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Where Dreams Shine Bright

Premier  
Supporters



Official  
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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*.



## FROM LEMONADE TO JINGLE ALL THE WAY: CITYKIDZ THROUGH A MOTHER'S EYES



Last summer, a family who had recently arrived from Vietnam happened upon one of our Lemonade Parties at a local park. This moment marked the beginning of a transformative journey for their daughters, Han and Nghi.

"We arrived in Canada on August 2nd, 2024, and my children were thrilled to join CityKidz in September," their mother shares. "The games [at the Lemonade Party] were so exciting they immediately asked me to register them [for the CityKidz program] when we got home." She hoped these opportunities would help them build friendships, embrace their new community, and feel a sense of belonging.

Just a week after arriving in Canada, Han and Nghi were officially signed up for CityKidz. Their mother recalls their joy as they anticipated their first Saturday bus ride. From that moment, the CityKidz red bus became a weekend highlight, taking them to a theatre filled with fun and laughter. Outgoing Han embraced activities energetically, while shy Nghi found comfort in the volunteers' kindness.

At CityKidz, they found more than fun and games; they found a sense of belonging.

The CityKidz Christmas Party brought magic to their holiday season. They were excited to get to wear their

pyjamas, engage in a lively game of 'pass the present', experience a visit from Santa and share in the festive meal, songs and stories that make the annual Christmas party such an anticipated event!

And of course, Han & Nghi were so thrilled to receive gifts like craft kits and other items they had on their wish lists. They had never received such generous gifts before.

Han and Nghi's excitement was contagious as they shared stories about their adventures. In December, their mother posted on Facebook, sharing heartfelt gratitude. "In the blink of an eye, three months have passed. My kids were nervously joining CityKidz, and now they're saying goodbye to the last bus ride of 2024. They love the red bus rides, fun games, and especially the snacks. Love U CityKidz."

In their "before" photo, Han and Nghi stood shyly in front of the red bus, their expressions a mix of curiosity and nervousness. In the "after" shot, their smiles radiated confidence and joy. Missy, their route captain, stood with them in both pictures, a constant source of encouragement. "Missy is so kind and patient," their mother shares. "My children always felt loved and cared for by the CityKidz team."



**147**

**Volunteers supported  
the Gift of Christmas  
Program**



**540**

**Volunteer Hours were  
given to the Gift of  
Christmas Program**



**2,336**

**Toys were delivered to  
CityKidz Children**

# Gift of Christmas *Highlights*



**398**

**Children attended  
Christmas parties**



**111**

**Youth attended the  
CityYouth Christmas Party**

# SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

## A SEASON OF BELONGING: EVELYN'S GIFT OF CHRISTMAS

For eleven-year-old Evelyn, and her mom Suzanne, this past holiday season was brightened by a perfect mix of holiday cheer and meaningful connection – all made possible by our community's generous support of the Gift of Christmas program. This program provided a festive meal, a joyous Christmas Party and a carefully chosen gift delivered to each child's home.

Evelyn felt joy in many moments of the Christmas Season. "I loved seeing the different decorations on people's houses", as she recalled her time spent taking walks through her neighbourhood to admire the lights and decorations.

At the CityKidz Christmas Party, Evelyn found more joy, sharing laughter with Nikki; a staff member she adores. "We always joke about what's going on in my life." One special moment was when Evelyn and her younger sister Violet posed with Nikki for a picture in front of CityKidz' Christmas tree; capturing the happiness of that day. For Evelyn, this meant feeling seen, cherished and connected to something greater than herself.

Evelyn's excitement reached its peak when she opened her gift from CityKidz that was selected just for her. Among the surprises, her favourite

gift was a speaker that she loves playing- sometimes a bit too loudly, much to her mom's amusement. "I felt really happy and overjoyed to be part of CityKidz," Evelyn shared, her voice reflecting the deep sense of belonging that she felt.

For Suzanne, seeing her daughter's joy in attending the party and receiving a gift was deeply moving. "I'm glad Evelyn belongs to an organization that treats all children equally," she said. "CityKidz shows compassion and truly understands community needs. CityKidz is an exceptional place where children can just be children," Suzanne added. "If you're able to donate and support a good cause, this is it!"

Evelyn's connection with CityKidz extends even beyond the holidays. Last summer, she attended Camp CityKidz where she formed friendships and created cherished memories. When asked about her greatest wish, Evelyn's answer came without hesitation: "Another week in August to relive the fun of camp".

For Suzanne and Evelyn, the greatest gift of all is belonging to a community that truly cares. Thank you for making this possible and for bringing faith, hope and love to families like theirs.



Bunge has been a dedicated Supporter of CityKidz since 2010. Our relationship began with our friends at Bunge hosting a toy drive to support our Gift Of Christmas Campaign. Led by Dean Bell, whose passion is to support children and youth living in Hamilton. Bunge's giving has grown to include their most recent employee donation of over \$4000.00 and more than 130 toys. Bunge has also held a number of Fundraisers; such as the auction of a pedal car built by Dean, as well as a Workplace Safety Photo Booth, initiated by Goran Mijokovic, celebrating a record number of accident-free days on the job, while encouraging his employees to snap a selfie with their safety superhero!

We are thrilled to continue building our relationship with our friends at Bunge in 2025, they are a true example of community and teamwork to support our mission here at CityKidz!

# VOLUNTEER WITH US



*"I have been volunteering with CityKidz for the past couple of years and love witnessing the incredible impact they have in Hamilton. At Starbucks, our focus extends beyond profit to giving back to the community. When we learned about the opportunities available at CityKidz, my team and I thought, 'Let's go for it!' We toured the building and participated in some events, and it was clear to everyone how inspiring their work is. CityKidz brings people together—volunteers, staff, and community members—to make a meaningful difference." - Steph*

We're looking for more folks like Steph to show amazing kids that they are loved and appreciated through our CityYouth, Home Visits, and CityKidz Saturday programs. Learn more and start your volunteer journey:

[citykidz.ca/volunteer](http://citykidz.ca/volunteer)  
[volunteer@citykidz.ca](mailto:volunteer@citykidz.ca)  
905-544-3996 x225



The CityYouth Christmas Talent Show was a joyful celebration of inspiration, determination, and connection.

Thanks to our incredible Volunteers and Supporters, the event brought together CityYouth, Mentors, and the CityKidz Community for an evening filled with holiday cheer.

The night began with a warm and festive meal, lovingly served by a group of amazing Volunteers. This gathering wasn't just about food—it was a moment to share, laugh, celebrate and connect as a community.

The highlight of the evening was the talent show, where Youth bravely showcased their unique skills and personalities in front of their peers. Tania, a CityYouth Mentor, kicked things off with an energetic song and dance. Emma dazzled the crowd with an anime-inspired routine, and Jessica amazed everyone with her breakdancing. Alyssa's soulful rendition of "Last Christmas" had the audience singing along; her sparkling snowflake dress adding a whimsical touch

There were plenty of laughs, too, thanks to Ishmael, who charmed the crowd with his quick wit, even after forgetting his comedy lines! He brought the house down when he thanked CityKidz Founder,

Todd Bender, and jokingly offered to take over his role someday!

Another standout was Izzie, whose hand-sewn cosplay and flawless anime dance had everyone cheering. "Izzie has an incredible sense of humor and creativity," shared her mom, Ashley.

The show continued with Redina's heartfelt song about togetherness, perfectly capturing the essence of the night, and finally, the audience was wowed, with a young man showing off his impressive pogo stick skills. Every performance was a testament to the talent, courage and passion of our youth and the safety they feel amongst their peers and mentors. It was nearly impossible for the judges to choose the winners.

In the end, Alyssa took Third Place, Jessica earned Second, and Izzie was crowned the Winner.

This special night would not have been possible without the generosity of our Supporters and commitment of our Volunteers. Your support provided not only gifts and a delicious meal but also an invaluable opportunity for our youth to build confidence, express themselves, and feel celebrated. Thank you for helping make this magic happen!

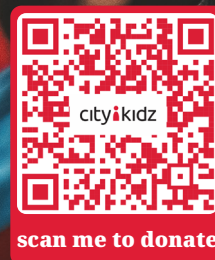
# WHEN WE CAN DEPEND ON YOU, OUR KIDS CAN DEPEND ON US.



## BECOME A MONTHLY SUPPORTER.

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

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



### CORPORATE PARTNERS



### SPECIAL THANKS TO



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**Disclaimer**  
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