



CPRA ACPL

REACHING EACH AND EVERY ONE

# Success Story

Semi-final game featuring Christie Lake Kids and Prezidential Hoops, featuring 17-year-old Hamza as top-scoring player.

## Christie Lake Kids expands to new neighbourhoods through basketball programs

**F**OR 17 YEAR-OLD LEVI, BASKETBALL HAS always been his favourite sport.

He grew up playing in his neighbourhood court with his older brothers and for his school team. But his family couldn't afford to pay for extracurricular basketball programs.

That's why when a friend told him about the new Christie Lake Kids basketball program, he knew he wanted to sign up immediately.

"I love it," Levi says. "Our coach, Eric, pushes us to be better players and teammates, and I've been able to improve my skills."



CHRISTIE LAKE KIDS,  
OTTAWA, ONTARIO

Canada

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Levi joined other youth from low income households in Ottawa to participate in Christie Lake Kids' new basketball program in 2023 – which was made possible thanks to Canadian Parks and Recreation Association's Reaching Each and Every One: A Community Sport Intervention program. This program, which was funded by Sport Canada's Community Sport for All Initiative, seeks to remove barriers and increase sport participation rates for equity deserving groups across Canada.

“We would not have been able to expand into new neighbourhoods, and therefore make relationships in a new community, if it weren't for this particular CPRA program,” says Natalie Benson, director of fundraising and communications for Christie Lake Kids.

The Ottawa-based organization offers sports and recreational programs free-of-charge to children and youth within the city's priority neighbourhoods – which include communities that have higher than average community housing and lower socioeconomic status.

“We plan our programs to be right in the community where kids live, where kids need us the most and can walk right over after school hours,” Benson explains.

She says the funding allowed Christie Lake Kids to offer three new basketball programs in communities they haven't served to date – and also welcome older youth into the basketball program.

“We've always run free sports programs for kids that are between the ages of five and 12,” she says. “This new funding helped us to meet new kids in new neighbourhoods where we wouldn't have had the opportunity to serve otherwise.”

She adds that Christie Lake Kids was also able to partner with other social services agencies and community houses to include an exciting wrap-up basketball tournament at the conclusion of the program.

Benson says this program, and others that Christie Lake Kids offers, helps children and youth to access sports who otherwise could not afford to.

Additionally, she explained their coaches are all trained to work with kids who have behavioural challenges - as well as social, emotional, and self-regulation challenges which may also present barriers to accessing sport programs.

“We're prepared and we're ready,” Benson says. “We have highly trained program supervisors on staff that work with any kids who are struggling. We do something called check-in check-out to make sure that we're understanding kids, and chatting with them about any particular difficulties they have.”



CPRA CEO Martin Sampson awards MVP trophy to Terrence, recognizing exceptional teamwork and hard work.

She adds that while Christie Lake Kids offers older youth separate leadership opportunities, the funding helped the organization to reach teenagers which had a positive impact on them.

“Sports and recreation is really life changing for kids, and especially teens,” Benson says. “It's definitely transformative.”

Benson says that the organization's programs also connect youth with positive role models which also makes an impact.

“We have great volunteers and great coaches,” she says. “It's great for kids to have a role model that's not in their own family – somebody helping them along and who believes in their potential.”

Benson adds that there can be challenges when starting up a new program, and the funding support made a difference for both the organization and its youth.

“Not only did the kids get a really great experience, but for us as an organization, it allowed us to have the capacity to expand,” she says.

For Levi, the program meant making new friends – and gave him an opportunity to play his favourite sport without barriers.

He says the experience motivated him to want to continue playing, and has made him think more about his future.

“Ball is life, so of course, I want to keep playing. I know basketball will always be a part of my life,” Levi says. “One day I hope to give back to the younger generation, and maybe be a coach, like my coach Eric at Christie Lake Kids.”🍁