



COMMUNITY
SERVICES

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KidStart 6-12s Annual Program Report 2021-22

About us

KidStart is a one-to-one volunteer mentoring program for children and youth who are at risk of experiencing serious difficulties in their lives. Our goals are to provide each participant with opportunities to develop a supportive relationship with a caring adult, to experience a sense of personal achievement, and to strengthen their resilience. We recruit, select, and support volunteer mentors who are consistent and positive role models. They meet weekly with the child or youth they are assigned to and engage them in a variety of community activities that are fun and have the potential to create new interests, discover inherent talents and abilities, and reinforce strengths.

KidStart is fundamentally preventive, rooted in the belief and supported by research – that early engagement with an adult mentor improves participants' capacity to overcome adversity and become more active and involved in their communities. KidStart's success is due to the outstanding commitment that our volunteers make to the program and the power of positive and meaningful relationships.

Volunteers are selected based on their demonstrated ability to accept young people unconditionally, develop caring relationships with them based on mutual trust, and model respectful attitudes and behaviour. We require every volunteer to make a one-year commitment to KidStart. Our Coordinators provide all our mentors with ongoing support, supervision and learning opportunities to ensure that the objectives of the program are consistently met, and that mentors are recognized for their contributions.

PLEA has been providing service through KidStart for over 30 years. It has been approved for police diversion referrals by the Vancouver Police Department since 2004.

This report focusses the KidStart 6-12s program which is provided throughout Metro Vancouver. It is funded by PLEA's generous donors, grants, and gaming revenue. All children are eligible; referrals come from parents or guardians, family members, teachers, school counsellors, community workers, social workers, police and others. We also receive funding from Family Services of Greater Vancouver (FSGV) who contract with us in order to refer children whose families are accessing their family counselling services.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) contracts with us in the Vancouver Coastal Region to refer youth aged 12-17 who are on probation, are diverted from court, or who may be transitioning from other PLEA youth justice programs; and in the Tri-Cities and Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows to refer youth who are 13 to 18 years old, and identified by their social workers, probation officers or others as being in need of a mentor. Through our program Kinnections we have extended the benefits of KidStart to older youth who are transitioning to independence from MCFD guardianship or are currently on a Youth Agreement. We are providing this contracted service in Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows.

Through our partnerships with John Howard Society of North Island and the John Howard Society of Victoria, the program has been successfully replicated in Campbell River, Courtenay, Comox and Victoria.

www.plea.ca

Who we served...

Overall

Profile	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of cases	151	118	167	164	182
# of youth served	142	116	156	145	170
% young women	69	72	62	57	65
% young men	31	28	38	43	35
% self-identified as Indigenous	23	24	26	28	25
Average age when cases were opened	10	10	10	10	10

of cases can be greater than the # youth because some youth were re-referred

FSGV

Profile	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
# of cases	18	16	25	29	29
# of youth served	16	16	24	27	28
% young women	56	50	42	41	46
% young men	44	50	58	59	54
% self-identified as Indigenous	6	12	8	0	7
Average age when cases were opened	8	9	9	9	9

of cases can be greater than the # youth because some youth were re-referred

How we did...service delivery

Overall

Profile	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	2017-18
Average monthly caseload	90	93	107	110	111
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N = discharged cases)	745 (N=64)	753 (N=44)	678 (N=68)	524 (N=61)	571 (N=79)
Average # of days wait (for opened cases) N = opened cases	431 (N=80)	348 (N=20)	335 (N=59)	299 (N=61)	427 (N=62)
# of volunteers	132	113	155	165	166
# of total volunteer hours	3321	2737	5083	6209	6490
% of relationships lasting > 1 year	76	90	69	54	77

How we did...against last year's goals

1. To measure the impact of the program on children and youth served. The development of an outcomes measurement tool to survey mentors and mentees.

Using the Literature Review completed by the McCreary Center Society and other highly regarded examples of outcomes measurement tools in the field, a tool was developed exclusively for KidStart with support from PLEA's Manager of Impact Evaluation and Quality Improvement.

KidStart has started sending surveys to Mentors and Mentee families in the fall. Data will be collected by the KidStart Program Manager and will be used for quality assurance, program development and to showcase to funders the impact of participating in KidStart.

2. To meaningfully incorporate cultural connections into the KidStart Program.

A KidStart Steering Committee, comprised of members of PLEA's Board of Directors, PLEA's Knowledge Keeper, a member of PLEA's Culture, Diversity and Accessibility Committee as well as KidStart Management and staff will be meeting early in the next fiscal year to develop a plan for meeting the cultural needs of mentees in the program.

3. For KidStart to 're-bounce' to the full caseloads after having a significant disruption due to Covid-19.

One of the KidStart Coordinators left us this year to pursue a new role, the decision was made not to fill this vacancy and therefore the capacity of the program was reduced to 90 mentees. At the end of the fiscal year, there were 87 mentees in the program, marking a return to full caseloads!

4. Continue to work towards greater consistency among programs offered by our partners.

This year we held our first joint John Howard Society of North Island and John Howard Society of Victoria and PLEA meeting in years. It was great to collaborate, share challenges and opportunities and find greater consistency within KidStart. All agencies are sharing information and finding more uniformity in the services we offer.

This goal is in progress. We recently launched the new KidStart.ca website which features updated visuals and messaging. It also has improved site navigation to support volunteer and donor recruitment efforts at a local level (Lower Mainland, Victoria and Comox/Campbell River), streamlines the processing of online donations, both from a user and team perspective, and more clearly articulates the relationship between the three service delivery partners. The communications team is additionally partnering with the John Howard Society of Victoria to update their print materials to further work towards brand consistency province wide.

4. Secure \$312,476 in fundraising revenue towards our 2021-22 operating costs. The workplan includes grant prospects as well as a focus on new donor acquisition, as well as the number and amount of gifts received through individual giving.

Fundraising results as of March 31st 2021 show the community gave \$250,586 in support of the KidStart 6-12s program, which relies on this revenue in order to operate. When you combine this with the fundraising revenue we brought forward from last year and deduct the revenue for use towards the operating costs of the program in the 2021-22 fiscal year, this results in \$277,843 in funding for our 2021-22 operating costs. This is \$34,633 below what we hoped for.

5. Implement the approved planned giving strategy to encourage an increase in legacy gifts.

This goal was not pursued, When it became clear the fundraising target for operations was going to be a challenge, we narrowed our focus to chasing the operational target only.

6. Building on the launch of the new KidStart website, develop a digital communications strategy and related policies to ensure KidStart is ready to capitalize on the acceleration of online giving that's becoming prevalent in the charitable sector.

A high-level digital communications plan was drafted which outlines a number of actions for KidStart to take, namely:

- A refresh the program's mailing lists. This is complete. 124 individuals signed up to receive latest news and updates from the program.
- Development of a bi-annual KidStart newsletter. This is in progress. A KidStart newsletter will be issued twice a year in Spring and Fall to keep KidStart's stakeholders informed about the program's latest news and events.
- Development of a KidStart social media strategy. This is in progress. A project team has been created to outline our social media objectives, targets and intended audience as well as a content schedule.
- Development of an image archive. This is in progress. Communications is becoming more image-driven. Having authentic, powerful imagery is a must when attempting to convey the impact of the program through digital means.

Selected accomplishments...

1. We were able to transition back to providing in-person group activities this year! Five were held in person, including a Science World day and a trip to the PNE and two were virtual arts and craft activities.
2. KidStart made its first attempt at running a donor acquisition mailing campaign. We raised \$1090 with 14 new donors.
3. Two successful holiday campaigns occurred between November 2021 and January 2022. The Holiday Hampers campaign was extremely successful, raising \$6,548 and involving support from Sprott Shaw College, Safeway, and Walmart. Next came the holiday fundraising campaign which brought in \$2,995.
4. 32 of our children and their families received hampers to support their basic food needs through the holidays.
5. 26 KidStart children attended camp this year! Overnight camps were not offered this year due to Covid-19 but day camps were a fantastic alternative. We also provided 6 children to do lessons in an area of their interest including music, physical activity and horseback riding.

Selected stories...

The children we work with experience big and small successes. The following illustrate the kind of growth and development that can occur for youth with the support and guidance of their mentors:

1. Nine-year-old Joshua had a long trauma history; he needed a male mentor to talk to that he could trust. Joshua's mentor Mark have spent a lot of time being outdoors. Joshua's mom shared that his confidence has increased, and he is emotionally benefiting from having a consistent relationship with his mentor. In addition, Joshua's bond with Mark has enhanced his self confidence and he is happy to see his mentor every Saturday for a new adventure.
2. Danika was struggling socially and emotionally both at home and school. Danika's mentor offers support, encouragement, and fun by creating baking and art activities for Danika to participate in, as a result Danika is coping with her emotions better and her self-esteem has increased.

3. Madeline was having a tough time before she was matched with her mentor Patty. Patty is consistent, engaging and they have lots of fun together. Madeline is a teen now and they often meet up and lose track of time talking about high school, friends and growing up. Even during the pandemic, they would meet in parks and get ice cream and hang out. As Madeline gets ready to leave the KidStart program, she will maintain a lifelong connection to Patty.

Biggest challenges...

1. This year we continued to face some challenges around the impact of Covid-19. Early in the year, our services were restricted to ensure the health and safety of our mentors and mentees were protected. This year we had a blend of virtual and in person events. Next year, we hope to be meeting in person for the majority of our events. We have found that zoom will continue to be a great tool in training our mentors as it has increased some attendance as it is easy to access. Amongst challenges are always learnings!
2. This year has been a challenging one for fundraising. Unlike the previous, we did not receive the same level of unsolicited large gifts to support us in navigating the pandemic. Furthermore, a few of our long-term funders reduced or simply were unable to give. Shifts like this are likely a reflection of the economic situation brought about because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and not related to the program.

Our team...



Volunteer Mentors have taken part in our “Boundaries and Trauma Informed Practice Orientation Training”, Understanding Substance Use, MANDT Verbal De-escalation training and Learning about Indigenous culture and the Impact of Residential Schools,

Our Fundraising Specialist participated in training on; Sponsorship opportunities, CRA reporting, major donor acquisition, giving trends, new fundraising platforms, communication plans, Indigenous cultural safety, Canadian donor trends and long term donor stewardship.

New relationships...

We welcomed 14 new individual donors courtesy of our donor acquisition campaign. We also welcomed Portes Cares into our donor family which generously gave a first gift of \$5000. Dayhu Investments and G & F Financial rejoined our giving circle with gifts of \$5000.

While it's always good to recognize the new, we would be remiss not to mention our long-standing donors who remain with us through thick and thin, year after year, such as Ames Family Foundation, BC Gaming, City of Vancouver, Gordon Fund (held at the Vancouver Foundation), RBC Foundation, Reay & Linda Mackay Fund (held at the Fiera Capital Foundation), Stewart Fund (held at the Vancouver Foundation), Vancouver Regional Construction Association and our individual donors who are too many to list. We are very grateful for their continued support.

Next year's goals...

1. Secure between \$388,688 and \$499,542 in fundraising revenue towards our 2022-2023 operating costs.
2. Continue to implement the KidStart communications plan including the introduction of bi-annual newsletters, the development of a social media strategy, and the creation of an image archive.
3. Develop and execute a schedule of events as a means of reconnecting with KidStart stakeholders following the COVID-19 pandemic including in-person group activities, a volunteer appreciation event, and a donor stewardship event.
4. To use data collected from surveys to do quality assurance, program improvement and enhancement.
5. KidStart Steering Committee drives optimized effectiveness and alignment with best practice
6. To meaningfully incorporate cultural connections into the KidStart Program.
7. To explore partnerships with post-secondary institutions for Volunteer Mentor recruitment.

For more information...

For programming contact Julia Harris, Program Manager, at 604-363-0046 or email jharris@plea.bc.ca. For fundraising contact Ethan Clow, Fundraising Specialist, at 604-364-3076 or email eclow@plea.bc.ca.