code youth

ANNUAL

REPORT

code youth

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VISION

A world where underserved youth have a second chance to develop employable skills and an opportunity to improve their quality of life by building a rewarding career in technology.

MISSION

Code Youth's mission is to support at-risk and disadvantaged youth between the ages of 17-29 in finding employment solutions, especially youth who have dropped out of high school. We provide entry level coding training and the tools necessary to find meaningful entry level employment in the IT sector.

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Message from the Founder

MONA FORREST

As a longtime foster mother, I was troubled by the lack of opportunities faced by my kids after they left foster care. Over 15 years, not one had escaped the cycle of poverty. Most were among the almost 14% (in 2017) of youth who had not completed high school. When in foster care, youth could receive extra tutoring, be eligible for extra time to complete assignments and tests. They were provided with all the books and materials they needed to assist them to achieve in high school. Even with these supports most young people had been through traumatic events in their lives before foster care. Finishing high school did not rate highly among these kids and they tell me they felt stigmatized by being in foster care.

I gathered friends with expertise in finance and administration and technology – web project management, social media, and communications, and myself with 25 years of non-profit organization management. We brainstormed, including with the young people, to increase their chances of success in life, particularly with their lack of a high school diploma. Code Youth, through summer project grants, hired young people and pursued research to find some answers. Different studies carried out included an environment scan to see what was presently available to help disadvantaged youth with employment opportunities, a feasibility study with budgets, and outreach to youth-serving agencies and corporations in Ottawa. Technology was the answer, particularly website development, and in general entry level work in the rapidly growing Ontario IT sector. Training plans evolved as the summer project teams met with IT employers and developed a training program, with the needs of local employers considered, to maximize our young people's chances of better employment. The training program continues to evolve with more input from employers.

We believe with evolving technology needs and continuing employment opportunities in the sector (in spite of COVID-19), many employers are interested in giving our youth a chance. They do not see the lack of a high school diploma as a particular disadvantage and look at the youth's project presentation and technology abilities. With increased communications about our program, Code Youth will have continued success. Our goals remain to enable young people to have an alternative to low-paying and precarious fast-food jobs, or social assistance, to enter a career with good remuneration, and to enable them to succeed in a better life for themselves.

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GISELLE LEDUC

March 2021 marked the beginning of Code Youth's 3-year funding agreement with Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) under the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS) program. This new funding allowed us to start delivering our program, free coding training and career strategies, to youth who face barriers to education and/or employment. We are very grateful to ESDC for this financial support.

This was a year of fast decisions and team collaboration between board members and staff to provide the best possible service to our learners and build the organization's processes from the ground up.

A start-up in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic required that we establish all of our operations online and develop training in a remote learning environment. This proved to be a positive opportunity as we were able to extend our outreach to youth from right across Ontario, including remote and rural areas. In addition, we had access to hire qualified trainers from anywhere in Canada and gather an amazing staff team of passionate professionals.

Our youth participants come from diverse backgrounds and are challenged with barriers to education and employment. Many have no formal education due to circumstances beyond their control and others have experienced discrimination in the workplace. Yet, these individuals demonstrate flexibility, commitment, and self-discipline throughout the program.

It takes a village and we are very thankful for our volunteers, donors, and supporters! Tech professionals provide our youth with career support, mentorship, and peer programming, as well as goods and services that help them develop their career goals, increase their self-confidence, build their networks, and qualify for entry-level coding positions in Ontario's technology sector. A team of high-school and college students helps with social media, and university students provide ongoing research and administration. Community supporters provide collaborative opportunities to refer our youth to other services that offer additional support. These generous contributions play a key role in the long term financial and economic livelihood of our youth.

I am very proud to be a part of this organization that gives young adults an incredible opportunity to demonstrate their brilliance and resilience and helps them realize their potential and overcome barriers!

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Program Description

Code Youth offers a free 10- to 12-week online training program designed for youth ages 17-29 who are at-risk, have dropped out of high school, or are facing barriers to education and/or employment.

Technical Skills Training to qualify for entry-level coding positions in Ontario's tech sector
- problem-based and led in an AGILE environment to simulate real workplace experience
- team oriented using sprints in Jira and other workplace tools such as Confluence, Slack, GitHub, CodePen, and Sigma
- Portfolio Building to develop and showcase coding projects

Career Preparation Training to prepare for the job market, apply and interview for job postings
- career planning, labour market information, employment search strategies
- resume building, cover letter writing, interview preparation
- employability skills including teamwork, communication, and leadership
- one-one-one coaching for individualized support

One-on-one Coaching to build self-awareness and confidence to explore employment opportunities in application development
- during the training to provide individualized support
- post training support to help them find jobs and build better futures by connecting them to employers

Learning Supports:
- resources such as general office supplies, laptop loaners, domains
- financial support in the form of a paid training allowance

Community Support to understand the tech sector and build confidence
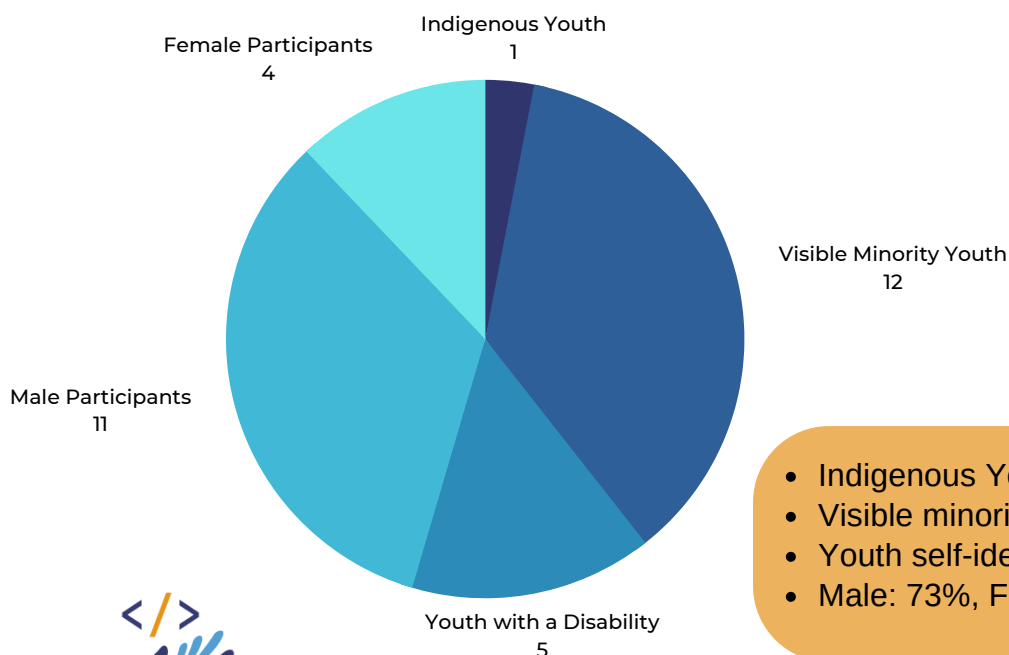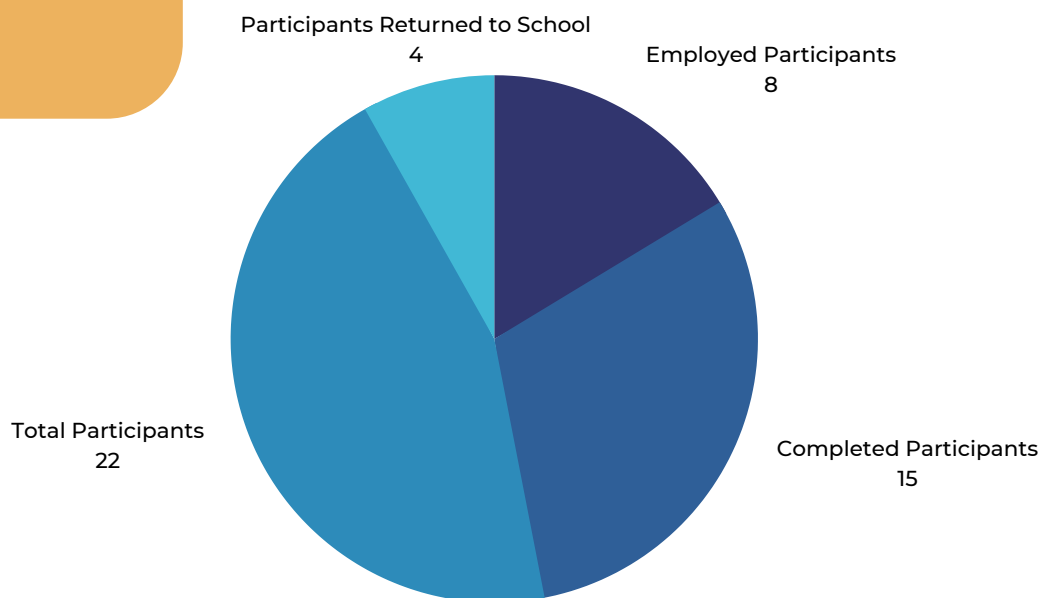- tech professionals mentor participants to provide career support and tech advice
- tech and other professionals give workshops on industry topics
- employers participate in mock interviews and offer feedback

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From April 2021 to March 2022:

- youth enrolled in the program: 22
- youth completed training: 68%
- employed: 53%
- returned to school: 27%

Participants Returned to School
4

Employed Participants
8

Total Participants
22

Completed Participants
15

Female Participants
4

Indigenous Youth
1

Visible Minority Youth
12

Male Participants
11

Youth with a Disability
5

- Indigenous Youth: 7%
- Visible minority Youth: 80%
- Youth self-identified a disability: 33%
- Male: 73%, Female: 27%, Other 0%

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Participant Testimonials

"I found Code Youth at a time when I struggled with employment barriers and wasn't sure where to go with my career... I now feel as if I have the skillset to pursue a job in the IT field and stand out to employers. Along with the coding portion, the employment training has provided me with skills to succeed in interviews and present myself well to employers."
- Iqbal

"I am a college dropout (computer programming) with no education that I can put on a resume beyond my high school education… I found that the [Code Youth] teaching style was much more suitable for me… Code Youth also go beyond simply teaching you web development, a considerable amount of time is spent helping you be able to find a job and get connections in the industry."
- Stephen

"Code Youth has really changed my life … I feel like I could actually get a job in the industry as a junior software developer. Words can't begin to describe how grateful I am to this program for what it has done for me."
- Majid

"The training helped give me the skills to learn the basics in coding. The vocational training gave me the confidence to apply for jobs and brush up on my interview skills. I'm glad to say I got a job in the field at the end." - M.A.

"I tried so many times to learn coding but never got enough self-time but by joining this course I was able to spend some time working on myself. Both technical and vocational training has given me a chance to explore and to find self-confidence to acquire new skills."
- Gursheen

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Volunteers

Code Youth is very grateful to all the amazing volunteers who help us ensure that our program is up-to-date and practical.

Tech Professionals graciously donate their time and knowledge to our youth as one-on-one mentors or as a peer programmers

Alan McKay, 2Keys, an Interac Company
Brian Garson, Assent Compliance
Harleen Kaur, Ericsson
Maryam Tse, Ciena

Robert Hanak, Programmimg Tutor
Shane O'Callaghan, Alessa
Zach Abrahams, MD

Administrative Research Volunteers help identify collaboration opportunities with others (youth organizations, tech companies, similar coding programs, etc)

Lee-Ann O'Neill
Abdelhakim Messaoudi
Vienna Zito
Gursheen Kaur Chawla

Raïssa Girimana
Yuka Ishii
Christine Nuqui

Social Media Volunteers, high-school and college students offer their insights, suggestions and critiques from the perspective of our participant age group

Ayma Bukhari
Riki McAlear
Kshitij Mavai

Nancy Lam
Naomi Runstedtler
Katie Nguyen

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Board of Directors and Staff

Every member of Code Youth's team is passionate about supporting youth in overcoming barriers to employment
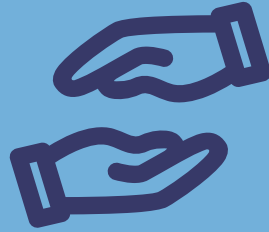
Board of Directors:

Mona Forrest (Chair / Founder)

Fareha Muhammady (Treasurer)

Tyler Gow (Assistant Treasurer)

Carter Kilgour

Claude Richer

Ranjith Mathew

Alex Katayama (Board Advisor / co-founder)

Staff:

Giselle Leduc, Executive Director

Munira Mohamed, Vocational Counsellor

Jannat Kaur Singh, Technology Facilitator

Lee-Ann O'Neill, Program Assistant (Jun 2021-present)

Sydney Riddiford, Program Assistant (Mar-Jun 2021)

Lee-Ann O'Neill, Business Development Rep

Jennifer Spence, Bookkeeper

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Funder and Supporters

Code Youth is very grateful to
Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)
for funding our program with $951,514 over 35-months under the
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy (YESS)
(Project Number: 016640831)
This is the funding that helped us get our mission started.

We are also very grateful to
Anita Vandenbeld, MP for Ottawa West - Nepean, Ontario,
for her continuous support over the past four years
for summer grants to do an environmental scan, research
employer needs, produce draft budgets, etc.

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Donors

Many thanks to the following sponsors and supporters for their in-kind gifts, donations and support of the program:

2Keys, an Interac Company, Alan McKay
(desktop/laptop donations)

Bourk Software Consulting, Simon Bourk
(SCRUM training via Minecraft)

Maple Wishes, The Wishing Well Project
(cash donation)

Neil Squire, Cheryl Comar
(assistive devices for participants with disabilities)

Olivier Turpin, Corporate Graphic Designer
(Code Youth logo redesign)

uOttawa, Telfer School of Management
(community service learning project)

Rebel.com, Brett Tackaberry
(domain names & web hosting)

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English Language Tutoring for the Ottawa Community (ELTOC)
gave our participants the opportunity to create a real world project;
a language learning app for their adult literacy learners.
See the app here: ELTOC app

The following people and organizations shared their valuable time, advice and knowledge as guest speakers and workshop facilitators:

- Black Professionals in Technology Network BPTN - Monique Clarke
- Bosi Chen, Full Stack Developer (GitHub)
- Deepak Agarwal, Full Stack Developer (job search)
- iContribute, founders (mobile app)
- Innovapost Team @ Canada Post (mobile app deployment cycle)
- Invest Ottawa (entrepreneurship)
- Justin Whalley, Database Technical Support Analyst - Shopify
- Incubator13, Camila Pastran (freelancing and entrepreneurship)
- Nokia Careers - Linda Krebbs
- Ranjith Mathew (networking & job search)
- Shinydocs - Heidi Hauver, VP People Experience
- TalentTank Recruiting - Mathew Shulman, Director & Co-founder
- TOOS Technical Solutions - Taha Sameer (mock interviews)
- Waterbear Cloud, Kevin Lindsay, CEO (development for AWS & cloud)

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- Auticon
- Brockville Employment + Education Centre
- Canadian Centre for Victims of Armed Conflicts (Refugee youth)
- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- City of Ottawa, Community & Funding Integrated Neighbourhood Team
- CollabSpace (office space & admin support)
- Dress for Success Ottawa
- Durham Region Unemployed Help Centre
- Employment Accessibility Resource Network
- Experica 2.0
- Incubator 13 - Entrepreneurship Hub
- Inuuqatigiit Centre (Inuit youth)
- Invest Ottawa
- Kagita Mikam (Indigenous youth)
- Neil Squire (youth with disabilities)
- OCDSB Indigenous Education Advisory Council
- Operation Come Home
- Ottawa Employment Hub
- Ottawa Network for Education
- Rideau/Rockcliffe Community Centre
- Specialisterne
- Start Up Canada
- Supported Employment Alliance (SEA)
- Vanier Community Service Centre
- YMCA Newcomer Youth Leadership Development Program
- Youth Employment Symposium: Connecting Paths to Employers
- Youth LEAD Program, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
- Youth Services Bureau

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OTTAWA BUSINESS JOURNAL   LOCAL   TECHOPIA   REAL ESTATE   REGIONAL   CANADA - WORLD

The Bright Side of Business: Code Youth receives funding to empower at-risk youth with tech-sector training

Ottawa Business Journal
https://obj.ca/article/local/bright-side-business-code-youth-receives-funding-empower-risk-youth-tech-sector
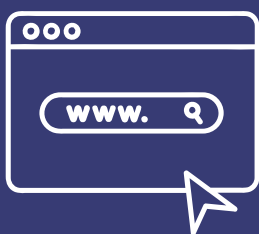
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Want to get involved?

There are several ways to volunteer with Code Youth and support its mission in helping at-risk youth get a second chance at a career.

Check out our website at
https://www.code-youth.ca/volunteer-with-code-youth/

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www.code-youth.ca

Text or Call
- 613-863-2633 OR
- 613-979-2633

Follow us and help spread the word

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