



**WE EMPOWER VULNERABLE YOUTH FROM UNDERSERVED AREAS
TO BECOME CONTRIBUTING MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY**

Our Story

A BIG IMPACT ON A FEW, RATHER THAN A SMALL IMPACT ON MANY.

Trails Youth Initiatives has been transforming lives since 1992 through a highly impactful outdoor education program. We empower vulnerable youth from underserved communities to become contributing members of society. Our uniqueness is tethered to a long-term and consistent approach that provides structure, commitment, and trust for vulnerable youth while building foundational skills in their formative years.

Starting at age 12, youth attend Trails for two weeks each summer and one weekend a month throughout the school year, committing to a four-year program. The innovative nature-based curriculum enhances both health and well-being, while also fostering genuine personal and social growth. The outdoors serves as a natural setting for developing vital life skills, promoting community, and encouraging active lifestyles.



Trails' success is further demonstrated through our strong alumni network, offering continued support to our 600 graduates. Through all our efforts, we address systemic poverty, racism, and educational disparities, and provide support to youth facing barriers.

Join us as we continue to make a profound difference in the lives of Toronto's youth, helping them overcome obstacles and achieve their full potential.

Our Values

TRAILS WAS FOUNDED WITH 3 KEY FACTORS TO SUCCESS:



Emotional & Physical Safety:
Everyone from youth to staff to volunteers needs to feel safe in the community.



Fun:
Youth are engaged using play-based, experiential learning.



Root and Wings:
Youth establish a solid foundation and transfer knowledge to real-world circumstances.



History of Trails



1992

Jim Hayhurst Sr. and Jim Hayhurst Jr. found Trails Youth Initiatives, Inc. as a registered charity with 46 enrolled in the program operated out of Kettleby.



1999

Trails secures a permanent home in Stouffville with a long-term land lease with the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and builds a lodge and three winterized cabins.



1996

Trails becomes a camp and outdoor education member of the Ontario Camping Association.



2000

Trails initiates a fifth year Leader in Training (LIT) program and establishes the Trails Bursary to provide financial assistance to alumni attending post-secondary education.



2001

Ministry of Education grants Trails Private School status: youth can now earn high school credits.



2003

Trails establishes relationships with six feeder schools from Toronto District School Board schools in Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.



2010

Jim Hayhurst Sr., Founder and Jack Cockwell, Group Chairman at Brookfield Asset Management Inc. form the Trails Board of Governors.



2015

Trails implements an alumni mentoring program for all Year 4 and LIT graduates.



2017

Expansion begins! The Vision Fund raises \$6 million to enable the recruitment of an additional 20 (total 40) year 1 participants per year & more than double alumni programming.



2019

Warren Clarke accepts the inaugural Hurst Legacy Award, a prestigious honour that recognizes alumni living truest to the Trails mission.



2020

Virtual Trails, Trails City Day Camp, and Family Camps support 100% of participants through the COVID-19 pandemic.



2021

The For Life program is formalized and engages twice as many alumni with expanded resources, including mentorship, career support, bursaries, and employment.



2022

Creation of Boost Camp: an outdoor education employment training opportunity for alumni and others from underserved communities; 100% of Boost Camp participants hired as Trails facilitators.

Breaking Barriers: Transforming Lives in Toronto's Lowest Income Communities

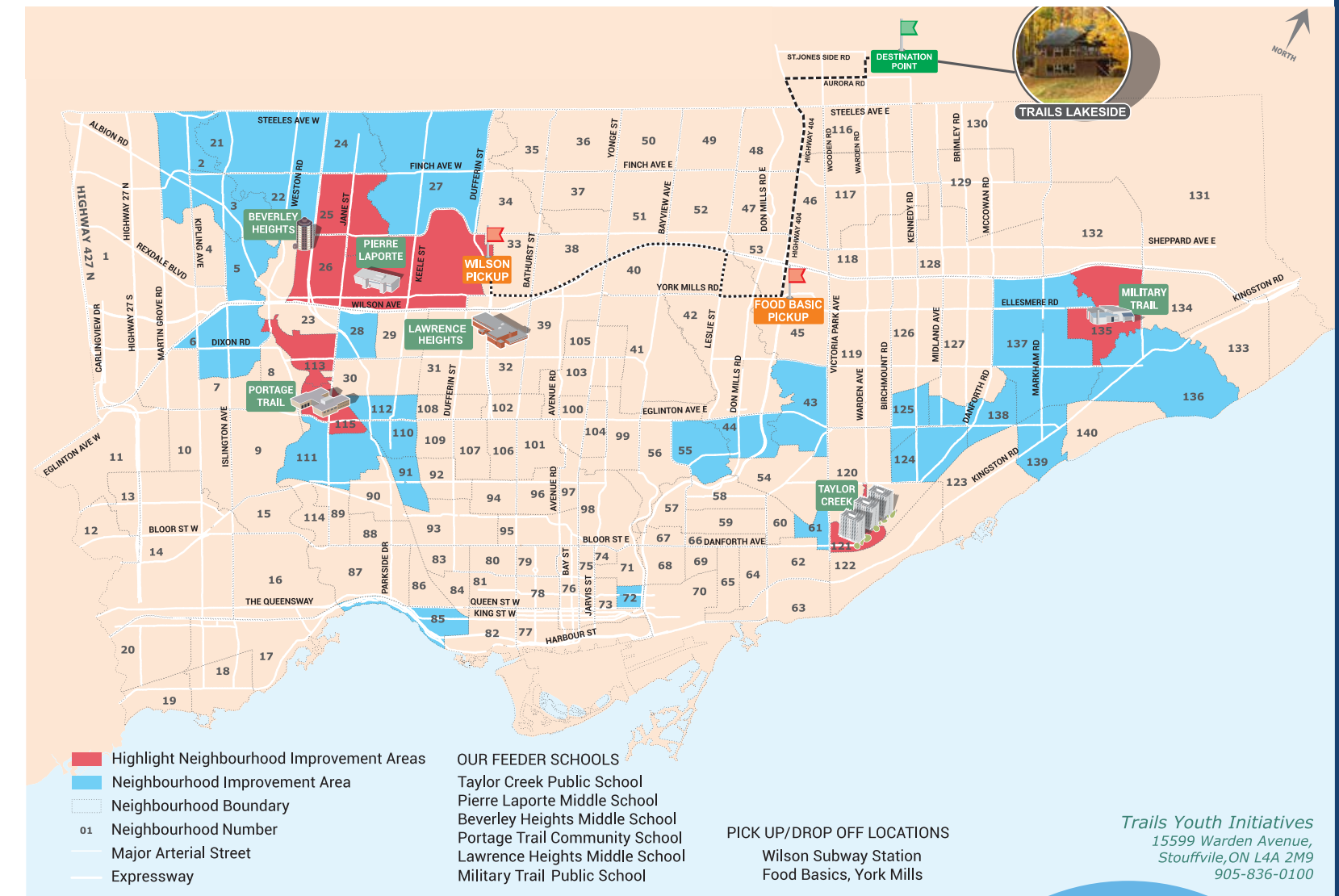
RACIALIZED CHILDREN AND THOSE FROM SINGLE-PARENT FAMILIES ARE 3X MORE LIKELY TO DROP OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL, CREATING A LIFELONG ACHIEVEMENT GAP AND PERPETUATING THE CYCLE OF POVERTY.

At Trails, we disrupt the low education-related fallout of poverty and racism. Your investment in our program provides essential support for these young people, fostering resilience and empowerment in Toronto's most vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Trails youth live within Toronto's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas – the city's highest risk and lowest income areas, where 26% of families report low income, significantly higher than the city's 19% average.



Our Schools



Participants join Trails from select partner schools who are in the bottom 15% of the TDSB's Learning Opportunity Index.

Each school in the TDSB is ranked based on the measures of external challenges affecting student success which include median income, percentage of families receiving social assistance, adults with low education, and single-parent families.

Teachers, principals, and guidance counsellors refer students in their Grade 6 year (at the age of 11–12 years old) to the program based on the barriers they face and whether this program will spark their inherent resiliency.

89% OF TRAILS PARTICIPANTS IDENTIFY AS PART OF THE BIPOC COMMUNITY.

Join the “Four Seasons, Four Years, For Life” Program and Make a Lasting Impact

AT TRAILS YOUTH INITIATIVES, WE EMPOWER YOUTH THROUGH A TRANSFORMATIVE, NATURE-BASED, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING JOURNEY. OUR MINISTRY OF EDUCATION-APPROVED CURRICULUM FOSTERS TRUST, SELF-CONFIDENCE, CONSISTENCY, AND COMMITMENT.

WHY YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS:

- **Empower Youth:** Equip young minds with essential skills and confidence.
- **Build Communities:** Develop future leaders who will make a positive impact.
- **Create Change:** Shape a generation ready to tackle tomorrow’s challenges.

OUR UNIQUE APPROACH:

- **Year 1: Trust** – Embrace the “Trails Way.”
- **Year 2: Self-Confidence** – Overcome challenges.
- **Year 3: Consistency** – Develop skills and knowledge.
- **Year 4: Commitment** – Contribute to the community.

OPTIONAL:

- **Year 5: Leadership** – Mentor peers.
- **Year 6: Empower** – Paid internships.

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM INCLUDES:

- Healthy relationships and boundaries
- Problem-solving and decision-making
- Conflict resolution
- Stress management
- Non-violent communication
- Leadership and teamwork
- Fitness, nutrition, and wellness



JOIN THE “FOR LIFE” PROGRAM AND BE A GUIDING LIGHT FOR TRAILS ALUMNI. YOUR DONATION EMPOWERS OUR ALUMNI TO OVERCOME CHALLENGES AND ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS THROUGH THESE FOUR KEY COMPONENTS:

1. Alumni Association

Foster lifelong connections and provide vital support during emergencies, helping alumni feel secure and connected.

2. Alumni in Mentorship (AIM)

Enable alumni to mentor younger alumni as they complete high school, building community through meaningful experiences.

3. Bursary

Open doors to post-secondary education including college, university, trades programs, and certifications, transforming lives through financial aid and mentorship.

4. FORward Resources

Help alumni secure fulfilling careers with resume building, interview preparation, career mentoring and networking support.



BY SUPPORTING THE “FOR LIFE” PROGRAM, YOU ENSURE TRAILS ALUMNI TRANSITION SUCCESSFULLY FROM YOUTH PROGRAMS TO THRIVING ADULTHOODS. YOUR GIFT OFFERS HOPE, OPPORTUNITY, AND LASTING IMPACT.

Our Impact

1

99% OF TRAILERS GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL,
COMPARED TO 55% OF THEIR PEERS

2

92% OF TRAILERS GO TO POST-SECONDARY SCHOOL,
COMPARED TO 45% OF THEIR PEERS

3

TRAILS SUPPORTS 176 YOUTH ANNUALLY IN THE
FOUR SEASONS, FOUR YEARS PROGRAM AND OVER
250 ALUMNI IN THE FOR LIFE PROGRAM

4

TRAILS BURSARY HAS SUPPORTED OVER 440 TUITIONS,
WITH OVER \$2 MILLION DISTRIBUTED



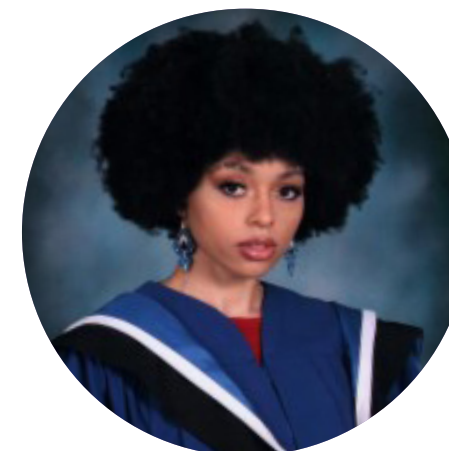
“I was often told that I would never amount to anything, but Trails believed in me and saw past the hurt child who showed up at age 12, and they have continued to believe in me which allows me to spread my wings and pay it forward. I am my own childhood dream. I am successful.”

– **SEANICE DENNIS:**
BScN Candidate, Registered Practical Nurse

“

My time as a young person was not easy, and there have been moments in my life where I did not see the value in education, nor did I understand my potential. Instead, I believed the opinions of those who perceived me as a failure. My advocacy work was encouraged by my close relationship with my mentor and Trails Founder, Hurst. His approach and willingness to work with many marginalized community members of Toronto inspired me and encouraged me to see my potential.”

– **DR. WARREN CLARKE:**
Ph.D., Diversity & Equity Consulting, Professor of Anthropology



“Trails Bursary has helped me pursue higher education to a point previously unimaginable. I know that the opportunities presented to me are a direct result of the bursary’s mentorship and financial assistance.”

– **TANIKA BRYAN:**
MA, Policy Analyst for the Government of Canada



18:1 Social Return on Investment

FOR EVERY DOLLAR COMMITTED TO TRAILS, THERE IS A SOCIAL RETURN OF \$18 BACK INTO TORONTO’S FUTURE*

*Methodology and calculation reviewed by Accenture (2021)

Inspire a Future of Resilience with Trails Youth Initiatives

OUR PROGRAM EMPLOYS A STRENGTHS-BASED, EXPERIENTIAL APPROACH THAT BUILDS ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS IN A SUPPORTIVE OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENT.

In the Greater Toronto Area, many youth face significant psychological distress, with 40% experiencing moderate to serious issues and 14% contemplating suicide. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified these struggles, doubling feelings of loneliness among Toronto students.

Trails steps in at a critical juncture, recruiting vulnerable youth at age 12. We focus on those from single-parent, low income, and immigrant families, providing a lifeline for those facing significant barriers to success.



We foster healthy beliefs and behaviours through structure, coaching, mentorship, and clear expectations. By creating an inclusive space, Trails helps youth reconnect with their communities, fostering resilience and promoting growth. Our 1:3 staff-to-youth ratio ensures deep, meaningful relationships and consistent support.

Trails doesn't just aim to change lives, we strive to break cycles of adversity. By equipping youth with the tools to thrive and pursue higher education, we promote social cohesion and inclusivity. Your support can help us continue this vital work, empowering the next generation to overcome challenges and achieve their full potential.



Photos of Trails Alumni, Amanda Haigh, Rodney Cupid, Truzaar Dordi (second from left) and Collin Caleb in their workplaces.

Trails' Commitment to Empowering More Youth

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO TRANSFORM THE LIVES OF TORONTO'S MOST VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE.

By 2026, Trails aims to more than double the number of youth served and expand support for our alumni.

To achieve our goal of impacting more lives, we need your help. Your generous donation will directly support our youth, providing them with the essential resources they need to succeed.

Your gift will be an investment in our community's future, giving every young person an equal opportunity to thrive.



2016:
88 YOUTH, 40 ALUMNI



2026:
176 YOUTH, 265 ALUMNI

From Marginalized Youth to Community Contributors

PILOT
ARCHITECT
SOCIAL WORKER
CAREGIVER
BEHAVIOUR THERAPIST
CLEANING SERVICE PROVIDER
HEALTH SCIENTIST
ELECTRICIAN
FINANCIAL CONSULTANT
WEB DESIGNER
ENTREPRENEUR

LAWYER
CHEF
SOFTWARE ENGINEER
TEACHER
DATA ANALYST
FASHION DESIGNER
PLUMBER
GRAPHIC DESIGNER
VETERINARIAN TECHNICIAN
OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST
BIOMEDICAL ENGINEER

What do these occupations have in common?

They are all held by kids who grew up in marginalized communities of Toronto and graduated from Trails.

89% of our alumni are employed and give back to their community



Will You Join Us?



Mel Millward, President

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