



**CAMP KIRK**

# 2024 Annual Report

# A Message from our Executive Director and Board Chair

What makes Camp Kirk truly magical is that it's a place where everyone belongs. Our dedicated staff ensure each camper leaves with brighter eyes, a lighter heart, and the knowledge that they are enough. The magic happens in small moments—shared high-fives, quiet conversations, and laughter-filled group games that create lasting friendships. With two-thirds of campers returning this past summer, we continue to pass on traditions that foster a sense of community.

Camp Kirk doesn't just help kids build friendships—it nurtures independence, boosts self-confidence, and sparks pride as campers discover their unique strengths. Our Impact Report shares parent feedback on how camp is helping their neurodivergent children develop crucial life skills and independence. As we continue to serve a more diverse population, our strength in adapting to meet each camper's needs continues to be a key priority.

## Key Initiatives for 2025:

- **New 5-Day Session:** A new session designed for younger campers will gently introduce them to camp life in a supportive, structured environment. This will also expand our capacity, increasing the number of campers from 150 to 180 across the summer.
- **Expanded LIT Program:** We will offer more Leader-in-Training spots and formalize the program to enhance employability and skills.
- **Monthly Clubs:** Free year-round clubs, including Dungeons and Dragons, Minecraft, arts and crafts, and more, to support campers' social skills and connections.
- **Staff Training:** Enhanced training in mental health awareness, self-care, and a peer mentorship program to ensure strong team cohesion.
- **Community Engagement:** We will continue hosting meaningful webinars to engage with parents and the broader community.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support of our donors, sponsors, and volunteers, whose contributions make our work possible. Special thanks to those who attended our Fall Gala, helping us raise nearly \$40,000 for camp. We also thank our volunteer board and committees whose stability and support have been invaluable and are leading the way for our new 5-year strategic plan as we look to deepen our impact.

As we look ahead, we are excited to continue growing our programs, expanding our reach, and ensuring that every child who comes to Camp Kirk feels the life-changing power of belonging! We invite you to continue walking alongside us in this journey of empowerment. Together, we can ensure every neurodivergent child discovers their unique strengths and potential.

With sincere appreciation,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deirdre Thomas".

Deirdre Thomas,  
Executive Director



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Dougherty".

Linda Dougherty  
Board Chair

## Our Mission

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

## Our Vision

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

# 2024 by the Numbers

**\$750,000+**

of camp costs subsidized because of your generous support.

**1430+**

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

**450+**

Family members received one to two weeks of respite.

## What Families Say

*"Always a big impact on my son's self-esteem, self and world discovery, new and most importantly continuing friendship and belonging.. Each year I see the growth, more independence and maturity in my son's actions and attitude after the time spent at CK. Thank you so much for all you do year around to keep up with a standard of fun for the next summer! Forever a grateful mother."*



88% of families said the Camp Kirk experience boosted their child's self-esteem.



92% of families said the Camp Kirk experience improved their child's sense of social acceptance and belonging.

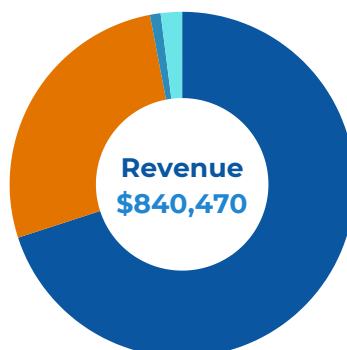


86% of families said the Camp Kirk experience has helped their child become more independent.

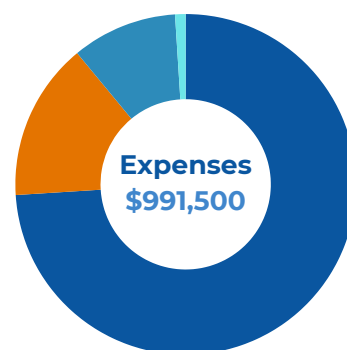
## Financial Summary

2024 was another year of transition for Camp Kirk as we welcomed a new Camp Director and full time Assistant Director. Bolstering our program resources led to a planned deficit of -\$151,000 for the year. The focus for 2025 is to return to a balanced budget.

For our 2024 audited financial statements please go to [www.campkirk.com](http://www.campkirk.com)



- Donations & Fundraising 70%
- Camper Fees 27%
- Government 1%
- Interest & Other Income 2%



- Programs 74%
- Fundraising 15%
- Administration 10%
- Public Relations 1%

# 2024 Summer Camp Program Update

## 2024 at a Glance:

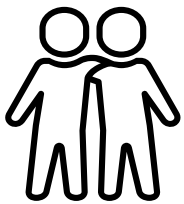
- **150** Campers
- **67%** Camper Retention Rate
- Increase in campers with autism, mood disorders and FASD

## Our Plans for 2025:

- **180** Campers
- **NEW 5** Day Session for Younger Campers and **8** Day Sessions for Older Campers
- **Enhancements** to our Sensory Room and Music Program



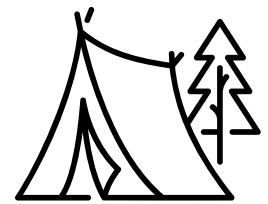
## Metrics that Matter



90% of parents said Camp Kirk helped their child work collaboratively with others



86% of parents reported improved independence in their child



93% of parents ranked the Camp Kirk experience as above average or exceptional

# 2024 LIT & Inclusive Employment Program Updates

## Leader In Training Program

### 2024 at a Glance:

- **18** Day LIT Program
- **100** Volunteer Hours Completed
- **Skills Practiced:** Teamwork, Communication, Risk Management, Self Advocacy

### Our Plans for 2025:

- **2** New Placements, New total of **10** LIT openings
- **3** Work Placement Streams
- **Morning** Skill Session / **Afternoon** Work Placement

## Inclusive Employment / Transition Program

### 2024 at a Glance:

- Offered 10 neurodivergent youth paid summer placements that bridge the gap between adolescence and adulthood.
- Participants received job skills training, workplace safety education, and hands-on work experience.

### Our Plans for 2025:

- Expand and enhance our Program to serve more individuals.
- Hire additional mentors to provide personalized guidance, and partnerships with industry leaders for meaningful job placements.
- Additional supports like mental health resources and transportation assistance

## Metrics that Matter

### Leader In Training Program



**100%** of LITs reported significant growth in leadership and self-advocacy skills

**100%** of parents agree that the program improved their child's social skills and future career readiness

### Inclusive Employment Program

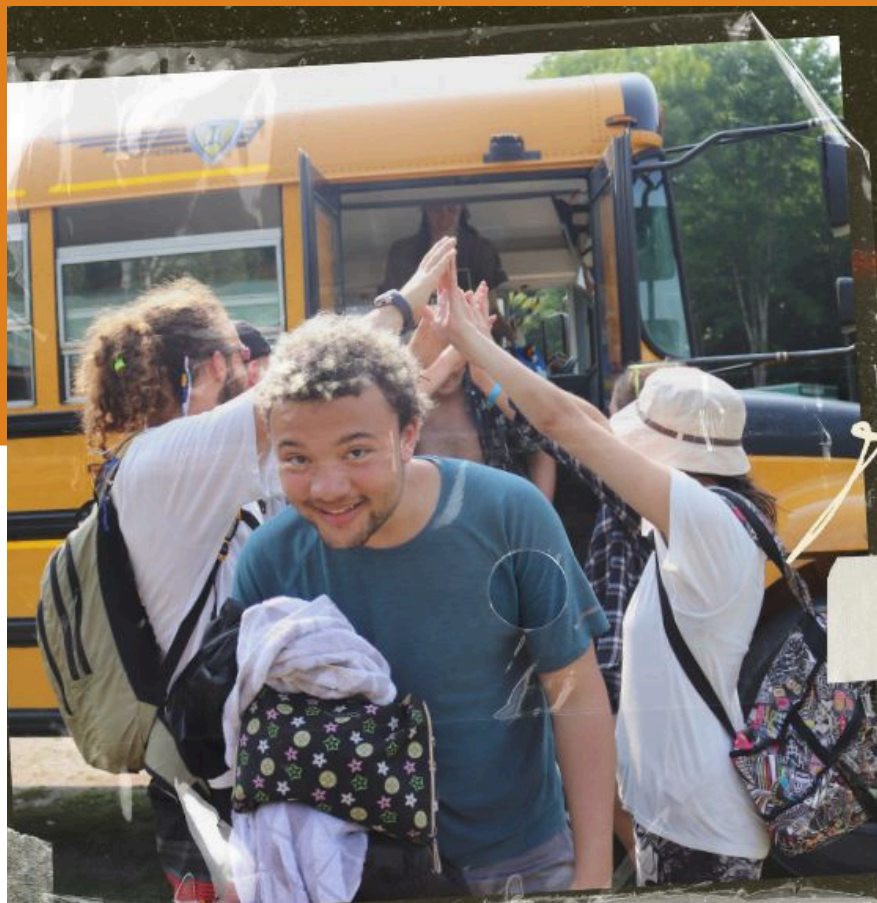


**86%** of participants strongly agreed that they gained critical employment readiness skills

**100%** of participants agreed that they were given the guidance and support needed to be successful

# Camp Kirk Staff Spotlight

Meet some of our most valued Camp Kirk Staff! Our transitional Staff like Caelan and Nathan, have kept the magic and traditions of Camp Kirk alive. They make incredible connections with our campers and are wonderful representatives of the mission and values of Camp Kirk.



*Caelan  
Hannssen*

Camp Kirker since 2016



*"This camp and its people stay with you even when you aren't a kid anymore - and the memories last too."*

*- Caelan Hannssen*

# Camp Kirk Staff Spotlight



Nathan  
Bacvar

Camp Kirker since 2015



*"Camp Kirk is the most amazing place that I have been to. I've enjoyed every summer as a camper because of the welcoming atmosphere and the amazing staff that work here. I've gained so many things growing up at camp like self esteem, social skills, leadership, and more. I wouldn't be who I am today without Camp Kirk and I am so thankful to be a part of our amazing community and to continue to empower our current and future campers!"*

- Nathan Bacvar

# Our Community



## Lions Club Supporters

Our sincere thanks to these honorary Camp Kirk staff who take care of our site by building, renovating and maintaining our spaces. Pictured left to right: Byron Taylor, volunteer since 2017, Tony Weerdenburg, volunteer for over 15 years, Art Thomson, volunteer since 2017.

## Community Webinars

This year, we hosted two webinars, *Embracing Neurodiversity: Building Inclusive Pathways to Success in the Workplace* and *Nurturing Connections: Empowering Parents of Neurodivergent Children*. Both were aimed at community agencies and parents to provide advice, support and resources.

## Monthly Virtual Camper Clubs

New for 2024, returning campers are invited to participate in free monthly online clubs. Many campers made wonderful connections over the summer with other campers and staff and we wanted to keep building on those relationships. Clubs are led by volunteers from our summer staff team and topics have included; Minecraft, Pet Club, Bracelet Making and more.

## Camp Kirk Fall Gala

2024 marked the return of the annual Fall Gala hosted at the North York Library. Over 120 guests reconnected over a delicious 3 course meal and live music from Tobin Spring & Band. Many thanks to all those that donated and participated to raise nearly \$40,000 net.

## McMullan Family Fundraiser

Since 2023, Andy and Madi have hosted a kick off to the summer benefitting Camp Kirk. 2024's event included musical act The Connors Brothers & food at Bailey's Homestead in Keswick. Special thanks to Pedestal Solutions for the continued support of the event

## Friendraiser Event

In May, we hosted a Friendraiser in Cibo, Yorkville to thank those that have supported us over the years and introduce new friends to Camp Kirk. David Barber & Jessie Newman shared their experience as former campers and now summer staff. We also shined a light on autistic comedian, Michael McCreary who entertained everyone with his unique observations of life.





# Our Supporters

(The Camp Kirk 2024 financial year covers donations made between October 1st, 2023 - September 30th, 2024)

## \$25,000+

Ontario Charitable Gaming Association  
Sun Life Financial  
Dean Connor and Maris Uffelmann  
The Mackinnon Family Charitable Fund  
The Mariano Elia Foundation

## \$10,000 - \$24,999

Taylor Statten Camping Bursary Fund  
Toronto Foundation  
The Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation  
Unity for Autism  
Paul and Vicki Hand  
Sally Hannon  
Linda Dougherty  
Canadian Tire Jumpstart  
Nosreap Family Foundation

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

Lions Clubs Camp Kirk Foundation  
Martin and Deirdre Thomas  
Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund  
The Peter Cundill Foundation  
Jean Wansbrough Leadership Training Fund  
Michael Douglas  
Shelley Peterson  
Alix Herber  
Fasken  
Alfred Johnston  
Deborah D'Arcy  
Jackman Foundation  
Judith Adams and Robert Black  
Midloch Foundation  
Nemar Limited  
The Joan and Clifford Hatch Foundation

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

Amici Camping Charity  
Ingram Micro  
Kilcoo Camp  
Jay and Jane Lewis  
Mike and Emily McDerment

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

Passion Fruit Partners  
District A 12 Lions  
Jenn Smith  
Leamington Lions Club  
Canadian Business Growth Fund  
Suzanne Porter and Sara Gardner  
Dot Jones  
Julie Girvan  
Kris and Sandra Smith  
Lions Club of Kingsville  
Marlin and Margot Horst  
Mitch and Sarah Bauer  
Susan Layard  
Newmarket Lions Club  
Jim and Rachel Williams  
Dr Mark Quigley  
Cambridge Highlands Lions Club  
Elmvale and District Lions Club  
Jarvis Lions Club  
Maria Holder  
Mississauga Central Lions Club

## \$150 - \$999

Katherine and Scott Beattie-Gives  
Kelly Cook  
Massimo Siciliano  
Jamie Bunston  
Wendy and David Bunston  
Mosaic Lodge Benevolent Fund  
Pierre Lussier  
Benjamin Haggith  
Ellie Morch  
Langdon Hall Country House  
Hotel and Spa  
Adam Vollerling  
Graham Tate  
Ridgeway Lions Club  
Spin Master Limited  
Andy and Madi McMullan  
Henri and Jane Audet  
Toronto Blue Jays  
Bracebridge Lions Foundation  
Craig Franklin  
David Beach  
Don Mitchell

## \$150 - \$999 cont.

Elizabeth Hugessen  
Jeremy Kraemer  
Marcello and Lori-Ann Saroli  
Mary Cook  
Michael Mahdavian  
One Properties  
Takuma Handa  
The Food Dudes  
Kevin Joy  
Rochelle Zorzi  
Gerald Wood  
Navan Lions Club  
Rachel and Steve Matos  
Reid Bowlby and Debbie Bongard  
Doug and Claudie Miehme  
Suzette James  
Belmont Swans Club  
Elsa Nowlan  
Jan Melchers  
Kevin Black  
Linda Jackson  
Olivia Giuliani  
Joyce Barretto  
Sonya Goldman  
Alienor Guilhem  
Ashley Duarte-Devlin  
Beth Beattie  
Dorchester and District Lions Club  
Heather Connolly  
Jenn LaFlamme  
Jim Barr  
Larry Yan  
Marg Harrison  
Sonia Illner  
Tom and Susan Stevenson  
Uxbridge and District Lions Club  
John Gillies and Anne-Marie Prendiville  
Alayne Hall  
Erin Khera  
Tara Allman  
Jim and Dale Egan  
Andrea Maguire  
Andrew Staffl  
Bess Trakas  
Bhupinder Nagra

## \$150 - \$999 cont.

Caroline Strickland  
Chris Sevigny  
Cobourg Lakeshore Lions Club  
Craig McCusker  
Jaxson Van Den Bosch  
Jennifer Power  
Jim and Krista McMullan  
Mandy Nagra  
Mary Copland  
Matt Hayes  
Peter Hamm  
Rahim Tejanir  
Rod Oliveira  
Salvatore Vella  
Simone Chan  
Sonya Chen  
Stacy Collins  
Susan Calverley  
Terry Sheehan  
Liz Miller  
Jana Reid  
The Vine  
Candace Connolly  
Chris Reidy  
District A9 Lions  
Ian Dunbar  
Ian Whenham  
Karen Simmonds  
Mike Oliver  
Roberta Tasson  
Schomberg Lions Club  
St Davids and District Lioness Club

## \$101 - \$149

Jessica Roszell  
Sadie Saucier  
Claire Beddoe  
Gibson's Cleaners  
Fire and Flux Studios  
Plattsville and District Lions Club  
Joan Don  
Settler's Ghost Golf Club  
Michelle Harper

## Committee Volunteers

Reegan Connor  
Anna Gilliat

## 2024 Board of Directors

Linda Dougherty, Chair  
Alix Herber  
Jamie Bunston  
Barbara Hnatiak  
Shelley Peterson  
Louise Gleeson

Kevin Palmer, Treasurer  
Bob Henderson  
Andy McMullan  
Paul Rich  
Sandy Zidaric

## 2024 Management Team

Deirdre Thomas, Executive Director  
Kristen Jackson-Dockeray, Camp Director  
Claire Beddoe, Assistant Camp Director  
Heather McLimont, Events Manager  
Michele Garry-Jones, Office Manager



# THANK YOU!

We are deeply grateful for all of our supporters and everything you do for our kids and camp.

[www.campkirk.com](http://www.campkirk.com)



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