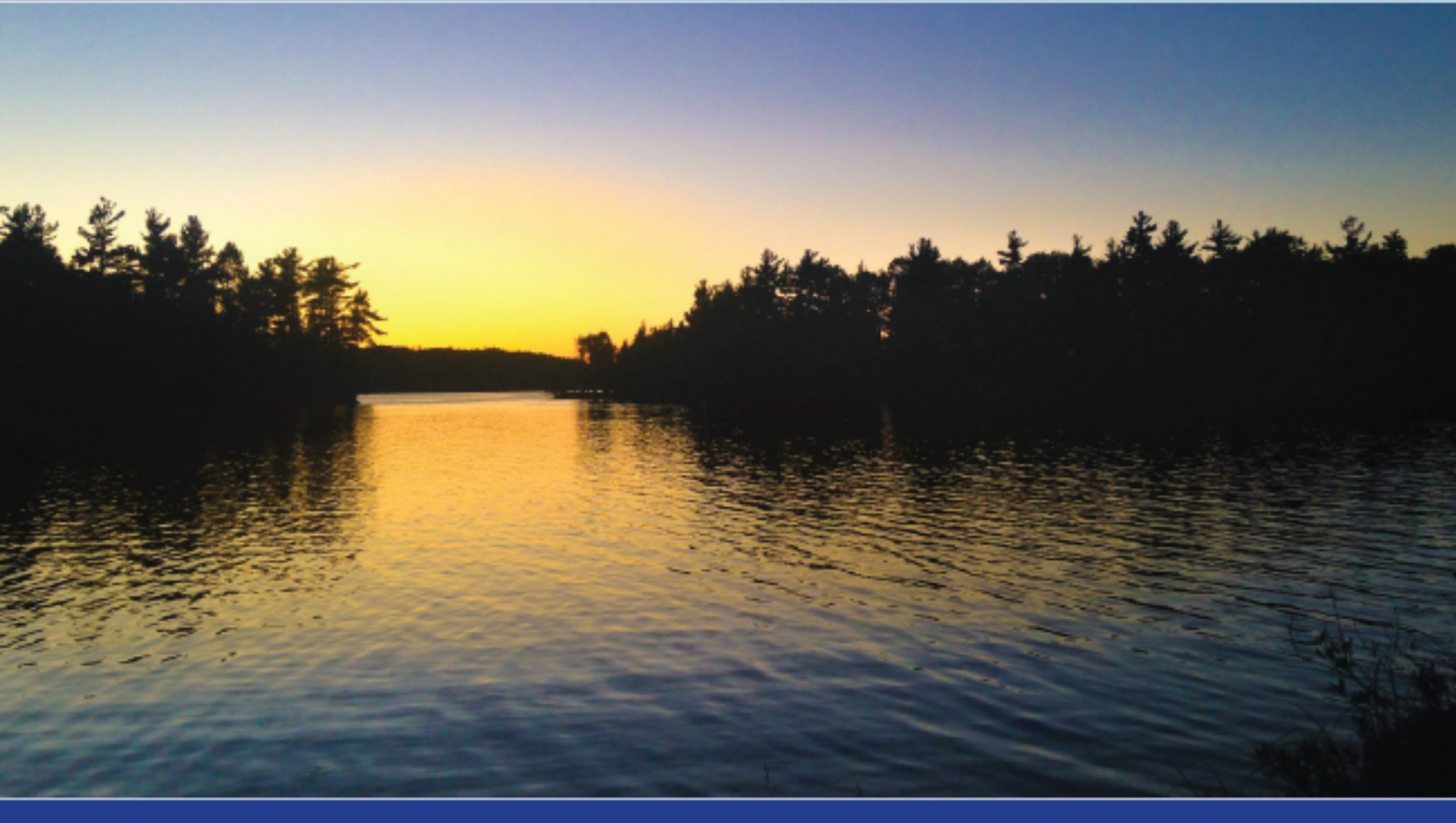




NEWSLETTER

CHRISTIE LAKE KIDS AND MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS



The programming that CLK provides to some of Ottawa's most vulnerable children and youth is carefully structured to provide positive intervention and counterbalance.

Christie Lake Kids working to address youth mental health

There is much greater awareness today of the mental health challenges faced by many children and youth, thanks in part to successful initiatives like Bell Let's Talk and the Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health's DIFD campaign. Research indicates that as many as 20% of kids in Ontario grapple with mental health issues and about 70% of mental health challenges among adults have their onset in childhood or youth.

At Christie Lake Kids (CLK), we have seen firsthand that there is a strong link between chronic poverty and poor physical and mental health. The Canadian Mental Health Association confirms that is why early identification and intervention is so critical and can lead to improved achievement in school and better health outcomes in life. The programming that CLK provides to some of Ottawa's most vulnerable children and youth is carefully structured to provide positive intervention and counterbalance some of the strains on young lives. We know this programming is vital to the well-being of the kids we serve. In 2018, we learned by surveying over 400 of our program participants that 32% of our young people - far more than the provincial rate of 20% - are living with one or more mental health challenges.



Since we know those served by CLK are more likely to live with a mental health challenge (compared to the average of children and youth in Ontario), we have incorporated essential training for our program staff and volunteers so they can better support the needs of these kids. These challenges can manifest in behaviours that lead to removal from mainstream recreational programs. However, the training we provide allows us to keep vulnerable children in programs to help build skills in a supportive environment. Some of our training includes:

- Collaborative Problem Solving: along with Crossroads Children's Mental Health, our volunteers and staff have learned how to identify "lagging skills" that can help explain a child's disruptive behaviours. This training helps staff to support the mental health needs of children without judgement, developing the skills they'll need to overcome future challenges
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention: Poor mental health can affect a child's ability to regulate their emotions and communicate when they are feeling stressed. As a result, many kids may display aggression towards their peers or program leaders. Non-violent Crisis Intervention training puts the majority of focus on de-escalating a child or youth when they are becoming extremely distressed.
- High Five Mental Health Training: this training is a module offered by High Five, a Canada-wide standard for excellence in children's recreation programming. This mental health training program engages volunteers and staff to think about the mental health needs of each individual child, and how programs can be best designed and delivered to ensure each child has a positive skill building experience.

Thanks to a grant from Bell Canada through the Bell Let's Talk program, we have been better able to provide support to our volunteers and staff members who work with children and youth with higher than average mental health challenges. This has helped improve the quality of our programs and increase partnerships with other agencies who have developed tools related to mental health.



[VISIT WEBSITE](#)



CHRISTIELAKEKIDS.COM

