).





OUR MISSION

We give children of Canadian Military Families and children who share similar unique life challenges a camp to call their own.

OUR VALUES

Kindness

We are kind and inclusive, and build a culture where everyone belongs

Results

We take fun seriously and we will make an impact on every camper's life

Respect

We foster respect for all those who have served our Country and Communities, both past and present

Responsibility

We are responsible stewards of our donated resources and natural environment

Appreciation

We honour and appreciate our donors and partners

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Thank You

FOR HELPING MAKE GREAT THINGS HAPPEN!

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