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## KidStart 6-12s Annual Program Report 2022-23

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### 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.

PLEA has been providing services through KidStart for over 35 years. 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 behaviours. 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.

This report focuses on 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.

## Who we served...

### Overall

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# of cases	126	151	118	167	164
# of youth served	115	142	116	156	145
% young women	71	69	72	62	57
% young men	29	31	28	38	43
% self-identified as Indigenous	25	23	24	26	28
Average age when cases were opened	11	10	10	10	10

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

### FSGV

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
# of cases	13	18	16	25	29
# of youth served	12	16	16	24	27
% young women	50	56	50	42	41
% young men	50	44	50	58	59
% self-identified as Indigenous	8	6	12	8	0
Average age when cases were opened	8	8	9	9	9

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

## How we did...service delivery

### Overall

Profile	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
Average monthly caseload	81	90	93	107	110
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N = discharged cases)	763 (N=49)	745 (N=64)	753 (N=44)	678 (N=68)	524 (N=61)
Average # of days wait (for opened cases) N = opened cases	304 (N=36)	431 (N=80)	348 (N=20)	335 (N=59)	299 (N=61)
# of volunteers	116	132	113	155	165
# of total volunteer hours	5416	3321	2737	5083	6209
% of relationships lasting > 1 year	83	76	90	69	54

We have seen a vast improvement in the amount of connection between mentees and mentors as we then came out of the pandemic. It has been great to see them able to spend more quality time together which is the heart of this program!

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

### **1. Secure between \$388,688 and \$499,542 in fundraising revenue towards our 2022-2023 operating costs.**

*Unreconciled fundraising results as of March 31st, 2023, show the community gave \$282,917, an increase of 16% from last year.*

*Like the year before, this has been a challenging endeavor for the fundraising team. Our largest gift remains the \$88,000 from the Province of BC's Community Gaming Grant. Most notably, the City of Vancouver made the decision last year to greatly reduce their funding, as a pre-cursor to ceasing their funding altogether this year.*

### **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.**

*This goal is complete. The Communications and Development Team has created content calendar that is refreshed annually. It drives the content for the bi-annual newsletters we now issue to our donors and mailing list subscribers, as well as our social media posts. Images portraying our programming and events are captured in a centralized, accessible image library on Flickr.*

### **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.**

*This goal was achieved. 2022-23 saw us hold the following events:*

*June 2022: A Volunteer Appreciation BBQ was held in Surrey, our first in person appreciation event since the pandemic started. We had food trucks, games and an ice cream truck to celebrate the contributions of our mentors. It was lovely to celebrate long service awards and treat our mentors to a fun night out. Next year we will plan to do events regionally to ensure all mentors can easily attend to celebrate their amazing impact on the program.*

*August 2022: The beautiful VanDusen Gardens served as a perfect backdrop for our first event KidStart Celebration. The event had 112 registrants and saw participation from donors, mentors, mentees, board members and staff.*

### **4. To use data collected from surveys to do quality assurance, program improvement and enhancement.**

*This goal is complete. The Communications and Development team now send monthly surveys to new donors, collecting information on their preferences for communication and engagement.*

### **5. KidStart Steering Committee drives optimized effectiveness and alignment with best practice.**

*One Steering Committee took place this year to explore cultural components of the KidStart Program. Next year the topic of partnerships with post-secondary institutions will be explored.*

### **6. To meaningfully incorporate cultural connections into the KidStart Program.**

*A Steering Committee meeting was held in to explore how cultural components can be added to the program. It was determined that building a resource list for mentors to access would be a helpful place to start.*

### **7. To explore partnerships with post-secondary institutions for Volunteer Mentor recruitment.**

*This goal will be moved to next year.*

## Selected accomplishments...

1. We successfully held the first annual KidStart Celebration on August 28<sup>th</sup> 2022 at the VanDusen Gardens. The event had 112 registrants and saw participation from donors, mentors, mentees, board members and staff. Attendees enjoyed a tasty lunch of sandwiches, pasta, and cookies provided by Truffles, the arts and crafts table, games & activities, and getting tattoos! Yes, we had air brush tattoos from Tattoos 4 Now, and of course, the fabulous balloon wall – which featured prizes hidden behind the balloons!

The event raised \$8,500 even though the goal wasn't to fundraise. Celebration was also able to activate numerous sponsors and motivate businesses to donate door prizes. A big thank you to the providers of the prizes: Amazing Co Mysteries, Rain City Games, Glitch Bar and Games room, H.R. MacMillan Space Centre, Hive Climbing, the Museum of Anthropology, Pandora's Locks, the Rec Room at Brentwood, the Aquarium, the Improv Centre, the Keg, the Vancouver Police Museum, Imperial Hobbies, EA Games, the Arts Umbrella, and Core Games!

Overall – a fantastic day and we'd like to express our appreciation of our main sponsors - Wesbild and Nucleus Networks - who helped make it all come together. We'd also like to thank Vancity – Commercial Branch for their support.

2. Two successful holiday campaigns occurred between November 2022 and January 2023. The Holiday Food Hamper campaign raised \$10,651.64 and involved support from Save on Foods, Vanfire, First West Credit Union, Kiewit-Ledcor, Douglas College, Eddies Hang Up Display, and Advantage Box. This is the first time that the team raised enough to cover all of PLEA's programs for the Holiday Hampers. 35 of these hampers were given to KidStart mentees and their families. The remainder went to youth and families participating in other PLEA programs.

The second campaign was the annual Holiday Campaign for KidStart. This year we raised \$3596, exceeding our goal of \$3000 and increasing from \$2507 last year. The donations raised go directly towards funding the operations of the program.

3. 48 kids attended KidStart Summer Camps this year!

## 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. Charlotte and her mentee Sofia just celebrated 5 years together. Sofia became the first person in her family to graduate high school last year! She recently got a job at a bakery and is moving out on her own. Though Sofia is finishing up with KidStart as she transitions to independence, she plans to stay connected to Charlotte as she becomes an adult.
2. Brian supported his mentee Arman on a school project that required him to develop a "simple" machine. It presented many challenges, to create the design, source materials and assemble this unique device. After a few tweaks the machine was ready to be triggered. The team held its breath as it went into motion. It took a few moments for it to cycle through each step but sure enough it worked! Arman's teacher gave the him an 'A' adding the outcome was far more complex than she had anticipated. His mum's input and encouragement played an important role in the success.
3. One of our stories is an amazing testimony from the parent of one of our mentees;

"Jessica recently got a job at a restaurant and has signed up for softball. Things are really looking up for her! Monica is such a wonderful influence on Jessica. Since they first got together, Jessica has really taken to her. She honestly

thought negatively about the whole mentoring program at first, but then quickly realized how wrong she was. Jessica instantly took to Monica after realizing this was a peer, just a little bit older and wiser. A person who genuinely WANTED to hang out with her at a time in her life when she barely had a friend. Monica has helped change her life around.

I am so thankful for this organization and how much it has helped my daughter's own mental health. At her worst, she was crying a lot, self harming, staying inside... Today, she goes to school regularly (and got all A's in her first semester!), has several friends, goes on sleepovers, has a job, joined a sport she likes, and it goes on. Monica and the KidStart Mentoring Program helped us get her the help we so desperately needed. I cannot thank you enough for this".

## Biggest challenges...

1. Our biggest challenge is the fallout from the shifting economic forces created by COVID-19. This is not just a problem with KidStart but across the charity sector, organizations are seeing 20% to 30% drops in their fundraising results. The largest impact of this on KidStart is the loss of the City of Vancouver as a funder. They were a regular donor of over \$30,000.
2. The other impact of Covid-19 is on the recruitment of mentors to the program. People's commitments have changed during and after the pandemic and the program is working hard to adapt and make our volunteering opportunity attractive to people looking to help their communities.

## Our team...



Volunteer Mentors have taken part in our “Boundaries and Trauma Informed Practice Orientation Training”, MANDT Verbal De-escalation training, Suicidal Ideation and Assessments, Children of the Street’s Safer Space training (online safety, sexual exploitation) and Learning about Indigenous culture and the Impact of Residential Schools.

Our Fundraising Specialist participated in training on; financial literacy, decolonizing and indigenizing our practice, finding event sponsors, board governance as well as planned giving challenges and opportunities.

## New relationships...

We saw several donors return from long absences, including Nucleus Networks, the Hamber Foundation, Vancity, and Pacific Blue Cross, as well as several individual donors. Additionally, we gained some new individual donors and welcomed Wesbild holdings and the Seedlings Foundation into our donor family. . .

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, 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. KidStart started collecting outcome measurement data in 2021. This year KidStart will examine the data that has been collected and put into place any program enhancements or changes needed to improve outcomes.
2. To meaningfully incorporate cultural connections into the KidStart Program.
3. To explore partnerships with post-secondary institutions for Volunteer Mentor recruitment.
4. To secure at least \$465,900 in fundraising revenue towards our 2023-24 operating costs.

## For more information...

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