



CAMP LIFTING LEAVES 2023 FEEDBACK REPORT





TEN OAKS PROJECT

The Ten Oaks Project is a charitable organization that engages and connects children and youth from 2SLGBTQIA+ identities, families, and communities through programs and activities rooted in play. Based in Ottawa, the Ten Oaks Project was founded in 2004 and offers affirming and life-changing camps and local programs for children, youth, and families.



Camp Lifting Leaves

Camp Lifting Leaves is a partner project of the Ten Oaks Project, Indigenous well-being agencies, and child welfare agencies across Ontario. We have seen a growing need for connection and community building amongst youth from 2SLGBTQIA+ communities who are in and out of care and are thrilled to offer a camp just for them!



DEAR FRIENDS, ---

The magic of Camp Lifting Leaves continues to bloom, with five years of growth and wonders. This year, the fire of the community burned brighter than ever, with not one but two sessions held. In March 2023, a virtual weekend of camp fun was offered, where campers received a supply of treasures and resources for programs. Later in October 2023, an in-person session was hosted, welcoming back returning campers and chaperones with open arms.

A heartfelt thank you to our devoted campers, chaperones, and staff who worked tirelessly to uphold the health and safety of our community. The in-person session of Camp Lifting Leaves provides a breathtaking backdrop of the wonders of the season. This year's campers reveled in a variety of activities, from Queer Trivia to canoeing, arts and crafts, and shelter building.

Campers and chaperones travel to great lengths to be part of this magical community. Many campers attended previous sessions, making it easier to slip into the shared rhythm of camp life.

Camp Lifting Leaves stands apart from other programs, as it is a partnership between Indigenous wellbeing agencies, Children's Aid Societies, and the Ten Oaks Project. At the heart of our mission lies a deep commitment to accountability, where the feedback of campers, chaperones, and staff is invaluable in shaping our programs to serve our communities better.

We are profoundly grateful for the time you took to share your experiences at camp and to read this report. Both sessions of Camp Lifting Leaves this past year were weekends of pure magic, creating connections, fostering joy, and building a community that will continue to thrive.

May the spirit of Camp Lifting Leaves continue to flourish under the care of this wonderful community!

Kymani and Ash





We hosted 35 campers, 18 chaperones, and 8 staff. Here is a list of agencies represented this year:

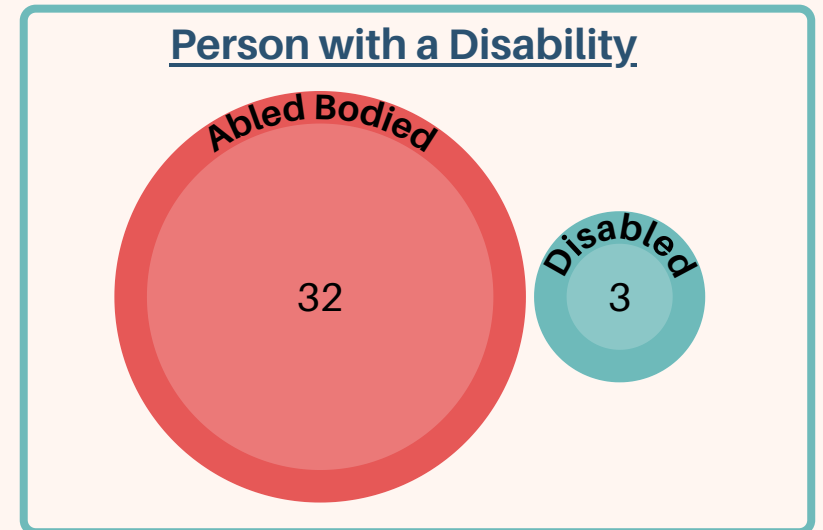
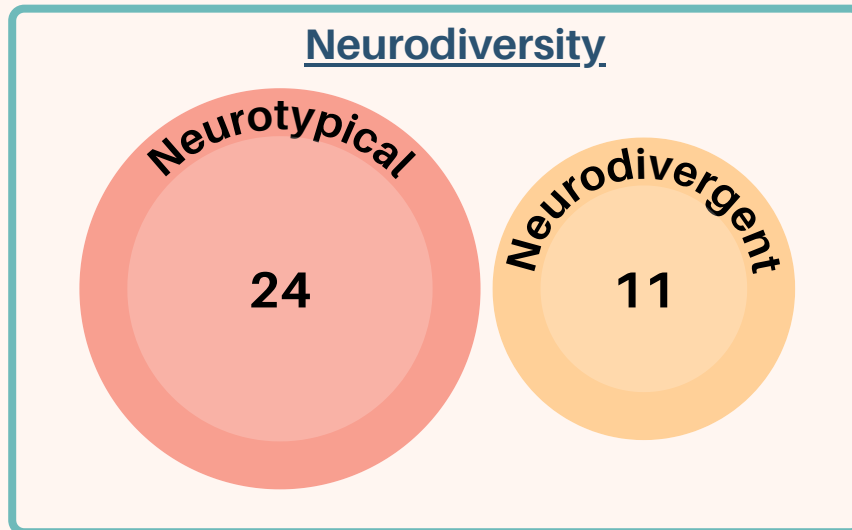
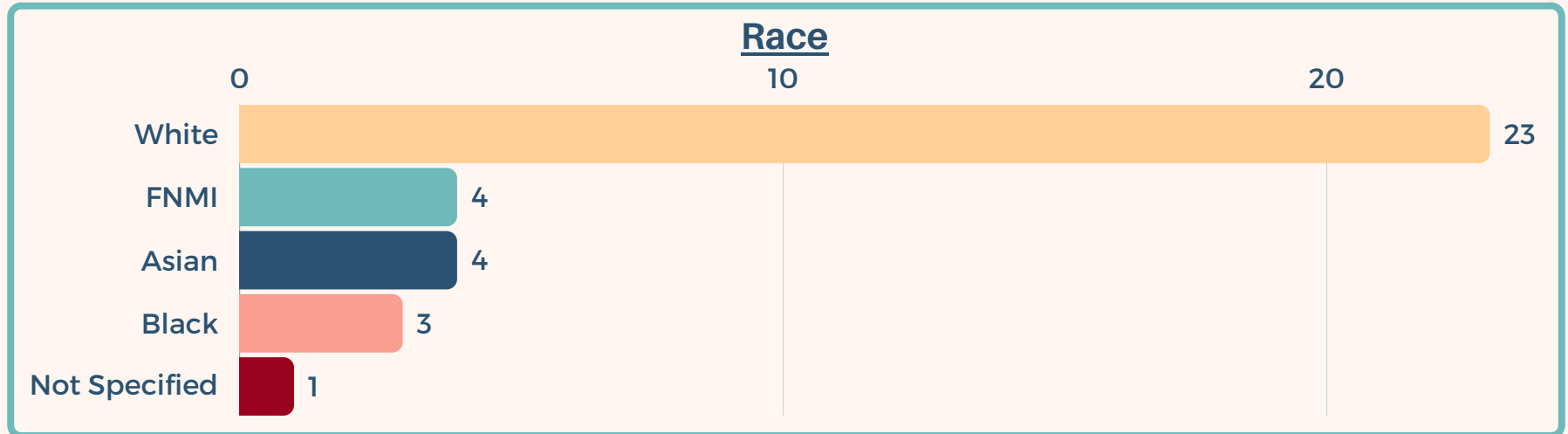


- 📍 Bruce Grey Child and Family Services
- 📍 Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- 📍 Children's Aid Society of Hamilton
- 📍 Children's Aid Society of London and Middlesex
- 📍 Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- 📍 Children's Aid Society of the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry
- 📍 Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- 📍 Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child and Family Services
- 📍 Family & Children Services of the Waterloo region
- 📍 Family and Children's Services of Frontenac, Lennox, & Addington
- 📍 Family and Children's Services of Niagara
- 📍 Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions
- 📍 Thunder Bay CAS
- 📍 York Region Children's Aid Society

"i hope this place lasts many many years. it's an amazing place and i love it ! i hope as many queer people get to experience it too <3"
-CLL camper



DEMOGRAPHICS

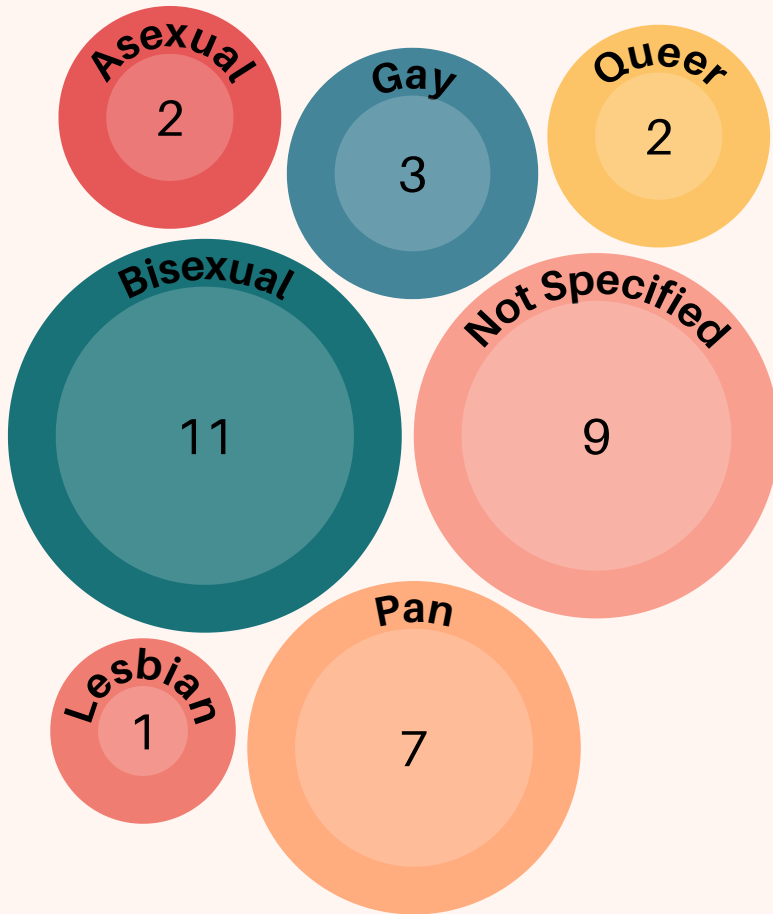


As with any demographic data collection, the information above does not fully explain the wide variety of ways folks can identify. Continuing to engage in best practices for gathering demographic information and listening to feedback will allow us to capture a better picture of who attends Camp Lifting Leaves.

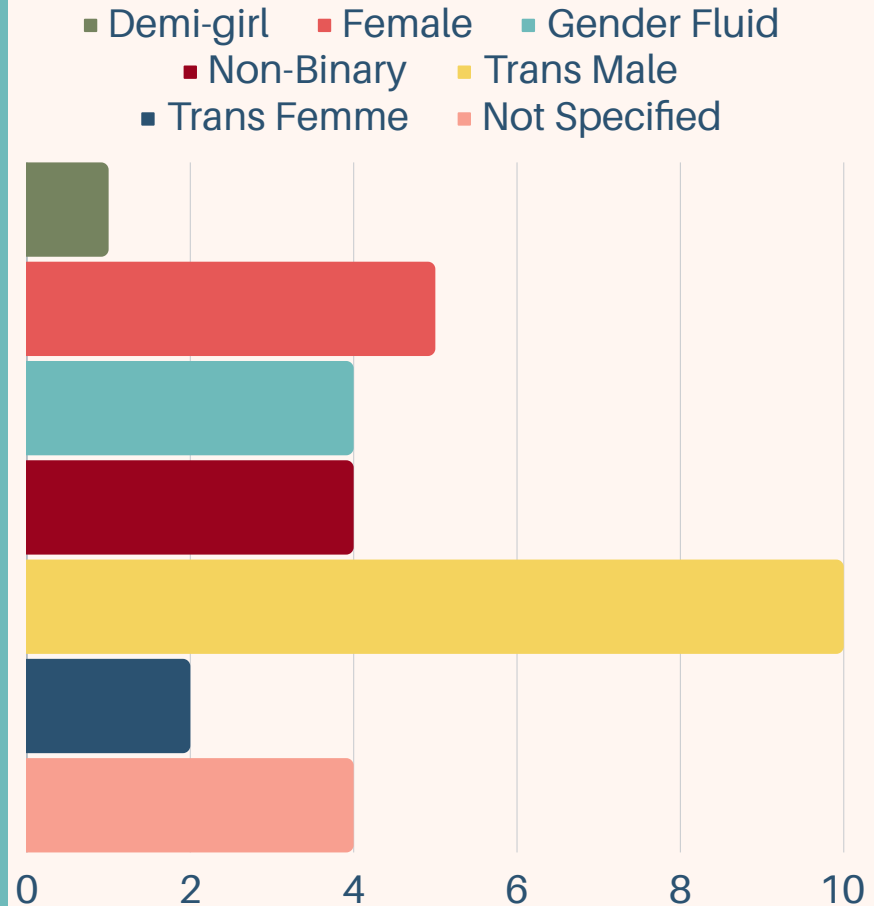




Attraction Identity



Gender Identity



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AREAS OF STRENGTH



Our standard feedback forms for campers, chaperones, and staff include a variety of questions about programming and the camp experience. We always gather feedback because hearing from our participants helps us improve our programs and better meet the needs of our participants.

When asked what is one thing I would never change about CLL, campers responded:

- The staff
- The vibes
- The great people that encourage you to take part in activities, and everyone is so supportive.
- Everything
- The activities we had to do
- How accepting and amazing this experience was
- Centered spaces
- Bunk times. Sleep is good.
- The people/chaperones <3 and the energy
- Food
- I appreciate that we were put in consistent groups, I made unexpected friends because of it.
- The positive community and opportunity to interact with everyone there
- The location

When asked what was your favourite activity, campers responded:

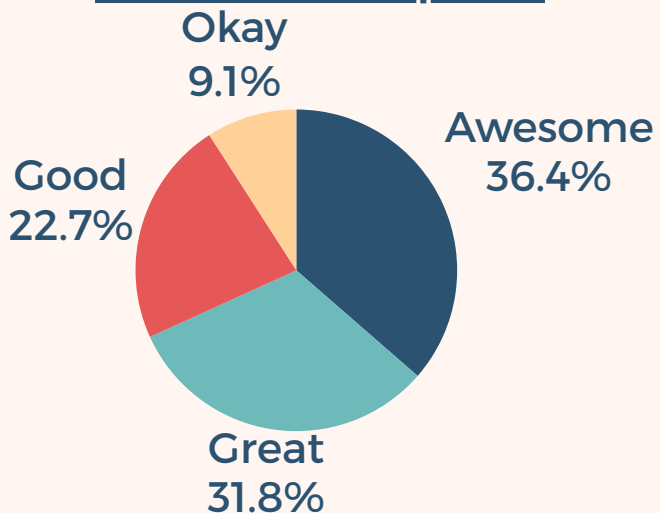
- Button Making
- Archery
- Stargazing
- BIPOC centered space
- Jeopardy
- Arts & Crafts
- Making bracelets
- Canoeing
- Polar dip
- High ropes
- Rock Climbing
- Camouflage



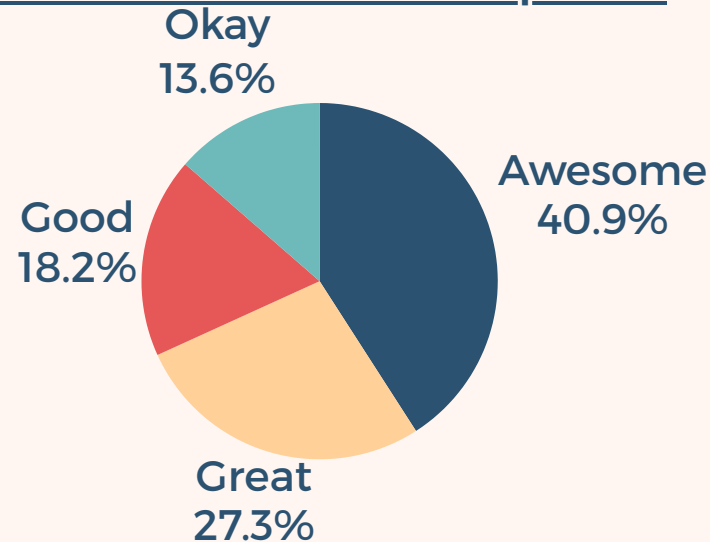
AREAS OF STRENGTH



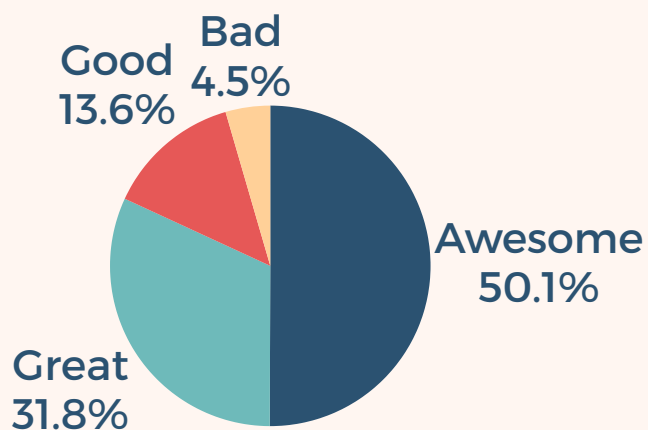
The food at camp was:



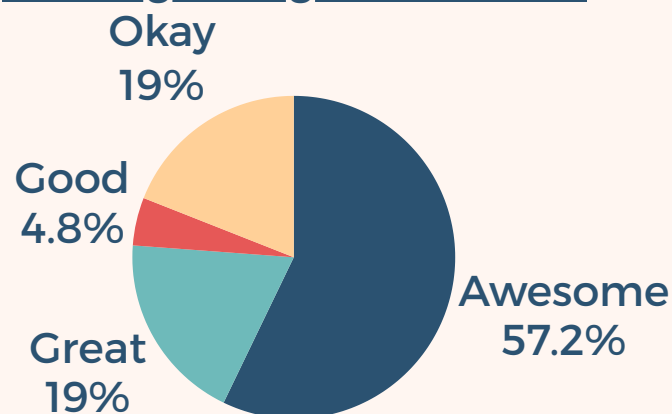
Overall the activities at camp were:



My experience at Camp Lifting Leaves was:



Bunking arrangements were:



AREAS OF GROWTH



Even though the experiences of the majority of campers were positive, there is always room to grow. Below, you will find areas of growth expressed by campers.

When asked what was your least favourite activity, campers responded:

- High ropes
- Outdoor activities in the rain
- Showering
- Canoeing
- None
- Shelter building
- Canoeing cause water is scary
- Archery
- I didn't have one!
- Everything else (other then art)
- Arts & Crafts (I still enjoyed it)
- Trivia
- Fort building
- Trying to wake my cabinmates up

When asked what was the hardest part of camp for me was, campers responded:

- Overcoming trama
- Had an easy time here
- The cold
- Showering
- Not being on wifi 25/7
- Navigation & schedule following
- Waking up early
- Getting enough sleep. Showering + proper hygiene
- Social anxiety + Changing/Proper hygiene (Linked)
- The large groups were a little intense and overwhelming at times.
- Not making friends
- Leaving
- Feeling wanted. Connecting with others.
- Being away from my mom + cat





When asked what would have helped while at camp, campers responded:

- A friend I already knew with me. Leges on the showers to store bottles.
- Going to bed earlier or waking up later
- A fire
- Better showering facilities
- If my chaperone had data 4 free time & quiet time
- Signs where to go
- A later curfew
- Earlier lights out time. Or an optional activity that late-nighters can do, but normal sleepy people can head to bed. Cleaner showers, LOL.
- Sound cancelling headphones / fidget toys, maybe (music also helps). A little quiet space to chill that isn't the cabin.
- Snacks for angry campers
- Better shower curtains (they were not long enough) to cover the length of the stall. Better lighting in showers
- My care (my own fault), ear plugs, shower shoes
- Accessibility



CHAPERONE FEEDBACK



100%

of chaperones
recommend
CLL

75%

of chaperones
were new to
CLL

100%

of chaperones rated
their experience as
Awesome, Great,
Good or Okay

100%

of chaperones
rated the activities
as Great, Good or
Okay

Overall, the feedback from chaperones was very positive; however, here are some areas of growth expressed:

- More downtime for youth
- Better sleeping and shower accommodations
- Snacks in between meals
- Additional training and education regarding Anti-Black racism
- Additional workshop options for youth such as skill building, wellness, conflict resolution



RECOMMENDATIONS



Based on the feedback given by campers, staff, and chaperones, four core elements were highlighted. The following are recommended to be implemented in any future programming, depending on Ten Oaks' staff capacity and budget.

Programming

In the coming months, we will explore additional programming options for youth to explore topics such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution, and more identity specific activities

Communication

In the coming months, we will strive to create better lines of communication between youth and agencies to ensure those who participate are set up for success.

Accessibility

Camps are historically very inaccessible, and CLL is no different. Additional questions will be added to the registration form to ensure accommodations are made prior to camp.

Anti-Black Racism

Anti-Black Racism is baked into every element of our society and can be carried out by people of color as well. Staff will require additional training and education to participate in CLL.



CLOSING REMARKS


With immense gratitude, I extend my sincerest thanks to the wonderful folks who continue to breathe life into Camp Lifting Leaves. Your tireless efforts, unwavering support, and invaluable feedback have spun threads of magic into every moment spent at camp.

To every camper who has roamed our campsites, every donor who has kindled the flames of hope, every agency that has given compassionate support, and every staff member who has poured their heart into every moment, I offer my deepest appreciation.

As a small non-profit run by a small but passionate team, we recognize the importance of balance and self-care. To ensure that our staff can continue to nurture our programs and events, we closed our feedback process for 2023. Rest assured, we eagerly await the chance to reconnect and hear from you after the 2024 sessions.

Till then, may your journeys be filled with wonder and joy.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kymani', followed by a stylized flourish.

Kymani Montgomery
Acting Executive Director

