



2022 - 2023

**CODE**  
YOUTH



# ANNUAL REPORT



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[www.code-youth.ca](http://www.code-youth.ca)



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# VISION AND MISSION

## VISION

A world where underserved youth have a second chance to develop employable skills and an opportunity to improve their quality of life by building a rewarding career in technology.

## MISSION

Code Youth's mission is to support at-risk and disadvantaged youth between the ages of 17-29 in finding employment solutions, especially youth who have dropped out of high school. We provide entry level coding training and the tools necessary to find meaningful entry level employment in the IT sector.

## VALUES

Code Youth prioritizes equality, fostering inclusivity and respect. We emphasize transparency, uphold high integrity, and practice good stewardship with resources. Teaching code is our means to inspire change and creativity, supported by best practices in an innovative, inclusive learning system.

# FOUNDER'S MESSAGE

**MONA FORREST**  
Founder of Code Youth



News of the success of the Code Youth application for funding came in early 2021, landing us right in the middle of the COVID epidemic! What we had planned for included in-person training for young people who had difficulty in high school, and a slightly older group who were stuck in low-wage jobs in food service and retail.

Statistics Canada, in their material on the impact of COVID on the NEET (not in employment, education, or training) indicator for young people aged 15 to 29, reported that in March and April 2020, the NEET rates for young people increased to unprecedented levels.

COVID proved to be a blessing in disguise, because as we worked to transfer plans from in-person training to on-line, we realized that the circumstances allowed Code Youth to reach more young people from Ottawa to a wider area of Ontario.

As a foster mother of teenagers for more than 20 years, I knew firsthand that bright, energetic young people were often stymied by the school curriculum, and dropped out too soon. However, there they were, working away at complicated games on their computers. The question of how to put those circumstances together resulted in the first ideas for Code Youth.

With two years of direct experience with the Code Youth training program, and constant re-evaluations and re-development according to that experience, we can say that individualized attention, mentorship, and training adapted to the needs of this specific population can result in success and a much better chance in life for these young people.

Code Youth attracted Board Members who worked hard to give us a framework, observe and offer great advice and in many cases were hands-on in adjusting the program and assisting in fulfilling rigorous reporting demands. The day-to-day success of the program depended largely on Executive Director, Giselle Leduc, and her staff, the employers who hired our young people, and the community organizations who collaborated with us. Last but not at all least, MP Anita Vendenbeld, who saw us through three summer grants, allowed us to hire amazing summer students who worked on the feasibility study, many budget versions, training methodology and community contacts.

Entering our third year, we can say our concept has proven successful, and we and look forward to continuing to evolve to help change futures for many young people.

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



2022-2023 was a very productive year for Code Youth. We turned our focus to participant employability and put our attention on business development to increase our participants' access to tech employment opportunities.

Several employment strategies were put in place to increase employer engagement:

- Recruited Volunteer Tech Professionals to mentor our youth one-on-one and to participate as Peer Programmers in the training sessions;
- Hired a part-time Business Development Representative who reached out to over 400 employers;
- Collaborated with employment agencies to widen our employment reach;
- Offered wage subsidies which encouraged 4 businesses to hire 6 Code Youth participants (Rebel.com, XTM, World Accord, ELTOC).

In addition, advice received from tech companies was implemented which resulted in changes to the training program to reflect industry needs:

- Added more practice time to create better portfolios that enhance employability;
- Restructured the tech team to add more hands-on practice by reducing the theoretical content and hiring two past participants to help the youth practice tasks and complete assignments.; and,
- Recruited one of our past participants as a volunteer peer programmer to assist with participant portfolio building.

Despite the effects of Covid and the changes in the tech job sector, we have received favourable response to our ability to offer wage subsidies for 12-week internships.

I am very grateful for the commitment of our staff, all of whom continuously look for opportunities and ideas to promote progress and continuous improvement for our youth. I am thankful for the members of the board of directors for their trust, interest and advice. We are grateful to our partners, funders and donors who believe in the work that we do and the youth we serve.

There still is work to be done in developing strategies that promote the hiring of our youth. In 2023, we will continue to seize the opportunities that present themselves.

# FUNDERS



Code Youth is very grateful for the funding received from ESDC as well as the continued support received from Anita Vandenberg who believed in the success of this program from the very beginning.

Funded in part by the Government of Canada under the Youth Employment and Skills Strategy



Canada Summer Jobs

# DONORS



**BOURK**  
SOFTWARE & CONSULTING



**Neil Squire**

**Rebel**

# PARTNERS

## CAREER PARTNERS:

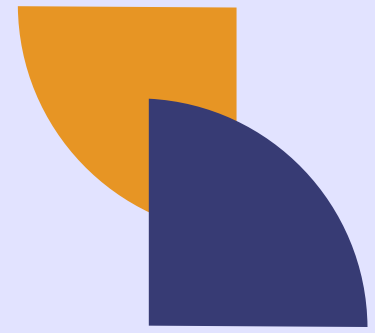
- Actions interculturelles
- Black Professionals in Technology Network (BPTN)
- Bourk Software & Consulting
- Community Employment Resource Centre Kanata (CERC)
- English Language Tutoring for the Ottawa Community
- Incubator13 - internships & entrepreneurship training
- Interac Corp
- Rebel.com
- Ready Willing and Able – for the neurodivergent
- TalentTank Recruiting - Mathew Shulman
- Vanier Community Service Centre, Sylvie Morin Heppell
- White board Collective



## COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

- Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- Dress for Success
- CollabSpace (office space and admin support)
- Community Employment Resource Centre Kanata (CERC)
- Experica 2.0
- iContribute
- Invest Ottawa
- Neil Squire Society
- Ottawa Employment Hub
- PaletteSkills
- Ready Willing and Able – for the neurodivergent
- StartUp Canada
- Supported Employment Alliance Network
- uOttawa, Telfer School of Management
- Youth Lead Program, Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
- Youth Services Bureau

# CORPORATE TESTIMONIALS



“Code Youth is an amazing organization with which to partner. We hired a student for placement who developed our website and created a new logo for us. Our student was professional , timely, and a terrific fit with our team.”

- ELTOC.ca

"Our Code Youth intern exceeded expectations in his role as Software Developer (Intern). He very quickly became an integral member of the team at Rebel. His technical skills were apparent immediately after joining, and he settled into the team dynamic perfectly. It was amazing to see how over only three months' internship, he became a confident, contributing member of our Development team. We're so happy to have been able to offer him a permanent position at Rebel, and that he will be continuing with us full-time"

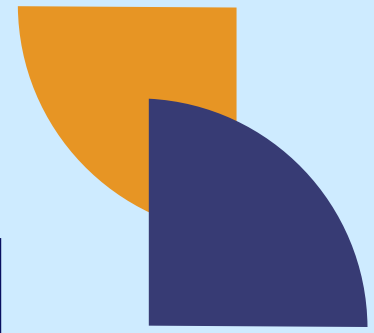
- Rebel.com

We would definitely recommend the Code Youth program to both attendees and employers. It was a great experience for the team having a fresh pair of eyes and hands. The Code Youth grad was a great addition to the team.”

- XTMinC.com



# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION



## TECHNICAL TRAINING

Technical training to qualify for entry-level coding positions in Ontario's tech sector

- problem-based and led in an AGILE environment to simulate real workplace experience.
- team oriented using sprints in Jira and using other workplace tools such as Confluence, Slack, GitHub, CodePen, & Sigma
- Portfolio Building to develop and showcase coding projects

## ONE-ON-ONE COACHING

Coaching to build self-awareness and confidence to:

- during the training to provide individualized support
- post training support to help them find jobs and build better futures by connecting them to employers
- to explore
- employment opportunities in application development

## CAREER PREPARATION

to prepare for the job market and interview for job postings

- career planning, labour market information, employment search strategies
- resume building, cover letter writing, interview preparation
- employability skills including teamwork, communication, and leadership skills
- one-one-one coaching for individualized support

## LEARNING SUPPORTS

- resources such as office supplies, laptop loaners, domains
- financial support (paid training allowance)

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

to understand the tech sector and build confidence

- tech professional mentors provide career support and tech advice
- professionals give workshops on industry topics
- employers participate in mock interviews and offer feedback



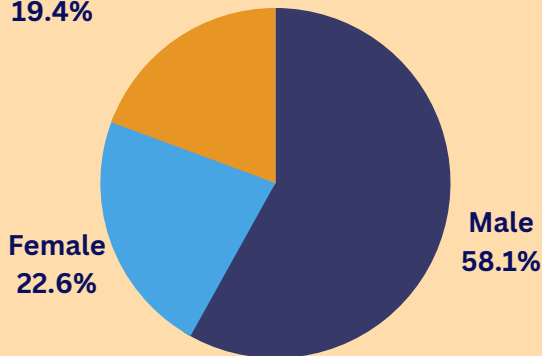




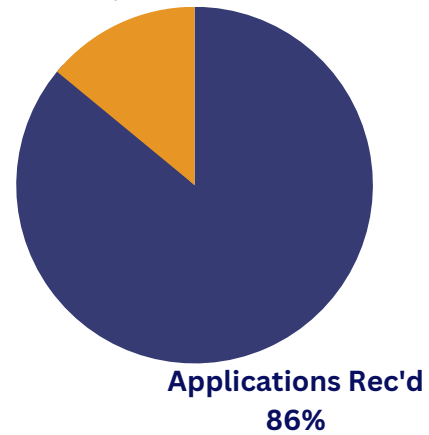
# YOUTH SERVED

APRIL 2022-MARCH 2023

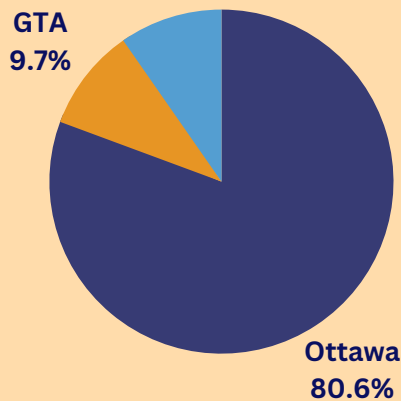
Other gender  
19.4%



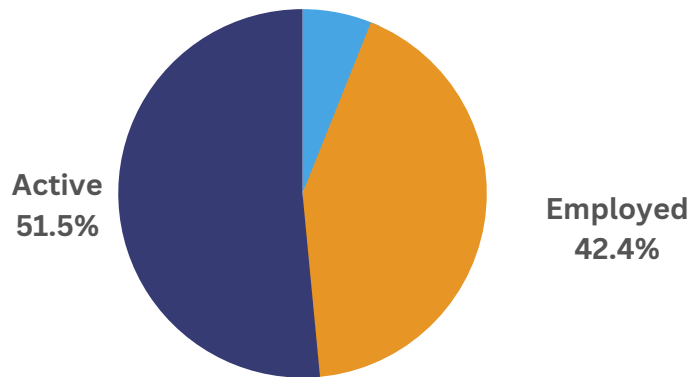
Accepted into the program  
14%



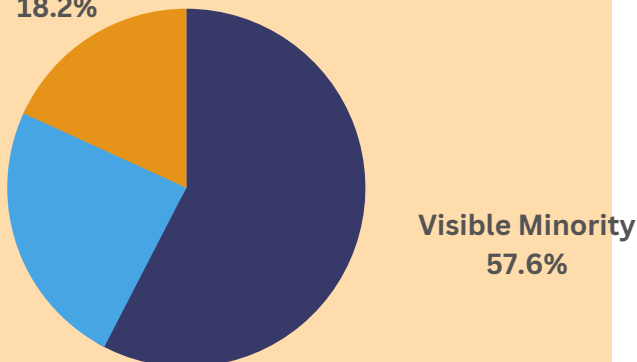
Other cities (3)  
9.7%



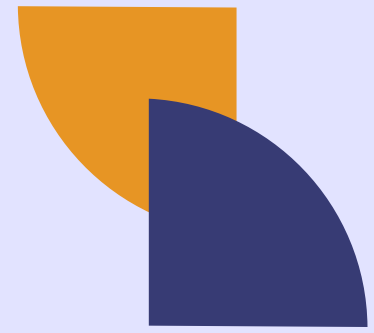
Returned to School  
6.1%



LGBTQ+  
18.2%



# PARTICIPANT TESTIMONIALS



“I dropped out of college, and never got my high school diploma. My work experience has been limited because of what I’ve went through in life. I learned how to code in multiple languages, to manage my time and myself, to figure out how to deal with unexpected problems, and to commit. . My confidence and outlook has changed immensely!” - SA

“I had to work in construction to save my life in Canada as a firstcomer. ... I learned everything about how to create a career in Canada ... knowing that a team that always thought of our career was behind us increased my self-confidence and I never felt alone. ... The system is impressive in that it is one-to-one, and they keep teaching until they are sure that we are learning.” – BC

“I have some work experience but have struggled severely with unemployment. I feel like before I was missing a direction for my professional life. Now I know exactly what I want to do. What is different now is mostly the fact that I know that it’s possible and that people in my position have successfully broken into the tech sector.” MM

“The work experience I have is mostly retail experience and customer services. The barriers I face at my employment are lack representation, diversity, and equality. Code Youth pushed me to apply myself and to be more confident... **gave me the strength and courage** I needed to apply myself and to take chances. I never thought how much I would enjoy this program and how much I’d achieve in just a short time. “ - IK



# OUR 2022-2023

# VOLUNTEERS



GRACIOUSLY DONATE THEIR TIME AND KNOWLEDGE FOR OUR YOUTH

## TECH ONE-ON-ONE MENTORS

- Alan McKay
- Ashley Butao
- Brian Garson
- Dan Phillips
- Melissa Pullen
- Peter Banh
- Robert Hanak
- Zach Abrahams

## OTHER TECH VOLUNTEERS

- Bechera Chapman-Tremblay, Curriculum Dev
- Carter Kilgour, Peer Programmer
- Harleen Kaur, Peer Programmer
- Jarret Dow, Research
- Mario Porras, Research
- Volodymyr Kocherhin, Curriculum Dev

## PROFESSIONAL GUEST SPEAKERS

- Diana Richards, HR
- Camila Pastran, Freelancing
- Dan Phillips, IT
- Heidi Hauver, HR
- Kai Hao, LMI
- Matthew Shulman, Recruiting
- Melissa Pike, AI
- Monique Rochon Scott, LinkedIn
- Ranjith Mathew, Networking
- Simon Bourk, SCRUM
- Steve Tang & Leanna Trunzo, IT
- Tom Henricksen, IT

## SOCIAL MEDIA VOLUNTEERS

### HIGH-SCHOOL, COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

- Riki McAlear
- Yuka Ishii
- Zeina ElGuindi
- Juliana Pinilla
- Guohui Wan
- Jaycee Lawa
- Quynh An Tran
- Emma Ralston

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

## 2022-2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mona Forrest, Founder & Chair

Claude Richer, Director

Fareha Muhammady, Treasurer

Carter Kilgour, Director

Tyler Gow, Assistant Treasurer

Ranjith Matthew, Director

## 2022-2023 STAFF

Giselle Leduc, Executive Director

Raninder Dhillon, Technology  
Facilitator

Lily Digiacomio, Program Assistant

Carter Gillis, Tech Facilitator  
Assistant

Lee-Ann O'Neill, Business  
Development Rep

Sammantha Preston, Tech Facilitator  
Assistant

Jennifer Spence, Bookkeeper

Ayma Bukhari, 2022 Canada Summer  
Job

Georgina Vincent, Vocational  
Counsellor


Every member of Code Youth's team is passionate about supporting youth in overcoming barriers to employment.

# WANT TO GET INVOLVED?

There are several ways to volunteer with Code Youth and support its mission in helping at-risk youth get a second chance at a career.

Check out our website at [www.code-youth.ca](http://www.code-youth.ca)



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