

2023

ANNUAL REPORT



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



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ABOUT US

INTRODUCTION

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

**FUN | RESPECT | EMPOWERMENT
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION | COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

OUR VISION AND MISSION

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



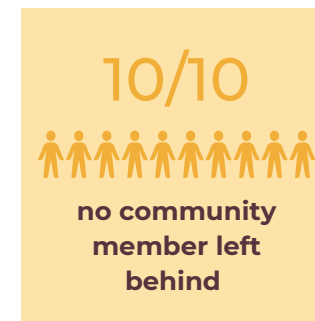
At Play Forever, we envision a future where all youth and seniors in Toronto have **access to inclusive, safe recreational, educational and mental health services**, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status.



PROGRAM IMPACTS

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

In the year 2023, Play Forever served the greater Toronto community through various programs and initiatives, making a tangible difference in the lives of youth and seniors. Our commitment to accessibility, education, and health services has led to the efforts outlined below.



EDUCATION

5+

Weekly programs offered

300+

Senior participants

80%

Of participants improved performance

EMPLOYMENT

50+

Youth employed

3

Job training programs

30+

Employment successes

RECREATION

5000+

Hours of free play provided

15+

Programs & services offered

1000+

Youth participants served

KEY PARTNERS

Our partners have enabled incredible possibilities for Toronto communities. Youth and families from diverse, underserved areas have completed our Community Programs, empowering children now and for years to come.



BEST NONPROFIT EMPLOYER VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

2023 FINALIST AWARD

We have been selected as a Finalist for the **Charity Village Best Nonprofit Employer Volunteer Program** award! This is a significant milestone and a testament to the dedication and passion of our volunteers.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to each and every one of our past and present volunteers. Whether you've contributed in-person or virtually, your efforts have been instrumental in our journey. Your dedication is what drives us forward and makes a tangible difference in our communities.

We're proud of this recognition and are inspired to continue our work. **Thank you** for being a part of our story!



ELECTED OFFICIALS



LEAH TAYLOR ROY

Member of Parliament

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



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.”



DAVID WEST

Mayor of Richmond Hill

“Play Forever is a critical organization in our community, offering programming that is important to our residents and society at large.”



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.”

PLAY FOREVER **STORIES**



ALAMDAR-ALI

Entrepreneur, Barber and Hairstylist

“Play Forever is really important because it kind of gives you a sense of someone’s watching over you- like that father figure [or] the older brother that’s there for you”

 [Watch Alamdard-Ali’s Spotlight](#)



HAJRA ABDULLAH

TMU Nursing Student

“Play Forever gave me the opportunity to interact with other kids and learn new skills. Now, I get to teach the homework club and it’s really rewarding to give back to my community”

 [Watch Hajra’s Spotlight](#)



MASOOD ABEID

UW Engineering Student

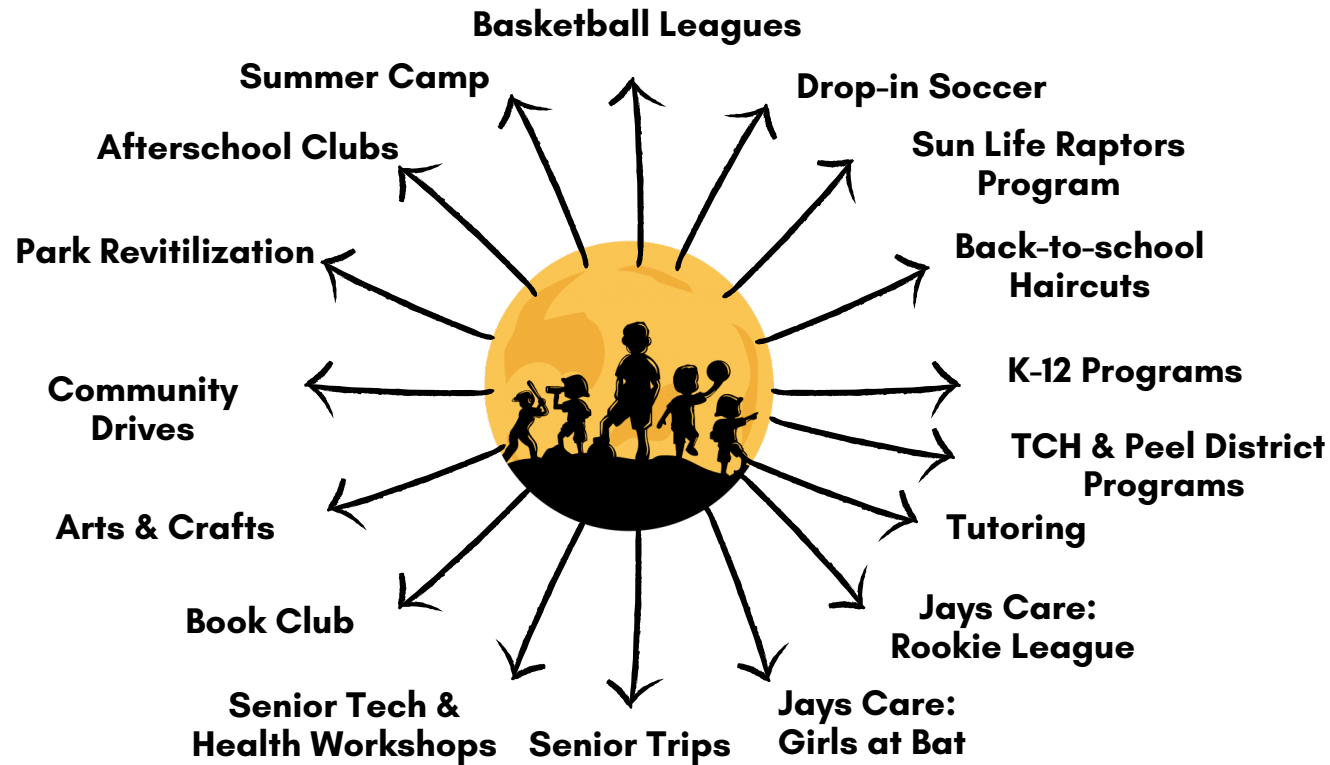
“I got involved with Play Forever through their first Friday basketball programs. I decided that it will be best for me to get involved with my community and give back so I started volunteering with them”

 [Watch Masood’s Spotlight](#)



PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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



CAMP WESTON: DREAM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Dream Community Foundation (DCF) is committed to creating opportunities that lead to an inclusive and connected community, where everyone feels a sense of belonging.

In collaboration with **Play Forever**, DCF established **Camp Weston**, a 6-week summer camp that provides local youth with a genuine camp experience. Campers enjoyed weekly field trips and nonstop activities - creating unforgettable summer memories.



PARKS AND RECREATION

REVITALIZATION

RESTORING COMMUNITY SPACES

Parks and recreation revitalization provided by Play Forever teaches youth about the importance 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 the 3 Sisters Garden Bed.



Play Forever, in collaboration with Natalie Cox and Crescent Village hosts engaging gardening workshops. These **workshops**, such as Introduction to Gardening, Flower and Veggie Gardening 101, Medicinal Gardening, Growing with Seniors, and Growing with Kids, aim to foster **community** engagement, promote **sustainable** practices, and create vibrant **green spaces** for all to enjoy. These initiatives are made possible by the generous support of our partners, enabling Play Forever to **empower youth** and families.

The 3 Sisters Garden Bed Tradition

The tradition involves planting corn first for beans to climb up, with squash planted to keep weeds down and retain moisture. This symbiotic relationship allows beans to improve soil nitrogen, fertilizing corn and squash as they grow together.



YOUTH BASKETBALL LEAGUES

TAKING THE GAME TO THE NEXT LEVEL



HIGHLIGHTS

Watch the full Youth Basketball League games on Youtube!



[Play Forever Basketball](#)

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.



BASKETBALL SUMMER CAMP

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CANADIAN TIRE JUMPSTART PROGRAM

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

In 2023, **Canadian Tire Jumpstart** featured us, sharing **real stories** from our community. Parents like Samira from Toronto highlighted how our Play Forever programs **inspired youth** to enjoy **activities for all ages**.

The featured video shows how our youth evolve into **coaches, mentors, or volunteers**, addressing a vital need in Toronto and neighbouring communities. CT Jumpstart recognized the vital role Play Forever has in nurturing and fostering growth in our youth.



BASKETBALL SUMMER CAMP

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING

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! Take a closer look at on Youtube!

 [Toronto Community Housing x Play Forever Camp](#)



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. Thank you to our partners who make it happen!



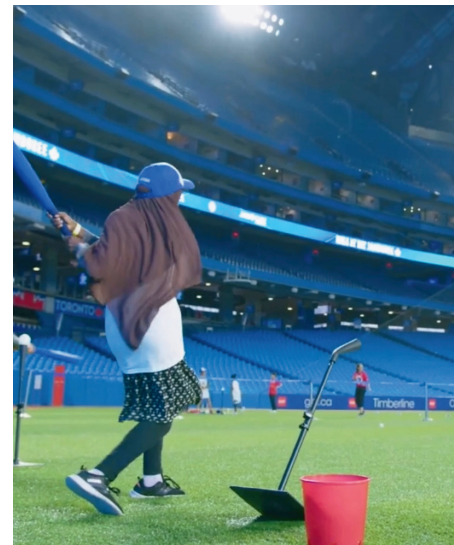
JAYS CARE: GIRLS AT BAT

BRINGING THE GAME TO GIRLS

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.

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!



JAYS CARE: ROOKIE LEAGUE

STAYING ACTIVE, PLAYING BALL



Take a closer look at our Jays Care Rookie League Program [here](#)

Rookie League is a program, in **partnership with the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCH)**, runs for seven weeks during the summer and is offered to children and young people who live in underprivileged areas of Toronto. 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 youth participants!



PSG X PLAY FOREVER

THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN TORONTO



In 2023, we celebrated a monumental collaboration between the **Paris Saint-Germain (PSG)** football club and Play Forever. This groundbreaking partnership, **the first of its kind in Canada**, has led to the opening of a new PSG store located in Toronto. In the upcoming year, **PSG** will bring in skilled coaches from the **PSG Academy** to train with local coaches and organize football camps exclusively for diverse Toronto youth.

Watch our PSG X Play Forever exclusive video [here](#).



PSG X PLAY FOREVER WONDER WEEKEND

EMPOWERING SOCCER GROWTH IN THE GTA

The **PSG X Play Forever Wonder Weekend** featured a **Coaching Clinic**, where expert coaches from PSG Academy trained local coaches, enhancing their skills and contributing to the growth of soccer in the community. Additionally, a hosted **Youth Training Clinic** provided youth with skill development opportunities, ensuring underserved youth have access to top-tier training. The event concluded with a **two-day tournament**, where teams showcased their newly honed skills, fostering camaraderie and growth within the GTA soccer community.

▶ **WONDER WEEKEND RECAP**



K-12 PROGRAMS

CONNECTING COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL

Our K-12 Programs and After School Club comprehensively support students from various school boards in the **York, Peel, and Toronto regions.**

Activities such as tutoring, volunteering, community initiatives, and employment opportunities aim to enhance students' **academic, personal, and social development.**

These programs create a supportive environment that fosters growth, builds community, and **empowers students to succeed.**

The After School Club offers academic support and homework assistance from trained volunteers, helping students achieve academic **success and confidence.**



HIGHLIGHTS

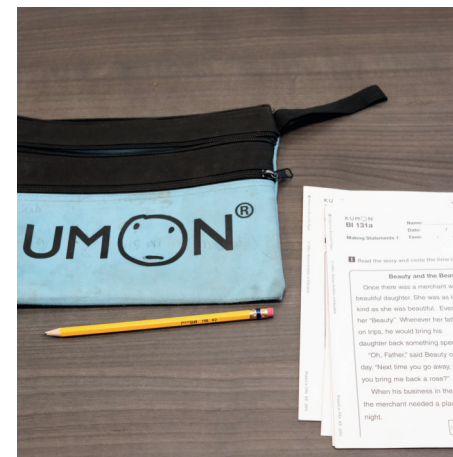
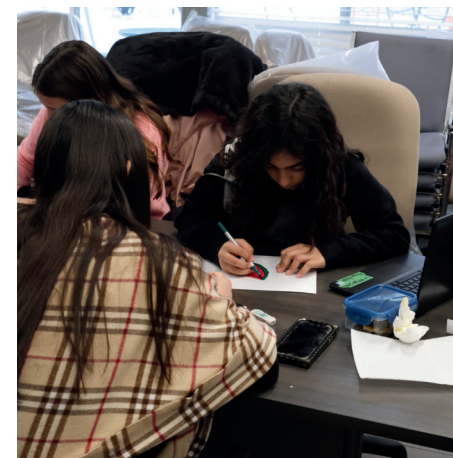
In 2023, our **Thrive for Youth Mentorship Program** aimed to reach over 120 participants across various dimensions, including personal development, mental health awareness, employment preparation, and sports engagement, through tailored **peer to peer mentorship.**

TUTORING

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH TO SUCCEED

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

GIVING BACK COMMUNITY DRIVE

CARING HANDS, BRIGHTER TOMORROWS

Introducing Play Forever's impactful **community drives**, aimed at promoting **literacy**, addressing **food insecurity**, and providing **essential items** for **families in need**. Supported by generous donors and volunteers, these initiatives embody our commitment to building a stronger, more connected community.



Play Forever's Book Club Program

Play Forever's book club and drive program, in partnership with *First Book Canada*, provides a wide range of books for children. This program promotes literacy, community involvement, and supports children in underserved communities.

Play Forever's Food Drive

Supported by the *York Region Food Network*, the Play Forever food drive collects non-perishable items for families experiencing food insecurity. Donations go to local food banks, pantries, and organizations serving those in need.

Play Forever's Winter Clothing Drive

In collaboration with *Brands for Canada*, Play Forever's winter toy and clothing drive collects items for children and youth in marginalized communities. Donations are distributed to families in need within the community.

SUN LIFE RAPTORS PROGRAM

HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES, ONE HOOP AT A TIME

Generously supported by the partnership between **Sun Life** and **the Toronto Raptors**, the **Ready to Rebound Program** helps youth develop the foundational skill of resilience. This initiative focuses on instilling the skill of bouncing back from adversity. The program recognizes the power of basketball as a tool for **personal growth**. Through dribbles, passes, and shots, participants learn not just the game, but the essential life lessons of perseverance and determination.



BACK TO SCHOOL HAIRCUTS

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.**



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!



SENIORS PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

POSSIBLE BY EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT CANADA (ESDC)

In partnership with **ESDC** and the **New Horizons for Seniors Program**, Play Forever provided free trips for 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**, and to **encourage socialization and community engagement**.



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 the 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**.



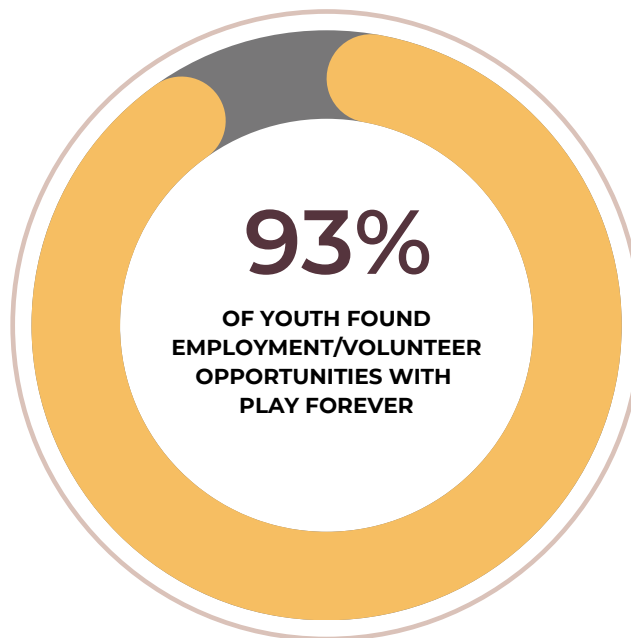
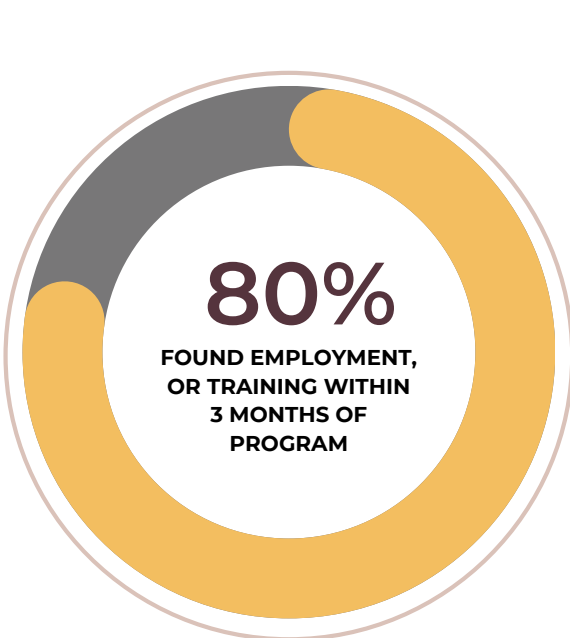
HIGHLIGHTS

In 2023, Play Forever provided free trips for our lovely seniors to the Aga Khan Museum in August, The Antique Market in November and the Distillery Winter Village in December



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

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.



THANK YOU



GET IN TOUCH



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