

# CAMP KIRK

## 2022 Annual Report



Empowering Neurodiverse kids and youth to reach their potential through recreational programs.





## Executive Director Letter

To the Camp Kirk Community,

This summer I got to view Camp Kirk through a whole new perspective. I was able to see it through the eyes of my 4-year-old daughter, Lilli, who lived up at camp for 3 months. Lilli was in the mix with the kids, and soaked up all that is Camp Kirk. She spent an hour on the floor counting ants with a camper who knew a hundred facts about the creatures; she witnessed big emotional meltdowns in our cabin when campers needed a safe space to decompress, and she wore noise-canceling headphones in our dining hall alongside a dozen other kids who were battling sensory-overload.

Nothing phased Lilli while at camp, because she grew up in this environment- a space where being 'different' is not just accepted, but the norm. It was a beautiful thing to watch, and made me appreciate, that much more, the gifts that Camp Kirk provides kids. Belonging, acceptance, and unconditional love....and all under the guise of fun at summer camp.

Places of belonging and acceptance are not easily found for most neurodivergent kids and youth. To all of you have pulled together to make Camp Kirk possible for our campers, thank you. Thank you for sticking by us during the pandemic, thank you supporting our efforts, and thank you for making the world a more loving and accepting place.

Sincerely,

Erica Park-Coutts  
Executive Director





*"It took a lot of convincing to get Max to take a chance and give Camp Kirk a try and we are so glad he was brave enough to go! He was a different kid after his stay at Camp Kirk - his confidence level and self-esteem after just one week was higher than we have ever seen it. He was so proud of all the things he did while he was at camp and he is already looking forward to returning again next summer."*



# Our Mission & Vision

As our programs develop and grow, we want to ensure we stay true to our mission. Our leadership teams return to our mission, vision, and values often to maintain the heart and soul of Camp Kirk in everything we do.

## Our Vision

A community where everyone can embrace their differences and harness their strengths

## Our Mission

We empower neurodiverse kids and youth to reach their potential through recreational programs.



## Our Values

### Fun

We believe fun and recreation are the key ingredients for kids to learn and grow.

### Relationships

Self-image, confidence, and resilience are shaped by our experiences with others, which is why positive relationships are the cornerstone of our programs.

### Customized Care

We go the extra mile to understand our kids, youth and families, and we design our programs to ensure everyone feels like a valued member of our community.

### Focus on Strengths

We create environments where differences can be seen as strengths, so kids can walk away with a true sense of what they have to offer the world.



# The Language We Use

## Neurodiversity

Simply put, neurodiversity is the diversity of the human mind. There are different ways to learn, think, and experience the world, and we believe these differences should be valued and celebrated.

At Camp Kirk, embracing neurodiversity means being intentional about how we design our environments, programs, and relationships, so that all types of minds can thrive. We strive to take this approach in all areas of our organization. This looks like:

- Having a big set of noise-canceling headphones at the entrance to our dining hall
- Providing staff applicants the interview questions in advance of their interview
- Creating Care Plans with both campers and staff so that we can tweak our support to match their needs/strengths

All of the kids and youth we serve are neurodiverse, and typically have one or more of the following diagnoses:

- Learning Disability
- Attention Deficit Disorder
- Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Tourettes or a tic disorder
- An anxiety disorder
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Other types of exceptionalities





# 2022 Impact

160

neurodiverse kids and youth  
benefitted from our summer  
camp and year round programs.

430+

family members received 1-2  
weeks of respite.

\$679,000

in fee subsidies distributed  
because of your generous  
support.



*"My son looks forward to camp all year and says often that camp is the best time of his life. He said recently when we were watching a video of campers and staff standing on chairs singing, that one thing he loves most about camp is that it's okay for him to be silly and like what he likes. Camp helps him feel like he has somewhere to belong in the world, and he's created such wonderful connections with staff and other campers."*

95%

of families said the  
Camp Kirk experience  
boosted their child's  
self-esteem.

89%

of families said the Camp  
Kirk experience improved  
their child's sense of social  
acceptance and belonging.

85%

of families said the Camp  
Kirk experience has helped  
their child become more  
independent.



# Camper Spotlight

## Caelan, 7 years at Camp

*"When I was diagnosed with ADHD I was ashamed of it, I thought it was a problem. I felt like I was a bad person because back then it seemed like everyone around me just yelled at me. Going to Camp Kirk changed things for me. It is a welcoming environment, it's a place where I can fail or do badly and no one judges or makes fun."*

*In most places, it's not the norm to be neurodiverse. During my first year at camp, I remember looking around the cabin and thinking "oh my god- these boys are disorganized, messy and lose things all the time...they're just like me....talk about feeling 'at home' ". At Camp Kirk, I can express myself, and I don't have to mask my neurodivergent-ness. Being able to just be me has given me a lot of confidence in life."*

*Without Camp Kirk I wouldn't be considering the options I am considering for the future that I am now. I got into four universities and even got a scholarship for one, and I know camp helped me get here."*





# Program Spotlight

## Community Weekends

Over the years we often heard from camper families that the sense of belonging and connection that Camp Kirk provides during the summer was desperately needed during the tough school year. In response to this feedback, we designed our new program, 'CK Community Weekends', to do just that- to extend the benefits of our summer camp program all year-round.

This new program brings groups of 20 neurodiverse kids and youth together for three touch-points throughout the school year. Groups meet for a weekend of outdoor adventure programming in the fall, winter, and spring, giving campers an opportunity to develop and grow their skills, confidence, and relationships.

In the 2021-2022 school year, we piloted the program with 2 groups of 20 campers (serving 40 kids and youth in total). Our Fall Community Weekends were a huge success, and we can't wait to see the kids back in the 2022-23 school year.







*"I was extremely surprised when I picked up my son after just one overnight weekend. His eyes were alive with spirit, he was eager to hold conversations, he was a completely different and engaged young man. We had a deeper conversation on that ride home that I've been able to have with him in years. It's only through the generosity of others and the incredible work being done by this group that my son has experienced a glimpse of a much fuller potential."*



# New Therapeutic Spaces

*There is a huge difference between “all are welcome here” and “this was designed with you in mind” - Dr. Crystal Jones*

At Camp Kirk, we are always striving to design our programs, environments, and relationships to better meet the needs of our campers. This summer, we created a few new spaces around camp to help our campers self-regulate, digest the busy social environment, and build friendships.

## Outdoor Dining

With financial support from the Harlod E. Ballard Foundation, we purchased event tents for outdoor dining and activities. These tents were made necessary because of COVID-19, but provided a much more inclusive dining experience for our campers. Dining outside allowed campers with excess energy space to move around while still being with the group, and it made the meal experience more manageable for campers who struggle with sensory processing. We'd like to thank volunteers from De Beers for helping us set up the Event Tents at the beginning of summer.



## Furry Friends

The therapeutic benefits of animals is well known at Camp Kirk (just ask our Camp Dog, Henry). With the goal of creating more opportunities to connect with animals, this summer we fostered two dwarf bunnies at camp. Playing and caring for the bunnies was a favourite activity for our campers. When overstimulated or dysregulated, campers often headed to our Camper Lounge to cuddle with the animals to help reduce stress and feel more grounded.



## Therapeutic Equipment

With funding from De Beers, Camp Kirk created a new Camper Lounge, stocked with therapeutic equipment. A squeeze couch, weighted blankets, balance boards, and other sensory gear helped our campers decompress, thereby helping them more successfully manage the busy social environment of camp.





*"She had an amazing time at camp and loved that no one made her feel different because of her Autism and ADD diagnosis. Making friends and maintaining friends can be difficult for her, and life can be lonely when you have difficulty with social skills. At Camp Kirk she had an opportunity to have fun with peers her age and develop her social skills in a supportive and supervised setting. We will definitely send our daughter back to Camp Kirk again next year!"*





# Our Community Lends a Hand



## Family Fun at the Corn Roast

On October 16th, we hosted the 'Camp Kirk Corn Roast' to raise funds and bring our community together. The day was filled with cotton candy, music, and a lot of love for Camp Kirk! We raised over \$30,000 for our campers!

A huge thank you to everyone who attended, and to the Event Committee for planning our first Corn Roast: Thank you Christine, Reegan, Taylor and Anna!

## Walking, Running and Biking for Camp Kirk

On April 24th, over 40 community members ran, walked, biked and paddled in support of Camp Kirk and our neurodiverse campers. Our 1st ever annual 5K raised over \$25,000 for our camp programs!



## Lions Lend a Hand

Each year, our partners at the Lions Clubs Camp Kirk Foundation raise funds and volunteer their time to maintain our home-away-from-home. Whether it is selling raffle tickets to raise funds for new washing machines, or coming together to clean up the camp in the spring, the Lions demonstrate an unwavering commitment to our campers.

A special thank you to Lion Tony, Lion Art, and Lion Byron for their hard work and dedication to maintaining the property during our pandemic closure. Without their efforts, we would not have been able to re-open the camp this summer.





## Over 12 years of Leadership

This year, after 12 years of service, Reid Bowlby has retired as the Chair of our Board of Directors. Reid has made an invaluable contribution to Camp Kirk, and we are tremendously grateful for his service to our kids, camp, and organization. As a dedicated volunteer and supporter, Reid worked tirelessly to ensure that Camp Kirk could be a safe, welcoming, and transformative experience for all campers. Through his leadership and commitment, Reid has helped to create a culture of inclusion, kindness, and respect. He has been a mentor, a friend, and a role model to our team. Thank You Reid!

Reid is leaving the board in the capable hands of our new Chair Linda Dougherty.



# Your Dollars at Work

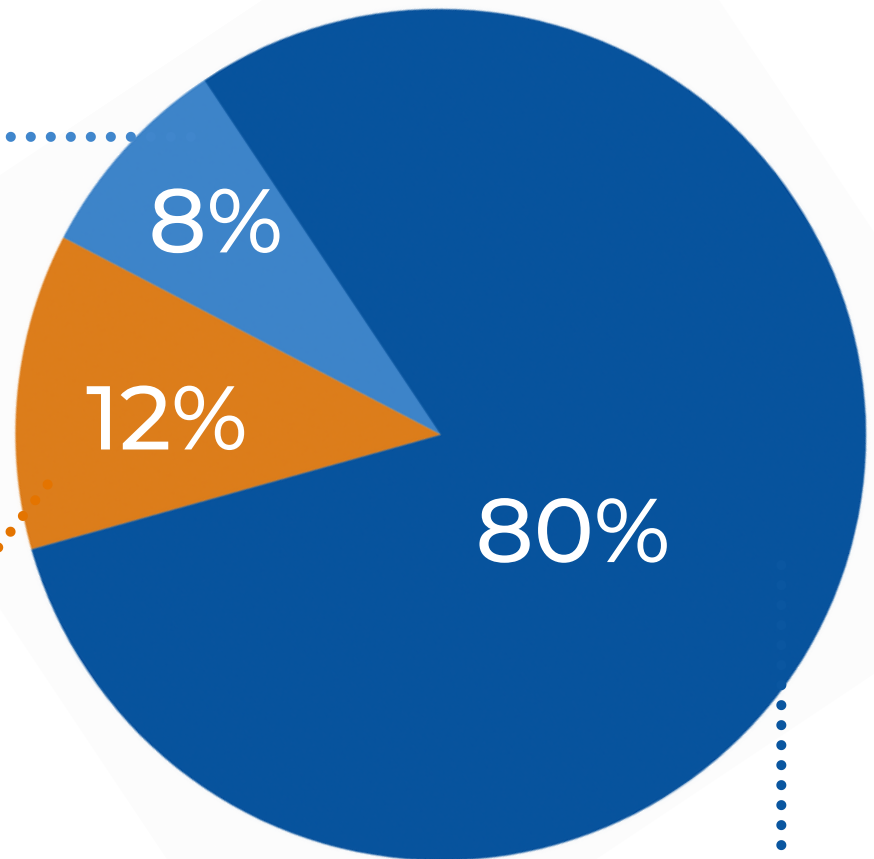
In 2022, we reopened camp after a two-year closure and launched year-round programming for our campers. With support from our community, we kept our reserves intact during the pandemic and provided support to our campers and families through four seasons.

## Administration

Investing in strong governance and administration to ensure we are a stable organization.

## Fundraising

Helping us build a committed community of donors and a strong financial base.



## Programs

Delivering recreation programs to empower neurodiverse kids and youth. 80 cents from every dollar spent went towards our programming.

The financials in this report are for the 2022 fiscal year (October 1, 2021 to September 30, 2022). If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@CampKirk.com](mailto:info@CampKirk.com) or (416)782-3310. You can see our complete [financial statements for 2022](#) at [CampKirk.com](https://CampKirk.com).



# Our Supporters

## \$10,000+

Anonymous  
Charles H. Ivey Foundation  
Dean Connor and Maris Uffelmann  
Harold E. Ballard Foundation  
Ontario Charitable Gaming Association  
Paul and Vicki Hand  
Reid Bowlby and Debbie Bongard  
Sun Life Financial  
Taylor Statten Camping Bursary Fund  
The Mariano Elia Foundation  
Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund  
Unity for Autism

## \$5,000-\$9,999

Alicia Coutts  
Bill and Betty Morris  
Charities Aid Foundation Canada  
De Beers Group  
Fasken  
Flavelle Family Foundation  
Leonard Steele  
Lions Clubs Camp Kirk Foundation  
Midloch Foundation  
Bob Henderson & Margot Peck  
Shelley Peterson  
the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation

## \$1,000-\$4,999

Alfred Johnston  
Amici Camping Charity  
Ashley Peoples  
Canadian Tire Jumpstart  
Christopher Boland  
Coboconk & District Lions Club  
David Sciuk  
David Beach  
District A-12 Lions  
Elmvale & District Lions Club  
Heathbridge Capital Management  
Henri & Jane Audet  
Jackman Foundation  
Jay and Jane Lewis  
Jean Wansbrough Leadership Training Fund  
John and Judy Kitchen  
Jon and Karyn Levy  
Julie Girvan  
Linda Dougherty  
Metrix Research Inc.  
Mike McDermott  
Mitch Korman  
Newmarket Lions Club  
Pittsburgh Township Lions Club  
Richard & Glenna Talbot  
Robin Taves  
Sarah White  
Susan Layard  
Susan Taves  
Suzanne Porter & Sara Gardner  
Toronto Art Restoration

## \$150-\$999

Adam Richardson  
Adam Vollerling  
Alayne Hall  
Alison Drinkwater  
Aliston Lions Club  
Alix Herber  
Amy & Ryan Crawford  
Andrew Stafl  
Andy McMullan  
Anjali Wimpenny  
Anna Gilliatt  
Audrey Davidson  
Beth Beattie  
Bob Henderson  
Bob McCrimmon  
Bracebridge Lions Foundation  
Brian Grossman  
Brodie Ferguson  
Cameron Douglas  
Canada Development Investment Corporation  
Candace Innes  
Charlotte Ribeiro  
Christine Prince  
Clara Fraser  
Clarita Burley  
Cynthia Quinn  
Dale Gold  
David Wortzman  
Dean Connor  
Delia Sinclair Frigault  
Denise Fruchter  
Diana Parker  
District A2 Lions Clubs  
Don Burry  
Dot Jones  
Doug Miehm  
Eden Grinshpan  
Elizabeth Hugessen  
Ellie Morch  
Elsa Nowlan  
Emily Meeking-Leslie  
Erica Park-Coutts  
Erin Khera  
Ernest Fernandes  
Fatima Bregman  
Gary and Rena Wong  
Gerald Wood  
Gillies and Prendiville Family  
Graham Tate

## \$150-\$999 cont.

Hagersville and District Lions Club  
HUB Equipment  
Jamie Bunston  
Jane Fleetwood-Morrow  
Jane Lewis  
Jason Lester  
Jay Wunder  
Jean Korman  
Jennine Ditz  
Jim and Krista McMullan  
Jim Armstrong  
Joanne Sterling  
Joseph Barretto-Burns  
Joseph Farrugia  
Joyce Barretto  
Joyce McDonald  
Judith Adams  
Judy & Lind Nyman  
Juliann Opitz  
Kara McIntosh  
Kate Barber  
Kate Royer  
Kathy Reynolds  
Katrina Hall  
Katrina Zealand  
Kelly Cook  
Laurie Maw  
Leesa Avrith  
Lena Ohanianians  
Lisa Gelman  
Little Inn in Bayfield  
Marcello Saroli  
Margie Mills  
Mark Quigley  
Mark Shroff  
Marla & David Korman  
Mastermind LP  
Michael Douglas  
Mitch Bauer  
Nancy Mendonca  
Natalie Little  
Navan Lions Club  
Olivia Giuliani  
One Properties  
Pat and Reilly Wimpenny  
Patricia Peterson  
Pedestal Solutions  
Rachel Seewald  
Rebecca Morgan  
Reegan Connor

## \$150-\$999 cont.

Ridgeway Lions Club  
Rob Lundeen  
Robin Boys  
Robin & Heather Labatt  
Sabeen Rosenblatt  
Sally Hannon  
Sandra Zidaric  
Sara Johnson  
Sarnia Lions Club  
Schomberg Lions Club  
Sonya Goldman  
Spin Master Ltd  
stuart henderson  
Su Langdon  
Susan Troke  
Suzanne Petrie  
Suzette James  
Tara Allman  
Toni Francisco  
Toys "R" Us  
Tuck Shop Trading Co  
Uxbridge and District Lions Club  
Wendy & David Bunston  
Wendy Girvan  
William Pigott  
Young-Dae Park  
Yousif Ishaksay

## Committee Volunteers

Reegan Connor  
Anna Gilliat  
Christine Prince  
Taylor Silva

## 2022 Board of Directors

Judith Adams  
Reid Bowlby, Chair  
Jamie Bunston  
Linda Dougherty  
Bob Henderson  
Alix Herber

Barbara Hnatiak  
Suzette James  
Kevin Palmer, Treasurer  
Shelley Peterson  
Paul Rich  
Sandra Zidaric

## Management Team

Erica Park-Coutts, Executive Director  
Tara Allman, Development Director  
Victoria Crawford, Camp Director  
Gabi Stan, Assistant Camp Director (interim)





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