



2025 ANNUAL REPORT





Our mission is to challenge and equip vulnerable youth to become contributing members of the community.



Trails Youth Initiatives is a long-term, relationship-based youth development organization that supports young people from underserved communities across Toronto. Through year-round programming grounded in outdoor education, mentorship, and leadership development, Trails creates opportunities for youth to build confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging.

156

Participants in the Four Seasons, Four Years initiatives



Our programs take place in nature, where experiential learning encourages participants to challenge themselves, develop life skills, and discover new possibilities for their future. Youth join Trails in middle school and can remain connected through high school and beyond, creating continuity during critical years of personal growth. We are the only charity in Canada that walks alongside young people through 520 hours of programming for at least four years, and into adulthood, offering consistent, relationship based support during the years it matters most.

400

Alumni engaged in For Life Initiatives



At the heart of our work is the belief that potential is universal, but opportunity is not. By removing financial, social, and systemic barriers, Trails helps level the playing field so that young people can access experiences that foster wellbeing, leadership, and long term success.

50

Alumni involved with Alumni in Mentorship (AIM)



75

Post-secondary scholarships provided along with mentorship



10

Post-secondary Trails Scholarships graduates



MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT MEL MILLWARD



At Trails, we believe every young person deserves a fair chance to discover their strengths, build confidence, and shape their own future. This year's theme, Leveling the Playing Field, reflects both our purpose and our promise. Too many youth face barriers that limit access to opportunity, mentorship, and safe spaces to grow. Together, we work to change that reality.

In 2025, our community came together in powerful ways. Participants deepened their leadership skills, strengthened connections to nature, and built lasting relationships with mentors and peers. Alumni returned as role models, volunteers, and champions of the next generation. These moments remind us that lasting change happens when young people are supported consistently and meaningfully over time.

None of this work happens alone. Our staff, volunteers, partners, and donors continue to invest in young people with trust and belief in their potential. Your support helps ensure that opportunity is not determined by circumstance.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to expanding access, amplifying youth voices, and creating pathways that allow every participant to thrive. Thank you for helping us level the playing field.

Mel Millward, President

“ Thanks to Trails, I can be confident, learn new things and make new friends.”
~Nam, Year 1 Participant

FULL-TIME STAFF

Mel Millward
President
Janelle Dayman
Director of Development
Josh Harney
Director of Education
Brandon McKinley
Youth Development
Director
Erin McLean
Director of Alumni &
Volunteer Engagement

Anum Khan
Program Director
Rae Lorenz
Program Director
Alex Zović
Program Director
Carlos Belchior
Facilities Coordinator
Robb Tidd
Kitchen Manager

Leslie McGill
Office
Manager/Donations
Amanda Abbasi
Fundraising Assistant
Tahirah Stanley
Philanthropy &
Partnerships



MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

GREIG CLARK

I happily joined the first Board of Trails in 1992 for two reasons:

The People: the passionate and charismatic co-founders, Jim Hayhurst Sr. (Hurst) and his son Jimmy.

The Mission: to challenge and equip vulnerable youth to become contributing members of the community.

The founders' enthusiasm was infectious, and the Mission aligned closely with my own belief that we should help those who seek it maximize their human potential. When purpose and opportunity intersect, you should take notice.

I also believe that while capitalism can be a powerful creator of wealth, how that wealth is distributed over time can make it harder for many people to reach their potential because of the circumstances into which they were born. As John Stuart Mill asked in 1859, "Why is it that dunces go to Oxford while geniuses sweep chimneys?" The more we help individuals realize their potential, the stronger both our communities and our society become.

That belief is what drew me to Trails and why it still matters today. Trails helps level the playing field by providing long



term support, mentorship, and opportunity for young people who deserve the chance to thrive. Today, that belief shows up in young people who gain confidence, complete high school, pursue post secondary pathways, and return to Trails as leaders and mentors.

I also valued what Trails was not. It was not a large government program. It was a grassroots, longitudinal model, Four Seasons, Four Years, For Life, designed to transform lives one by one.

As Greg Ryan said when I rejoined the board in 2019, "Welcome back to Trails. This is a group of great people working on a great cause. What could be better?"

Nothing. Sign me up.

Thank you for joining us on this journey.

Greig Clark, Chair of the Board of Directors

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Greig Clark, Chair	Christine Chen	Hanssa Jain	James Werry
Greg Ryan, Treasurer	Rob Drynan	Lauren Mostowyk	Jennifer Werry
	Dr. Ryan Howard	Hussain Stanley	

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Mary Anne Chambers	Shaun Francis	Alex Markovich	Kelly Willis Green
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Hurst Legacy Award 2025

The Hurst Legacy Award was founded in 2019 to honour the incredible work of our founder, Jim “Hurst” Hayhurst. While he passed away in early 2020, his legacy lives on in the Trails Alumni who are benefiting from his creation of Trails over 30 years ago. The Hurst Legacy Award is presented annually to a Trails Alumni who consistently lives the Trails mission. This award celebrates the many ways Trails alumni continue to contribute to their communities, each in their own time and in their own way or how they carry the values of Trails forward through service, leadership, and care for others.

Alisha Cater

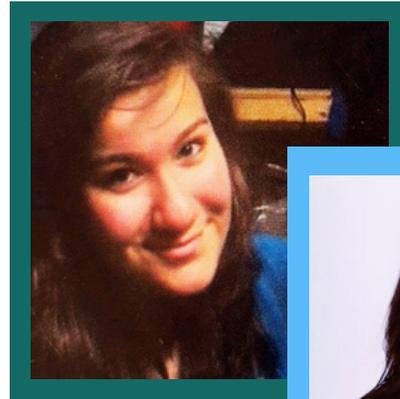
Group: Flaming Wing Falcons 2007-2011

Facilitator with the Windseekers | Trails Scholarship

Recipient | AIM Mentor | BA in Law and Society

Honours Certificate in Alternative Dispute Resolution

Certificate at York University in Family Mediation



“A simple act of kindness, offered with humility and a warm smile, can change a life.”

My journey with Trails began with one such act—a heartfelt conversation between my grandmother and a close family friend, whose daughter was part of the program. She spoke of Trails as a place full of beauty, adventure, and something hard to name but deeply felt. I applied immediately. Not long after, the Program Director visited my home, and I was accepted. That single moment altered the course of my life.

I was just 12—quiet, unsure, and struggling with confidence. Trails opened a door to a different world. It gave me space to grow, to connect with nature, and most importantly, to connect with myself. From the start, it offered something rare: a community that saw me, welcomed me, and encouraged me to find my voice. I met kids from all walks of life. Trails became a sanctuary—a place where we laughed until our stomachs hurt, chased the sun across the field, and huddled in snowy silence at winter cookouts. It gave me a childhood I didn’t know I was missing.

One of the most powerful lessons I learned at Trails was how to face fear. I still remember staring up at the high ropes course, frozen with anxiety. But at Trails, “challenge by choice” meant I could move at my own pace. That first year, I only climbed the ladder. The next year, the tree. Eventually, I crossed the wire. By my final year, I wasn’t just climbing—I was coaching others through it too.

Trails nurtures growth, one courageous step at a time. After four years as a participant, I returned as a Leader-in-Training, then an intern, and eventually a Facilitator. I

found deep meaning in working with younger participants—especially those who reminded me of myself. I wanted them to feel safe, seen, and supported. I spent four years with the Windseekers group and stayed connected while studying at university.

As I stepped into adulthood, I began to understand just how profoundly Trails had shaped me. The tools we were given—like Nonviolent Communication and VOMP—became part of who I was. They helped me navigate difficult conversations, stay grounded in empathy, and build meaningful connections. Through the Trails Scholarship, I received more than just financial support—I was paired with a mentor who walked alongside me throughout my post-secondary journey. That steady presence, combined with the scholarship’s generosity, gave me both the confidence and the resources to succeed. I went on to earn my BA in Law & Society and became an Ontario Accredited Family Mediator.

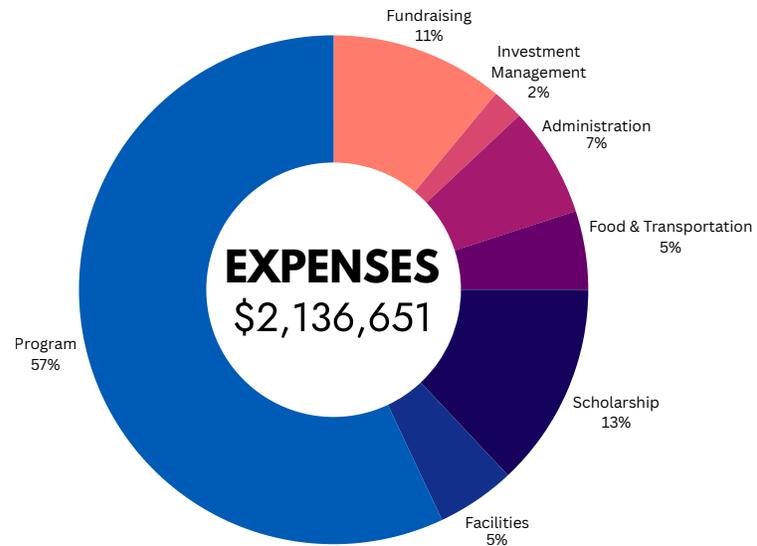
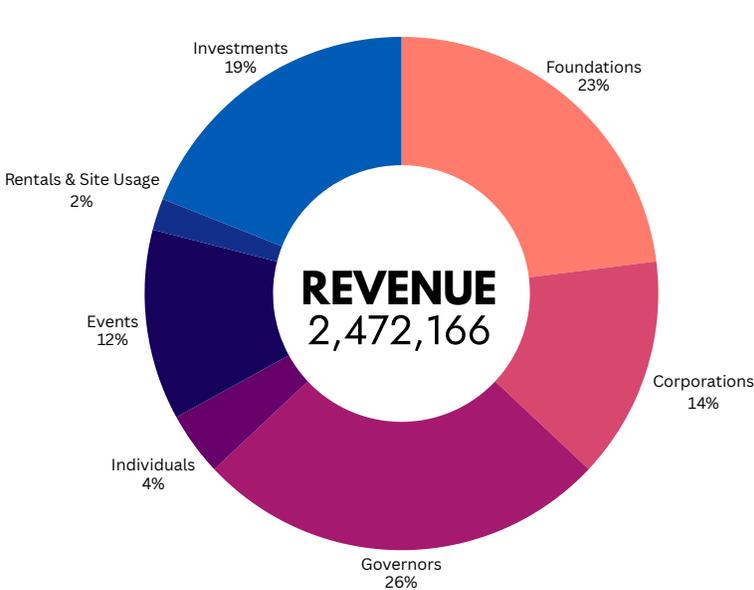
My Trails connections opened doors professionally, too. I landed a position in Toronto’s Family Courts, where I worked with people from diverse backgrounds, bringing empathy and presence into every interaction. Today, I support family businesses in managing relationships and building governance structures. But no matter the setting, I carry Trails with me. I honour people’s humanity. I listen deeply. I lead with authenticity.

I still give back to Trails—mentoring, speaking, attending events—because it’s part of who I am. Trails didn’t just shape me. It gave me the tools to keep growing. And the voice to help others do the same.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

OCTOBER 1, 2024 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2025

Trails is a registered charity and raises funds through events and donations from corporations, foundations and individuals. Trails does not seek or accept government funding.



Aligning with Vision 2026, this year's surplus will be allocated to our continued expansion to double the number of youth served. Our Investment Committee provides strong financial stewardship, allowing Trails to remain sustainable while delivering deep, long term impact for youth.



POWER HOUR | OCTOBER 17, 2024

Power Hour brought our community together for an unforgettable hour of movement and impact, raising just under \$100,000 for Trails youth. Special thanks to Kimchan Ramrattan of KCFit and his family for their leadership, energy, and significant commitment to leveling the playing field.



GET OUTSIDE CHALLENGE | MAY 3-10, 2025

Fresh air, shared purpose, and a community on the move. This year's Get Outside Challenge raised \$90,000 for Trails, culminating in a celebratory hike at Tommy Thompson Park. Together, supporters stepped outside and showed what's possible when we #GetOutsideForTrails.



3PEAT 3X3 TOURNAMENT | JULY 19, 2025

Game on. Led by Trails alum Rae Lorenz, the inaugural 3Peat Charity Basketball Tournament turned competition into community impact. Twelve teams, alumni leadership, and incredible support helped raise over \$13,000, proving the Trails legacy keeps giving back.



VANCESTOCK XIV | SEPTEMBER 25, 2025

Music, connection, and a crowd united for youth, raising over \$40,000. Presented by Cooper Mediation, Vancestock lit up the night with unforgettable performances by Sisters & Brothers and Kubla, reminding us how powerful community can be when people come together for a shared cause.

THANK YOU

FOR LEVELING THE PLAYING FIELD!

\$50,000+

Annual Foundation
Jack Cockwell
Fourth Box Charitable Foundation – Steve Rogers
Joyce Family Foundation
Lake Family All One Fund
Petman Foundation
Range Foundation
Regent Family Foundation
Robert Green & Kelly Willis Green Foundation
RBC

\$25,000+

BMO
Canadian Tire Jumpstart Charities
Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation
Coral & Bill Martin Family Foundation*
Interac Corporation
Mackenzie Investments Charitable Foundation
Paul Brink & Kate Cochrane–Brink
Rotary Club of Toronto Eglinton Foundation

\$10,000+

Anthony Rubin
Bell Canada
Bryan Pearson
Christina Mary Hendrie Trust
Conam Charitable Foundation
Cooper Mediation
David Kerr
Diane Horton
Equitable Bank
Evan Dalton
Greig & Carolyn Clark Fund**
Hamm Family Foundation
Hodgson Family Foundation
J. Cam & Randi Ivey
Jackman Foundation
Jane & Tom Sabourin Family Foundation
Lang Family Foundation
Leah Battista Foundation
Limerlost Challenge
Murray & Susan Armitage Foundation*
Paul Sabourin
R. Howard Webster Foundation
SGNC Foundation
Stait Family Fund
William Simpson Gifting Fund

*at Toronto Foundation

**The United Church of Canada Foundation

\$5,000+

Adam Wagman
Brian Kusisto
Brown–Nusbaum Family Fund
CCO Productions
Crestpoint Real Estate Investments Ltd.
Dennis & Denny Starritt
Donald F. Hunter Charitable Foundation
Douglas Grant
George Lunan Foundation
Greey–Lennox Charitable Foundation
Greg & Michele Ryan
Hunters International Ltd.
iA Insurance & Financial Inc.
Jacma Foundation
John McIntosh
Kerry Salsberg
Kololian Foundation
Laidlaw Foundation
Larry McFadden
McColl–Early Foundation
Moody Family
Nature Canada
Rob Krajcarski
Rotary Club of East York
Sabourin Kimble & Associates Limited
TEKsystems / Allegis Group Foundation

\$1,000+

Alexander Lowden
Ashiqur Khan & Nadia Islam
Avison Young Canada Inc.
Brian Vyner
Bruce Shirreff
Burgandy Legacy Foundation
Cadillac Fariview Corporation
Carol Schatt
Carolyn Gray
Carolyn Langill
Chris Mihalicz
Christine Chen
Dave Ma
David Hill
David Taylor
Deland Kamanga
Erin McLean
Evelyn Bray Photography
Frank Soave
Gandy Charitable Foundation
Herman Gill
Isaac Zisckind
J & B Carroll Family Foundation
James Morrison
Janelle & Steve Dayman
Jeff & Jonna Smith
Jennifer & James Werry
Jeremy Wagner
Joe Walsh
John Black

Katherine Gurney & Andre Nowakowski
Kathy Boate
Kirk Roberts
KJ Harrison & Partners Inc.
Konata Lake
Kopas Family Fund*
Larry Mah
Lauren Mostowyk
Les Young
Linda Lee
Lorraine & Joel Cooper
Mark & Lari–Ann Convery
Mark Diamond
Mel Millward
Michael Hogg
Nicholas Walsh
Peter Cheung
Rob Drynan
Scott Russell
Susan Weisbarth
Suzana Popovic–Montag
Terry Krinsky
The Ordinary
Tim Casgrain
Toronto Star Fresh Air Fund
Torys LLP
Trevor Thom
Trish Fonberg
Tyler Hamilton
Vance Cooper
Vanessa Morgan
Weppler Family Foundations
William Thorsell
Winfield Boyd
Yule Family Foundation

Impact Groups

Canadian Tire
Crestpoint Real Estate Investments Ltd.
Interac
Michael Hogg – RBC
MNP
Range
TD Friends of the Environment
TELUS
TEKsystems

Volunteers

Over 250 alumni and community volunteers gave their time and talents to help make Trails successful this year. We are grateful for their contributions in the following areas:

Program Volunteers
Special Project Volunteers
Event Volunteers
Mentors (AIM and CARE)
Advisory Committees
Corporate Partner Volunteers

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead to the final year of our expansion and Vision 2026, Trails remains focused on expanding access and deepening impact. The needs facing young people continue to evolve, and our programs will grow alongside them.

In the coming year, we aim to welcome more participants, strengthen alumni engagement, and increase opportunities for youth leadership and skill development. We will continue investing in inclusive programming that centres youth voices and reflects the communities we serve.

Leveling the playing field is ongoing work. It requires collaboration, innovation, and sustained commitment from everyone who believes in the power of young people. With the support of our community, Trails will continue creating spaces where youth feel seen, supported, and empowered to thrive.

The future is brighter when opportunity is shared. Together, we are building that future.

“

Receiving a scholarship from Trails changed the trajectory of my life in ways I could have never imagined. From the moment I joined the Trails community, I was surrounded by mentors and peers who believed in my potential and pushed me to strive for excellence.

~ Nikee Allen, Alumni and Post-Secondary
Scholarship Recipient

Juris Doctor and Master of Information
Systems and Design from the University of
Toronto

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