



**FINAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REPORT, APRIL 1/20 – March 31/21
ISSUED MARCH 24, 2021**

HIGHLIGHTS (AND LOWLIGHTS) OF THE PAST YEAR

Covid shuttered Boundless doors on March 17th last year for five months. In mid-August, we were re-classified as an essential service and have been open at half scale relative to Pre-Covid ever since. In that time, we launched a new Indigenous program, formally became a conservation area, and helped over 100 kids get their lives back. We tried our hands in online learning (rather successfully), and have dabbled in online counselling.

With stout hearts, we have been navigating the pandemic like clumsy martial artists, responding to the ebb and flow of opportunity and obstacle, trying to stay centred and laser focussed on our students.

These kids, as in other years, accomplished extraordinary feats of learning and transformation. They, the lucky few, became part of a prosperous learning community, face to face. Real life. Sadly, there were so many fewer of them compared to the years before.

And yet, 2020 was no time for lamentations. The stage has been set for a large expansion of services in 2021.

THE (MOSTLY) DELIGHTFUL IRONIES OF 2020

- It was the healthiest year for staff and students in our history. Our bubble was the among safest places to learn amidst than the whirlwind all about us.
- That a new program could actually be launched in the pandemic. Our Indigenous partnerships are thriving.
- We put the finishing touches on marrying conservation with high school education. The pandemic afforded us the time and space to accomplish this.
- We ran a budget surplus. Donors stood by us, and many new ones joined our community. The wage subsidy helped. And our expenses dropped dramatically due the reduced scale of service. Our balance sheet is solid.

BY THE NUMBERS

	<u>2020/2021</u>	<u>2019/2020</u>
Total At-Risk Students served	113	408
Total Student Days Delivered	2145	8000
Student Completion Rate All Programs	98%	96%
Behavioural Incidents	116	417
Serious Health and Safety Incidents	0	0
Students Completing Full Diploma at Boundless	26	77
Increase in English curriculum grades compared to public school scores	28%	31%
Increase in Math and Science grades compared to public school scores	32%	29%
Number in students participating in Pilot Job Readiness program	44	NA
Budget Surplus/Deficit exclusive to Youth Programming	\$110,000	0

PROFILES OF OUR STUDENTS BEFORE ARRIVING AT BOUNDLESS

- 100% of our students had achieved credits below their grade level
- 100% experienced long-term school interruptions (also impacted by COVID)
- 21% had been suspended or expelled
- 100% presented diagnosed mental health and learning challenges
- 14% had criminal histories
- 100% reported as low-income

WE LAUNCHED OUR INDIGENOUS PROGRAM in 2020

The story of our new Indigenous program is really a tale of our incredibly unique community partners and how they want to use Boundless as a resource to bolster their communities. These groups can be forgiven for approaching Boundless cautiously. Their experiences with the mainstream hasn't always worked out so well. The term "Boarding School" evokes trauma and does not inspire confidence.

Building an Indigenous program takes patience, subtlety and the capacity to be a chameleon, always adapting to meet evolving needs.

To quote one Elder who trained our staff recently,

"Just shut up and listen."

In 2020, a quarter of our boarding school was comprised of First Nation kids, and two communities participated in group based programs this past month for the first time.



The Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families are entrusted with supporting Inuit people to settle in "the south". The community is ravaged by suicide, addictions and their young people are almost entirely disengaged with school. They want Boundless to simply engage their youth in learning, and to train their teens to be leaders. Their Elders shall be facilitating an impressive array of cultural activities. The first "date" between our organizations resulted in a mutual pledge to develop long-term programs.

The Native Canadian Centre of Toronto and the Native Child and Family Services of Toronto, both located downtown, are cultural centres for Aboriginal people. They provide outreach to the homeless, child welfare and support services, and help families manage the complicated job of urban living. Programs have already begun in earnest and shall ramp up again in May and June at quite a significant scale.

The Chippewas of Saugeen Ojibway Band (Saugeen First Nation) didn't quite know what to make of Boundless when we first connected.

"Just what does Boundless know about working with Indigenous People. Who's paying? Why have you reached out to us? Is this a one-time offer?"

On eggshells, we responded, "Private funders are footing the bill. Our mandate is to support marginalized groups".

This response did not exactly inspire confidence. Talks lasted months. Many zooms resulted in a hard-earned green light from Band Council. Visions of youth earning a full diploma, multi-generational excursions and harm reduction initiatives are dancing in everyone's heads. The story begins this June.



BOUNDLESS EDUCATION CONSERVATION AREA (BECA)

BECA is a multi-century initiative to protect the 600 wilderness acres that Boundless owns. We fantasize about acquiring hundreds, and perhaps thousands of more acres of adjacent land. We have time, after all.

We achieved ambitious milestones in 2020. The Conservation Easements have been enshrined in law. A BECA committee has been formally established. These people, along with their descendants, shall stand guard for millennia.

A pipe dream? We think not. Guided by an innovative lawyer and current chair of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance, Ian Attridge, we have addressed long term vulnerabilities in financing and governance that is entirely unprecedented and rests on legal bedrock.

The Committee shall use the **BECA Legal Defense Fund** as its armour to enforce the easements should they ever be challenged. This restricted fund reached its target of \$200,000 by year's end. Donors stepped up big time.

As long as Boundless owns its property, these funds shall remain untouched and shall compound into seven and eight figures in the distant future. If Boundless cannot maintain ownership, the BECA committee shall keep a close eye on the land, and use the BECA fund, if necessary, to give teeth to their enforcement of environmental best practices.

Part of the vision of BECA is to gradually make our conservation area more accessible to the general public. It is also to embed environmental stewardship in The Boundless School curricula and have our students participate directly in the conservation of our land.

This, so far, has included beekeeping, tree-planting and erosion control. Dreams to develop an small organic farm are taking root.

THE BECA COMMITTEE

Steven Gottlieb - Executive Director of Boundless, BECA Chair
Ian Attridge – Environmental Lawyer, Chair of the Ontario Land Trust Alliance
Ben Gardent – MBA, BECA/Boundless Treasurer
Dr. Erin Brenan – E.R. Medicine, Boundless Board member, ardent environmentalist
Laura Ziliotto – Program Evaluation Expert, Former Boundless Board Member
Tom Robson - Current Chair of Boundless. Teacher. Organic Farmer
Adrian Meissner – Teacher, Current Director of Operations Boundless
Tony Rupoli – Teacher, Former Principal of Boundless
Nicholas Arsenaault – Deputy Director of Boundless, MSc Environmental Management and Policy

CURRENT AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

STAFFING

Boundless has adjusted financially to Covid. We have maintained community partnerships and forged promising new ones. We are re-building at a rapid clip. Health and safety protocols are well dialed in and we can cope with the pandemic in the long term, stay open, and work our magic on struggling youth.

But the impact Covid had on Boundless staffing was formidable. 12 months ago, we let go two-thirds of our staff team. It often takes years to train Boundless teachers and counsellors. Losing this volume of staff will take 2-3 years to get back to square.

Our strategy from the outset has been to keep our core leadership team intact. This has proven to be fortuitous, because the ramp-up of services has been rather seamless.

Notwithstanding, even when the virus abates, its impact on staff development will linger. The great news is that we already witness seeds of fantastic new leadership sprouting.

ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Last summer we engaged 44 kids in online English curriculum. It generated a few bucks for Boundless. Students and parents were thrilled with the outcomes.

Nevertheless, our staff have determined that online teaching is not for Boundless. The surplus it generates is modest. It competes with our own re-development plans, and frankly, our hearts are simply not in it. Boundless is all about face to face and shall remain so.

As for online counselling, the jury is still out. It's quite possible that the virus will fade away before we make a final determination on its value for Boundless kids.

INEFFICIENCIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE

There were times during Covid's peak when we had more vehicles than students at Boundless. We have umpteen buildings to maintain. We were designed to be bigger.

As we navigate the budget challenges associated with operating at a small scale, we must look for every efficiency to keep our expenses optimized and streamlined. Not knowing at what scale you are operating meant we had to play the role soothsayer at times.

Now that we have a clear vision for the next few years, planning has become more palatable.

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 12 MONTH EDUCATION PROGRAM ENDING MARCH 31, 2021

EXPENSES (EXCLUSIVE TO OUR YOUTH PROGRAM)

Teachers and Staff	914,000
Travel	16,000
Insurance	62,000
Program/Educational Expenses	338,000
Admin	20,000
Total	\$1,350,000

REVENUE

Donations	720,000
Revenue from Boundless Social Enterprise	225,000
Central Toronto Youth Service Contract	515,000
TOTAL	\$1,460,000

THE YEAR AHEAD - 2021/2022

- While the year ahead sees us as more than doubling in scale compared to 2020, we view our evolution to be not merely about increasing numbers, but also about reaching those on the margins who normally would not be able to access our work. This requires deeper more engaged models of intervention with young people with greater needs. It also requires program adaptation for continued results.

We're going to shift our focus to serving marginalized and racialized youth. We have started with Indigenous youth, and will adapt other programs concurrently, and thereafter, to other marginalized groups.

- We shall resume the continued growth of Ottawa based programs, financial literacy programs, job readiness programs and programs exclusively for young women.
- We expect a modest revival of our social enterprise, resulting in more revenue to meet greater expenses because of the planned increase to service levels. Our continued success with donations shall be critical to achieving the goals as they have been stated herein.
- Our long-term program outcome evaluation will be ready in April, 2021 and we are eager to learn of its findings

PROJECTED SERVICE TARGETS 2021

**(conforms to current Covid protocols approved by the Renfrew County
Local Health Unit)**

	2021/2022 (target #)	2020/2021 (Actual)
Total Youth Served	275	113
Total Student Days Delivered	5000	2145
Indigenous Youth Participants	60	30
Indigenous Student Days Delivered	1400	614

OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

The programs will be delivered in close collaboration with the following community schools and agencies **DURING COVID**

- 1) Native Canadian Centre of Toronto
- 2) Native Child and Family Services of Toronto
- 3) Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families (Ottawa)
- 4) Chippewas of Saugeen Ojibway Band (Saugeen First Nation)
- 5) Toronto Catholic School board
- 6) Central Toronto Youth Services
- 7) Renfrew County Children's Aid Society

POST COVID (PENDING)

- 8) Ottawa Police
- 9) Toronto Police
- 10) Children's Aid Society of Ottawa
- 11) Ottawa Carlton District School Board