

2022 Programs Report



BACK TO play

WELCOME

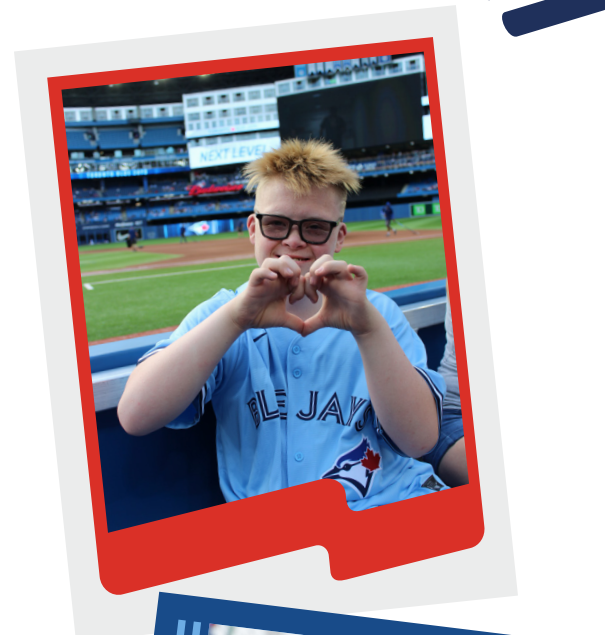


The past year has continued to amplify the inequities within the Canadian sport and play sector, with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting grassroots sport and play far beyond what anyone could have predicted. Across the country, we have witnessed a rise in the cost of programming while the availability of organized sport and play-based programs has drastically diminished. We have seen and heard firsthand the effects this loss of sport and play has had on children and youth, and how those most often left on the sidelines have been pushed further to the margins.

To address some of these emerging issues, Jays Care set the ambitious goal to bring sport and play-based programming to over 45,000 children and youth across Canada - enough to fill every seat in Rogers Centre. To achieve this goal, we relied heavily on a dedicated group of program supporters made up of generous donors, program partners, and committed volunteers. Their support made it possible to deliver some of the most accessible, inclusive, and equitable Jays Care programming to date.

Throughout this report you will read about some of the incredible work these supporters made possible and discover some of the inspiring youth, volunteers, and families participating in Jays Care programs. Jays Care could not do this work alone, and together we are making play the ticket to a happy and healthy future for children and youth across the country.

The Jays Care Team



Land Acknowledgement

Jays Care recognizes that our organization is based on Treaty 13 lands - traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit. We also recognize that we are located on the traditional home of many other nations including the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Chippewa, and Wendat Peoples. We are honored to work with and learn from communities across this country now referred to as Canada. Therefore, we want to acknowledge all First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples whose original and treaty territories we stand upon across Turtle Island.

We see the unifying power of baseball and sport everyday, which is why Jays Care commits to standing with Indigenous peoples, listening with a good mind, and supporting communities on their journeys towards a stronger future for generations to come.

A land acknowledgement is a first step but not an exclusive statement. Jays Care strives to use our platform to engage in respectful dialogue with Indigenous communities, and work towards educating all Canadians on Indigenous history and the vibrant cultures still here today. We encourage readers of this report to further their learning and discover how you can be an ally to Indigenous peoples across the country.

[Click here for resources.](#) 



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VISION

A level playing field for all children and youth across Canada.

MISSION

Through the power of baseball, we create lasting social change across communities and empower young people to unlock their potential.

BELIEFS

At Jays Care we believe in the potential of every child and the power of baseball and community to unlock it.

THE POWER OF SPORT AND PLAY



Research has shown that sport and play can create all kinds of positive change for the children and youth who participate and their communities...

> FUELS HEALTHY HABITS

Young people who engage in sport and play are more likely to stay physically active for life, reducing their risk of diseases, strengthening their bones and muscles, and improving their overall brain health (SickKids, 2020).

> IMPROVES MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Regular participation in physical activity provides young people with numerous mental health benefits that can strengthen their sense of well-being. These include protecting against depression (Kandola et al., 2020), decreasing stress (Martikainen et al., 2013), and increasing self-confidence (Collins et al., 2018).

> INCREASES SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Students who participate in curricular and extracurricular physical activity have shown a higher commitment to school (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), an increased desire and ability to participate in school life (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), and improved cognitive and memory functions (Singh et al., 2012).

> CULTIVATES LEADERS

Many of the traits required to achieve success in sports are also those we expect of strong leaders. When young people participate in sport, they practice teamwork, goal setting, and gain the confidence needed to become the next generation of leaders (Mak & Kim, 2017).

> BUILDS STRONGER COMMUNITY

Sport and play are inherently social and bring people together both on and off the field. They have the power to strengthen communities by building connections and fostering inclusion and belonging (Vital Signs Sport & Belonging, 2019).

YOUNG STORYTELLERS 2022

Meet some of the inspiring children and youth across Jays Care programs!



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH](#)

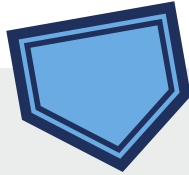


TACKLING THE ISSUES



At Jays Care, we know that children and youth often face intersecting challenges when it comes to accessing and meaningfully participating in sport and play. That's why all our programs are designed to combat systemic barriers, advance equity and inclusion, and foster belonging. In doing so, our hope is that no matter the program a young person joins, they can step up to the plate and succeed.

Access



For **1 in 3 children living across Canada**, cost keeps them out of sport and extracurriculars (KidSport Canada).

In Jumpstart's 2022 State of Sport Report, **54% of parents** reported that the availability of youth sport and play opportunities has diminished.

Discover how Jays Care collaborates with partners across the country to increase access to sport and play and get children and youth off the sidelines on **page 08**.

Inclusion

More than 1 out of every 3 Black youth, 1 of 4 Indigenous youth, and 1 of 5 BIPOC youth report having directly experienced racism within the Canadian sport sector (Change The Game Research, 2021).

In Canada's largest study on homophobia in sport, over **70% of respondents believed youth team sports are not welcoming or safe** for the 2SLGBTQ+ community (Out On The Fields, 2015).

Learn about the trainings Jays Care offers to caring adults across the country to create safe(r), more inclusive, and welcoming sport and play environments for all children and youth on **page 21**.

Belonging

According to data collected by UNICEF Canada, **two-thirds of children and youth living across Canada** feel isolated and unsupported by family, friends, and teachers.

Children and youth across Canada who participated in sports throughout 2019-2021 were **91% more likely to list a very strong sense of belonging to their community** (Change The Game Research, 2021).

See how baseball is being used to foster belonging and build community for children and youth across the country on **page 15**.

Gender Equity

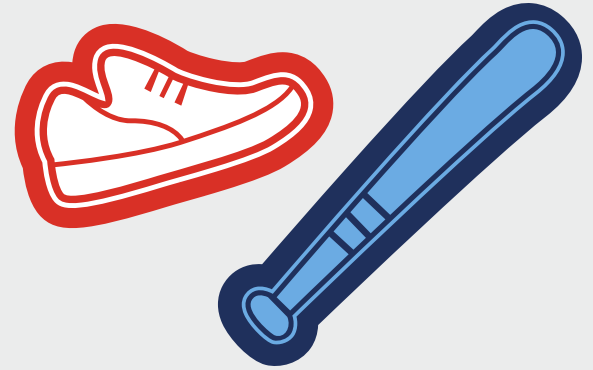


1 in 3 girls across Canada drop out of sport by the time they reach age 13 (Canadian Women & Sport, 2020).

A 2018 study conducted by Ernst & Young found that **94% of women** who hold C-suite positions are former athletes.

Read about how Jays Care is advancing gender equity in Canadian sport spaces and more broadly throughout Canadian society on **page 24**.

PROGRAM IMPACT



46,148

children and youth participating across Jays Care programs

2,834

coaches and leaders trained

794

programming sites

683

implementing partners

13

provinces and territories reached

ACCESS

Creating greater access to sport and play across the country



AFFILIATE SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS



Bringing baseball to a community near you

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Through Affiliate Schools and Community Partners, Jays Care is able to increase equitable access to meaningful baseball programming for youth who have been pushed to the margins of sport and play. These program implementors level the playing field for children and youth who need it the most by running one or more of Jays Care's core baseball programs: Girls At Bat, Challenger Baseball, Indigenous Play Ball, and Rookie League. Coaches are provided with all the training, tools, and resources needed to make their programs as accessible, inclusive, and fun as possible.

Did you know?

In Jumpstart's 2022 State of Sport Report, **91% of sport organizations reported concern over their ability to provide the same level of service to the communities they served pre-pandemic.** Jays Care aims to address this gap by providing Affiliate Schools and Community Partners with all the equipment, funding, and resources necessary to (re)launch baseball programming in their community.

11,702

children and youth in school programs

370

Affiliate Schools

8,132

children and youth in community programs

103

Community Partners



Highlight

In conversation with Anjali and Cathy, Rookie League and Girls At Bat Coaches, Toronto

“At the Malvern Family Resource Centre, we provide free programming to all age groups. We have been in the community for about 38 years and offer equitable and inclusive programs. The community and families we serve are typically low-income and racialized, and most youth who attend are between the ages of 6-18. Over the years, one of the most highly requested sports from our kids has been baseball. However, we have been unable to provide it because of a lack of equipment and coaching experience. This all changed when our colleague, Josh, found out that we could become a Jays Care Community Partner, and we saw all the support we would be offered by Jays Care.



“By joining, we were finally able to kickstart two baseball programs, Rookie League and Girls At Bat, and are currently one of the only organizations running baseball programming in our community!”

The Girls At Bat program has been especially helpful in getting girls at the centre involved in programming. We used to have a difficult time having proper co-ed programs, especially sports-related ones. For the girls, we find it takes having a person or friend they know participating to get them to join in. However, since starting Girls At Bat, it has become a gateway for our co-ed programming because the girls no longer feel threatened by sports and baseball. Their confidence has risen so much that the girls have even begun challenging the boys. We often hear them saying, ‘I can catch and throw now too!’ or ‘Girls can do that too!’. The kids still talk about playing baseball all the time and are always wearing their Jays Care shirts. We will definitely run the programs again next year, and we hope our returning youth will become mentors for any new youth who decide to join.”



ROOKIE LEAGUE DAY CAMP



Breaking down barriers to summer camp

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Rookie League is a free, seven-week summer day camp program implemented in collaboration with Toronto Community Housing Corporation for children and youth living in under-resourced neighborhoods across Toronto. The program creates equal access to structured play-based programming designed to encourage connection, fun, and physical activity. The program prioritizes hiring youth staff from local communities and has proven to build confidence and enhance employability skills.

Did you know?

A 2016 study of **10 and 11-year-old children in Toronto, Ontario, found that children in low-socio-economic status neighbourhoods had less access to physical activity resources** (such as parks and trails, sports facilities, community centres and summer camps) and, even when these were available, used them less frequently (ParticipACTION, 2022). Jays Care's Rookie League Day Camp program seeks to close this gap by providing fun and engaging extracurricular programming for children and youth living in Toronto Community Housing all summer long.

1,455

camper spots filled

154

youth staff employed

93%

of parents reported that Rookie League increased their child(ren)'s access to extracurricular activities

21

Toronto Community Housing sites serviced



Highlights

In conversation with Julien, 22, Rookie League Camp Staff, Humberline



"I used to pick up my brother all the time from Rookie League and became familiar with a lot of the staff involved with Toronto Community Housing. I heard of an opportunity to work for Rookie League and thought it may be a good way to meet and network with some positive role models in my neighbourhood, so I applied. Working for Rookie League exposed me to what was going on beyond my community. I saw firsthand the struggles families were facing and gained new perspective. It shone a light on my own experiences and showed me that they aren't singular. It made me want to be the best version of myself for the kids. A highlight moment from the summer for me was taking my campers to a local splash pad. Seeing them run around and play reminded me that kids just need to be kids. That's why as staff, we have to show up as the best version of ourselves every day and remember it is for the kids. If I could give new Rookie League staff any advice, it would be to check your individual issues at the door and come with positive vibes. Life gets tough for everyone, but Rookie League is a place for everyone. It is a space where you can open doors not only for the kids in the program, but also for yourself. It is a space that can impact everyone involved."

In conversation with Nathaniel, 11 years old, Rookie League Camper, Trethewey



"I've been a Rookie League camper for two summers now. I only joined because there wasn't anything else going on in my community. If I wasn't in Rookie League, I don't know what I would be doing in the summer, and I definitely would not be playing baseball. Rookie League gave me something to look forward to everyday- it felt like one big family. Some of my favorite memories are from when we played baseball against other campsites. I liked when we all had to work together as a team and show off our skills. Every day in the program is just one big adventure and is always full of laughter. Before coming to Rookie League, I never understood baseball; but at camp, I learned the basics and realized I was really good at it. I even hit five home runs this summer! I am now thinking about playing competitively in the future, something I never thought of before. I didn't choose baseball; baseball chose me, and Rookie League made that happen."



FIELD OF DREAMS



Investing in spaces where everyone can play

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Field Of Dreams is Jays Care's infrastructure granting program dedicated to designing, refurbishing, and building safe and accessible spaces for children and youth to play and develop important life-skills. Having a safe space to play is vital to a child's well being. Safe spaces not only provide children and youth with a place where they can participate in physical activity and exercise, they also serve as a venue to socialize and learn new skills. The Field Of Dreams program brings people together and creates stronger communities by breaking the barriers they face when it comes to accessing sport and play.

Did you know?

In 2022, the percentage of children and youth meeting the physical activity recommendation(s) within the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth sits at **28%** (ParticipACTION, 2022). Jays Care's Field Of Dreams program increases opportunities for children and youth to get physically active across communities in Canada by providing safe and accessible spaces for them to play.



116

completed projects since 2013

16

completed projects in 2022

Roy Halladay Field

On July 13th, 2022, after many years of planning, construction, and through a \$1-million capital infrastructure grant, the Roy Halladay Field officially opened. Named after the late baseball legend Roy Halladay, the field was a fitting tribute to his love for and longstanding commitment to Toronto's young people. As his wife Brandy noted, it was always a dream for their family to create a space where any child or youth can pursue their passion for the game, no matter their background or ability. The field is Toronto's first fully accessible baseball diamond featuring double-wide dug-outs and a completely vulcanized rubber infield and outfield. These small but often overlooked elements were all part of the design process between the City of Toronto and Jays Care, ensuring the field was accessible to all. In the coming years, the diamond will be used by athletes in Jays Care's Challenger Baseball program as well as by the wider community. By being the first fully accessible field in the city, it is sure to draw out athletes of all abilities who may have previously been unable to participate in less accessible spaces.



"I'm just so, so excited it's here in Toronto for all of these kids and adults to use for years to come... everyone is included and that's what baseball is supposed to be about"

- Brandy Halladay

Donor Highlight

Rogers

As Jays Care's largest funding partner since 2011, Rogers has donated more than \$10 million in support of creating greater access to sport and play across Canada. Through our long-standing partnership, Rogers has helped to level the playing field for tens of thousands of children and youth by investing in programs like Rookie League, Field Of Dreams and Community

Partners. Through their support, summer camp has become a reality for children and youth living in Toronto Community Housing, and baseball has become even more accessible to thousands of young people in almost every province and territory. Since 2017, they have also awarded the Ted Rogers Scholarship to more than 125 young adults across Jays Care programming in support of their pursuit of post-secondary education. We thank Rogers for their support and are proud of our collaborations which have seen children and youth step off of the sidelines and into the game!



BELONGING

Using baseball to create spaces where children and youth belong



INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMING



Reconciliation through sport

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

At Jays Care, we are proud to partner with many Indigenous communities and organizations across the territory now referred to as Canada to co-develop and implement a wide range of sport, play, and leadership programming. All programming is designed through a community-driven approach and increases health outcomes, belonging and identity, and deeper connections to caring adults and peers for the children and youth involved. Programs range from intergenerational baseball leagues to summer camps to life-promotion retreats and serve youth from Indigenous communities from coast to coast to coast.

4,699

children and youth across Indigenous programming

154

Indigenous programming sites

235,684

healthy snacks and meals provided to Indigenous children and families

Did you know?

40% of Indigenous youth cite having a harder time connecting with others now compared to pre-pandemic (Change The Game Research 2.0, 2022). The Indigenous programs offered in partnership with Jays Care are all designed to enhance inter-community connections, peer-to-peer relationships and connect children and youth with caring adults from their communities.

[To learn more about the Indigenous Programs offered in partnership with Jays Care click here.](#)



Highlight

A conversation with Dolores, Lisa-Marie, and Paula.

Dolores (Grandmother) and her daughters Lisa-Marie (League Coordinator) and Paula (Parent) are active leaders in their Maamwesying Indigenous Rookie League program, an intergenerational baseball league designed to bring children, youth, and adults from neighbouring Indigenous communities together for intergenerational play and sharing of culture and traditions. We had the privilege to sit down and chat with the women about the inaugural season of their league. Below you can read an excerpt from our conversation.



Lisa-Marie: Post-Covid, the Health and Wellness team at Maamwesying wanted to bring something positive to our communities. There were so many negative things happening that we wanted to do something community driven that engaged entire families. So, we decided the Indigenous Rookie League program would be best. It has been a long time since we had inter-community sports taking place along the North Shore. When I was younger, we used to go to different communities and play ball. Baseball was part of our communities all the time. It has been a long time coming to get our communities together in sport and recreation again. We now have families from all different communities along the North Shore playing in our league. We are all really connected in that way.



Dolores: A unique thing about our program has been adding our culture. This has been important because many of us grew up without it. So, by adding it in, we are enhancing our community by practicing the culture. I did a smudging ceremony. For many kids, it was their first time doing the ceremony.

Lisa-Marie: As my mom said about the culture, we are all Anishinabek. We have our own language, culture, and teachings, and we have been able to bring that out through this program.

Dolores: I lost the language myself. My grandmother used to speak to me in the language. But there was a time when I got sent to the English school, then she stopped speaking to me in the language. She felt I needed to get an education and speak English, that our language was no longer important. Coming out of the residential school, I lost my self-esteem and identity. I had no confidence in myself.

Donor Highlight

The Sprott Foundation

Over the past three years, The Sprott Foundation has donated over \$1 million to Jays Care, with more than half of these funds dedicated to addressing food insecurity in Indigenous communities across Canada. Through their generous support, 235,684 healthy meals and snacks have been provided to children, youth, and communities across all Indigenous programs at Jays Care, fueling over 19,000 Indigenous children, youth, and families. The Sprott Foundation has also contributed to the Blue Jays Families Fundraising Weekend and provided over 10,000 individual meals to families facing food insecurity as part of Jays Care's Family Night at Home initiative. We thank The Sprott Foundation for its commitment to fueling happy and healthy children and youth across Jays Care's programs!

And it is not only me that went to residential school; it is generational. Many in our communities have been carrying what happened and need to heal from the hurt, loneliness, and abuse. That's why we do what we do. It is important for the kids nowadays to keep their identity and to keep their culture and language alive.

Paula: When we play baseball, we're still Anishinabek, that isn't going to change. So, if the kids can see that when we play ball, through things like prayer, giving thanks, or playing a drum song before the game, it gives them something to be proud of. And not just when they are at baseball, but everywhere they go. They should have that opportunity to see who they are and feel who they are all the time, not just once or twice a year at a pow-wow. And that is what we try to do with this program.

Lisa-Marie: Yeah, I think that sense of identity and being around others who celebrate our culture and are proud is important for a young person. Because I know when I was young, I wasn't always proud to be Anishinabek. We are trying to bring our kids together and say, 'Yes, be proud, you're beautiful, you're Anishinabek, our culture is beautiful.' We want them to take that with them wherever they go.

Paula: Normally, when a kid wants to play a sport, they have to go outside the community to join a league that isn't culturally based. The great thing about this program is it allowed kids to play with their community and build community pride. For our community, Atikameksheng, we had 28 kids playing ball this summer. That is almost all the kids on our reserve! At games, you would see cars lined up to watch the games and aunties all over Facebook asking when and where the next game would be. The program brought a lot of people together who usually wouldn't get together, and that hasn't happened in our community in a long time. It really was an amazing thing to see.



CHALLENGER BASEBALL



Let's all play ball

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Challenger Baseball is Jays Care's adaptive baseball program, run in partnership with Little League Canada and Baseball Canada. The program is specifically designed to empower children, youth, and adults living with physical and cognitive disabilities. The program operates in partnership with schools, communities, and baseball leagues and associations, with the goal of teaching athletes the core life skills inherent to baseball: teamwork, communication, determination, resiliency, inclusion, and courage. Challenger Baseball ensures that every athlete plays in an accessible and inclusive environment, where they can build confidence, increase physical activity, and be part of a greater community.

Did you know?

The percentage of children and youth with disabilities meeting all recommendations within the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines was 0% throughout 2020 (ParticipACTION, 2022). Jays Care's Challenger Baseball programming increases the physical activity levels of children and youth living with disabilities by providing sport and play opportunities where they can compete, be part of a team, and play ball no matter their skill level or ability.

9,013

children, youth, and adults across Challenger Baseball programming

283

Challenger Baseball programming sites

61%

of parents/guardians indicated that Challenger Baseball is currently the only sport programming their child is participating in.



Highlight

In conversation with Helen, Challenger Baseball Parent, Port Hope.



“Sarah started Challenger Baseball off a recommendation from a family friend. Growing up, Sarah was involved in sports like soccer. However, at one point, her level of running no longer matched her peers, and sports started becoming less accessible to her. This changed when she joined Challenger Baseball, as it allowed her to be in a space where she was comfortable with her peers. Personally, I do not know much about baseball, but my husband plays, and we like our kids to be active. We value the skills and experiences gained in these settings, from community building to sportsmanship to friendship and teamwork. We know any sport can teach you those things, but for Sarah, Challenger Baseball has been her space to do so.

This year, Sarah’s school ran Challenger Baseball and Girls At Bat programs, and she got involved with both. Through these programs, her teachers nominated her to throw the first pitch at a Toronto Blue Jays game- instantly making her a star around the school. On the big day, Sarah and I were both a little nervous, but any nerves quickly faded once we saw the group of supporters who came out to cheer Sarah on. Teachers, classmates, family, and friends all showed up to the game to see her big moment.



“It was huge for us, her family, to see the community that came out to support her.”

After her pitch, she came to join us in the stands, and you could tell she was proud of her throw and herself. Her teacher and classmates were also so proud, and they even took some photos for her school yearbook. It was an incredible night for Sarah and for us all to witness.”



INCLUSION

Making baseball inclusive for ALL



TOP OF THE FIRST



Levelling the playing field

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Top Of The First is Jays Care's diversity, equity, and inclusion certification program for baseball/softball coaches, administrators, programmers, and adult volunteers across Canada. The first of its kind, the certification program offers a variety of training, tools, and professional development credits that aim to equip participants with clear action plans, effective resources, and enhanced skills for creating more equitable, inclusive, and accessible programming. Designed in partnership with the Toronto Blue Jays, Anima Leadership and Dr. Janelle Joseph, the program is helping coaches to re-imagine their playbooks and level the playing field.

Did you know?

82% of youth report not having anyone they feel they can talk to about experiences with racism or discrimination in sport. This perception increases among Black youth (89%), Black women and girls (92%), Indigenous youth (93%), Indigenous women and girls (95%), and youth with a visible disability (94%). Jays Care's Top Of The First program addresses these issues by increasing access to diversity, equity, and inclusion training for baseball/softball leaders so that more young people have adults they can trust and turn to.

205

coaches and leaders trained



93%

of trainees reported an enhanced understanding of strategies to diversify recruitment at their league/association.

94%

of trainees reported an enhanced understanding of unconscious biases and how to create more inclusive environments.

Highlight

Annually, across Canada, roughly 160,000 children and youth aged 5 to 18 register for Baseball Canada and Little League Canada programs. Of that group, 10% identify as girls, 6% as racial minorities, 5% as children and youth with disabilities, and 3% as receiving financial assistance to pay registration fees. Given the sheer reach of these two integral Jays Care partners, the potential to move inclusion forward in the field of sport and play is immense; and this is the reason why Top Of The First was developed. In its inaugural year, 205 participants from 130+ leagues and associations participated in the training program and reported feeling welcomed, challenged, and better equipped to interrupt exclusion and create inclusive sports environments. The training success can be credited to the skills of our virtual education facilitators, B Adair, Gabriela (Gaby) Estrada, and Stefan Thomas, who made it all possible. Each facilitator paired their unique and thoughtful facilitation style with their lived experiences with exclusion, discrimination, and racism to create a safe and engaging environment for all.



As one participant noted:



“Many of the topics discussed forced me to pause and evaluate my behaviours. It provided me with many ways to implement true inclusion in my life, in my league, and to show my son. The instructors were extremely knowledgeable and easy to talk to - it was a very comfortable and welcoming environment.”

Donor Highlight

TD

In our effort to grow inclusive sport and play across the country, TD has stepped up to the plate time and time again. As the presenting sponsor of Top Of The First, TD has played an integral role in creating more welcoming, diverse, and inclusive sport and play spaces for children and youth across the country.

Additionally, TD has generously sponsored Jays Care's 2022 signature fundraising events - including the Curve Ball Gala, Annual Golf Classic, and Broadcast Auction - raising over \$3 million towards Jays Care programming. TD employees are also wonderfully active volunteers across Jays Care events, creating incredible opportunities for children and youth in Jays Care programming. We thank TD for their generosity, commitment, and investment, as it enables Jays Care to significantly broaden our reach across Canada and get more children and youth into our programs!

GENDER EQUITY

Tackling gender equity both on and off the field



GIRLS AT BAT



Getting girls into the game

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Girls At Bat is an introductory level baseball program designed to reduce some of the biggest barriers anyone identifying* as a girl may face when accessing or participating in sport. Some of these barriers include, but are not limited to, sport being too competitive, having a perceived lack of skill, limited access to opportunity, and low confidence. Girls At Bat removes these barriers by creating spaces that empower and centre the leadership and voices of girls and provide opportunities for them to learn and play sport amongst a resilient and inclusive community. The program changes the game for girls by focusing on four key pillars: connection, courage, leadership, and love of sport. The program is implemented by schools and community organizations with the goal of increasing participation and retention in sport and play.

8,205

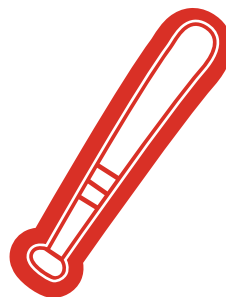
children and youth across Girls At Bat programming

257

Girls At Bat programming sites

95%

of Girls At Bat coaches reported that a majority of participants in their program demonstrated an increased love of sport



Did you know?

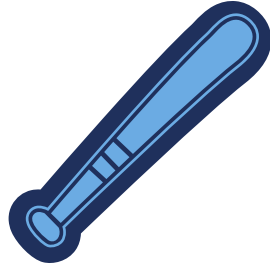
One in four girls is not committed to returning to their pre-pandemic sport participation levels (Canadian Women & Sport, 2021). Jays Care's Girls At Bat programming gets girls back into the game and creates spaces where they want to stay and play sports for life.

*NOTE: Any reference to girls and women in this section should be read as self-identified or parent-identified gender, not assigned biological sex.



Highlights

In conversation with Elora, Girls At Bat Coach, Georgetown



"One of the best things about running the Girls At Bat program at our school this year was giving the grade 6 girls a safe place to be themselves, spread kindness, and learn a sport. Our school is a grade 6-8 school, and I find when talking to the grade 6's, there aren't many events or clubs for them. Also, our school has a competitive athletics department that only offers team sports on a try-out basis. Girls At Bat is the first program at our school that allows for a try-out-free sports space for girls. We had 31 students on the team that would usually not try out for any sports, who finally got the opportunity to be part of a team and belong to something special. One student I can think of who has benefitted greatly from joining the program is Ava. Ava is 11 and joined the team with the encouragement of a friend. She is normally quite shy and had never played baseball before. Since joining the program we have seen her completely come out of her shell and become an incredible team player. She would always be the first to cheer on her teammates and would light up if they did the same for her. A standout moment this year is when she hit the ball off the tee for the first time, I have never seen her smile so big!"

In conversation with Ruqaiyah, 16, Toronto



"I joined the L.I.T. Girls program through my community centre. One of the leaders there

mentioned how they nominated me for an opportunity they thought I would like. I have been a part of this program for a year, both in the school year and the summertime. When I first joined the program, I was shy, but I now recognize there is no reason to be. Anytime a girl spoke up about their feelings, I could heavily relate. It was inspiring to hear the other girls speak up, and I hope that whenever I spoke out some of the girls felt the same way. Before the program, I wasn't so sure of myself for a long time. I would constantly second-guess myself. But, being with such an encouraging community made me believe that I can achieve my goals and provided me with the resources to do it. The program was a great experience. It pushed me to step outside my comfort zone and to be a part of something I normally would shy away from. My goal is to get more people involved with the program the same way I was. I have already nominated a bunch of people in my life I think would benefit from the program like me. It opened a lot of doors for me, and I hope it does for others too."



L.I.T. GIRLS



Unlocking tomorrow's leaders

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

L.I.T. Girls is Jays Care's virtual leadership programming offered to self-identifying girls aged 13-18 across the country. This leadership programming is designed to equip participants with the skills, confidence, and support system needed to thrive during a pivotal part of adolescence. At Jays Care, we believe that girls are at the forefront of positive change, and we want to provide them with access to more leadership opportunities, connections to like-minded peers, and incredible role models in diverse industries and professional landscapes. The goals of this programming are to help participants build resilience, discover their undeniable strengths, values, and passions, and to celebrate them as they become the leaders of tomorrow.

Did you know?

In a KPMG study (2015) that polled more than 3,000 professional and college women, **3 in 4 women expressed the desire to have learned more about leadership while growing up, as well as having more opportunities to practice leadership.** Jays Care's L.I.T. Girls programming aims to offer a safe and inclusive space for young women and girls to harness their leadership potential early on and develop the skills needed to become tomorrow's leaders.

289

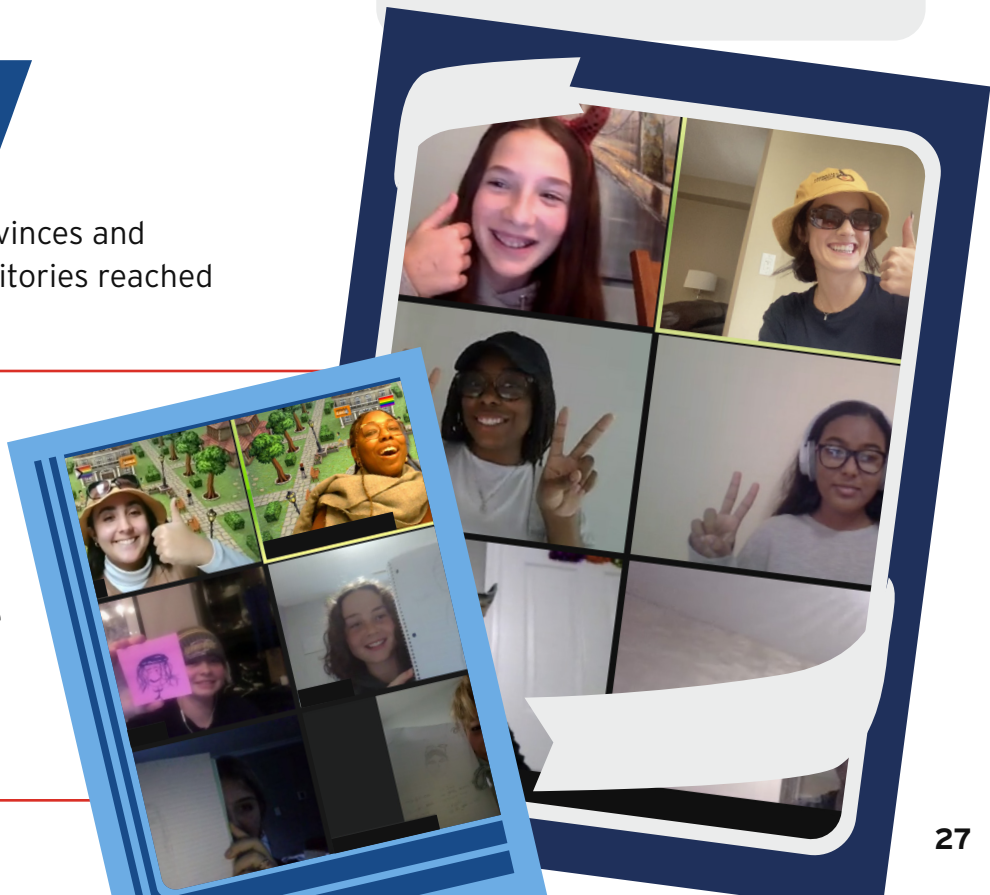
youth across L.I.T. Girls programming

7

Provinces and territories reached

93%

of L.I.T. Girls participants agreed the program provided opportunities to grow as young leaders



COMMUNITY SUPPORT INITIATIVES



At Jays Care, we know that sport and play are the ticket to a happy and healthy future for young people across the country. However, we recognize that the children and youth across our programs can require additional support to fully unlock their potential both on and off the field. As a result, when a child or youth joins a Jays Care program, they gain access to additional supports designed to address their emerging needs.

Winter Hampers Initiative

Reduces barriers to sport and play all year long by providing children and youth across Jays Care's programs with the winter gear necessary to get active outdoors.

2,583

Winter Hampers delivered across Canada

350+

Challenger Baseball families impacted

750+

families living in Toronto Community Housing impacted



850+

students attending priority schools in the GTA impacted

Family Night at Home

Provides families across Jays Care programming with hot, nutritious meals and play-based learning opportunities, so that they can connect, bond, and be fuelled.

6,000+

individual meals served to 426 families living in Toronto Community Housing

375+

individual meals served to 25 Indigenous families as part of the Indigenous Play Ball program

375+

individual meals served to 25 newcomer families as part of the Girls At Bat program



Turn the Page

Provides Canadian educators the chance to fill their classroom and school libraries with diverse books and learning resources.

1,080

educators received books to fill their classroom



280,000

books were distributed to educators across Ontario and British Columbia

3,000

Lego resources made their way to classrooms

Bounce Back Initiative

Provides funding to Indigenous partners seeking to address local food insecurity and/or create opportunities for community gathering and celebration as part of their COVID-19 recovery efforts.

\$339,737

granted to 40 Indigenous communities across the country



Respite Support

Reduces the financial burden of respite for Challenger Baseball families by providing up to 60+ hours of free respite care for their athlete.

58

Challenger Baseball families received respite support



2,394+

hours of respite support were provided

Take Me Out to the Ball Game

Children, youth, and families across Jays Care programming get the opportunity to attend a Toronto Blue Jays game in the Jays Care Community Clubhouse suite. It provides the 'Big League' experience, including free food and snacks, visits from Ace, and a feature on the Blue Jay's Video Board.

79

games attended



2,874

Jays Care youth hosted in the clubhouse

Ted Rogers Scholarships

Presented by Rogers Communications, young people across Jays Care programming are provided with the opportunity to be nominated for post-secondary scholarships. This includes a \$2,500 renewable scholarship, for up to four years, to support their educational pursuits.



24

scholarships awarded in 2022

\$60,000+

awarded in 2022

100+

Jays Care participants have received scholarships to date

Donor Highlight

Sue Steel

Working security with the Toronto Blue Jays for over 22 years, Sue Steel meets all types of fans. From the die-hards to the first timers, her favorite fans remain the wide-eyed children and youth who enter the Jays Care Community Clubhouse all season long. Sue has generously donated financially to Jays Care to ensure that children and youth across Jays Care's programs can attend a game and enjoy the 'Big-Leaguer' experience. She remains passionate about helping children and youth experience their first baseball game and Jays Care thanks her for her continued support in making the game more accessible to hundreds of youth in our programs.



"I have the privilege of working at Rogers Centre and seeing the Blue Jays play. I want to help eliminate barriers to access so children can experience this magic!"



THANK YOU



Jays Care sincerely appreciates and acknowledges all donors who generously contribute to make sport and play a reality for thousands of children and youth across Canada.

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**BREAKING DOWN *barriers* &
BRINGING BACK *play***

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