



# OUT OF SCHOOL TIME (OST) SUMMER PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT



2017





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***All photos provided by Michael Kuby***

# (1) The Out of School Time Collaborative

The Out of School Time Collaborative (OST) is a partnership of community groups, community leaders, service delivery agencies, local institutions, and Edmonton citizens that have been working together since 2008. The formation of the OST was in response to concerns raised by immigrant and refugee families and community groups regarding the increased need for specific supports and programs for their children and youth when they are not in school. The OST has evolved and expanded its focus to include out of school time programs and supports for immigrant and refugee children and youth as well as all children and youth experiencing social vulnerability.

The goal of the OST Collaborative is to improve the resiliency of vulnerable children and youth through widely accessible and quality out-of-school time programs.

We believe that by being connected to services, programs, and opportunities through OST programs, children, youth, and their families will become more actively involved in their communities, experience greater academic success, develop an enhanced sense of belonging and identity, and be more engaged Edmontonians.



**Out of School Time  
Collaborative**





# The Out of School Time Collaborative

Since 2015, REACH Edmonton has provided full time coordination and backbone support for the OST Collaborative, as well as chairing the OST Secretariat and OST Gatherings. The Coordinator has facilitated the delivery of training opportunities including the annual OST Conference in June. REACH assists partners in aligning the vision and objectives, provides constant communication, and leverages the partnership to address complex social issues more effectively.

Current members of the OST Secretariat:

- Africa Centre
- Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
- Boys and Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area (BGCBigS)
- City of Edmonton
- Edmonton Catholic School District
- Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
- Edmonton Public School Board
- Norwood Child & Family Resource Centre
- REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities
- United Way of the Alberta Capital Region



The role of the OST Secretariat is to secure and diversify funding sources, monitor and guide the overall OST strategy, support the vision and activities of OST partners, respond to the organizational and program development needs identified by OST partners, and organize training opportunities and meetings as requested by partner organizations.



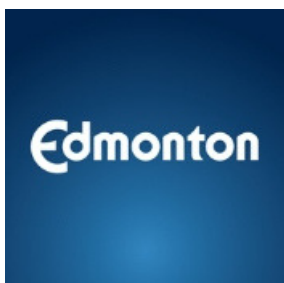
## (2) Collaborative Funding Approach

Four Funders....one process! As collaborators since 2015, the Butler Family Foundation, City of Edmonton, REACH Edmonton, and United Way of the Alberta Capital Region pool both financial and human resources to implement a common process for applying for grants, awarding grants, final reporting of programs, and the provision of capacity building support to organizations.

The funders met throughout 2017 to revise the grant application, review requests for funding, determine funding amounts, revise evaluation and feedback forms, and analyze final reporting. Collectively, \$168,690 was pooled to support summer programs. REACH Edmonton staff play an advisory role and do not participate in the final funding decisions.

In April 2017, the Butler Family Foundation hosted a luncheon to provide an opportunity for other Edmonton based Foundations to learn about the OST Collaborative and the summer programs. This event raised awareness of the initiative and garnered interest in contributing financial support. Efforts to expand the circle of financial support will continue in 2018.

In November 2017, the City of Edmonton's Community Services Advisory Board supported a recommendation from the Director of Community Resources (grants) to double the support for OST from \$50,000 to \$100,000 each year in 2018 and 2019. A portion of that funding will cover additional staff time to support the increasing number of organizations joining the OST Collaborative.



### (3) Funding History

Since 2012, OST summer program funding has provided support for approximately 23 different organizations to deliver summer programs. Some groups also accessed provincial funding (STEP program) and/or federal funding (Canada Summer Jobs program), to hire students and provide them with a unique opportunity to work as staff in the programs.

Year	Funding Amount	Funders	# of Programs Funded	New Groups	Returning Groups
2012	\$100,000	City of Edmonton	10	10	N/A
2013	\$65,000	City of Edmonton	8	0	8
2014	\$50,000	City of Edmonton	7	1	6
2015	\$82,326	Pilot year for collaboration: Butler Family Foundation, City of Edmonton, REACH Edmonton, United Way	8	2	6
2016	\$130,000 + (\$200,000)	Butler Family Foundation, City of Edmonton, REACH Edmonton, United Way (Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada)	16	10	6
2017	\$168,690	Butler Family Foundation, City of Edmonton, REACH Edmonton, United Way	13	3	10





## (4) 2017 Summary

OST funding was awarded to 13 programs, many delivered by individual organizations and three through partnerships. Funding was based on need, number of participants, length of program, and percentage of budget total being requested. Funding supplemented the financial resources that groups secured from other sources including their own organization's membership. With the additional support of OST funding, community groups were able to provide a wider variety of activities and opportunities for participants.

Out of the 13 programs that received funding, 10 groups were funded in previous years and the remaining 3 groups were new to the summer OST program. The additional funded organizations and new partnerships increased the number of programs available in the Southeast, Southwest, and Central areas of Edmonton. The following four organizations have been funded every year since 2012:

- Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton
- Brander Gardens ROCKS
- Nyarkenyi Development Foundation of Alberta
- Council for the Advancement of African Canadians (Africa Centre)



# 13

Programs funded

# \$168,690

Program dollars invested

# 1298

Children and youth served

## (5) 2017 Summer Programs & Program Details

Organization	Program Name	Funding Received	Participants	Location	Area of Edmonton
BGCBigs & Council for the Advancement of African Canadians	Africa Centre Summer Program	\$15,000	170	Calder and Lauderdale Schools	Northwest
Terwillegar Riverbend Advisory Council	Brander Gardens ROCKS	\$5,190	138	Brander Gardens School	Southwest
Council for the Advancement of African Canadians & Somali Canadian Cultural Society	All in One Millwoods Summer Camp	\$3,000	80	Satoo and Kameyosek Schools	Southeast
Multicultural Health Brokers	Multicultural Afterschool/ Summer Youth Support Groups	\$7,000	247	Numerous locations	Northcentral
Creating Hope Society	Summer Camp	\$12,000	30	Oliver School	Central
Partners for Humanity	Learn and Grow	\$8,300	59	Academy at King Edward	Strathcona/ Central
Millwoods WCI/BGCBigs	Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants Summer Camp	\$19,200	72	St. Elizabeth School	Southeast
Nyarkenyi Community Development Foundation	OST Multicultural Day Camp	\$20,000	70	JD Bracco School	Northeast
Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton	Reach Ahead	\$18,000	158	Belvedere School	Northeast
Somali Canadian Women & Children Society	Horumar Summer Program	\$20,000	115	Dr. Donald Massey School	Northeast
South Pointe Community Centre	Discover Canada Kids Camp	\$23,000	55	South Pointe Community Centre	Southwest
Sudanese Nuer Tiang Cultural Society	Cultural Heritage and Recreation Program	\$9,500	44	Hillview Community Centre	Southeast
Sinkunia Community Development Organization	Sinkunia Out of School Time Summer Events	\$8,500	60	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers	Central



## (6) 2017 Organizations & Program Descriptions

### **Multicultural Health Brokers**

#### **Multicultural After School/Summer Youth Support Groups**

This was the first year for this program which was planned and delivered by youth for youth. Several groups across Edmonton developed their own approach for identifying the interests and needs of their members. They then developed tailored programs to meet those needs. Programming covered a wide range of topics from recreational activities (volleyball, basketball, soccer, etc.) to English language support, summer school homework support, cultural specific programming/education, as well as various workshops aimed at developing leadership, civic engagement, self confidence, and/or employment skills.

### **Creating Hope Society**

#### **Creating Hope Summer Camps**

Creating Hope hosted two, ten-day summer programs in 2017 to provide a sense of belonging, independence, generosity, cultural awareness, and teaching for Indigenous children and youth. The group partnered with the Somali Canadian Women and Children Association for a second year to jointly organize a day of intercultural sharing and celebration.



### **Brander Garden ROCKS**

#### **Summer Program**

Brander Gardens ROCKS is focused on building the capacity of and supporting the diversity in the Brander Gardens community in Southwest Edmonton. Programming focuses on academic school readiness, fitness and recreation, music and art, leadership, and the celebration of diversity.

Programs were delivered in Brander Gardens Elementary School and in the Capital Region Housing green space. In August, tents were set up in the green space for games and reading and there were two field trips per week. A week long camping trip was also hosted.



### **Sinkunia Community Development Organization**

#### **Sinkunia Out of School Time Multicultural Events**

This was the Sinkunia Community Development Organization's first year of involvement in the OST Collaborative. They designed a summer program that provided recreational, social, cultural, and academic activities to 60 children of African heritage. Activities included swimming, academic support, storytelling, and drumming and dancing lessons. Field trips included going to a movie theatre, the zoo, and a ride to Sylvan lake for a day picnic on a yellow school bus. The end of the program was celebrated with a barbecue at Rundle Park.

### **Nyarkenyi Development Foundation of Alberta**

#### **OST Multicultural Day Camp**

Nyarkenyi Development Foundation of Alberta serves communities in Northeast Edmonton. The Multicultural Summer Camp, now in its seventh year, provided cultural, educational, and recreational activities for 70 children and youth from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds. Activities included academic support, intercultural sharing and learning, youth volunteer opportunities, and field trips.



### **Somali Canadian Cultural Society of Edmonton**

#### **Reach Ahead**

This four-week program offered academic, recreational, social, and cultural learning including Math, English, Arts & Crafts, Gym, and Somali Language. In addition, students participated in leadership workshops and field trips to many recreational sites in Edmonton.

### **Somali Canadian Women & Children Association**

#### **Horumar Summer Day Camp**

The word Horumar means 'move forward' in Somali. This four-week program offered activities on leadership, art, physical education, educational support, and dhaqan (culture) as well as a 5 day trip to Camp Wohelo located on Pigeon Lake. Sixty seven children, youth and adults participated, and for many it was their first experience camping and being in nature since arriving in Canada.



### **Sudanese Nuer Tiang Cultural Society**

#### **Cultural and Recreational Program**

Sudanese Nuer Tiang Cultural Society has been running programs for their children and youth since 2008. This was the organization's second year involved with the OST Collaborative. The funding they received supported an expansion of their summer program and an increase in the variety of activities they were able to offer. Children and youth in their community increased their leadership, academic, and physical skills, as well as strengthened their self-esteem and cultural pride. The training and access to resources for staff and volunteers helped them further develop their program.

### **South Pointe Community Centre**

#### **Discover Canada Kids Camp**

South Pointe is a new community centre in Southwest Edmonton providing an opportunity for people to meet neighbours and make new friends. 2017 was the second year South Pointe Community Centre delivered a summer program for immigrant and refugee children and youth, many from Syria. The program ran while their parents attended LINC classes and focused on learning about and experiencing Canadian activities, games, foods, crafts, and history.



### **Partners for Humanity**

#### **Learn and Grow**

This was Partners for Humanity's first year receiving funding from the OST Collaborative. Learn and Grow focuses on providing a safe, nurturing environment for children and youth, primarily from immigrant and refugee communities, to thrive and to experience many social, cultural, recreational, academic, and leadership experiences. The program's goal is to provide activities and experiences which support each child to reach their full potential.



**Four organizations formed three partnerships combining resources, expertise and experience to co-deliver their summer programs.**

### **BGCBig's + Council for the Advancement of African Canadians**

#### **Africa Centre Summer Program**

This partnership offers a summer camp to provide support and activities for children and youth in the areas of academics, sports/recreation, arts and culture, and leadership development. This program played an essential role in introducing participants, and their families, to Canadian life, structured programming, and valuable life skills. The children and youth enjoyed field trips to places in Edmonton that are often new to them.

### **Council for the Advancement of African Canadians + Somali Canadian Cultural Society**

#### **All in One Millwoods Summer Camp**

This was the first year for this partnership to deliver a summer camp for the African community on the south side. They brought together their collective experience of 30 years in delivering programs for children and youth. One program has had a strong emphasis on academics and the other focused on five areas: arts and culture, sports and recreation, service and leadership, academics, and healthy living. During this first partnership year, the organizations discovered their commonalities and their differences, while delivering a very successful program.

### **Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants + BGCBig's**

#### **Millwoods Summer Program**



This partnership combined the Millwoods Welcome Centre's direct access to immigrant and refugee children, youth, and families with the programming expertise and staff at BGCBig's. Recreational, academic, cultural, and youth leadership components were incorporated into the program. Both partner organizations brought their expertise together- learning from one another to deliver a quality summer program.

## (7) Collaborative Evaluation Approach

### Final Reports

As part of the funding agreement, each organization submits a final report that details the participation, activities, successes, challenges, and learnings of their program. At present, these reports serve as the primary data source for this progress report, supplemented by highlights from additional data collection strategies described below. (Please note: an additional external evaluation report is available through REACH Edmonton).

### Surveys and Interviews

In addition to the final reports, the OST Collaborative involved an external evaluator to explore organizational strengths and challenges. The following data collection methods were used to gather feedback from participating children, youth, parents, and staff:

- Child and Youth Surveys (278 surveys completed)
- Parent Survey (153 parent surveys completed)
- In-depth interviews (10 individual interviews were completed with summer program representatives)



## Child, Youth, and Parent Surveys

The survey tools were developed in consultation with the OST Evaluation Advisory Committee and were distributed to the agencies by the REACH Edmonton program coordinator. Survey questions were adapted from the American Camp Association (ACA) battery of validated survey tools. The survey included a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions. Questions were selected to align with the following United Way and partner agency common outcomes:

- Participants have healthy relationships
- Participants increase their network of social support
- Children have developmentally appropriate skills
- Participants are involved positively in the community

Each agency was responsible for distributing surveys and collecting feedback. Completed surveys were submitted to the project coordinator. In most cases, survey data were entered verbatim into an Excel spreadsheet by the evaluation team. Three organizations managed their own data entry and analysis and shared the anonymous raw data with the project coordinator for inclusion in the overall analysis. (Overall survey findings will be shared later in an appendix.)

## Program Representative Interviews

The evaluation team invited representatives from each of the funded agencies to participate in an individual interview regarding their summer programming. Representatives were asked to reflect on strengths, challenges, program capacity, sustainability, and ongoing support needs. In total, 10 interviews were conducted during the data collection period.

After each interview, notes were entered electronically into word processing software. The summary notes from each interview represent a close approximation to verbatim comments, not a line-by-line transcript, based on the notes taken during the interview. Once completed, the summary notes from each interview were privately shared with each agency for review and verification. Where applicable, feedback was incorporated into revised interview notes. All interview data were then combined into one file for analysis, organized by evaluation question. The interview data were reviewed multiple times to strengthen understanding and context. Data were coded by emerging response categories within each question, based on large chunks of meaning.



# (8) Program Activities

## Recreational, Social, Cultural & Educational

The Out of School Time Collaborative works with organizations to build their capacity to plan, deliver, and evaluate their programs. Research shows that providing a variety of activities and experiences strengthens the learning for children and youth. In planning summer programs, organizations are encouraged to include a number of different recreational, academic, and social activities as well as cultural and intercultural experiences.

## Recreational Activities

Program staff reported that recreational opportunities made a difference for participating children and youth in the following ways:

- Development of teamwork, cooperation, communication, leadership, listening, and rule following skills
- Development of strategic thinking and new physical, motor, and life skills
- Children and youth learned how to play with, support, and encourage others



Recreational activities include:

- Badminton
- Basketball
- Canoeing
- Capture the Flag
- Dancing
- Dodgeball
- Football
- Games (Hot potato, Battleship, 7UP, Octopus, British Bulldog)
- Gardening
- Gymnasium time
- Hiking
- Jogging/Running
- Kickball
- Musical Chairs
- Obstacle Course/Relay
- Soccer
- Swimming
- Tag/Grounders
- Tug of War
- Volleyball
- Walks

### Social Activities

Social activities and special events were offered to bring together children, youth, families, staff, and volunteers. Some of the most popular events involved field trips (e.g. Waterpark, Fort Edmonton Park, Valley Zoo, Parliament Building, and City of Edmonton Recreation Centres). These trips provided opportunities for participants to explore new environments in the Edmonton area and to learn new things about their community.

Program staff observed that these social activities and special events made a difference for children, youth, and families in the following ways:

- Helped to develop social skills including: integrity, honesty, loyalty, respect, patience, confidence, active listening, compromise, sharing, and kindness
- Understanding of Canadian history and culture
- Provided opportunities for social interactions with peers and adults in the community
- Provided leadership opportunities for older youth working with younger children; and intergenerational sharing
- Provided opportunities for face-to-face interaction, sharing, and storytelling (decreased connection to technology during program hours)
- Contributed to a sense of belonging and feeling part of a community

Social activities include:

- |                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • BBQs           | • Nursing Home Visit                  |
| • Bus Trips      | • Picnic                              |
| • Camping        | • Science Day                         |
| • Carnival Day   | • Sharing Circles/<br>Talking Circles |
| • Comics         | • Sports Day                          |
| • Corn Maze      | • Spray Park or<br>Playground         |
| • Creative games | • Talent Shows                        |
| • Field Trips    | • Team Building                       |
| • Games          | • Volunteering                        |
| • Gymnasiums     |                                       |
| • Icebreakers    |                                       |
| • Movies         |                                       |

*"A single mom, new to Edmonton, was connected to the youth program to find opportunities for her two daughters to connect and build relationships. Both girls were active participants in many of the activities that brought youth from a diverse background together, they report a positive experience and are looking forward to staying in touch with many of the youth that they met as they move into school. Both girls are going to be participating ongoing in the Girls' Club - the older sister is even interested in helping out in a more supportive/leadership role!"*

**- A staff member on the social development of program participants**

### Cultural Activities

Summer OST programs are encouraged to create opportunities for children and youth to strengthen cultural identity and pride by sharing their culture with others. This dynamic of intercultural sharing and learning helps promote understanding and respect, as well as a sense of inclusion and acceptance.

Program staff observed that these activities made a difference in the following ways:

- Appreciation and respect for cultural differences and different ways of doing things
- Strengthened identity through exploration of the arts (arts & crafts, dance, music) and learning new ways of creative expression
- Learned about Canadian culture (including: police, grocery shopping, Canadian social norms)
- Learned about their own culture
- Sense of inclusion
- Ability to communicate within their own culture and across cultures



Cultural activities include:

- Arts & Crafts
- Celebrating Cultural Holidays
- Creative Writing
- Culture Day Celebration
- Cultural Exchange Day
- Dance & Performances
- Diverse Meals/Potlucks
- Games (trivia, puzzles, scavenger hunt, amazing race, etc.)
- Geography and History of Countries
- Language Classes
- Learning Cultural Practices
- Police Presentations
- Sharing Cultural Music & Drumming
- Story Telling
- Studies of Cultures
- Traditional/Cultural Sharing



### Educational Activities

Bridging the learning gap over the summer is critical to ensure that children and youth will start school in September ready to learn.

Summer programs included a variety of educational activities including games, guest speakers, and traditional classroom style learning. Programs were designed to provide fun, engaging, interactive, and safe learning environments.

Program staff observed that the educational component of the programs helped children and youth in the following ways:

- School readiness (reading, writing, math, language learning, etc.) for the next school year
- Confidence and motivation to actively participate in learning
- Creativity and critical thinking skills

Educational activities include:

- Arts & Crafts
- BINGO
- Communicating
- Debate Club
- Educational Games
- Educational Trivia
- English/English Language
- Field Trips
- Fire Safety
- Geography
- Homework Support
- Marine Life
- Math
- Reading/Library
- Safety Lessons
- Science/Experiments
- Sharing Immigrant Stories
- Social Studies
- Spelling
- Writing



*"(One of our participants) was a grade one student who came from Somalia to Canada this summer and could not speak English. It was inspiring how our staff and kids welcomed him and made him feel like a member of a family. He was extremely shy during the first week and would not let go of one of our staff. He had difficulties playing with his peers. Our staff coached him through different strategies to integrate him to the group. By the end of the program, he had broken through his shell and was playing with his friends."*

**- A staff member on the development of a program participant**

## (9) Success Stories: Child & Youth Development

"We had a set of 6 year old twins... who had recently come to Canada from India. They had never been to a Canadian school so this was their first real experience of how school would go in September. They came to camp every single day for the entire 4 weeks and over that time grew to be very confident and well-adjusted. When we did the Carnival day to wrap up the summer the girls' mom came and brought with her a fresh bowl of a delicious Indian dessert to say thank you to the staff for everything they had done for the girls. She said that (their) experience had been so great that she was looking into having them registered at (the school where the summer program was located) for the upcoming school year because they felt so comfortable there." - [Millwoods Welcome Centre for Immigrants & BGCBig's Summer Program](#)



"(One of our participants) is a 14 year old male who has Autism and FASD, and often struggles in groups to feel accepted and welcomed. He attended both of our camps this year after camp leaders and guardians felt he would be more successful with the younger kids. Camp leaders were able to modify the camp by adding more structure and longer transition times so he could attend both camps in July and would feel more comfortable in the camp. On the first day of camp the other children were a little bit wary of him as he was quite a bit bigger than the other children. However, throughout the day the children got to know him and quickly built strong friendships that transitioned into camp members helping and looking out for him and (the child) helping and looking out for his camp members. He came in everyday excited to see staff, camp members and participate in the activities."

- [Creating Hope Society of Alberta's  
Creating Hope Summer Camps](#)

"One of the students was quite shy at the beginning of the camp. She would choose not to participate in any of the activities, she would refuse gym time, and she would be very disengaged during academic sessions. Over the course of the camp however, she willfully opened up and began participating in classroom activities, physical activities, and became one of the bright spots of the camp. Opening up to her and other classmates, her teachers, and genuinely enjoying her experience."

- [Somali Canadian Cultural Society &  
Council for the Advancement of African Canadians' All in One Mill Woods Summer Camp](#)

# (10) Program Growth & Development

## Successes

Organizations felt their summer programs were successful in meeting the needs of children, youth, and families in their community. Many programs experienced an increase in numbers of children and youth as well as volunteers. Some additional reported successes included:

- Activities planned by the program staff contributed to outcomes beyond “just having fun”
- An increasing range of recreational, social, and educational activities provided
- Parents were more engaged in the programs, attending field trips, and as volunteers
- Families were engaged that may not otherwise have accessed summer activities for their children
- Learning, fun, and personal development occurred for children and youth, but also for the staff, volunteers, and parents

*"Youth were being seen as resources, not problems.*

*[We are] cultivating a new generation of caring and talented youth."*

**- A staff member of a summer program**

## Challenges

Though there is much to celebrate about the 2017 summer OST programs, the development of new programs or expansion of existing ones often poses challenges. Many programs expressed the common challenges including: the need for additional funding to expand their programs to meet the growing enrollments; the struggle to find efficient transportation of children to the programs; unexpected changes in weather, limited space, or construction on site that hindered activities and program plans. Additional challenges reported by some organizations included the following:

- Limited lead time to plan the program, get organized, hire and train staff/volunteers
- Developing a consistent plan with partnering organizations
- Handling behaviour issues and/or bullying among the children and youth
- Lack of consistency in attendance in some programs
- Placing of age restrictions was a barrier for some families
- Accommodating a wide age range (5 to 16 years) often resulted in difficulty developing programming that met the needs of all participants
- Difficulty finding trained and experienced staff and volunteers that can work both independently and as a team



## Staff & Volunteer Learning

Year over year, it is consistently reported that running a program takes a significant amount of work and planning. Many programs reiterated the need to train staff and volunteers, plan in advance, and establish clear policies and procedures, especially when working to deliver programs with partners.

Many volunteers and staff participated in professional development or skills training delivered by the OST Collaborative throughout the year and/or at the OST Conference in June. Topics included:

- Financial Training
- Food Safety
- First Aid
- Grant Proposal Writing
- Program Planning & Management
- Volunteer Management
- Trauma Informed Training
- Leadership Skills
- Collaborating & Partnering
- Problem Solving & Patience
- Flexibility & Agility
- Communication
- Conflict Management
- Swimming Pool Activities

In addition to reported benefits for children and youth, program staff and volunteers reported that they had learned new things and developed new skills. These changes were attributed to the combination of training opportunities (classroom learning) and the process of delivering the programs (experiential learning).

Examples of reported benefits among staff and volunteers included the following:

- Greater appreciation for other cultures (food, music, dance, cultural practices, etc.)
- The importance of cultural identity
- The importance of and challenges involved in settling and integrating into a new country
- Personal growth, increased self-esteem, and discovery of new skills or talents
- Interacting with the children, youth, and the community yielded a new energy, capacity, and space for creative ideas and connections with others

*"My understanding of the importance of cultural identity was greatly deepened this summer camp. As the camp grew, so did the diversity within the camp. As we celebrated cultural day, it became so clear to me how essential a person's culture is to their individual identity... uniqueness did not drive people apart but really brought them together. As the children celebrated their cultures, I began to really celebrate mine and the beauty that was found in it!"*

- A staff member of a summer program

## (11) Evolution of the OST Summer Programs

A significant aspect of the OST Collaborative is to support community capacity building and strengthening the ability of organizations to deliver quality programs for children and youth. A focus in 2017 was on the use of evaluation to improve groups' programs. As a result, there were many reports that indicated the use of evaluative thinking, learning from successes and challenges and making adjustments to the program. Staff are beginning to assess the challenges they faced and are considering possible solutions for next year.

**"There were challenges starting the program planning too late."**

Next year: early planning sessions with staff from both partners; have the entire program planned in advance.

**"Staff and/or volunteers were not taking initiative in planning or daily program tasks."**

Next year: more training for leadership and confidence; create lists of action items that need to be completed.

**"Challenges getting the word out about the summer program."**

Next year: stay in touch via social media or other communication tools to keep the families engaged all year.

**"Managing children and youth personality and behaviour differences."**

Next year: more behavioural and trauma-informed training for staff and volunteers; Activities for the children/youth to address biases, assumptions, and bullying.

**"There were barriers beyond transportation for families to commit to attending the program."**

Next year: do a more in-depth evaluation of what those barriers are and develop plans to address them.

**"Challenges managing the expectations of parents."**

Next year: clearly outline the purpose and activities of the summer camp for parents.

## (12) Supporting the OST Summer Programs

### **How can the OST Collaborative continue to support these programs?**

Many organizations involved in delivering summer programs expressed gratitude for the financial, program, and training support coordinated through the OST Collaborative. There is a collective effort to support continuous program improvement as organizations learn, grow, and evolve over time. The final reports submitted by each summer program, combined with the external evaluation of the OST Collaborative, provide a deeper understanding of strengths, issues, and challenges. This drives the exploration for new resources and approaches to provide meaningful support as organizations work to continually improve programming for children, youth, families, and communities.

Some of these supports include:

#### **Ongoing Feedback Loop**

An event where OST summer program staff and volunteers can report back and share their experience with the broader OST Collaborative is held annually.

#### **Resources and Support**

In 2017, some programs reported having to deal with difficult and/or complex situations involving children and youth or their families (for example, disclosures of family violence, bullying, and managing difficult behaviour). Awareness of and access to community resources and training would be valuable for future program staff and volunteers.

#### **Mentorship and Sharing**

Some organizations that have delivered summer programs over multiple years have gained significant experience and learning while others are just starting out. Creating more opportunities for organizations to connect and share their knowledge, successes, challenges, and solutions strengthen the network of organizations doing similar work in the city.

*"...working with people is critical. And that's what I like about REACH being a backbone, and bringing different people (together), and listening to what their need is and reflecting that. It is a sound way of dealing with social issues."*

**- A staff member of a summer program**



## Supporting the OST Summer Programs (continued)

### Ongoing Training

The OST Collaborative is committed to providing ongoing, relevant, and accessible training that will help organizations plan their programs and achieve their outcomes. It was clear from the feedback in 2017 that training opportunities such as the OST Conference and topics such as Trauma Informed Practice and Behaviour Management are needed on an annual basis.

Some additional ideas for training include:

- Hands-on workshop for program planning, reporting, and evaluation
- Information session on helpful resources (for example: 211, 311, Leisure Access Pass, translation services, Child & Family Services, etc.)
- Volunteer management
- Financial and board governance
- Cultural awareness and cultural identity programming
- Social media and communications support
- Sessions on recognizing one's biases and/or assumptions

***"It is a positive way to invest in the wellbeing of individuals, families, and communities throughout Edmonton."***

**- REACH Coordinator**

