





In this year's report, we celebrate the profound impact of relationships fostered through Ever Active Schools' diverse programs. From empowering Indigenous youth at Culture Camps guided by Elders, to the inclusive environments of the Jays Care Affiliate School Program where students build confidence through sports, our initiatives highlight the transformative power of connection. The Recreation Leadership Program links students to mentorship and employment opportunities, while our Active School Travel initiatives forge community bonds through sustainable transportation practices. These stories illustrate how strong, supportive relationships drive our mission, empowering students and communities alike to thrive.

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Message from Our Board of Directors

On behalf of our staff and board at Ever Active Schools we would like to thank our friends, and supporters of our work this past school year. Each year we grow our reach across Alberta and beyond and are thankful for the opportunities to make meaningful differences in the lives of children and youth daily. We hope you enjoy this year's report which highlights some of our favourite moments from the year!



Rebecca Nedelec
Board Chair



Robert Young
Past Board Chair



Brian Andrais
Director



Nancy Luyckfassel
Director



Sean Lessard
Director



Val Olekshy
Director



Alim Gillani
Director

About Ever Active Schools

Ever Active is a National Charity governed by a Board of Directors that is responsible for guiding the organization toward a sustainable and successful future. Our vision is that all students belong to healthy school communities that enable optimal health and learning. At Ever Active Schools we value: relationships, innovation, diversity, contributing and well-being.

We are pleased to present our annual report for the 2023-24 school year. As you navigate through this report you'll learn more about how we make a difference in the lives of children and youth across Alberta and beyond by:

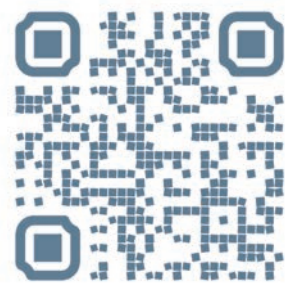
- supporting capacity building efforts to increase preparedness to address Comprehensive School Health,
- supporting schools to meet the recommendations for health-promoting schools,
- supporting the needs of priority populations, and,
- by providing opportunities for children and youth to experience increased well-being.

This work wouldn't be possible without the guidance and support of our various advisors. At Ever Active Schools we are fortunate to have the support of both an Educator Advisory Council (EAC) and a Youth Advisory Council (YAC). To learn more about these councils, and their representation, visit: www.everactive.org/about/our-people/.

In addition to the support and guidance provided by our advisory councils we feel very fortunate and grateful to have had the support of a variety of Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers from across many Treaty areas over the years. In particular, we've had the distinct privilege of having Elder Flora Northwest support our team and guide our work in a good way over the past five years.



Elder Flora Northwest at Shaping the Future, 2023



Scan to see our EAC and YAC

Total Reach

274,024

People reached

750

Daily average

1,405

Products/services delivered

Breakdown

70%

Engaged with us as individuals (e.g., through workshops or resources).

29%

Reached through school-level interactions.

<1%

Reached through school authority or association-level interactions.

Unique Schools/Programs

559

Up from 460

Equivalent to all schools in: Edmonton, Red Deer, Airdrie, Lethbridge, Grande Prairie and Saskatoon combined!

Teacher and Staff

5,882

Total reached

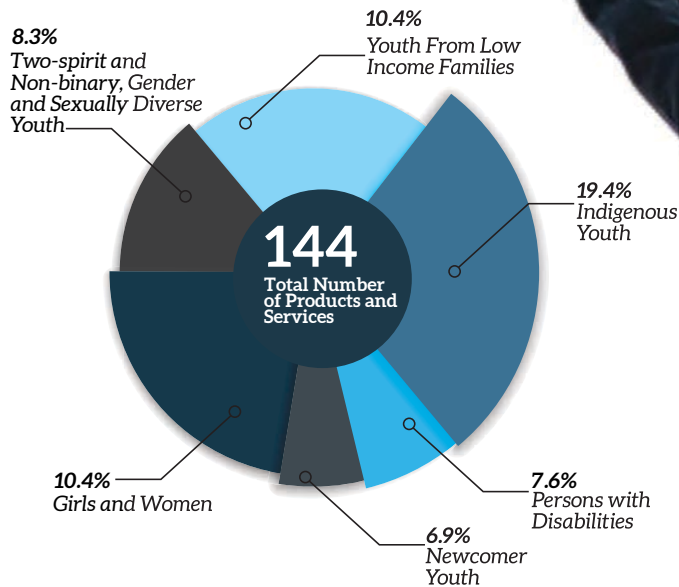
Estimated number of participants that took part in the 2023 Edmonton Marathon

Children and Youth

77,807

Total reached

Equivalent to more than 1.5 times the population of the Northwest Territory



Percentage Distribution Of Products and Services Supporting Priority Populations

Partnerships

167

Unique

39

New

Partnerships by sector

Health: 20
Education: 36
Recreation/Active Living: 77
Research: 6
Private: 6
Other: 22

Nature of Partnerships

Alliance: 43
Sponsorship: 13
Contract: 29
Win-Win: 65
Shared Venture: 17

Nature of Partnerships

Total Committees: 56
Municipal/Regional: 23
Provincial: 20
National: 12
International: 1

Support and Development

Across our programs and services EAS supported participants to develop or reinforce an average of 6 (n=297) partners to support their wellness efforts

Adaptive Sport Festival



Funder:



Partners:



“ It’s okay to fail. If you are trying a modification to include someone, and it doesn’t work the way you hoped, don’t be discouraged - keep trying.

Erin Schwab

Health and Wellness Consultant,
Ever Active Schools



In the fall of 2023, as part of the Everybody Plays initiative, Ever Active Schools (EAS) hosted an Adaptive Sport Festival in partnership with Medicine Hat Adaptive Sport and Recreation and Autism Society Alberta. The festival brought together students with disabilities, teachers, educational assistants, and caregivers from 12 schools and five school jurisdictions to explore ways to offer more inclusive sports and recreation, ensuring everyone can play.

One of the nearly 100 participants, Reid, has a condition that limits his joint mobility. However, his condition has not stopped him from being a kid, participating in and enjoying adaptive sport and recreation.

At the festival, participants were split into three groups where they had the opportunity to play wheelchair sports, adaptive boccia and gym games. Erin Schwab, EAS Health and Wellness Consultant, who facilitated the event, spent the day in the gym game quadrant, where participants and educators asked questions and worked together to adapt the games to fit everyone’s needs. While playing a game called Tails, Reid’s educational assistant asked him whose tail she should try to pull for him, and they would chase their target together. By offering Reid the choice of his target, he could participate alongside his peers in the game.

A teacher summarized the event: “Each of my students felt supported and included in the activities that were presented and left feeling like they belonged to a collective group of people who shared similar interests and needs.” Erin, who was deeply moved by the experience, says the biggest thing she learned from the Adaptive Sport Festival was that “it is okay to fail. If you are

trying a modification to include someone and it does not work the way you hoped, don’t be discouraged, keep trying.”

Project Overview

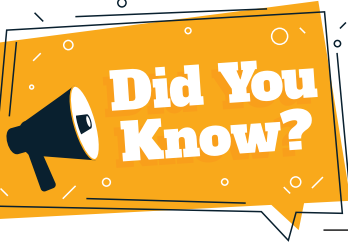
Everybody Plays events create opportunities to increase well-being for children and youth through participation in recreation, sport and/or performance arts. EAS Health & Wellness Consultants work with school and community partners to identify and respond to local needs, providing opportunities for youth to participate along with professional development and capacity building opportunities for educators, champions and student leaders.

Project Results

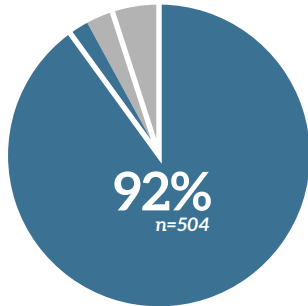
The Adaptive Sport Festival had a significant impact on student participants. According to a survey of 33 students:

97% of participants tried a new activity for the first time and reported feeling more active due to the opportunity. This highlights the festival's success in encouraging physical activity and introducing students to new sports. 100% of participants said the event helped them make friends and feel like they were part of a group. This demonstrates the festival's effectiveness in fostering social connections and creating a sense of community among the students.

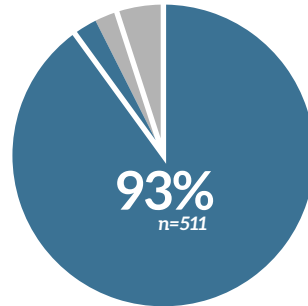
Overall, the Adaptive Sport Festival not only promoted physical activity but also played a crucial role in enhancing social connection and inclusivity among student participants.



Across our consultation and community development projects, professional learning opportunities and events, Ever Active Schools is moving the needle on improving supports to priority populations



Of surveyed participants indicated that they were more familiar and comfortable with how to meet the equity, diversity and inclusion needs of priority populations



Of surveyed attendees reported feeling more supported through resources or partner organizations to meet the equity, diversity and inclusion needs of priority populations



Culture Camp



“ Students crafting their walking sticks were fully immersed in their task. Without distractions like cell phones, they focused intently on their creations, each one weaving their own memories into the wood.

Jason Lafferty

*Health and Wellness Consultant,
Ever Active Schools*

The day was designed to immerse students in the richness of ceremony and tradition, offering them a living community experience. Unlike typical school days marked by a colonized bell, this day encouraged students to follow their instincts and explore where their hearts led them. Forty-five students from four Edmonton Public School Board high schools attended the Culture Camp, crafting walking sticks and scraping moose hide, all at their own pace and with complete freedom of choice.

Jason Lafferty, Ever Active Schools Health and Wellness Consultant and facilitator of the camp, observed, “Students crafting their walking sticks were fully immersed in their task. Without distractions like cell phones, they focused intently on their creations, each one weaving their own memories into the wood.” There was no rush to complete every activity; instead, the focus was on allowing students to simply exist in the moment, embracing the teachings and experiences as they unfolded naturally.

The culture camp was guided by Elders who led various activities for the students, providing Lafferty with a unique perspective to observe their interactions. He noted that one particularly striking moment occurred during the moose hide scraping activity. Two students from different schools engaged deeply in conversation as they worked alongside each other. The Elder guiding them had emphasized the ceremonial nature of

the task, stressing the importance of bringing positive thoughts and taking breaks as needed. Despite having just met that morning, the students connected as if they had known each other for years, bonding over their shared passion for the day's teachings.

This opportunity underscores the power of experiential learning in fostering genuine connections and meaningful experiences among Indigenous youth. The absence of external pressures allowed the students to engage authentically with the teachings and each other, creating a day rich in cultural exchange and personal growth.

Project Overview

The Culture Camp was a small piece of our work in partnership with Jasper Place High School's Indigenous Leading Spirits Club, through the support of the Archdiocese's Indigenous Reconciliation Fund. This initiative is in its early days and aims to coordinate multi-sport exhibition games and tournaments hosted locally and throughout the city. By fostering athletic skill and cultural pride simultaneously, this project aims to create a platform that celebrates Indigenous culture through the spirit of competitive sports, uniting schools across the city.



“ We were honoured to learn directly from Elders Clarence Whitstone, Doris Stanley, Denis Stick and Clifford Stick, who shared their knowledge through an Indigenous lens, starting with Creation stories.

Chantell Widney

Health and Wellness Consultant,
Ever Active Schools

Another Ever Active Schools' Health and Wellness Consultant, Chantell Widney, also witnessed transformative learning opportunities for high school students from Maskêkosak Kiskinomâtowikamik, noting that the immersive experience fostered respect, empathy, and a deeper connection to Indigenous heritage among the youth.

The high school students' visit to Onion Lake/Fort Pitt, where Treaty 6 was signed in 1876, proved to be a profoundly impactful educational experience. Amidst the various historical accounts surrounding the treaty's signing, hearing firsthand narratives from a direct descendant of Big Bear, who was present at Fort Pitt, offered invaluable insights and perspectives.

"We were honoured to learn directly from Elders Clarence Whitstone, Doris Stanley, Denis Stick, and Clifford Stick, who shared their knowledge through an Indigenous lens, starting with Creation stories," said Widney.

This opportunity allowed the students to engage deeply with history, experiencing it firsthand in a manner that transcends the pages of textbooks. By interacting directly with Indigenous perspectives and histories, the students gained a richer understanding of Indigenous culture and the profound significance of treaties.

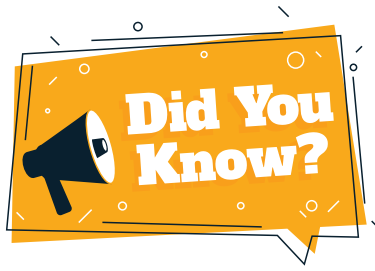
Project Overview

Our work with Maskêkosak Kiskinomâtowikamik is part of Ever Active Communities, where we partner with municipalities or community leadership to provide sustainable support for well-being within an entire community. This involves hiring staff who live and work in the community to promote health in ways that benefit the unique local context. Partnerships with local schools and school divisions are central to this. Learn more about the deep work in this community [here](#).

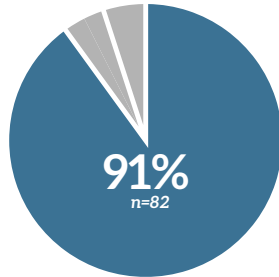
Romeo, a student from the trip, shares his story. [Listen here!](#)

Note: Sensitive topics and explicit language used!

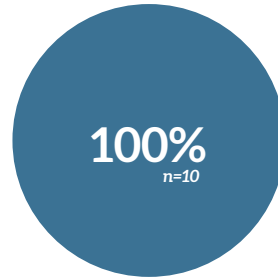




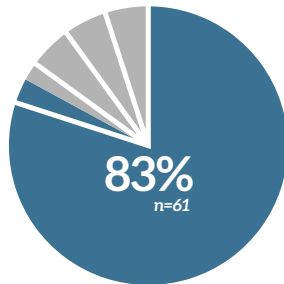
Across all of our products and services



Of children and youth reported that our work helped them to connect to their culture



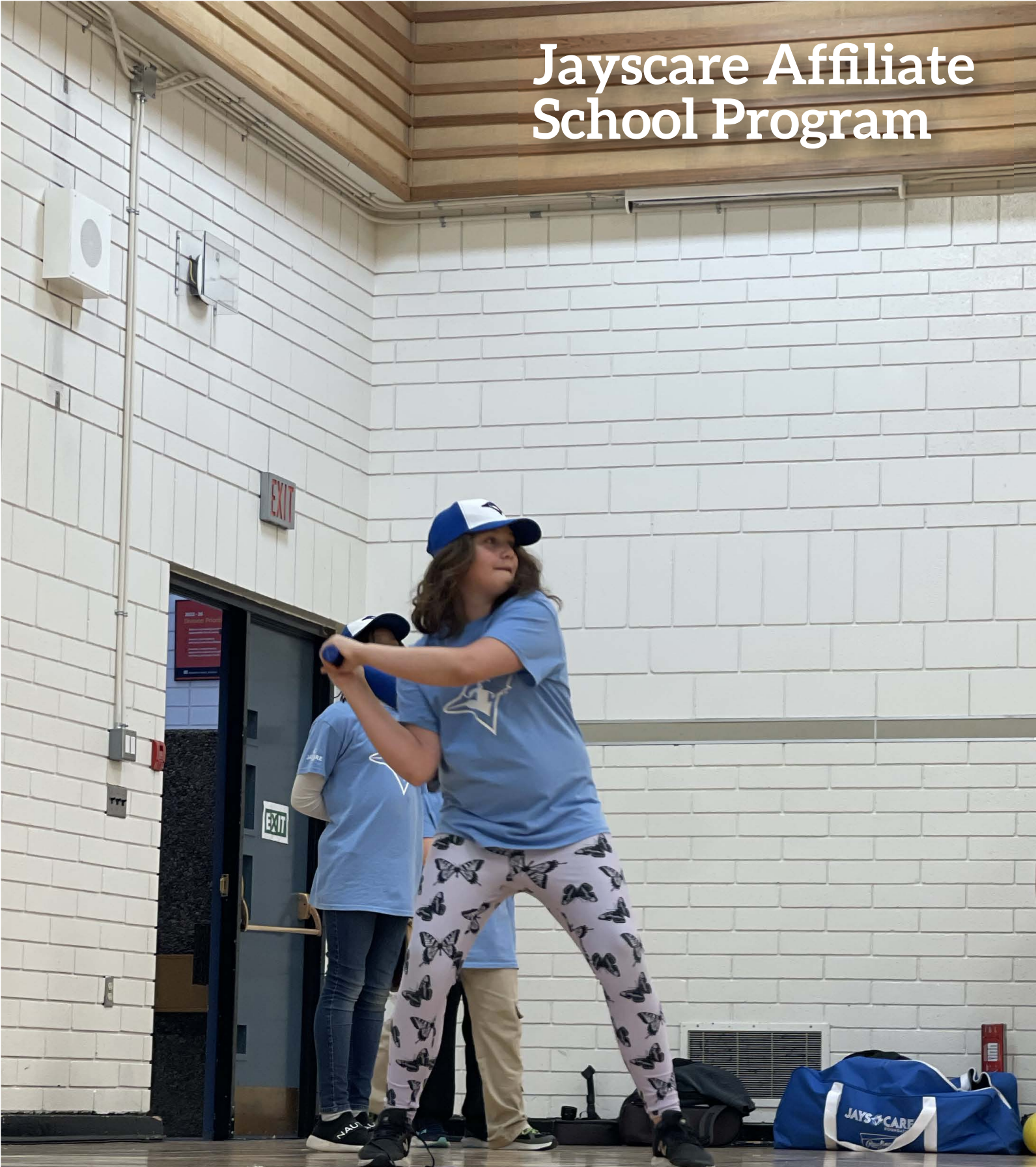
Of children and youth reported that our work helped them to celebrate their culture



Adult perception of increased student connection and their celebration of culture



Jayscare Affiliate School Program



Funder:





Emily Kinkaid-Speight
*Health and Wellness Consultant,
Ever Active Schools.*

“It's okay if we don't win. Just like coach says, if we are trying our best and having fun, that is the main goal.

-Grade 4 student
Stoney Nakoda

In the spring of 2024, over several weeks, Ever Active Schools (EAS) had the opportunity to visit 14 Affiliate School Programs in Alberta as part of its partnership with Jays Care Foundation. Facilitated by an Emily Kinkaid-Speight, an EAS Health and Wellness Consultant, our travels took us from Medicine Hat to Calgary, Morley, Glenwood, Edmonton, and Enoch. Seeing educators run these programs in their schools was incredibly inspiring. Each educator had customized the program based on their school's needs, creating inclusive environments for all athletes to try something new and fun, step outside their comfort zones, and build confidence and new friendships through the power of sport. It was remarkable to witness this across the province.

At a school in Glenwood, the teacher champion of Indigenous Playball noted, "Having the program at our school created interest for our students to join local little league teams. Parents have told me that their children have improved tremendously with the program."

At a school in Calgary, the teacher champion of Challenger Baseball shared, "We have a student who uses a walker/wheelchair and is always fully included in the activities and excited to come and play. She hesitates in her PE class but steps up and asks to pitch, chooses her runner for the bases, and is having a great time."

At a school in Medicine Hat, the teacher champion of the Rookie League shared, "We had a large number of students who had never thrown a baseball, put on a glove, or swung a bat.

This program not only gave opportunities to less fortunate students but also provided them with a safe space after school to connect with peers and coaches and be active."

At a school in Edmonton, the teacher champion shared, "All the girls in the program are always excited for Monday as they know they will see their coaches for 'Girls at Bat.' You can tell how excited they are at the end of the day to learn about the game of baseball."

At a school in Morley, Emily overheard two Grade 4 athletes talking while playing. One was on first base and the other on second. After a few hits, the student on first base said to his teammates, "Come on team, we have to win this game." The student on second base quickly replied, "It's okay if we don't win. Just like Coach says, if we are trying our best and having fun, that is the main goal." They then approached the student on first base and gave a high five. In that moment, we realized the power and importance of the program, witnessing it firsthand.

Project Overview

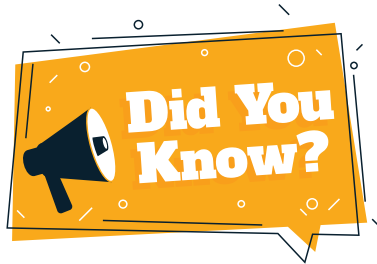
The Jays Care Affiliate School Program aims to increase awareness and provide resources for schools to implement an inclusion-focused extracurricular program that uses baseball to teach life skills such as teamwork, courage, and resiliency. Educators are trained in trauma-informed practices to create a safe environment for diverse groups, including girls, youth with disabilities, Indigenous youth, and those facing barriers such as poverty or gender identity. The Jays Care Foundation provides equipment and support to participating schools, including a program manual, specialized baseball equipment,

and ongoing assistance.

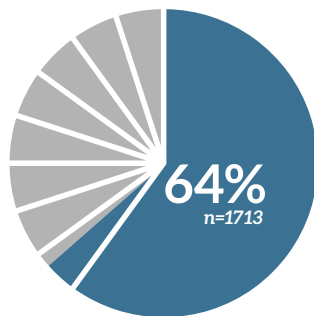
Project Results

The Jays Care Affiliate School Program has experienced remarkable growth in Alberta since partnering with Ever Active Schools. The program now spans 115 schools across 42 cities, engaging 3,658 student

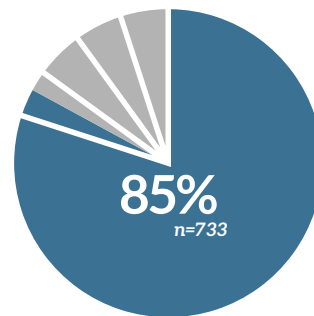
athletes, 169 student coaches and 467 coaches. Also, 100% have a desire to advocate for more inclusive physical activity opportunities at their school. 98% of Jays Care Coaches (n=115) reported "My capacity to run trauma-informed, inclusive programming increased (1=N & 2-5=Y).



As a result of EAS programs



Of children and youth have had more opportunities to try activities for the first time. These activities include baseball, dance, self-defense classes, curling, skating, and Indigenous games.



Of youth surveyed expressed high interests of seeking out more of the activities they tried in the next 6 months.



Active School Travel



Partners:



“ Trevor recognized that one scooter rack was great, but 10 were needed given the surge in active school travelers.

Tracey Coutts

*Health and Wellness Consultant,
Ever Active Schools*

Ever Active Schools (EAS) has fostered enduring partnerships with the City of Leduc over many years. These deep-rooted connections within the community and school boards have enabled remarkable achievements in supporting wellness and comprehensive school health initiatives.

The City of Leduc and EAS have collaborated on after-school initiatives, physical activity programs, active travel plans with schools, built bike/scooter racks at the library and supported students' use of the Leduc Recreation Centre. Lastly, the City of Leduc and EAS jointly developed a mid-sized City Charter to promote Active School Travel and Safety. The mayor of Leduc, a former teacher and longstanding board member of Ever Active Schools, has been instrumental since our inception.

Our strong community ties have fostered trust within school divisions, allowing us to collaborate extensively with schools across the city.

One such school where EAS has made a significant impact is West Haven School. Health champion Trevor Henderson, alongside his support team and grade 5 students, spearheaded an impactful School Travel Planning project. Their efforts included collecting data to inform an action plan, organizing multiple educational events, advocating for infrastructure

changes to support active travel and successfully applying for a ChooseWell microgrant to install a scooter rack.

"Trevor recognized that one scooter rack was great, but 10 were needed given the surge in active school travelers," noted Tracey Coutts, EAS Health and Wellness Consultant and Active School Transportation lead.

Following the 2020/2021 school year, the initiative exceeded expectations as more students opted for bikes and scooters to commute to school. Despite budget constraints, Henderson and the school council collaborated with a local welding company to design and install their own skateboard and scooter racks. Shortly after installation, these racks were fully utilized, meeting the growing demand.

Last school year, Trevor and his students participated in community consultations for the Leduc Active Travel Charter. Their grade 5 class provided crucial youth perspectives, helping stakeholders better understand the needs of young people regarding active travel. The Charter aims to identify and govern resources and responsibilities between local school jurisdictions and the municipality, benefiting all community members.

Project Overview

The Leduc Active Transportation Charter is an initiative aimed at promoting safe, sustainable, and active travel within the city of Leduc, Alberta. Funded nationally, the charter focuses on aligning the efforts of school boards and the municipality to allocate resources, responsibilities, and commitments toward active transportation. Its primary goals include reducing traffic congestion,

improving air quality, and fostering healthier lifestyles among residents.

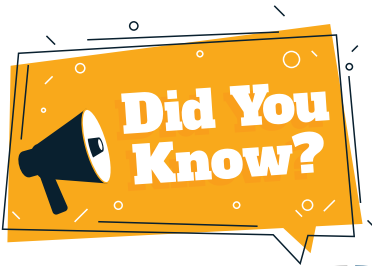
Key features of the charter are:

- Promoting safety measures for active transportation users.
- Integrating active transportation into urban planning and development.
- Encouraging school board engagement in promoting active transportation.

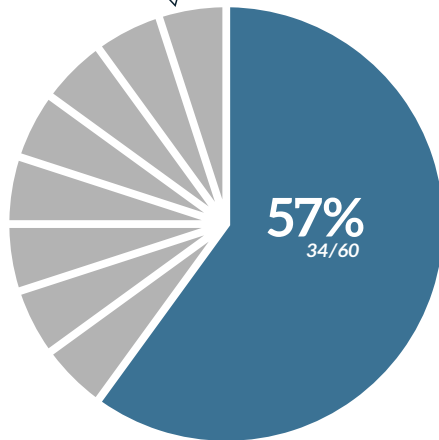
The charter is being developed with significant input from the community, This collaborative effort ensures that the charter reflects the diverse needs and preferences of Leduc's residents.

Project Results

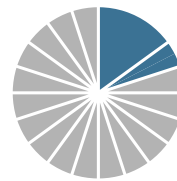
At West Haven School in Leduc, Alberta, prioritizing active school travel has yielded multiple benefits. By encouraging walking and wheeling, student wellness has improved alongside reduced vehicle emissions and fuel costs for families. Safety enhancements like new crosswalks and a flashing beacon have made school neighborhoods safer. Cost-effective local solutions, such as custom skatedocks from Ja-Co Welding, have provided secure storage for equipment, boosting the local economy and minimizing shipping emissions. This initiative showcases the power of community collaboration and engagement in fostering active transportation and achieving broader environmental and health goals.



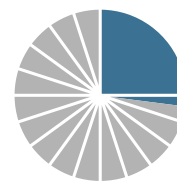
This year, Ever Active Schools worked deeply with 60 schools to help them meet the Canadian Healthy School Standards.



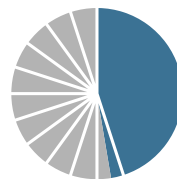
Schools meeting the recommendations for health-promoting school standards.



Beginning



Developing



Accomplishing



Mastering



Recreation Leadership



Funders:



Collaborators:



Calgary Board
of Education



“She truly glowed with pride and confidence as she shared her accomplishments on the last day of the school year with all those who came to celebrate her and her classmates.

Kaitlyn Mitchell

*Health and Wellness Consultant
Ever Active Schools*

In the spring of 2024, a Recreation Leadership student achieved a significant milestone as the first in her family to earn a diploma. She earned an impressive 83 credits in her final year of high school, with her participation in the recreation leadership program playing a crucial role. Through the program, she accumulated 17 credits and logged the highest attendance hours among her peers. Her dedication not only contributed to her academic success but also enhanced her employability skills, laying a solid foundation for her future endeavors.

"She truly glowed with pride and confidence as she shared her accomplishments on the last day of the school year with all those who came to celebrate her and her classmates," said Kaitlyn Mitchell, a health and wellness consultant with Ever Active Schools who facilitated the Recreation Leadership program.

Like many of her peers in the program, her achievements go beyond academics. She secured two job opportunities: overseeing summer camps with the City of Calgary and managing a youth team for the Calgary Stampede event. On the final day of classes, she radiated pride and confidence as she shared her successes with classmates and supporters alike.

In total, students in the Recreation Leadership program earned 252 credits and 108 certifications. This program provides crucial support to students facing challenges, helping them overcome obstacles and thrive in a nurturing environment that supports success beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Project Overview

The Recreation Leadership program provides pathways to employment in the recreation and human services sector for youth facing barriers to employment and academic success. In Canada, many youth secure jobs through family and friends, creating challenges for those in communities with higher

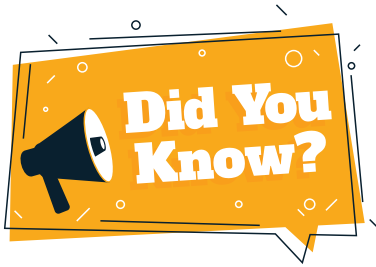
unemployment rates. Work experience programs, typically funded by unions, often benefit young men entering trades, exacerbating job opportunity disparities for girls and gender-diverse students.

Recreation Leadership connects youth to an employment network and higher-paying jobs in health and human services, while also supporting high school completion through credit-earning. Students not only acquire valuable skills and certifications but also develop a strong sense of belonging and connection to their community.

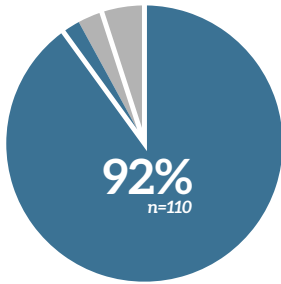
Project Result

Students participating in Recreation Leadership are experiencing notable improvements in academic success and employment prospects, as evidenced by the following survey results:

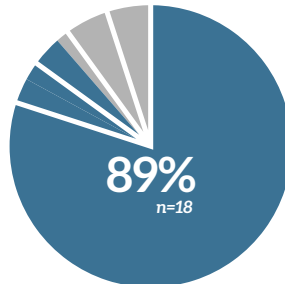
- A significant 94% (n=18) expressed feeling empowered to make a positive impact in their school or community.
- Similarly, 94% (n=18) reported feeling significantly more prepared for their future careers as a direct result of their participation in Rec Leadership.
- Additionally, 78% (n=18) credited Rec Leadership for contributing to their academic achievements, highlighting its role in enhancing their overall school performance. These findings underscore the program's effectiveness in equipping students with both practical skills and a sense of purpose within their educational and career paths.



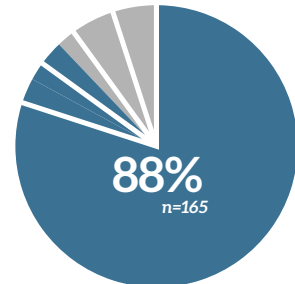
As a result of EAS programs and services



Of surveyed youth indicated that the programming helped them succeed at school



Of surveyed youth indicated that they were aware of different career options because of the programming



Indicated that they felt better prepared for a career because of the programming





As we reflect on the successes of the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the partnerships and connections that have made these achievements possible. Ever Active Schools remains committed to fostering environments where every student can flourish, and where communities are strengthened through the power of relationships. Together, we will continue to build a brighter, more inclusive future for all. Thank you for being a vital part of our journey.



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