

NEWSLETTER

IMPORTANCE OF ADULT RELATIONSHIPS



The Importance of Strong Adult Role Models for Underprivileged Kids

Breaking the cycle of economic disadvantage has a number of key components including nurturing a love of learning, increasing self-esteem, growing skill sets and fostering enhanced relationships with peers and authority figures. Christie Lake Kids (CLK) has long emphasized the importance of helping youth from priority neighbourhoods in Ottawa experience positive interactions with strong adult role models.

A relationship with a non-parental adult can positively influence a young person's perception of their own strengths and abilities.

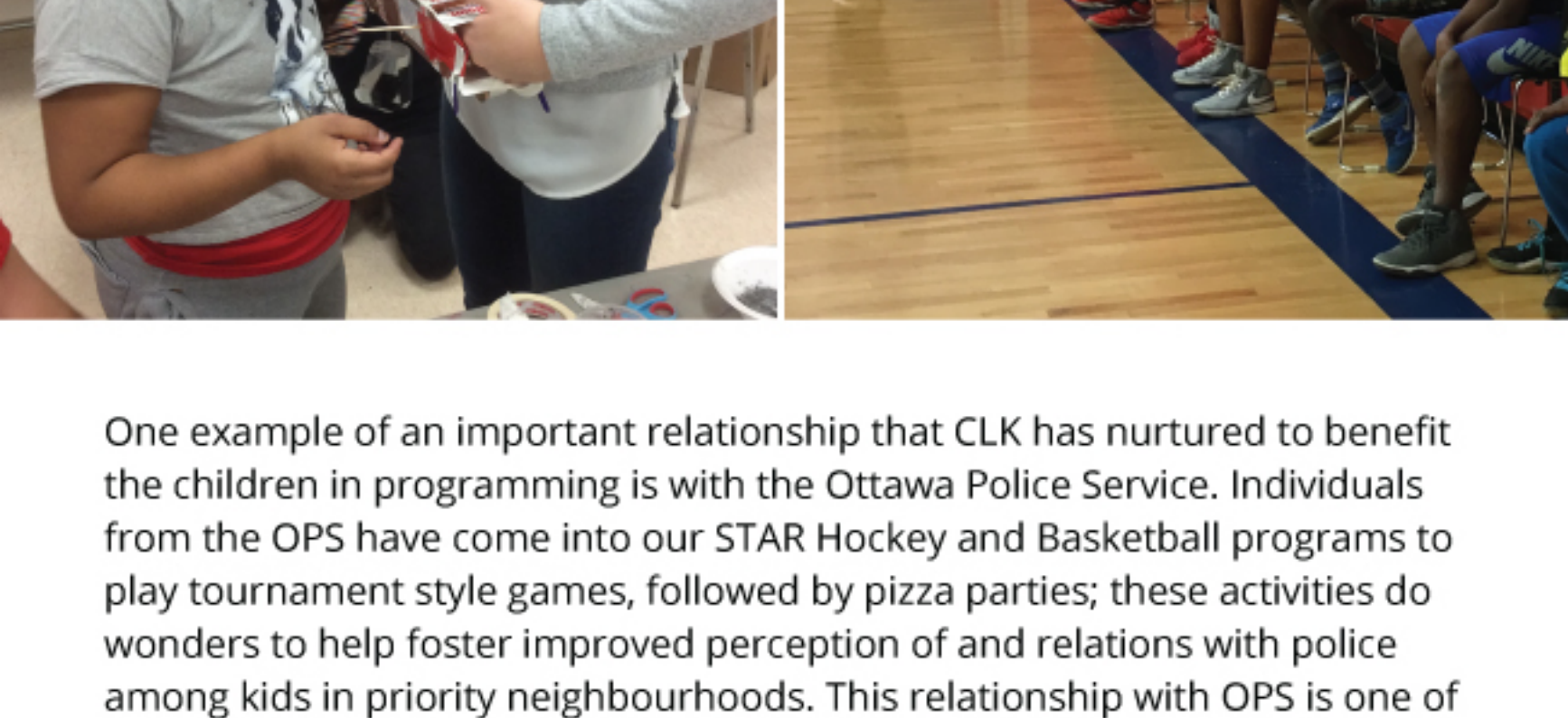
In fact, CLK has worked tirelessly for nearly a century to provide mentoring programs with positive role models who help to build physical, emotional and social skills. There are many good reasons why this is one of our focus areas, one of the most compelling of which is the fact that a relationship with a non-parental adult can positively influence a young person's perception of their own strengths and abilities. This in turn serves to enhance self-esteem while providing a different perspective towards addressing life's challenges. In addition, kids who identify with role models they know personally show higher levels of self-esteem and stronger academic results.



CLK participants responded that they have adults they feel comfortable talking to at our programs. Positive relationships with adults are proven to affect self esteem and self efficacy.

Some of the other reasons why CLK emphasizes exposing kids to role models who serve as a good example by influencing others in a positive way include:

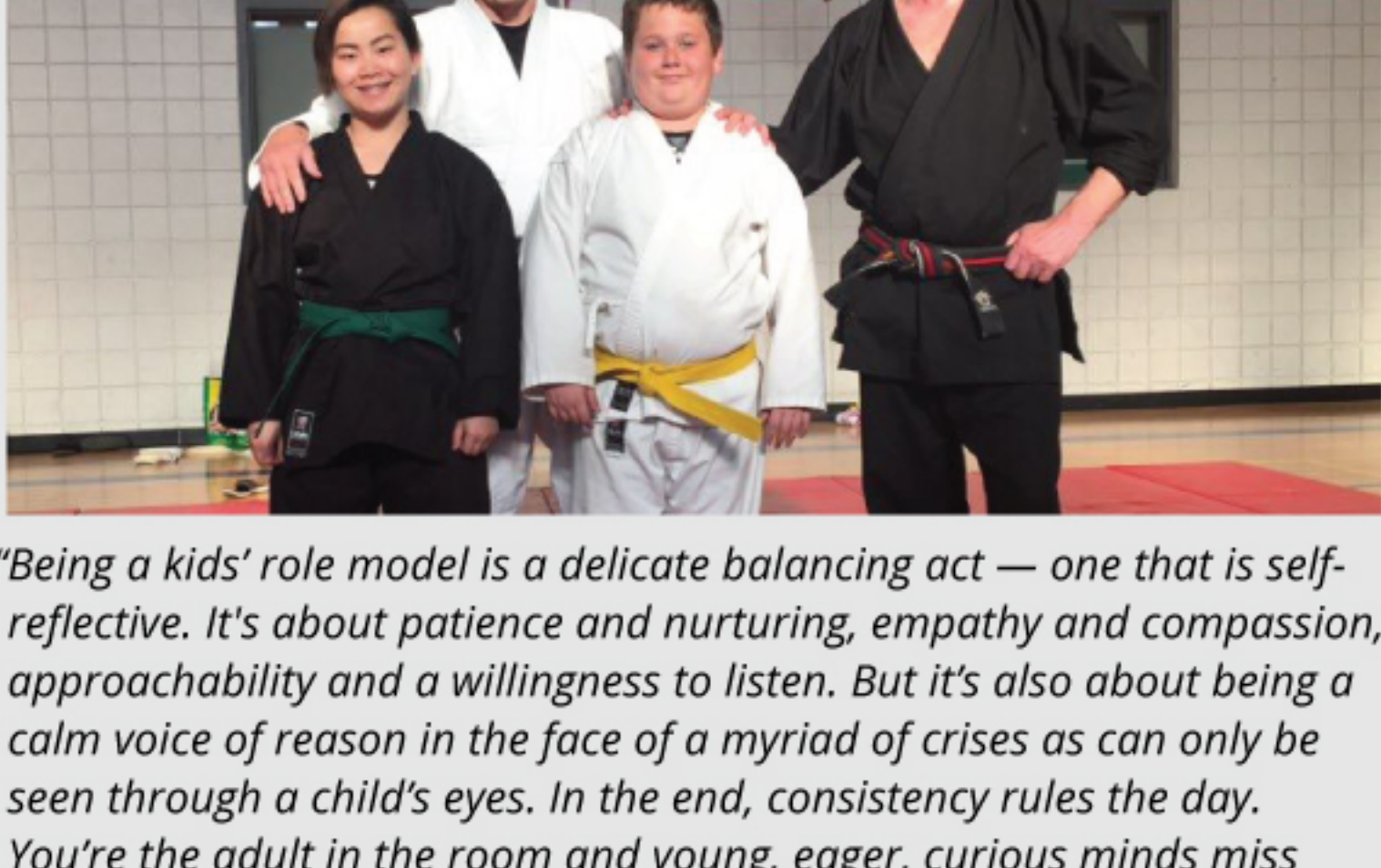
- Studies prove that in providing positive role models in organizations like Christie Lake Kids, mentorship can promote resiliency in at-risk youth.
- Activities to improve youth's social and emotional skills are most effective among younger children and at-risk youth.
- Community-based after-school programs can provide safe havens where youth can express themselves and receive guidance in engaging in social and community activities.
- Role models are those people youth look to when searching how to react to and deal with life. In role models, they find guidance on how to live gracefully, learn to be successful, and grow into adulthood.



One example of an important relationship that CLK has nurtured to benefit the children in programming is with the Ottawa Police Service. Individuals from the OPS have come into our STAR Hockey and Basketball programs to play tournament style games, followed by pizza parties; these activities do wonders to help foster improved perception of and relations with police among kids in priority neighbourhoods. This relationship with OPS is one of the many ways CLK works to bring positive role models and enriching experiences to at-risk kids and youth. CLK's guiding mission is to provide a better outcome for children in numerous ways, including reduced likelihood of gang participation, improved educational performance and more.

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CLK takes great pride in the training provided to volunteers who will ultimately serve as role models, including in areas such as mental health and how to help youth navigate the pressures of their lives, conflict resolution, physical literacy and more. Many employees from Ottawa's corporate community including Hydro Ottawa, for example, serve as volunteers in after school programs and at camp. In the afterschool STAR programs, over 100 active volunteers help to influence, guide and mentor kids from priority neighbourhoods. Our successful track record has proven that CLK can be one of the greatest influences on a young life due to the amount of time and hours per week youth spend within its programs.



"Being a kids' role model is a delicate balancing act — one that is self-reflective. It's about patience and nurturing, empathy and compassion, approachability and a willingness to listen. But it's also about being a calm voice of reason in the face of a myriad of crises as can only be seen through a child's eyes. In the end, consistency rules the day. You're the adult in the room and young, eager, curious minds miss nothing. While it's a tall order, it's also profoundly rewarding. Reward comes in the form of grins and giggles, fleeting flashes of budding self-confidence, an impromptu hug. Each is priceless in it's own right. Meanwhile, you step back, smiling knowingly to yourself and move on. Neither challenges, nor opportunities to help make a difference in these kids' lives will ever cease."

*Eric Alexander
Aikido sensei (teacher of traditional Japanese martial arts)*



Dr. Dan with Christie Lake campers

CLK Historical Highlight

For nearly 50 years, Dr. Dan Offord spent his summers as the Director of Christie Lake Kids Camp. Over his many summers spent at camp, Dr. Dan would become a leader and expert in the field of child development. His research not only highlighted the heightened challenges facing children and youth living in low-income, but the importance of positive adult role models in ensuring a positive and healthy future. Dr. Dan was a tireless advocate for children, and continues to leave a lasting impression on Christie Lake Kids' programs. On a regular basis, we hear personal stories from past campers about their memories of Dr. Dan, and how the personal connection he formed with each child helped change their lives. Today we build on Dr. Dan's research and memory to place positive adult relationships as one of our most important outcomes. Thanks to the work of Dr. Dan, we know that forming positive relationships with volunteers and camp staff are one of the most important resources for children growing up in low-income communities.

VISIT WEBSITE

UPCOMING EVENT



Join us on August 15th, 2018 at Emerald Links! Let's beat last years record amount raised of \$100,000 for our Leaders in Training Program! We are so grateful for the continued support within the Ottawa community; you continue to help us help our kids!

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