



TRAILS IMPACT REPORT FALL 2023

15599 Warden Avenue,
Stouffville, ON L4A 2M9
admin@trails.ca
905-836-0100
Charity # 13505 0755 RR0001
www.trails.ca

Thank you for being part of the Trails story

We are grateful for your support to get us to this point and honoured to step into the next 30 years with you.

Trails was built on the belief that all youth benefit from a long-term consistent approach to engagement. This is especially true for those facing barriers based on race, income, education and neighbourhood. Our approach uses outdoor experiential learning to teach leadership, resilience, and conflict resolution, as well as physical and mental wellness. Our mission has remained unchanged: **to challenge and equip vulnerable youth from at-risk areas of Toronto to become contributing members of the community.**

Milestones in 2023 Include:

Four Seasons, Four Years: This summer marked our return to a double-cohort (40) of Year 1s, a first since the beginning of the pandemic. Throughout both weekend and summer sessions, we were able to deliver a high-quality program, learning *through* the outdoors.

For Life: We continued to build momentum with the For Life program, with a goal for interested alumni to opt in and take advantage of the available resources. For Life resources in 2023 included: the Alumni Association, AIM (Alumni in Mentorship), Trails Post-secondary Bursary and FORward Resources.

People: In January, we hired two new full-time Program Directors – welcoming Anum and Alex! We now have 14 full-time staff and 34 part-time facilitators. Trails also provided in-depth staff training and offered certifications in Bronze Cross, Wilderness Advanced First Aid and Non-Violent Communication.

Celebrations: On May 7th we welcomed nearly 200 guests to Trails Lakeside for TrailsFest – a celebration of our 30th anniversary. This was the first time we hosted an event on-site with alumni, participants, families, community members and staff coming together to take part in “all things Trails.”



Your Impact in Numbers

\$1.7M Funds raised through private funding

\$18.20 Every \$1 donated to Trails generates \$18.20 in social impact value to program participants and society over their lifetime

136 Participants in the Four Seasons, Four Years, For Life program this year

99% of our youth graduate high school (compared to a 50% drop out rate of peers)

98% of participants said the Trails program improved their self-regulation, responsibility and communication skills.

97% of participants said that Trails improved their leadership and conflict resolution skills

96% of participants said that being at Trails helped their physical well-being, while 95% said Trails improved their emotional well-being

9 Post-secondary Trails Bursary graduates, including 5 bachelor's degrees, 2 college diplomas and 2 doctoral degrees

35 Students who received Trails Bursary and mentorship for post-secondary

41 Alumni involved with mentorship through the A.I.M. program

43 Year 4 and LIT participants graduated in June

40 New Year 1 and 2 Participants started in July



BABUR'S STORY : ROOTS & WINGS

From a quiet kid lacking confidence to a pilot and instructor who is soaring high

Dear Trails Family,

Our first years at Trails were spent growing roots by developing the key skills needed to survive outdoors. It was the beginning of a lifelong journey with new friends, who I now consider family. The value of teamwork, initiative, and resilience were consistently instilled in us and the campgrounds of Trails gave us tools beyond just learning how to canoe or cook over an open fire.

As the years passed, we began to stretch our wings. In our 5th year, as Leaders-in-Training (LIT), we mentored the younger participants and modelled the values Trails taught us. We always went the extra mile. We left Trails with a full toolbox and wings strong enough to take us anywhere we envisioned. For me, this meant getting my pilot licence.

Flying a plane was like learning how to swim. I recall my first summer at Trails and swimming in a lake for the first time. I had no clue how to swim and every summer I struggled through our swim tests, each time progressing a little further. Learning to fly was a similar experience: There were many hurdles I had to overcome but with the support from Trails, I was able to overcome any barrier I faced.

Becoming a flight instructor was similar to being an LIT. I had the opportunity to provide guidance to new aviators on their journey to achieve their dreams. Similar to being a mentor at Trails, I built my students' skills, provided them with the proper foundation of knowledge, and guided them towards making safe decisions so that they eventually had the confidence to fly without me being by their side.

Trails is not just a camp, it is a lifelong journey of personal and professional development. Without the help of Trails' donors, I would not have been able to pursue my dreams of becoming a pilot. Each time I make an entry in my pilot logbook, I am forever grateful for the financial support, guidance, and mentorship that Trails has provided me. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Sincerely, Babur Khan
Wandering Legacies (2010-2014), Trails Bursary Recipient

