



## **FINAL PROGRAM REPORT, APRIL 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 – MARCH 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022**

### **AN EXTRAORDINARY YEAR IN REVIEW WE, THE LUCKY FEW**

Our students arrived this year with the crushing weight of the world upon their shoulders. 2021 was the perfect storm for adolescent pathology. Crippling anxiety and depression had deeply taken root, and is now a way of life that defines their generation.

The public education system, despite its best efforts, was turned upside down, jettisoning tens of thousands of Ontario youth to fend for themselves. Isolation and despair eroded life and social skill development in ways we have yet to fathom.

But at Boundless, things were quite different.

For the precious few hundred who arrived at our Madawaska Valley wonderland, they left their baggage behind. They got to be kids again. Unfettered, they learned quickly and built a loving community around themselves. Youth achieved such outstanding academic and social outcomes that they seemingly mocked the odds stacked against them.

And, shockingly, Boundless was Covid free. We, the lucky few.

#### **WE REBOUNDED IN 2021**

- Buoyed by robust donations, we met and exceeded all service targets, more than doubling in scale
- Our burgeoning Indigenous program also grew exponentially, and saw the creation of sublime community partnerships. Trust is growing. There is momentum and a sense of wonder in these collaborations
- The youth invested hundreds of hours of sweat and creativity in developing land-based, and conservation-themed learning, guided by award winning Science and English teachers
- With some surplus (see next page), we invested in an organic community garden, setting the stage for our students to devour more than just books at Boundless

## **BY THE NUMBERS**

	<b><u>2020/2021</u></b>	<b><u>2021/2022</u></b>
Total Students served	113	264
Total Student Days Delivered	2145	6415
Student Completion Rate All Programs	98%	95%
Behavioural Incidents	116	218
Serious Health and Safety Incidents	0	0
Students Completing Full Diploma at Boundless	26	54
Increase in English curriculum grades compared to public school scores	28%	38%
Increase in Math and Science grades compared to public school scores	32%	38%
Number of Indigenous Students	66	108
Budget Surplus/Deficit exclusive to Youth Programming	\$110,000	\$136,000

## **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
- 11% had been suspended or expelled
- 48% identified as Indigenous
- 100% presented diagnosed mental health and learning challenges
- 78% reported significant familial dysfunction
- 14% had criminal histories
- 100% reported as low-income

## **A LOOK INSIDE OUR INDIGENOUS PROGRAM**

The past year saw the continuation of pilot Indigenous projects launched in 2020, and the engagement of new community partners as well.

It's not easy building connections with communities whose justifiable mistrust of the establishment spans centuries. Some groups won't return our calls. We tread carefully.

By enabling those partners to take the lead in programming, what is emerging is a chameleon-like and adaptive effort to help Indigenous youth graduate, seize leadership roles and thrive on the land.



## **NAVIGATING THE RIDDLE OF INDIGENOUS PROGRAMMING**

We believe that Indigenous people should lead and teach other Indigenous people at Boundless. Given that none of our teachers are Indigenous, we face a riddle. Should we, and how do we, make ourselves obsolete?

The simple answer is to hire and train Indigenous people. If it were that easy. In fact, one in three hundred applicants applying to work at Boundless are Indigenous.

The solution? To start training Boundless Indigenous alumni as soon as possible after they graduate. We'll certify them in wilderness survival and medical skills. We'll provide paid internships for a number of years, focussing on leadership and facilitation skills. In time, perhaps five years or so, they shall be mature enough to obtain seasonal or full time employment. And then the initiative will gather its own momentum.

Or so the theory goes. We're going to try, starting this Spring.

### **OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

**The Inuuqatigiit Centre for Inuit Children, Youth and Families**, located in Ottawa, supports Inuit people to settle in "the south" with the provision of all kinds of support services.

Inuuqatigiit uses Boundless to train their youth leaders, re-acquaint young people to their own culture and are prodigious referrers to our Boarding school. Plans for 2022 include using Boundless as a place to conduct their own therapeutic healing programs

**The Native Canadian Centre of Toronto**, located in downtown Toronto, provides arts and culture programs, outreach to the homeless and is a hub of healing for local Indigenous people.

Their referrals to Boundless tend to be a little older – 17-20 years old, far behind in school, and prone to problematic substance use. Plans for 2022 include having Boundless support the high school education of their youth. Discussions are being held to develop a harm reduction initiative using Boundless as a retreat.

**The Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST)**, also located downtown, support Indigenous youth mostly from Toronto. They are the Child Welfare Agency and provide all the supports of a typical Children's Aid Society, plus so much more, which includes developing their own summer camp/land-based program. In 2022, they are sending scores of youth to Boundless to get them ready and well trained to run their own camp for NCFST. They also refer many youth to our boarding school.

**Hastings and Prince Edward County District School Board – Indigenous Program** - Boundless works most closely with their Bancroft offices. With hundreds of First Nation youth as students, HPECSD has opted to use Boundless as a way of preparing grade 8 graduates get a head start in school. In addition, plans are underway to use Boundless as an educational tool to re-engage their students who have dropped out.



## **BOUNDLESS EDUCATION CONSERVATION AREA (BECA) CHORES JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT WORSE**



Since the fall, the students have been getting dirty developing an elaborate network of trails. They are honing the land for BECA. While it's fine to preserve the land for the benefit of itself, at BECA, we believe the land must also be preserved for the teaching and healing of people.

The kids chose the site for our new organic community garden. They tested the soil. They defined what shall be sowed this spring. We bought a lot of shovels. They'll study biology outside of a textbook. Why do blisters happen? Why is sand so terrible to grow things in and what are we going to do about it? The whole escapade has our kids riveted.

## **CURRENT CHALLENGES**

### **STAFFING**

It feels like a broken record that we have been bemoaning the Great Human Resource Depression for a few years now.

At Boundless, we perceive that Young Adults (new teachers and youth workers) are now loath to leave their attachments to come work in the wilderness. This is exactly the cohort that our service model has traditionally depended on. Covid meddled with the trajectory of their plans. Many have claimed they lack the wherewithal to cope with the demanding nature of working at Boundless. There are others reasons too, but they all point to the fact that finding and training superb people – for we need nothing less than the most talented to work here – is becoming more difficult, not less.

We have had no issues retaining staff. Once they start day one, staff don't want to leave. But getting people here is like squeezing water from a dry rag.

We have received some salvation by hiring older staff - those people in their fifties who recently retired and headed for the hills. In doing so, these individuals are transforming our curriculum and providing mature and solid leadership.

### **INEFFICIENCIES IN INFRASTRUCTURE**

While we are serving less students than we did pre-Covid, we still have 600 acres and 16 buildings to maintain. We sense the inefficiency every day.

### **WE MISS THE SCHOOL BOARDS**

Both Toronto School Boards, and the Ottawa one, are hamstrung by their own Covid protocols and simply have been unable to refer youth to Boundless, or any other outdoor overnight initiative, for two years now.

**FINANCIAL REPORT FOR THE 12 MONTH EDUCATION PROGRAM ENDING  
MARCH 31, 2022**

**EXPENSES EXCLUSIVE TO OUR YOUTH PROGRAM**

	Year Ending March 31, 2021	Year Ending March 31, 2022
Teachers and Staff	914,000	1,260,000
Travel	16,000	34,000
Insurance	62,000	74,000
Program/Educational Expenses	338,000	394,000
Admin	20,000	25,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,350,000</b>	<b>1,787,000</b>

**REVENUE**

	Year Ending March 31, 2021	Year Ending March 31, 2022
Donations to youth program	720,000	848,000
Revenue from Boundless Social Enterprise	225,000	560,000
Central Toronto Youth Service Contract	515,000	515,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,460,000</b>	<b>1,923,000</b>
Surplus (Deficit)	110,000	136,000

**PROJECTED SERVICE TARGETS 2022/2023**

	2021/2022 (actual)	2022/2023 (Target)
Total Youth Served	264	300
Total Student Days Delivered	6415	7500
Indigenous Youth Participants	108	125
Indigenous Student Days Delivered	2560	3000

## **THE YEAR AHEAD - 2021/2022**

- Indigenous programming will evolve to include large-scale leadership training on behalf of our partners; the beginning of harm reduction initiatives for problematic substance users; the introduction of healing circles conducted by Elders with Boundless logistical and programming support, and the delivery of new academic re-integration programs that targets drop-outs
- We shall resume the continued growth of Ottawa based programs, Covid permitting
- We shall continue to invest and expand our financial literacy and job readiness programs
- We shall create an organic community garden and integrate its operation into high school curriculum while maximizing the labour force of the students themselves
- Focus on developing staffing capacity, providing more incentives and training to attract talent

## **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) Toronto Catholic School board (boarding school referrals only)
- 5) Hastings and Prince Edward County District School
- 6) Central Toronto Youth Services
- 7) Renfrew County Children's Aid Society

### **POST COVID (PENDING)**

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



