



**Camp Lifting Leaves
Feedback and Recommendations Report**

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Introduction

What a strange year this has been to hold the third annual session of Camp Lifting Leaves! Running camp programs amidst a global pandemic means that we had to be creative in holding Camp Lifting Leaves virtually. Though we are heartbroken that we were not able to gather in person, the wonderful energy from the participants and staff made gathering online still feel special and hopefully gave participants access to community supports in an isolating time.

Awareness and participation in this program continues to grow, and we are so happy to report that we grew by 50% this year. Because the program was running virtually our program was more accessible to participants from an even wider geographical area than previous years. We are so grateful to welcome more folks into the Camp Lifting Leaves and Ten Oaks Project communities.

We also learned many things about camps in general as well as the hopes and expectations of our participants, chaperones, and our volunteer staff for Camp Lifting Leaves. We heard them appreciate many things, and also provide recommendations for how we can make camp even more magical. We value this feedback with all our hearts. Fundamentally, we are an organization that is built around people – their hopes, their abilities, and their uniqueness. Ten Oaks, as its core, is motivated by the needs folks from 2SLGBTQ+ families, identities, and communities. Moreover, we are an organization built on the strength of our community and we would not exist without the valuable contributions of our campers, volunteers and staff. This report is based on all the feedback we received through our camp evaluation forms filled out by our campers, chaperones, and volunteer staff. We are happy to share this report with our communities to stand by our commitment to continual learning and to ensure transparency in our programming development and improvement.

We hope to see you in person at Camp Lifting Leaves 2021!

Olivia Fogel
Programs Manager

Demographics

This year we hosted 44 campers, and 16 volunteer staff. Because this year's program was run virtually, we had participants join from across Ontario.

Agencies that were involved with registering youth to participate in Camp Lifting Leaves:

- Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox and Addington
- Family & Children's Services of Guelph and Wellington County
- Halton Children's Aid Society
- Hamilton Catholic Children's Aid
- Kelford Youth Services
- Children's Aid Society of London And Middlesex
- Family and Children's Services Niagara
- Nogdawindamin Family and Community Services
- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- Family & Children's Services of Renfrew County
- Sarnia Children's Aid Society
- Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
- Children's Aid Society of The Districts of Sudbury And Manitoulin
- Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- York Region Children's Aid Society

In our participant and volunteer registration forms, we ask for a bit of demographic information to make sure our programming is reflective of our diverse communities. It is completely optional to provide this information and the numbers below are based only on the folks who chose to respond.

Black, Indigenous and People of Colour: 39%

Gay, lesbian, bi, queer, etc. (i.e. not straight): 65%

Trans and Non-binary: 19%

Queerspawn: 11%

Recommendation:

In the past few years, across all programs, we've seen gaps in representation when it comes to BIPOC, transfeminine, and queerspawn folks at Ten Oaks Project programs. It is recommended that we also gather specific data around transfeminine identities. It is recommended that we continue the practice of gathering demographics data as an option to avoid enforcing coming-out culture.

It is also recommended that the program management continue to prioritize BIPOC and transfeminine folks on the waitlists.

Feedback – Areas of Strength

Our standard feedback forms for campers and volunteers include a variety of questions around programming and the camp experience. We always gather feedback because hearing from our participants helps us to improve our programs and better meet the needs of our participants. Below are some of the most popular aspects of Camp Lifting Leaves.

Camp Atmosphere and other General Feedback:

- One of the best things about camp was the community that it brought together
- Though the program was online, many folks were able to make connections with other participants throughout camp
- Participants generally felt that the program selection and facilitation offered a good variety of fun and educational topics

Programming:

- Overall, the programming at camp worked very well, participants attended every activity- none were cancelled due to lack of attendance
- Multiple workers and caregivers commented that the level that their participant was engaged greatly exceeded their expectations for a virtual program
- Most folks had received their camp care packages before camp and were able to use the materials to engage with the programming
- Centred spaces gave opportunity for very rewarding discussion for campers, it may be beneficial to hold more next time, especially for some of the groups that had lots of attendees
- The Neurodivergent/Disability Centred Space was new this year and was very well attended, participants indicated that it was a necessary and appreciated space
- Programming that was specifically mentioned as being appreciated:
 - o Story time
 - o Drag
 - o Boondoggle Bracelet Making
 - o Neurodivergent Centred Space

Staff:

- It was a noticeable difference in discussion groups not having chaperones in the spaces, as compared to previous years
- Staff were well prepared for their programming and were able to make connections with some participants despite the virtual platform
- It was noticeable and appreciated by the returning staff to be able to connect with returning participants

Feedback – Areas for Growth

Based on the feedback provided by our participants and volunteers, the following is recommended by the Programs Manager to be implemented in any future virtual programming, dependant on Ten Oaks' staff capacity and budget.

Camp Atmosphere and other General Feedback:

- Many participants indicated that they missed the in-person component and community of camp
- Some folks had trouble accessing the program links, so future camp programs will ensure to test communication with all participants during the work week so support people can be certain by the weekend that all participants know how to and are able to connect to the programming they wish to

Programming:

- Many folks are feeling “zoomed out” so had some challenges with staying engaged on the computer as much as they would have wanted to participate
- Recommendations to ensure a higher level of transparency and safety in Centred Spaces by ensuring each participant in attendance of each Centred Space is aware of the guidelines, expectations, and purpose of the space
- Some programs that participants had requested were not able to be offered due to staffing limitations and availability
- Staff recommended having the space to hold debriefs with co-facilitators in case any challenging situations or dynamics arise throughout the program

Closing Remarks

Whether you were one of the responders of our survey, someone who attended or hopes to attend one of our programs, or a past, present or future staff members, we appreciate the time you took to read this feedback and recommendations report in its' entirety.

The Ten Oaks Project is a small non-profit run by a team of two full-time staff. To ensure that our staff has the time and capacity to run our growing programs and community events, are able to keep a healthy work-life balance and avoid getting emotionally or physically burnt out, we have implemented a new feedback processes. The feedback process can be reviewed in detail at this link. Please note that the Camp Lifting Leaves feedback process has now been closed, and we look forward to connecting and hearing from you after the 2021 session. We would like to thank all who had a hand in making intentional magic happen at Camp Lifting Leaves.