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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*.



Anas is a clever kid who can solve a Rubik's Cube right in front of you. He's expressive and enthusiastic when answering any questions about his week, his interests and his dreams – so much so that he'll sometimes trip over his words in a rush to get them all out there. It's endearing, and we're all too happy to listen to the eight-year-old launch into a description of his latest passion.

One of the things we quickly learned about Anas was that he loved art. He's good at math, science, soccer and just about any subject you throw his way. But art – that's his passion. More often than not, it's his answer to our questions about the best part of his week.

Naturally, we were keen to see some of his creations, but Anas kept us waiting, explaining that his paintings, drawings and other projects would stay at school until the end of the year.

We waited patiently and when July finally rolled around, we asked if he had brought home any art from school.

What he shared with us was simply amazing.

"Did you draw this from memory, or did you have a picture you copied?" we asked, gobsmacked by his detailed rendering of a bumblebee and its honeycomb.

"From my head," he wowed us.

One after another, he showed us his work: an impressionist pastel drawing of a lake and lily pads that would make Monet proud. A pencil crayon work of his favourite super hero. Everything he showed us was amazing, and far beyond what you'd expect from your average eight-year-old.

Beaming at her son, Anas's mom, Hanadi, asked us if there were any community art programs available for Anas. She saw her son's joy and was eager to encourage his talent and creativity.

Right away we knew we needed to send him to the creative arts week at Camp CityKidz.

This July, Anas joined dozens of other crafty kids for two days of music, art and drama. He hammed it up for his group's movie-making session; competed in a wet and wild relay race; put his problem-solving brain to work with his team for an egg-drop challenge; and, of course, channeled his boundless creativity into some pretty cool artwork.

Thank you to everyone who helped make Camp CityKidz a reality this summer. Thank you for providing opportunities for wonderful kids like Anas to laugh, play, create and have a summer to remember.



# Season Highlights

## 198

Children  
attended **Camp  
CityKidz**



**"I'm thankful for  
food, people and  
friends!"**



**"This is my best day  
at CityKidz ever!"**



**"I am thankful for the  
food, you guys, art, and  
this whole place."**



**"My favourite part of camp  
was making slime."**







# DONOR SPOTLIGHT



## Harrison and Norah

No person or idea is too small to make a difference! Eight-year-old Harrison and his five-year-old sister, Norah, decided to make a difference this summer by hosting a lemonade stand and raising money for a local charity. When it came time to choose where to donate their profits, their mother suggested CityKidz. "It's summer, it's kid-related, it just fit perfectly," she says. While we might be a bit biased, we couldn't agree more. Thank you so much, Norah and Harrison!



"I still think it's unreal how all of those small things ended up making such a giant impact on my life," says Jonathan Bowen, reflecting on the unexpected knock on his door that brought him into the CityKidz community.

While Jonathan began attending our programs at his mother's behest ("she thought it was good that we had something to do on the weekends," recalls Jonathan), it was the connections he made there that kept him coming on our big red buses week after week and year after year.

"CityKidz brought together so many kids from all over the city that I may have never known or met otherwise," says Jonathan. "I was able to meet so many other kids just like me and foster friendships that have transcended the walls of CityKidz. Some of the kids I met there at a young age I still consider very good friends to this day."

As he got older and aged out of our Saturday programs, Jonathan was eager to stay involved with CityKidz and the friendships that came with it any way he could.

"I just couldn't find myself wanting to leave," he explains. "I loved what they did, I loved what they stood for; it had become a part of who I was so I stayed

involved all the way up until I had to move away for university."

At the age of 12 he joined our CityYouth mentorship program and its sister program, Jr. Leadership. In addition to the unforgettable experiences he had and practical skills he gained from the programs, Jonathan also remembers the guiding lessons of faith, hope and love. Most of all, he remembers the life-changing lesson to never give up.

"I know it sounds cliché, but it was one of the lessons that really stuck with me," says Jonathan. "There have been times where I'd been having a hard time and been wanting to give up on a lot of things but then, almost like magic, someone at CityKidz would make something work for me. I remember thinking to myself: how can I give up on myself before all of these other people have even given up on me?"

"That concept of never giving up caused such a mind shift for me in the way that I view things. It plays a crucial part in the way that you deal with hard situations, and I think that CityKidz has definitely played a very crucial part in making me the person that I am today."

# VOLUNTEER WITH US



*"I'm the kind of guy when I see a need, I try and fill it as best I can according to my skills. I heard that [CityKidz was] in desperate need of bus drivers. So I thought, you know what? I like driving. I enjoy trying to help others. Why don't I give it a try? So I went for my license and I went to a couple of volunteer training sessions and the rest is history."*

**Lee,  
CityKidz Bus Driver**

Driving a bus for CityKidz, you're so much more than a driver, you're an integral part of our community of faith, hope and love. CityKidz bus drivers connect children from all corners of the city. They bring children and youth together to learn, grow, and, most-importantly, have fun together.

Join our team of bus drivers or consider volunteering by:

- Supporting our Home Visits
- Joining our Saturday Teams

**For more info or to volunteer:**  
**[volunteer@citykidz.ca](mailto:volunteer@citykidz.ca)**  
**905-544-3996 x 225**



From the moment eight-year-old Gavin stepped off the bus – hoodie covering his head, teddy bear clutched to his chest – it was clear he was feeling uneasy about coming to Camp CityKidz.

"I don't want to be here. I want to go home," he said, anxiety clear in his voice and his posture.

Our team did their best to include Gavin in activities in a way that was comfortable for him. As much as we wanted him to stay and have a fun camp experience, it seemed that, despite our best efforts, this wasn't going to happen. If he didn't want to be here, we weren't going to force him and told him we would take him home as soon as our van and driver returned.

Gavin huffed and grumbled. He was clearly overwhelmed, so we redirected him to a box of Lego in the hopes that some quiet, independent play would help calm him until he could go home.

As it turned out, Gavin had never played with Lego before. He spent the next two hours completely engrossed with the colourful building blocks: looking at them, putting them in containers and shaking them, linking them together to form abstract shapes.

One of our staff, Leanne, took her lunch break to sit with Gavin. He soon started asking her questions: *where do you get Lego? How much does Lego cost? Do you think I can have Lego?*

As he played and talked, he began to loosen up from the tight ball of nerves and frustration that had gripped him all morning. By the time Leanne had to return to her desk, Gavin seemed relaxed enough to join the final afternoon activity: making slime.

Within minutes Gavin was covered top to bottom in cornstarch, loving every minute of being messy and absorbed with exploring the unfamiliar texture of the goopy substance.

As the day was wrapping up, another staff member who had observed Gavin's love of Lego asked a favourite CityKidz question: *what can we do for this kid?*

Gavin hadn't arrived at camp with anything besides his hoodie and bear. So we found him a drawstring bag and tucked his two possessions inside along with a little surprise Lego kit for him to find when he got home.

When Gavin returned to Camp CityKidz the next day, he carried no comfort item nor tension in his shoulders. He played ball, water games and, of course, Lego.

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

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transform lives, one child at a time.

Learn more at [citykidz.ca](http://citykidz.ca)

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CityKidz • 601 Burlington St E, Unit A • Hamilton, ON • L8L 4J5

info@citykidz.ca • citykidz.ca • 905-544-3996 • Registered Charitable No: 89498 2479 RR0001

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#### Disclaimer

Some names and photographs may have been changed to protect the privacy of our children and their families.