

# ANNUAL REPORT

BUILDING HEALTHY, VIBRANT COMMUNITIES STARTS HERE **2022**



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# ABOUT US

Play Forever is a non-profit organization providing structured and accessible recreation, education & health services to seniors and youths of Toronto, Ontario. Play Forever currently serves youth ages 6-29 with weekly programs, primarily focused on helping youth from marginalized communities and low-income families.



# VISION

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At Play Forever, we envision a future where all youth in Toronto have access to **inclusive, safe recreational, educational** and mental health services, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status.

# MISSION

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We strive to create a supportable environment where youth can build their **confidence**, develop new **skills**, and foster **positive** relationships with peers and mentors. Through our programs, we aim to **empower** youth to **overcome** barriers, and become **active** members of their community.



# Program **IMPACTS**

**\$300,000+**

In Salaries Provided to at Risk Youth

**\$25,000+**

Scholarships and Volunteer Honorarium Rewarded

**1500+**

Program Participants

**100+**

Trained Youth Mentors

**400+**

Program, Services & Events

**120+**

Part time, Full Time, and Occasional Staff



# Key **PARTNERS**

Our partners have enabled the development of incredible possibilities for communities around Toronto. As a result, youth and families from diverse and underserved communities of the city have been able to successfully complete Community Programs - helping empower children today, and for years to come.



# Elected OFFICIALS



**LEAH TAYLOR ROY**  
*Member of Parliament*

“ Visiting Play Forever and seeing how the summer programs has helped them with their important work, was inspiring. ”



**MICHAEL PARSA**  
*Member of Provincial Parliament*

“ Play Forever has gone above and beyond to ensure the well-being of the local community and to ensure the betterment of the City of Richmond Hill. ”



**CARMINE PERELLI**  
*Former Deputy Mayor of Richmond Hill*

“ An educational youth initiative that encourages community development, health and wellness and also provides an after school program. ”



**TOM MUENCH**  
*Former Counsellor of Richmond Hill*

“ [Play Forever] represents the true Canadian value of helping others who, in some cases, are unable to help themselves. ”



# Play Forever **STORIES**



It has been a great pleasure to experience the growth and progress of the Play Forever programs. These initiatives have provided me with the chance to give back to my community while having enjoyable experiences with friends and family.



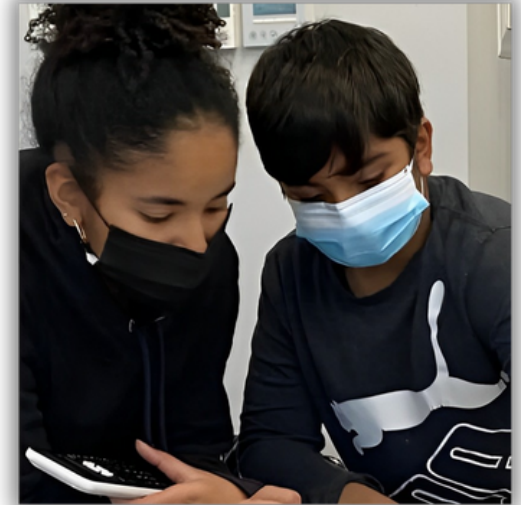
• **MASOOD ABEID**



Play Forever has been a constant part of my life since childhood, and has always brought me joy and happiness. As I grow older, I want to replicate the positive impact it had on me in the younger generation of today.



• **AANISH KARIAPPER**



Working with Play Forever has been one of the most rewarding experiences. I been able to give back to my community and gain invaluable skills and relationships along the way. I'm so grateful for the opportunities Play Forever has given me.



• **HAJRA ABDULLAH**





# ONP<sup>h</sup>A 2022 AWARD OF EXCELLENCE RECIPIENT



Through the contribution of Play Forever's community programs for youth and seniors, Crescent Village Housing was announced as the 2022 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) Award of Excellence recipient.

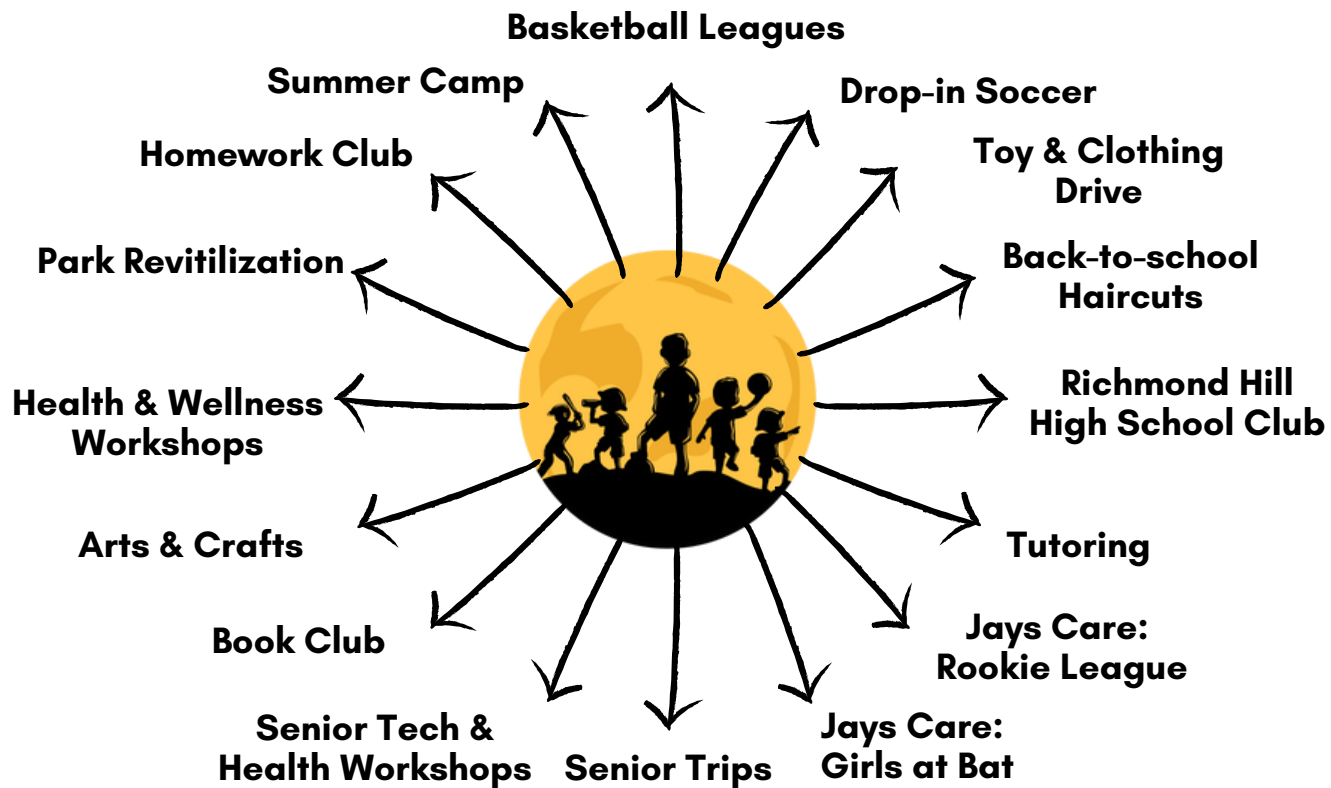
Play Forever's partnership with Crescent Village has been instrumental in cultivating a thriving, diverse, and inclusive community within the 170 homes located in Richmond Hill. The team has gone above and beyond to support residents through various programs that nurture their well-being and foster educational growth. They constantly seek new opportunities to leverage financial support and community partnerships to improve the lives of their tenants.

Watch the full video sharing our story here: [ONPHA Awards 2022: Award of Excellence](#)



# Programs & SERVICES

Play Forever offers a range of programs and services aimed to fulfill the needs of youth, families and communities. These are collectively designed to boost academic performance, promote physical health, integrate communities, and provide a safe and structured environment to learn and grow.



*Play Forever*

# YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUES

Taking the Game to the Next Level

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Play Forever Youth Basketball leagues provide youth aged 13 and up with an opportunity to learn and improve their basketball skills in a structured and competitive environment. The youth leagues consist of weekly seasonal games and a championship playoff tournament run by our experienced coaches and mentors. Our program is aimed to promote physical activity, teamwork, leadership and community building by creating an opportunity for socialization and fun among participants.

Watch the full Youth Basketball League games on our Youtube channel

 [PlayForever Basketball](#)



## HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to both the Raptors, our spring league champions and the Magic, our winter league champions! Both teams showed excellent teamwork and skill throughout the seasons!



*Play Forever*

# BASKETBALL SUMMER CAMP

In Partnership with Canadian Tire Jumpstart Program

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW


Play Forever's summer basketball camp program provided by Canadian Tire's Jumpstart Program offers weekly outdoor basketball training sessions for youth ages 6-12 and 13-17. The program allows participants to develop their skills, compete in activities and have fun under the mentorship and coaching of our trained leaders. Our basketball camps aim to build confidence and self-esteem in players by creating opportunities for success and improvement.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Our summer camp was held at our very own Play Forever basketball court and all participants received free jerseys for the camp!



Take a closer look at the Canadian Tire Jump Start summer camp

 [Play Forever](#)



*Play Forever*

# BASKETBALL SUMMER CAMP

In Partnership with Toronto Community Housing

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Play Forever's summer basketball camp program in partnership with Toronto Community Housing offers weekly indoor basketball training sessions for youth ages 6-12 and 13-18. The program is geared toward the development of physical, emotional, and basketball-related skills. Again, basketball camps aim to build confidence and self-esteem in players by creating opportunities for success and improvement.

Take a closer look at the Toronto Community Housing x Play Forever camp

 [Play Forever](#)



## HIGHLIGHTS

The TCH x Play Forever basketball camp was held at Moss park. Participants received training from former NCAA Division 1 college athletes and other trained instructors!

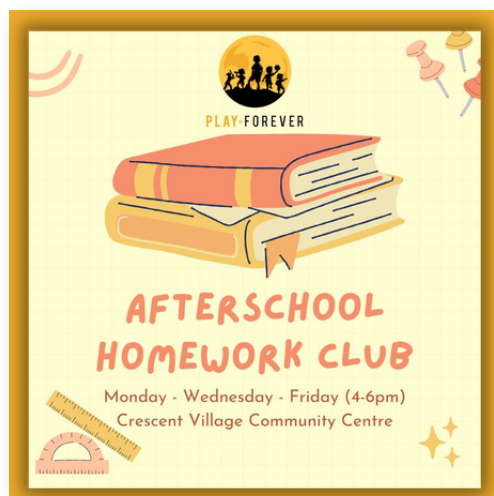
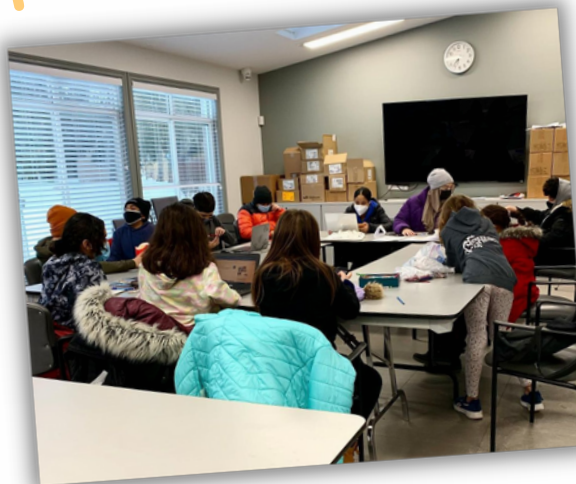


# Play Forever HOMEWORK CLUB

Building Bright Futures

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Homework Club is a program designed to provide academic support to students who need extra help with their homework. The program offers a safe and supportive environment where students can receive assistance from trained volunteers. Play Forever's goal for the Homework Club is to help students achieve academic success and become confident and successful learners.



I used to struggle with my homework a lot, but ever since I started going to the homework club, things have gotten much easier! I like that I can ask questions and get feedback on my work.

**Homework Club Student**



*Play Forever*

# PARKS & RECREATION REVITALIZATION

Reviving Community Spaces

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Park and recreation revitalization provided by Play Forever teaches the youth about the important of their environment, sustainability and how to take care of their community while promoting healthy lifestyles. Our summer co-op student from Laurentian University Indigenous Social Work placement program, created a workshop for a 3 Sisters Garden Bed.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Play Forever hosts gardening workshops at crescent village community centre led by Natalie Cox, Horticulturist, Urban Farmer and Gardener. Workshops include;

- Introduction to Gardening,
- Grow Your Own Microgreens,
- Flower Gardening 101,
- Medicinal Gardening - Grow your own teas
- Veggie Gardening 101
- Growing with Seniors
- Growing with Kids

**GROWING**  
WITH NATALIE



## DID YOU KNOW?

The 3 Sisters Garden Bed tradition is based on the relationship of corn, beans & squash that thrive when grown together. Corn planted first for beans to climb up & squash is used to keep weeds down & conserve moisture. Beans also improves the nitrogen which fertilizes the soil for the other two plants.



*Play Forever*

# HEALTH & WELLNESS WORKSHOPS

#MentalHealthMonday #HealthIsWealthWednesday

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Play Forever's health and wellness workshops in partnership with Farmacy for Life are designed to promote healthy lifestyle choices among the youth. The program provides various resources and services in order to support youth in improving their physical and mental health. Our weekly #MentalHealthMonday and #HealthIsWealthWednesday Instagram posts provide valuable information and tips to stay healthy!

### DID YOU KNOW?

Black seed oil can help aid weight loss, promote healthy heart, skin, liver, digestive system and supports your immunity.



## HIGHLIGHTS

All smiles when Farmacy For Life surprised the youth with Black Seed Oil, Irish Sea Moss, Oil of Oregano and resource cards to help them learn more about the benefits of boosting their immune system with herbal remedies, playing sports & getting outdoors!





# ARTS & CRAFTS

Bringing Imagination to Life

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

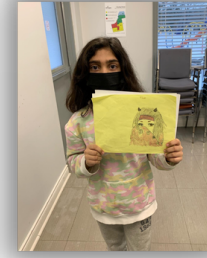
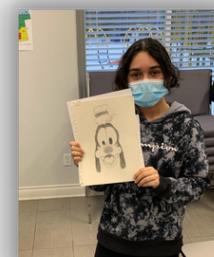
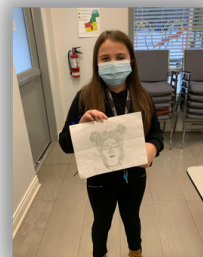
In January, Play Forever collaborated with the York Region Government to seek out 5 artists from the local community in York Region. Their task was to create and submit artwork for the potential inclusion in the design of York Region's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan for 2022.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Artwork submitted by Abhijit, 12 years old & one of the winners of the York Region Government Community Safety & Well-Being Art Contest!

Community safety and well-being is something to remember and helps keep everyone safe. My Art is about a human with a hand holding a globe about health care, food, housing, safety, being active and eco-friendly.

**Abhijit**



A few art contest submissions from our successful Homework Club

# Play Forever BOOK CLUB

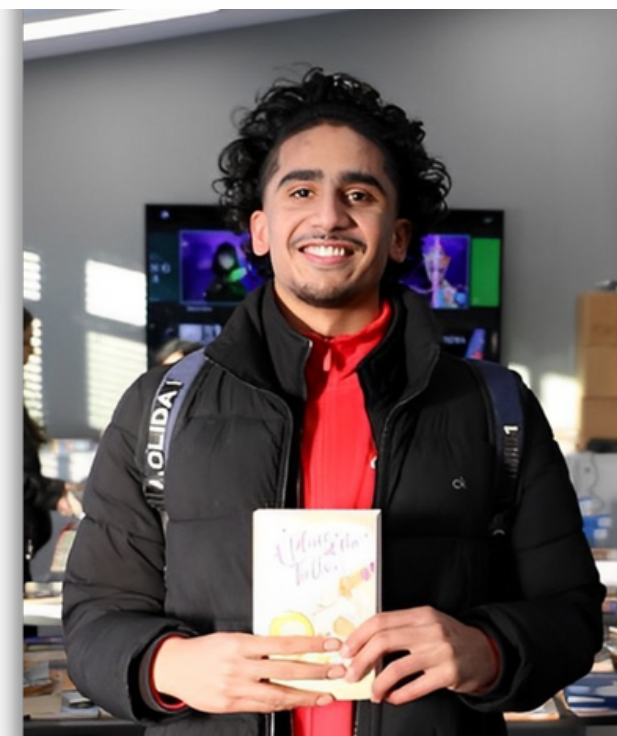
## Journey Through Pages

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Play Forever's book club/drive program provides a wide range of books for children. This program aims to promote literacy, encourage community involvement and support children in marginalized communities. It allows the volunteers of the community to make a positive impact on the lives of children and help ensure that they have access to the educational resources they need to succeed.

### HIGHLIGHTS

Our latest Book Drive with **First Book Canada** was a great success with the help of our amazing volunteers!



*Play Forever*

# SENIOR TECH & HEALTH SESSIONS

Connecting Seniors Through Technology

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Play Forever's senior tech and health program is designed to help seniors virtually and in-person. The program aims to address seniors' isolation through the use of internet and apps, while providing digital health and entertainment options. Additionally, the program includes education on social media and cybersecurity, as well as assistance with hardware and software applications. Play Forever's program also provides a Reading Pal, which is an on-call volunteer to assist or talk with seniors. Overall, the program aims to improve the health and well-being of seniors through the use of technology and social engagement. Our goals for 2023 are to increase tech services and develop new and existing health & wellness programs for over 100 seniors.

## HIGHLIGHTS

Youth interested in participating in the Senior & Youth Tech Support program received volunteer hours, a work reference and an honorarium!

Hemeed, my tech buddy, was very prompt, and contacted me via text and eventually, in a very short period of time, he was responsive and we were able to talk on the phone. Whereby, I was able to explain to him what my needs are and where he could help. He sounds like a very diligent, responsible chap.

**Caring Senior**



# Play Forever SENIOR TRIPS

Possible by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) - New Horizons for Seniors

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In partnership with ESDC and the New Horizons for Seniors Program, Play Forever provided free trips for the seniors across the GTA. In order to prevent isolation among older adults, the program provides various opportunities to travel and explore new places. Furthermore, the trips enable the youth to gain valuable volunteer experience through their involvement in community activities alongside the seniors. Overall, our aim is to help promote mental and physical health well being and to encourage socialization and community engagement.

## HIGHLIGHTS

In 2022, Play Forever provided free trips for our lovely seniors to the The Toronto Zoo in June, Ripley's Aquarium in July and Ontario Science Centre in October!



*Play Forever*

# JAYS CARE: GIRLS AT BAT

Bringing the Game to Girls

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Girls At Bat is a beginner-level baseball program aimed at breaking down the common barriers that prevent girls from participating in sports. These obstacles may include overly competitive environments, feelings of inadequacy or limited access to opportunities, all of which can negatively impact a girl's confidence. The program's goal is to eliminate these obstacles by creating safe and inclusive spaces that prioritize the leadership and perspectives of girls. Through Girls At Bat, girls can learn and play sports within a supportive community that encourages resilience and growth.

Take a closer look at the Jays Care: Girls At Bat program



[Play Forever](#)



## HIGHLIGHTS

Play Forever was honoured to be selected as a Jays Care community partner to run free and accessible youth baseball camps during the summer. We were able to successfully provide the Girls at Bat program as one of these camps!



*Play Forever*

# JAYS CARE: ROOKIE LEAGUE

Staying Active, Playing Ball

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Rookie League is a program that runs for seven weeks during the summer and is offered to children and young people who live in underprivileged areas of Toronto, in partnership with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The program aims to provide all participants with an opportunity to engage in structured play-based activities that promote social connection, enjoyment, and physical exercise. The program places a high priority on hiring local youth as staff members, which has been shown to help build self-assurance and improve employability skills.



## HIGHLIGHTS

We threw out the first pitch for our first summer softball game, and we would like to thank our Deputy Mayor & Local Councillor, Carmine Perrelli pictured alongside one of our Board of Directors Ayanle Omar and young youth participants!



# Play Forever TUTORING

Empowering the Youth to Succeed

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Play Forever tutoring program offers free online and in person tutoring sessions for students aged 6-18. Our program offers personalized, one-on-one and small group instruction designed to help students improve their academic performance. These sessions may focus on the student's needed subject area, such as math or language but may also provide general academic support. In order to best accommodate the students, our tutors offer subject lessons, test preparation, homework help, study skills training, and other resources to help students succeed. Our goal with the tutoring program is to help youth develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed academically and reach their full potential.



Thank you for enrolling my children in your Play Forever Tutoring Program. The tutors have been doing a fantastic job with them, and it has been an absolute pleasure working with the Play Forever team.

**Ganga T, Parent**



## Play Forever

# RICHMOND HILL HIGH SCHOOL CLUB

Connecting Community and School

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The RHHS Play Forever Club School provides various activities and services to the students of Richmond Hill High school. Some of these activities include tutoring, volunteering, community & school initiatives, and employment opportunities. These activities aim to enhance the academic, personal, and social development of students while fostering a sense of community and school spirit.

Overall, the goal of the club is to create a positive and supportive environment for students to thrive in and to help them achieve their goals.



### HIGHLIGHTS

The Play Forever club held its very first dodgeball tournament open to all Richmond Hill High School students. First and second place teams received special prizes including gift cards and t-shirts!



Check out one of Play Forever's Guest speakers, PenMoodz speak at Richmond Hill High School's Black History Month Assembly



[Play Forever](#)





*Play Forever*

# BACK TO SCHOOL HAIRCUTS

Giving Students a Fresh Start

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

In partnership with the Office Professional Hair Studio and CPX Cuts, Play Forever provided the youth with back to school haircuts in the summer. Getting a haircut before going back to school is beneficial to the youths' confidence and self-esteem, as well as promoting good hygiene habits that are essential for their overall health and well-being. Overall, our goal is to help children feel more prepared, confident and supported as they start the new school year.



PROGRAMS & SERVICES

## HIGHLIGHTS

The back to school haircuts were held at Crescent Village's Play Forever basketball court. Special thanks to one of Play Forever's first entrepreneurs, Ali - CPX Cuts, for making sure the youth stay fresh before the school year!

**THE OFFICE**  
*professional hair studio*



# Play Forever SOCCER PROGRAM

## Scoring Big With Youth Soccer

### PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Play Forever soccer program is a weekly drop-in program provided to the youth throughout the world cup period. The program is run by trained and experienced coaches who ensure that all participants have a positive and enjoyable experience. The weekly soccer drop-in program is an excellent way to promote physical fitness, community engagement, and soccer skills among community members. The program is a positive and inclusive space that helps bring the youth together and promote healthy and active lifestyles.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The Play Forever Soccer Program was held in celebration of Canada's first appearance in the FIFA World Cup since 1986!



*Play Forever*

# WINTER TOY & CLOTHING DRIVE

From Our Community, For Our Community

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The winter toy and clothing drive is an annual initiative of Play Forever that aims to collect donations of new and gently used toys and clothing items for children and youth from marginalized communities and low-income families. Play Forever partners with local businesses, community organizations, and volunteers to collect donations. Donations are then distributed to families in need throughout the community. The toy and clothing drive is an important initiative for Play Forever, as it allows the organization to support families in need, promote community engagement, and raise awareness of its programs and mission.



## HIGHLIGHTS

In partnership with JerseyFrostInc, Play Forever was able to provide donated basketball jerseys to the community for the winter holidays!



*Play Forever*

# BACK TO SCHOOL CLOTHING DRIVE

From Our Community, For Our Community

## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Like the winter toy and clothing drive the back to school clothing drive is an initiative of Play Forever that aims to provide new clothing items for children and youth from marginalized communities and low-income families. Play Forever provided organization merchandise including t-shirts, hoodies, and backpacks which were distributed to children in need for the upcoming school year. The clothing drive is an important initiative for Play Forever, as it allows the organization to support families in need, promote community engagement, and raise awareness of its programs and mission.



## HIGHLIGHTS

We held our Back To School campaign at the Play Forever basketball court where youth in the community were provided with exclusive merchandise!



# *Play Forever* **FOOD DRIVE**

In Partnership with Food Bank of York Region

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Play Forever food drive is an annual initiative that aims to collect donations of non-perishable food items for families and individuals experiencing food insecurity in marginalized communities and low-income households. Play Forever partners with local businesses, community organizations, and volunteers to collect food donations. Donations are then distributed to food banks, pantries, and other community organizations that serve individuals and families in need throughout the community. The food drive is an important initiative for Play Forever, as it allows the organization to address an urgent need in the community, support families and individuals experiencing food insecurity, and promote community engagement and awareness of its programs and mission.

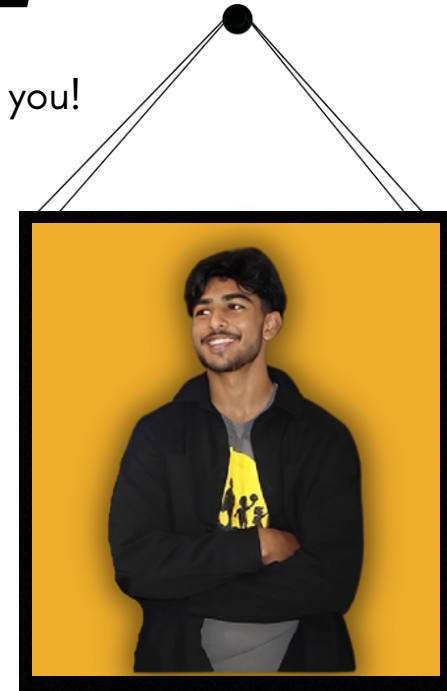




# Youth **INITIATIVE**

At Play Forever, we bring the opportunity to you!

Congratulations to Hasan-Ali for completing his successful grant initiative which was made possible by our partnership with TakingItGlobal. The goal of the initiative was to bring a group of youth from his community on a nature walking trail so they can get fresh air and have a nature photoshoot while enjoying time with their friends. The Rising Youth Program by TakingItGlobal empowers youth to take community service ideas and turn them into action through microgrants.



Play Forever has allowed me to make a positive impact on the community and grow professionally. I have been exposed to various opportunities to contribute, not only as a volunteer but with daily business operations and tasks. I want to thank all of Play Forever's partners who allow youth and seniors to Play Forever.



- **HASAN-ALI ABIDI**

Our youngest member on the Board of Directors!



# International **VOLUNTEER DAY**

As we celebrate International Youth Day, Play Forever would like to express our gratitude to all the volunteers who have dedicated their time and effort to making our mission a reality. Our organization would not be able to accomplish all that we do without the tireless support of our volunteers. Their contributions to organizing events, mentoring youth, and fundraising efforts have been invaluable to our cause.

We would also like to recognize our volunteers of the year, Hasan-Ali Abidi, Hamza Abdullah, Aanish Karriapper, and Jayden Hung, for their exceptional dedication and hard work. These individuals have gone above and beyond in their efforts to support our organization and the youth we serve. They embody the spirit of service and we are grateful for their contributions. We look forward to continuing our work together to create a brighter future for the youth in our communities.



# Employment PROGRAMS

Made by our employment agency - Employment Forever

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Play Forever has established multiple partnerships to create employment programs for the youth. These partnerships encompass a range of organizations, including YMCA, yes.to, Canada Summer Jobs, and VPI Working Solutions. By working closely with these partners, we have successfully recruited and hired over 65 youths aged between 15 and 29 over the past year through various employment programs. These opportunities comprise full-time, part-time, and casual work arrangements.

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# Board of **DIRECTORS**

The members who make up our team at Play Forever and serve on the Board of Directors all play a vital role in ensuring that the heart of GTA keeps on beating. Their dedication to our mission is what has allowed us to provide life-changing programming and services for over 100+ Youth in the Greater Toronto Area.

**Shiyao Li | Mohammad-Ali Abidi | Azad Gulam | Sahal Abdi | Said Abdi | Kenny Au  
Ayanle Omar | Hasan-Ali Abidi | Ahmed Osman | Anthoine Walters | Malik Cox  
Hamud Mbaarak | Dawood Akhtar | Nabil Jama | Adam Osman**



## **MOHAMMED AL-SALEM** FOUNDER & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Founder and Executive Director of Play Forever, Mohammed Al-Salem, has over 15 years of experience within municipal governments and community organizations. He has progressed to oversee Community Relations, Community Development, and Community Portfolios.

# THANK YOU

**GET IN TOUCH**



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