

ANNUAL REPORT



2024 - 2025

CHAIR MESSAGE

Julianne Rohel

This past year has been one of meaningful transition and continued impact for our organization. As we reflect on 2025, I am deeply grateful for the collective commitment that has allowed us to remain a trusted place for youth to find and build their communities.

As I reflect on the past year, I am appreciative of the dedication and shared purpose that has carried our organization forward. Through it all, our commitment to empowering youth has remained unwavering.

First, I want to extend our heartfelt thanks to our former Executive Director Lisa Kindree, whose leadership and care for the organization strengthen the foundation on which we continue to build. Her departure in May marked an important moment of transition, and we are deeply appreciative of the impact she made during her 20-year tenure.

To our staff team—thank you. Your commitment to our mission, your adaptability, and your steady delivery of programs throughout a year of leadership change speaks to your professionalism and passion for our mission.

We are also grateful to Sarah Pervez, who stepped into the role of Interim Executive Director with clarity, steadiness, and care. Her leadership bridged the transition from one Executive Director to the next, ensuring continuity in operations and supporting both staff and board through this period. Her contributions have positioned us well for the future.

To our funders and community partners, thank you for your continued trust and investment. Your financial support, collaboration, and belief in the power of youth engagement make our work possible. We are honoured to work alongside you to build stronger, more connected communities.

I also want to acknowledge our Board of Directors for their engagement, commitment, and thoughtful stewardship throughout 2025. Your dedication to strong governance and your support during this year of transition have been invaluable.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to welcome our new Executive Director, Leslie Biles. Leslie brings a deep passion for youth empowerment, a collaborative leadership style, and a vision for strengthening and expanding our impact. We are excited for the future under her leadership and look forward to the energy and insight she will bring to the organization.

Together, we continue to build communities where young people feel connected, valued, and empowered to make a difference.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MESSAGE

Leslie Biles

As the new Executive Director of Youth Central, I am honoured to join an organization that has been a cornerstone of youth engagement and leadership in Calgary for more than three decades. I am excited by the opportunity to support and empower young people as they make meaningful contributions to their communities and help build a stronger future for us all.

The 2024–2025 year marked an exciting chapter for Youth Central, defined by remarkable growth in volunteerism, leadership development, and community impact. Through our programs, thousands of youth were given opportunities to learn, lead, and create positive change, while more than 140 community agencies were supported in strengthening the communities they serve. These accomplishments are a testament to the passion and dedication of our youth participants, staff, partners, and supporters who believe deeply in the power and potential of young people.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude



to Lisa Kindree for her 20 years of outstanding leadership, commitment, and unwavering enthusiasm for Youth Central. Lisa guided the organization through the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic and championed its post-pandemic growth, leaving behind a legacy of resilience, innovation, and impact that will continue to inspire us for years to come. I also wish to sincerely thank our Board of Directors and our exceptional team. Your vision, dedication, and tireless efforts have been instrumental in advancing our mission and ensuring that Youth Central continues to thrive.

Thank you, our supporters, for being part of this journey. Together, we will continue to ensure that every young person has the tools, confidence, and support they need to thrive today and into the future.

Increase in Volunteer Projects Since 2019

→ 153%

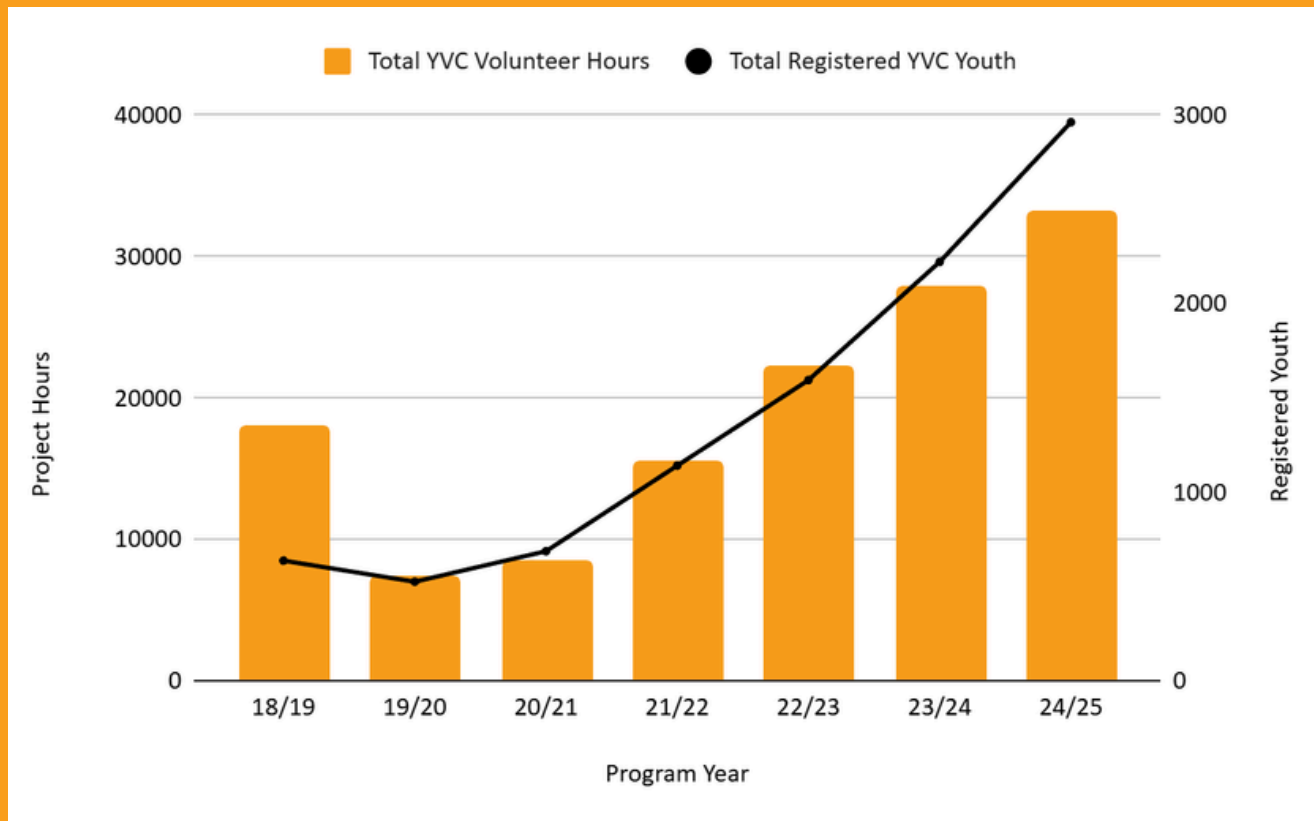
Increase in Agency Partners Since 2019

→ 152%

OUR IMPACT

Growing to Meet the Rising Need

Organizations across the country are seeing a dramatic decrease in adult volunteer participation. At Youth Central, we're seeing the opposite trend. More youth are seeking opportunities to contribute to their communities, develop personal skills and form meaningful connections with others - and we're growing so we can help them do just that!



→ Formed Friendships **95%**

→ Increased Empathy **93%**

→ Total Youth Engaged **3,462**

Fighting Isolation Building Community

Youth Central participants consistently report increases in life and leadership skills social skills, such as confidence, leadership, communication, and empathy being the highest reported skill. How does this translate to everyday? Youth Central participants are forming genuine connections with youth in their city.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE AND CONNECTION

Active Youth Volunteers

→ 1,201

Volunteer Projects Completed

→ 976

When Alisa joined Youth Central's Youth Volunteer Corps (YVC), she was focused on gaining experience that might help her find a job. Like many youth, she started as a YVC volunteer, unsure of what to expect. With each project, that uncertainty shifted. Volunteering became something she looked forward to, shaped by a sense of community and shared purpose.

Over time, Alisa's confidence grew. She formed friendships that became lasting connections and found herself surrounded by ambitious, motivated peers who pushed her to do better in her own life. Exposure to a wide range of projects, including those addressing social issues, expanded her perspective and helped her recognize the impact she could make.



Today, Alisa serves as a senior volunteer, guiding new participants and helping create a welcoming environment for youth taking their first steps into volunteering. Through YVC, Youth Central offers this same accessible pathway to confidence, connection and real-world experience for thousands of youth across Calgary each year.

“With each Youth Central volunteer project, I started finding confidence in not only myself, but also about how I make a positive impact.”

Alisa, Age 17
Youth Volunteer Corps Participant

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION

“Youth Central was honestly transformative to me and my development of both empathy and community. This is a space where my ideas are prioritized.”

Areej, Age 17
Mayor's Youth Council participant

When Areej joined Youth Central's Mayor's Youth Council (MYC) at the start of high school, she was looking for something bigger than the small world she felt confined within. Through MYC, Areej found a space where her ideas were taken seriously and transformed into real action. What began as uncertainty quickly became a sense of purpose.

MYC introduced Areej to a community of peers who wanted to listen to her experiences and perspectives on what youth in Calgary need. It offered a life beyond school, one rooted in empathy, connection and shared responsibility. For the first time, Areej could explore their role in the city without fear of judgment, surrounded by others who were equally curious and driven.

Without Youth Central, Areej believes her life would have remained individualistic, without a clear sense of the impact youth can have. Instead, MYC revealed Areej's capabilities, shaped her post-secondary path, and reframed Calgary as a city full of opportunity, a place where community is visible, active and worth investing in.

Increase in Teamwork & Communication Skills

→ 93%

Increase in Confidence

→ 95%

SUPPORT THAT CHANGES WHAT'S POSSIBLE



Growing up in unstable environments, Kyle often lacked the consistent support every young person deserves. At 16, after years of moving between difficult living situations, he left school. When Kyle moved in with his friend's family, into a home free of substance use and rooted in stability, his outlook began to shift.

Wanting a full high school experience, Kyle joined Youth Central's Discovering Choices Youth Council. He built new connections, volunteered in his community, and discovered the power of giving back

Through the GRADitude Project, he received a suit for graduation and future job interviews, something he would not have felt comfortable asking his new guardians for. He said the experience made him feel "prepared, respected, and seen."

"Although Youth Central isn't the largest, it has a massive impact. Things are challenging right now. Giving a helping hand is one of the best things you can do."

Kyle, Age 17
GRADitude Participant

Racialized Participants across all programs.

→ **78%**

Newcomer Participants across all programs.

→ **37%**

WHEN YOUTH ARE ENGAGED, COMMUNITIES THRIVE

For more than six years, the Auburn Bay Community Association has relied on Youth Central volunteers to bring some of the neighbourhood's most visible community moments to life - from Stampede Breakfasts and Mother's Day celebrations to community garden cleanups and the Parade of Lights. For a small, volunteer-driven organization, that support has been essential.

Youth Central volunteers show up when extra hands matter most, making large events possible and easing the pressure on an aging volunteer base. Their presence changes the energy of these gatherings. The partnership with Youth Central also opens doors for families searching for meaningful opportunities for their own children to connect beyond school.

Without Youth Central, much of this work would fall to a shrinking pool of volunteers with limited capacity. By engaging youth early, the Auburn Bay Community Association sees volunteering become a lifelong habit, one that builds the community stewards of the future.

“We always struggle to find volunteers. Having a core group of youths to support us has been critical to the success of our events.”

Carla Obuck, President
Auburn Bay Community Association

Volunteer Hours Contributed

→ 33,159

Community Organizations Supported

→ 146

OUR SUPPORTERS

**Our work is possible because of
generous community builders like these:**

Bryce Kapsha	Matco Financial Inc.
Calgary Foundation	Matthew Grant
Canada Life	Michael Stensby
ChangeX	Milk Jar Candle Company Inc.
City of Airdrie	Paul Jiang
ConocoPhillips Canada Resources Corp.	Penny Hume
Desjardins Foundation	Rogers Birdies for Kids, presented by AltaLink
Enbridge Inc.	Rotary Club of Calgary
Equium Group	Rotary Club of Calgary at Stampede Park
Family & Community Support Services	Rotary Club of Calgary East
Field Law LLP	Rotary Club of Calgary North
Government of Canada (Canada Summer Jobs)	Royal Bank of Canada
Hopewell Residential	Royal Bank of Canada Foundation
Hunter Family Foundation	Sandra Neill
Jessalyn Rohs	Sanjel Energy Services
Jim Button Community Builder Fund at Calgary Foundation	Searchlight Financial Solutions Inc.
John Bowlen Legacy Flow Through Fund 1 at Calgary Foundation	SMART Technologies
Julianne Rohel	TD Bank Group
Junior League of Calgary	TELUS Friendly Future Foundation
Kinette Club of Calgary	The ARK Foundation
Koeller Charitable Giving Fund at Calgary Foundation	The City of Calgary
Langille Family Fund at Calgary Foundation	The Clothing Bar Boutique
Lisa Kindree	The Co-operators Group Limited
Marketplace Events	Volunteer Alberta
	Werklund Foundation
	Youth Volunteer Corps

*Donations over 1K

**Thank you for believing that youth can and do
contribute meaningfully to their communities.**

STAY CONNECTED



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