



YOUTH EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE

Success Story



Eamon Studer (far left) with the kids and youth staff from the summer camp program

CPRA funding supports expansion of camp programming to meet community needs

THE NELSON AND DISTRICT YOUTH

Centre in British Columbia was created by the City of Nelson more than 20 years ago as a social enterprise focused on providing young people with employment opportunities and a range of sports and recreation activities.



CITY OF NELSON,
BRITISH COLUMBIA



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“With this support, we were able to fulfill our mission for the summer to provide youth with employment experience and skills development, while serving more families in our community.”

Jordan Martin, Manager, Nelson and District Youth Centre

Over the years, the facility has developed into an impressive community resource. “Most people know the Youth Centre as the location of the largest indoor skate park in Western Canada, but we offer so much more,” says Jordan Martin, manager of the centre. “We have a band room, art and dance studios, a tech centre, an indoor basketball court and pool, foosball and ping pong tables, as well as a hangout zone – in short, a whole host of healthy activities and special programs for youth to explore and learn.”

The Youth Centre has also developed new services to meet the needs of families. “Our focus has always been youth, but more recently, we have expanded to be more multi-generational. We are now providing families in our community with after-school programs and summer day camps,” Jordan says.

“Many parents here in Nelson work contract jobs and jobs where they are on call. They have various work schedules and often have to work with little notice,” she adds. “We recognized the importance of offering affordable and flexible camps and other care options for their children.”

In 2021, the Youth Centre received funding from the CPRA Youth Employment Experience program, and according to Jordan, the funding was “a great asset for our programming.”

CPRA’s program is designed to provide young people with employment experience in the sport and recreation sector, while allowing the organizations that employ them to build capacity. Both objectives were met for the Nelson and District Youth Centre.

They hired 22-year-old Eamon Studer, who is from Nelson, to take on the position of Senior Camp Counsellor from June to September 2021, before he returned to classes at the University of Victoria, where he is studying business management. The summer camp, held in several parks in the city, serves around 500 children each year.

“Having the funding to hire Eamon allowed us to expand the summer camp by adding spaces for 10 more children,” Jordan says.

Hiring Eamon also took pressure off Jordan and Youth Centre Lead Hand, Miranda Urquhart. The Youth Centre operates additional City of Nelson community resources: a campground, a farmers’ market and a parkade. In typical summers, Jordan and Miranda share responsibility for those resources, plus the summer camp and the other centre activities and services.

“It was great to have Eamon there to focus solely on the daily operations of the summer camp program,” says Jordan. He received mentorship from Miranda, and in turn, supervised the junior camp counsellors.

“Eamon helped develop the skills of the junior staff,” Jordan says. “If a staff member was having trouble with a child, for example, if there were bullying issues or the child didn’t want to participate in an activity, Eamon would give the staff support and help develop their problem-solving skills. Meanwhile, he was also learning new supervisory skills.”

According to Jordan, “Eamon brought a sense of professionalism to our program and was a great ambassador for our city parks and our programs. He was also very welcoming and supportive to the parents of the children attending the camps.”

The CPRA funding allowed the Youth Centre to provide the best possible summer program for the residents of Nelson, she says.

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