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Despite the restrictions and distancing measures that were sanctioned in Ontario during the pandemic in 2020, the staff and volunteer teams at Christie Lake Kids upheld our efforts to offer quality programming for our young participants. After hosting a wildly successful summer camp program that took place entirely online, restrictions were lifted in the fall and we kicked off our in-person program schedule with a firm safety plan in place. In order to conduct in-person programs, all of our staff and volunteers were trained in and agreed to adhere to strict protocols that outlined best practise standards that prioritized safety above all else.

Our pandemic protocols include terms recommended by provincial and federal health officials:

- All staff, volunteers and participants submit to pre-screen questions prior to every program date, including a temperature check upon entry. Those who report symptoms are encouraged to self-isolate and to get tested as soon as possible.
- Contact tracing documents are used to keep accurate accounts of attendance each week.
- All staff, volunteers and participants wear masks and we practise mandatory hand hygiene, particularly handwashing.
- We maintain clean play areas by bringing in clean equipment and disinfecting all surfaces and objects after use.

Nothing is more important than protecting the health and well-being of the community, especially the province's most vulnerable populations. The young people in our programs show resilience in many ways but some of our families are vulnerable to the risks posed by the pandemic because they have limited access to doctors and medications, healthy meals and stimulating cognitive activity. This is why it is important for us at Christie Lake Kids to do everything we can to provide programming options, while putting protective sanctions in place to protect these young people and ourselves.

Below are some of the activities we have been delivering during the pandemic:

Christie Lake Camp Programs:

Summer 2020 featured the launch of CLK's first ever virtual programming, Camp in a Box, in response to the government's closure of overnight camps. With a goal of delivering the spirit and excitement of camp in a safe and accessible way, we delivered curated kits filled with art supplies, science/nature materials, sports equipment, water bottles, snack kits, camper mugs, books, and more to the homes of 300 campers. Similar to our on-site camp programming, Camp in a Box divided each session of campers into age-specific groupings. Each section met online each day for age group-specific activities, led by a team





of passionate summer staff and volunteers. Campers completed activities like STEM Challenges games, and Arts/Craft Projects each day. Our LITs completed a series of Leadership Workshops with guest speakers who covered topics including health body image, healthy friendships and relationships, and youth mental health.

In response to ever-changing pandemic realities, CLK is working on a variety of scenarios to ensure that camp programming is offered no matter what restrictions are in place this summer. We remain hopeful that some form of in-person programming will be a possibility, and we are also expanding our Camp in a Box program plans to ensure we are prepared to deliver virtual programming as well. We are incredibly proud of the resilience of our campers, their families, and our summer staff who keep the camp spirit alive year-round! Our summer team will reach out to families in May with more information once our summer plans are confirmed. Until then, we appreciate your patience as we work with leaders and community partners to ensure a fun, safe, and exciting summer is planned for our campers!

Leaders in Training Programs:

The Leadership in Training program has been redesigned to accommodate all of our youth (13-17 in age appropriate groups) during the covid-19 pandemic. The program is 100% virtual this year and we are aiming to find new best practices that best fit the program and our youth's needs.

This year we have taken a larger focus on healthy living and mental health. We have integrated cooking, art, dance, yoga and fitness programs to keep the youth creative and physically active, as well as learning new skills. We are providing opportunities for the youth to talk about how they are feeling and how they are being affected from this collective trauma. The mentoring aspect of LIT has been the biggest success. Fostering those healthy relationships has given the youth a space place to open up honestly and work on personal goals that they have created during this pandemic. Our current LIT program aims to engage youth in their own growth this year so they can develop ownership and take responsibility for their continued learning.

Skills Through Arts & Recreation (STAR):

Our STAR programs have continued to engage children and youth aged 6-17, by offering a variety of arts and recreation program activities. During Covid 19, we are currently serving children and youth from all across Ottawa, but primarily from the Russell Heights, Caldwell and Strathcona Heights communities. In the fall, we were running half of our programs virtually, and half of our programs in-person. It was important for us to provide both program options in order to serve as many families as we can during this time.

Our winter session has consisted of virtual programs only. Every child who is signed up for a virtual program receives a STAR program kit, containing all equipment and materials needed in order to assure we are providing an engaging and educational experience to all. We tripled the amount of virtual spots this session, in order to still provide programming to those who had opted for in-person in the fall.

We will be returning to hybrid model of virtual and in-person programming, for our spring session.