



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

A Message from our Executive Director and Board Chair

As we celebrate 30 years of Camp Kirk, I can't help but reflect on the tremendous impact from that first group of 36 kids with Henri as the founding Camp Director to providing over 1500 neurodiverse kids and youth with an environment where their differences are valued and seen as strengths. We have accomplished this with a key focus on fun, fostering positive friendships, and going that extra mile to ensure our kids have a second place to call home year after year.

Mentorship Program

Visiting camp this summer, we had the opportunity to meet our campers and staff. It was in hearing from our former campers - now Leaders-in-Training and staff - that we grasped the full impact of Camp Kirk. It isn't just about one week of camp, our campers grow confidence and skills by coming back to camp year after year. The Leader-in-Training (LIT) program geared to graduated campers, helps develop leadership skills, independence, and employment skills, all within the support of the Camp Kirk community. We had seven LITs this last summer for 18 days, you will hear from Julian on page seven about what he enjoys about being an LIT.

This year we also had nine former campers become staff members either as counselors or general care staff. It is heartwarming to listen to Jessie and David share their first work experiences and how they just want to give back and provide the campers with the best experience they can.

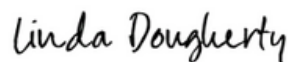
Supportive Community

We are forever grateful for the donors, sponsors, and foundations that make the work possible and ensure that all families have access to Camp Kirk programming. We are also thankful for the volunteer might of our Board and committees whose stability and support have been invaluable and help ensure we are prepared for the future growth of Camp Kirk.

With much gratitude,



Deirdre Thomas,
Executive Director



Linda Dougherty
Board Chair

Our Mission

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

Our Vision

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

2023 by the Numbers

\$700,000+

of camp costs subsidized because of your generous support.

1400+

Impact Days. An impact day is equal to 1 day of programming.

430+

family members received one to two weeks of respite.

What Families Say

There has never been a perfect fit for my daughter in her social surroundings, until now. Camp Kirk introduced her to what could be, a place she can be herself and be celebrated for her individuality. A place she can thrive and find joy and comfort with her peers and feel supported by all those around her. We have waited to find a place for our daughter to find a positive social circle and set her up for success. Camp Kirk did this and she has never been happier.



95% of families said the Camp Kirk experience boosted their child's self-esteem.



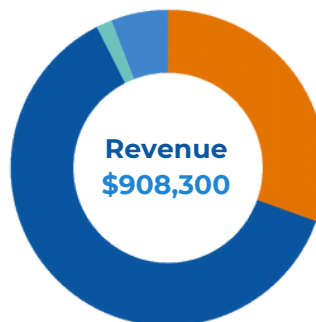
89% of families said the Camp Kirk experience improved their child's sense of social acceptance and belonging.



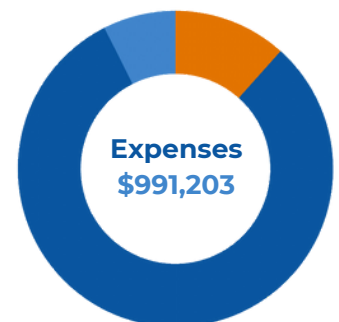
85% of families said the Camp Kirk experience has helped their child become more independent.

Financial Summary

2023 was a year of transition for Camp Kirk. We prepared for leadership and organizational changes and recruited a new Executive Director. These activities required an investment of funds and staff time, and led to a planned deficit of \$82,903. You can see our complete financial statements for 2023 Fiscal Year at campkirk.com.



- Donations & Fundraising 62%
- Camper Fees 30%
- Government 6%
- Interest & Other Income 2%



- Programs 81%
- Fundraising 12%
- Administration 7%

Mentorship Program

Camp Kirk's Mentorship Programs are designed to support neurodiverse youth as they navigate the transition to adulthood. Geared to graduated campers, the Mentorship Programs help participants develop their leadership potential, independence, and employment skills- all within the support of the Camp Kirk community.

In 2023, nine former campers joined our staff team. They had an extra layer of support from their supervisor and Camp Director to ensure they felt confident and had a successful transition into the role and responsibilities of summer staff. For many this was their first summer job, and being in an environment that they are familiar with and feel safe in helped them learn self-advocacy, teamwork and other skills that will help them in the future.



We also had seven former campers in our Leader in Training (LIT) program this year. The program is designed to support neurodiverse youth before their first job as they navigate the transition to adulthood. Former campers develop their leadership potential, teamwork and independence all at camp.

What Parents Say

"Our son just finished the LIT program, after having been a camper at Camp Kirk for years. He truly loves being at camp and feels he is part of a community there. When he comes home, he is always more outgoing and mature than he was when he left. Over the years, camp has given him awareness and acceptance of people who are different from him, and helped him to be more considerate of others. The LIT program has given him important skills and work experience in a supportive environment. We really appreciate the support and caring that Camp Kirk has provided over the years. In my son's words: 'Camp Kirk is a place where you can feel accepted and you can do what you want without having to worry about people judging you.'"



88% of LIT parents said the Camp Kirk experience has helped their child to be more adaptable to change.



100% of LIT parents said the Camp Kirk experience improved my child's sense of social acceptance and belonging.



100% of LIT parents said the LIT program helped their child work more collaboratively with others.

Mentorship Program Staff Spotlight

Jessie Newman

2nd year Camp Counsellor
Camper from 2015-2019

How camp staff helped you as a camper:

Camp Kirk really helped me to grow and find strategies to cope with my autism. All the staff are trained in how to help campers. When you are feeling strong emotions or things are not going your way, the kindness and calmness from the staff helped me to cope with those big emotions.

Why you decided to work at camp:

After 5 years of being a camper at Camp Kirk, this place feels so much like home to me and I just knew I really wanted to come back and be a counsellor here because I want to give back to the same loving community that really helped me grow as a person.

Working at Camp Kirk has been a great first job experience, being able to work in a really friendly environment. It has helped me have more confidence in my university degree.

Favourite memory from working at camp:

A camper gave me a bouquet of flowers and said they loved and appreciated me and that was just so sweet, it really warmed my heart.

How has Camp Kirk impacted your life:

I don't think I would be the person I am today if it wasn't for Camp Kirk, it has helped me with my social skills, interacting with others and my confidence in myself to do anything I want to.



30 Years of Empowering Neurodiverse Kids and Youth

In 1993, a small dedicated staff team delivered a memorable summer camp experience for 36 children with learning disabilities. This marked the beginning of a program that would evolve over the next three decades.

30 years later the scope of our services has grown, through year-round programs, supportive employment experiences, and leadership programming, our organization strives to provide wrap-around care for our campers and their families. From six years old to adulthood, we are building inclusive environments where neurodivergent kids and youth can develop confidence, connection, and community.

While our roots were planted in serving children with learning disabilities, our programs have evolved to embrace a broader spectrum of neurodiversity. We now cater to kids and youth with various exceptionalities, including Autism, ADHD, Tourette's, and more.

A Few Reason Why Neurodiverse People Need Our Support



Unemployment rates for neurodivergent people are estimated to be as high as 30-40% – That's 8 times the rate of most Canadians.



The cost of raising a special needs child can be four times higher than other children. There are also costs of taking time off work and passing up promotions to care for their child.



Children with ADHD are estimated to receive an average of twenty thousand more negative messages than neurotypical children by age ten.

Camp Kirk Impact



Over 8 Million dollars raised to lower camper fees. No child ever left out of our programs due to finances.



Over 70,000 impact days. An impact day is equal to 1 day of camp programming. Over 1500 kids have benefitted from Camp Kirk



Over 4500 family members have received one week or more of respite over the years.

"I find it hard to believe that Camp Kirk has been existing for over 30 years. I am so proud to have been the chosen one to start this camp, especially when I see the number of neurodiverse kids and their families who have and continue to benefit from the Camp Kirk experience in so many ways. May it continue to flourish for another 30 years!"

~Henri Audet, Founding Camp Director



30 Years of Empowering Neurodiverse Kids and Youth cont.

"When you're knee-deep in caregiving, you don't realize the toll that it's taking mentally and how physically exhausting it can be. The break offered by Camp Kirk gives me the opportunity to recharge my batteries and really be there for my son. The staff at Camp Kirk are truly wonderful and each greet you with the biggest smile and excitement about seeing your kid arriving on drop off day. The smile and running hug from my son on pick up day is like no other! Seeing my sons, exhausted yet happy face and hearing his scratchy voice from so much laughing and singing and talking is amazing. His self confidence is boosted, his esteem restored. The kids that attend camp kirk just need a chance to really be seen and heard and at camp kirk they get just that."

~2023 Camper Parent

"Camp Kirk has had a monumental impact on who I am and what I do, as it helped me realize my skills in being able to work in a group dynamic more effectively. It showed me the value of friendship and how important it is to take care of yourself before taking care of others. My experience as both camper and LIT/CIT helped me to realize the importance of being someone who's reliable and supportive."

~Alex, Camper and LIT 2007-2012

Proud Partners for 30 years

Lions Clubs Camp Kirk Foundation owns the Camp Kirk property and our programs for neurodiverse youth would not exist without the shared missions of our two organizations.

"We take great satisfaction from the number of children whose lives have been so positively impacted by Camp Kirk. At the same time, the number of children in need of our services increases every year and we must strive to serve even more. As members of the Board of Directors as well as members of Lions Clubs in District A16 we look forward to continuing to serve the children of Camp Kirk for the next thirty years and beyond".

*~ Lion Carl Young
Board Chair Lions Clubs Camp Kirk Foundation*



Mentorship Program Leader-In-Training Spotlight

Julian Aburto

1st year Leader in Training
Camper from 2015-2019

Favourite Activity with campers:

Archery, they get a learning experience and I get to be a mentor

Favourite memory from when you were a camper:

Trying the Buckey Swinger our Giant Swing for the first time!

On Helping campers when they are discouraged:

You got to tell them "Yes you can do it, don't give up, if times are tough come talk to someone...we are here for you, we want you to have a good time and we want you to feel like a million bucks when you go home." It's great that I can give back to Camp Kirk.

I'm thankful I got to be a leader in training and I hope one day, I'll become a counsellor here. Beyond Camp Kirk, I have a great passion for cooking and working in the kitchen. I also have a passion to become a firefighter.



Mentorship Program

Staff Spotlight

David Barber

2nd year Camp Counsellor
Camper from 2015 - 2019

Memories of being a camper:

The reason I wanted to come back as a camper year after year was because the staff were so supportive. They shine a light on your brightness, the skills and strengths you have and helping you ...with the things you struggle with.

Favourite activity with campers:

Going to the eco hut searching for turtles or supporting kids on the rock wall - I love seeing the kids reach their goal and reach past their previous accomplishments.

What it is like working at Camp Kirk:

Although it is hard work, it is worth every moment seeing how the kids progress, and seeing all they accomplish year after year. That's what makes me want to come back.

The next step for me is ...I see myself working with children, but I also want to continue on here, in a greater role. Who knows, someday I might be Assistant Director or Director so I won't need to leave this community that has helped me out.



Our Community

Lion Tony

Lion Tony is a fixture at Camp Kirk. Throughout the summer you'll find him at camp helping the team with any and everything that needs to be fixed. This summer one of his many projects was restoring the Leader-in-Training accommodations. We've named the LIT bunkie the Beaver Lodge and dedicated it to Tony for all the hard work and love he gives to camp.



Community Fundraisers

Camp Kirk Kick-Off - In May, Andy and Madi held their first annual fundraiser for Camp Kirk at Baily's Homestead in Keswick - They raised over \$9,000!

Birthdays - On Facebook and at home, supporters shared their birthdays with Camp Kirk. Together 6 community members celebrated and raised over \$3,000 for our campers.

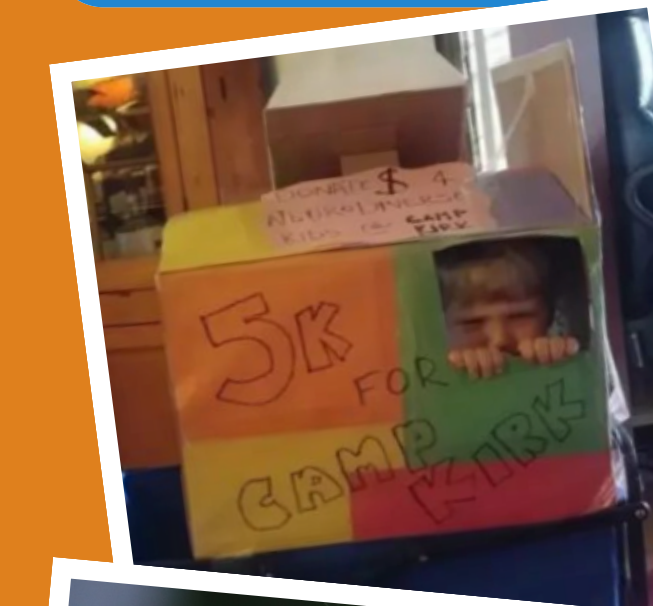
5K Your Way - Over 30 community members walked, ran, biked and paddled in April to raise funds for neurodiverse kids and youth. They raised \$15,000 .

Erica bids farewell

2023 was Erica's last year on staff. After 20 years of working at Camp Kirk as summer staff, Camp Director and Executive Director she is pursuing other opportunities to support neurodiverse youth.

"The years have been filled with all that a person can hope for in life - a loving community, more belly laughs than I can count, and the opportunity to have a meaningful impact...Yes, change can be hard, but with a team like the one we have in place, I know that this transition will help our organization do even greater things for our neurodivergent kids and youth" - Erica

Erica is staying involved with Camp Kirk, and is currently assisting our team with onboarding our new Camp Director.



Our Supporters

\$25,000+

the Mackinnon Family
The Mariano Elia Foundation
Ontario Charitable Gaming Association

\$10,000- \$24,999

Reid Bowlby & Debbie Bongard
the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation
Dean Connor & Maris Uffelmann
Charles H. Ivey Foundation
Paul & Vicki Hand
John M and Bernice Parrott Foundation
Longo Family Foundation
Sun Life Financial
Taylor Statten Camping Bursary Fund
Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund
Unity for Autism

\$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous
Guy Burry and Liz Lundell
Exp Services Inc
Fasken
Bob Henerson & Margot Peck
Alfred Johnston
The John David & Signy Eaton Charitable Foundation
Lions Clubs Camp Kirk Foundation
Shelley Peterson
Tom and Susan Stevenson
Toronto Art Restoration

\$1,000-\$4,999

Amici Camping Charity
Henri & Jane Audet
Judith Adams
Mitch & Sarah Bauer
David Beach
Jamie Bunston
Wendy & David Bunston
Canadian Business Growth Fund
Linda Dougherty
Michael Douglas
District A 12 Lions
Stephen Dent
Craig Franklin
Julie Girvan
Alix Herber
Marlin & Margot Horst
Ingram Micro
Dot Jones
the Jackman Foundation

\$1,000-\$4,999 cont.

Jean Wansbrough Leadership Training Fund
Kilcoo Camp
Jon & Karyn Levy
Susan Layard
Jay & Jane Lewis
Metrix Research Inc.
Mike & Emily McDerment
Sonya Mainprize
Ellie Morch
Andy & Madi McMullan
Newmarket Lions Club
Ontario Credit Union Foundation
One Properties
Suzanne Porter & Sara Gardner
Passion Fruit Partners
Ashley Peoples
Brent Pumple
Dr Mark Quigley
Jenn Smith
Massimo Siciliano
Susan & Ed Taves
Martin & Deirdre Thomas
Sarah White
David & Jennifer Wortzman

\$150-\$999

Tara Allman
Aliston Lions Club
Jim Armstrong
Beth Beattie
Joyce Barretto
Katherine Beattie
Belmont Lioness Club
B, halfmoon
Bracebridge Lions Foundation
John-Bosco Agbasi
Kate Barber
Robin Boys
Kelly Cook
Andrea Centa
Reegan Connor
Sonya Chen
Canada Development Investment Corporation
Cobourg Lakeshore Lions Club
Simone Chan
Victoria Crawford
Chatham Lions Club
Audrey Davidson
Ashley Duarte-Devlin
Alison Drinkwater
Patricia Doney
Ian Ferguson

\$150-\$999 cont.

The Food Dudes
Denise Fruchter
Russell Ferguson
Farm Boy
Joseph Farrugia
Jane Fleetwood-Morrow
Dale Gold
Eden Grinshpan
John Gillies & Anne-Marie Prendiville
Wendy Girvan
Anna Gilliatt
Olivia Giuliani
Alienor Guilhem
Sonya Goldman
Gibson's Cleaners
Susan Griffin
HUB Equipment
Sally Hannon
Hagersville & District Lions Club
Alayne Hall
Elizabeth Hugessen
David & Katrina Hall
Peter Hamm
Steve Heighway
Bill & Judy Haust
Benjamin Haggith
Yousif Ishaksay
Sonia Illner
Kevin Joy
Suzzette James
Sara Johnson
Erin Khara
Lagdon Hall Country House Hotel and Spa
Little Inn in Bayfield
Pierre Lussier
Jane Lewis
Su Langdon
Jennifer Link
Lions Clubs International District N4
Robin & Heather Labatt
Gilles Lavigne
Jennifer Leach
Rob Lundeen
Emily Meeking-Leslie
Doug & Claudia Miehm
Kara McIntosh
Rebecca Morgan
Andrea Morris
Bob McCrimmon
Joyce McDonald
Margie Mills

\$150-\$999 cont.

Amanda Matejcek
Jim and Krista McMullan
Patricia Meeking
Liz Miller
Mastermind LP
Judy & Lind Nyman
Elsa & Michael Nowlan
Navan Lions Club
Patricia Peterson
William & Carol Pigott
C. Keefer Pitfield
Erica Park-Coutts
Cynthia Quinn
Ridgeway Lions Club
Jana Reid
Kate Royer
Irma Rogers
Don & Ellen Reid
Shaughn Renahan
Jessica Roszell
Spin Master Ltd
Delia Sinclair Frigault
Marcello & Lori-Ann Saroli
Michael Schoen
Oliver Schmelzer
Sandra & Kris Smith
Andrew Stafl
Sadie Saucier
Ryan Stanga
Settler's Ghost Golf Club
Shane Shuster
Joanne Sterling
Jonathan Salvatore & Blaire Audet
Katie Sagmeister
Schomberg Lions Club
Graham Tate
Toronto Blue Jays
Sean Thomas
Tuck Shop Trading Co
Susan Troke
Uxbridge and District Lions Club
Adam Vollerling
The Vine
Gerald Wood
Kathleen Waterworth
Shawn Wilson
Rochelle Zorzi

Committee Volunteers

Reegan Connor
Anna Gilliat
Claire McNevin
Taylor Silva

2023 Board of Directors

Judith Adams
Jamie Bunston
Linda Dougherty, Chair
Bob Henderson
Alix Herber
Barbara Hnatiak
Andy McMullan
Kevin Palmer, Treasurer
Shelley Peterson
Paul Rich
Sandra Zidaric

2024 Management Team

Deirdre Thomas, Executive Director
Tara Allman, Development Director
Kristen Jackson-Dockeray, Camp Director
Claire Beddoe, Assistant Camp Director

Thank You



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