This past year gave Take a Hike a lot to celebrate. One of the biggest achievements was supporting 143 youth experiencing vulnerabilities across the province to envision their futures, dream big, and build belief in themselves and their potential. As well, we realized our goal of growing to 8 programs in BC. We are proud to have hit this incredible milestone with the opening of our Saanich program in September 2021 to youth in the Saanich community who needed it most! We also deepened many important relationships we had been building over the past few years. These relationships will be game-changing for us as they have enabled us to meet our goals faster, making it possible for us to change the lives of more youth across BC. We are all truly excited as we reflect on what this year has meant for our strategic goals to support the mental health and well-being of more youth in our communities.

It is a testament to our work that the youth in our programs continue to do well and improve their mental health even while the pandemic affected its third school year. I am so proud of the work of our Mental Health Clinicians and passionate staff. We were able to dig deeper and profoundly impact the lives of youth.

You’ll see in the upcoming pages the successes accomplished by the youth in our programs and the impact realized by Take a Hike this year. We expanded clinical counselling support for youth into summer so they could have someone to lean on and chat with whenever they needed and continue to receive care during sometimes challenging months. In addition, you will see the critical work we are doing towards Reconciliation and building strong relationships with Indigenous leaders within our communities. Last year, Take a Hike worked closely with an Indigenous Education consultant, Jo Chrona, to assess the ways we can better serve Indigenous youth and to give recommendations of how we can approach learning through an Indigenous lens. This year marks an exciting new chapter for Take a Hike and we’re so elated to share it all with you.

A huge thank you to our committed community of donors, board members, volunteers, and staff who have made the lives of vulnerable youth a priority. Our sincerest gratitude to the thousands of donors who made a gift and supported Take a Hike throughout the year – you make great things possible!

Nicole Geyer
Board Chair, Take a Hike Foundation
I lost hope in the school system, I thought it was a lost cause. Coming to Take a Hike gave me so much trust in school and gave me hope that some people like me are able to get help. You gave me purpose.

TAKE A HIKE NANAIMO YOUTH
FINDING FRIENDS + CONFIDENCE AT TAKE A HIKE

LETTER FROM A RECENT GRAD
Before Take a Hike, my life was unstructured. I wasn’t going to school, and I was arguing with my mom a lot. I was doing things that maybe a kid shouldn’t be doing, and life was just unhealthy. I wasn’t in the best state, mentally or physically. Eventually, I learned about Take a Hike through a friend of a friend. They told my mom about the program and since it had worked so well for them, my mom signed me up. We met with Kayla, the Youth and Family Worker and some of the teachers and it went really well, and I felt comfortable coming to Take a Hike for my grade 10 year.

Coming into the program, I still felt like it was just school but as I started to warm up it felt better being in the program. In the beginning, I definitely struggled with being shy and being a bit uncomfortable cause, it takes time for me to warm up. The first year for me at Take a Hike was a bit nerve-wracking because I’m shy and I didn’t really have friends and didn’t consider the kids in the Take a Hike program as being my crowd. I still wasn’t coming to school very often and disappeared for a while but then I came back and started to enjoy coming to school. Before coming to Take a Hike, I would complete maybe a third of the year and then just not come back. At mainstream school, I never had any friends and then I wouldn’t want to go. And because I didn’t go, I would get behind on my work and it would pile up and any motivation to go would be gone.

When I joined Take a Hike, I started to make friends and I actually wanted to come to class. I started to keep up with my work and I felt good about school and just kept going.

I have so many great memories from the last couple years at Take a Hike. One that stands out to me is a time that we were out on a trip and at one point, I looked up and all the adults were standing together, and the fire was lighting up their faces and they were all smiling, and

I looked around the campfire, and everyone else was smiling too. That moment sticks out to me because it made me happy, and I realized I was smiling too. I had brought my blanket and I was snuggled up by the fire and I was just happy. I knew I belonged.

In the beginning, I saw the trips as just field trips and when we go and do things outdoors, I just thought it sucked. But as we started to do these trips more, I started to get more comfortable and enjoyed the trips.

As I get ready to graduate from Take a Hike, I’m excited to get ready for my future. I want to continue being in the outdoors and exploring part of the world through nature. I’m thinking about going into either post-secondary or trades to go into plumbing. I’ve also developed an appreciation for my community. I would like to volunteer more and give back to my community.

To be honest, before coming to Take a Hike, I wouldn’t have even had this plan.

I wouldn’t have bothered to think about the future. Take a Hike has done a lot for me. Thank you.
For vulnerable youth in the Take a Hike Program, high school is pretty tough. Yet, they are capable and motivated individuals, each with their own background and life experience. The Take a Hike program responds to their personal needs to help them succeed in school and in life however they define their success.
143 youth participated in our program this year.

**Each Participant Engaged In:**

- **178 Days** of programming (Monday to Friday)
- **161 Hours** of group counselling
- **110 Hours** of outdoor adventure-based activities
- **41 Individual** clinical counselling sessions (60-90 mins)

**Belonging is Togetherness**

Belonging is connectedness and both have an immense effect on the mental health and well-being of youth. Belonging is life changing as it gives youth a sense of safety, strong relationships, and a knowledge that they are not alone.

**Improvements in Mental Health**

The reality is that the pandemic is not over and has affected three school years and the way we live our daily lives. The pandemic has also had an immense impact on youth mental health with over 57% of youth aged 15-17 reporting their mental health as somewhat or much worse than before the pandemic according to data sourced by Statistics Canada.
Over the past three school years, Take a Hike has pivoted to ensure the youth in our programs have access to the mental health supports they need.

Last year, over half of the youth in our programs reported improvements in their mental health which is phenomenal considering the impact of the pandemic on their daily lives and how they engage in school and with each other.

FEELINGS OF BELONGING AND CONNECTEDNESS

Speaking of engaging with their peers, Take a Hike youth also reported gains in feelings of belonging and connectedness.

Almost all youth expressed connectedness with their peers and to the adults in the Take a Hike program.

Even more impressive is that over half of the youth in programs reported feeling cared for and listened to by staff. These results show how Take a Hike youth were able to continue building strong relationships even during the pandemic.

DREAMING OF THE FUTURE

Even as the pandemic continues, it hasn’t hindered the Take a Hike youth from dreaming about their future.

Over 80% feel they have developed the skills and knowledge needed to fulfill their goals and prepare for employment.

And even with the ever-shifting last few years, nearly all the youth in our programs feel optimistic about their futures and whatever successes they might hold.

These reflections made by Take a Hike youth over the last year are incredibly encouraging as they show how much the Take a Hike program impacts their lives. Without supporters like you, these results would not have been possible. Together, we are empowering youth through not only some of the most challenging parts of their lives but also through an unrelenting pandemic. These results show that with mental health and wellbeing supports, youth achieve resilience, strong relationships, connectedness, and a belief in themselves that guides them on their path of life.

YOUTH AND ACEs

Among the 120 youth who reflected on the past year, over 50% experience 4 or more ACEs. These youth reported significant positive improvements in:

• Connectiveness with their families, community, and peers
• Feelings of hope and gratitude
• Optimism about the future
Of the 143 youth that participated in Take a Hike this year...

- 87% of Take a Hike youth and their families are in financial need.
- 78% had a mental health diagnosis or had an emerging mental health concern.
- 65% had a special needs designation or serious mental illness.
- 61% have experienced three or more ACEs*.

* Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
ACEs are stressful experiences that occur before age 18, such as: abuse (physical, emotional, sexual), neglect (physical, emotional), and household dysfunction (mental illness, mother treated violently, divorce, incarcerated relative, substance abuse).

The past three school years have been met with unpredictability due to the pandemic with this past year being the most unsteady as we navigate our new normal. This unsteadiness changed how youth experienced school life and connection with peers and impacted the way they were able to manage their mental health and home lives. I am continually humbled by the resilience the youth we work with show everyday.

PETE PREDIGER,
DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMS AND CLINICAL DIRECTOR
I was first introduced to Take a Hike more than 10 years ago through one of its founders and former teacher, Tim Gale. We were both in a running group that met on Saturday mornings at the end of Pacific Spirit Park. After our runs we would head to a local coffee shop and catch up. Most of us worked as lawyers, accountants, and business owners but Tim’s work was different. He would share stories of his days spent working with vulnerable youth. He would describe the challenges these youth faced and the positive impact this program, Take a Hike, had on the youth. It became clear to me that the world needed more programs like Take a Hike.

I decided to become a supporter of Take a Hike because of the impact Take a Hike achieves and the success rate of the youth who join Take a Hike. I’m an accountant, so I’ve looked at the numbers. The impact Take a Hike has is incredible.

The success rate for the youth, and the benefit to society of ensuring these kids don’t fall through the cracks, makes Take a Hike a smart investment.

And now, these graduates are positive contributors to our communities. It’s incredible to see what the youth in this program achieve.

Take a Hike has not only been important to me but also to my son Tyler, who decided to start volunteering with Take a Hike shortly after graduating from university with his bachelor’s degree. Tyler stayed with Take a Hike for a number of years before taking what he learned from volunteering with the program and starting a master’s degree in counselling. It’s wonderful to see Tyler using what he learned from his experiences volunteering with Take a Hike in his own career as a counsellor. It just goes to show how Take a Hike impacts not only the youth in the program but also those who become involved as volunteers.

As a long-time supporter of Take a Hike, I’m excited to see how Take a Hike grows into the future. This program has the potential to reach so many young people who need it, and it would be amazing to see us take this crucial program that really works all across the country.
I’m an accountant, so I’ve looked at the numbers. The impact Take a Hike has is incredible. The success rate for the youth, and the benefit to society of ensuring these kids don’t fall through the cracks, makes Take a Hike a smart investment.

TERRY HOLLAND
This year Take a Hike grew to 8 programs across BC with the opening of our Saanich program in partnership with the Saanich school district. An amazing achievement for Take a Hike, this program brought us to three programs on Vancouver Island and ensured we would be able to serve more Island youth. The program launched in September to great reception from the community and was able to open in February of 2022 to 12 youth who could benefit the most from our life-changing program.

Because of the incredible achievements of the youth in Take a Hike, we have a responsibility to bring this life-changing program to every community where there is need. There is a youth mental health crisis in our province, made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This year, we took an important step to ensuring all youth in BC realize their potential by growing our programs on Vancouver Island and began conversations with school districts in the Interior. The interest in bringing our program to school districts across the Interior has been very encouraging. The impacts our program makes possible for the youth in our communities is clear and school districts are taking note and are keen to bring Take a Hike to their communities. We are ready to grow into these communities, but we need your support to ensure we are able to change the lives of youth who need it most in the Interior. As the pandemic effect its third school year, it is crucial we are able to expand our program into communities who are not only keen to have Take a Hike impact the youth in their communities but also to ensure that youth in BC have the mental health and well-being supports they can benefit from in order to achieve success – however they define it.

In September 2022, we were elated to add Merritt, Sooke and Stz’uminus to our roster of Take a Hike programs in BC bringing us to 11 programs and begin work on adding more programs to the Interior region. With your support, we can achieve introducing more Take a Hike programs to BC’s Interior youth.
1. Nanaimo (Snuneymuxw, Snaw-Naw-As and Stz’uminus)
2. Cowichan (Ts‘uubaa-asatx, Penelakut, Halalt, Lyackson, Stz’uminus, Malahat, and Quw’utsun)
3. Stz’uminus
4. Saanich (Lekwungen, Songhees and WSÁNEĆ)
5. Sooke (Scia’new, T’Sou-ke, Nuu-chah-nulth Pacheedaht)
6. Vancouver (Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh)
7. Vancouver (Musqueam, Squamish, and Tseil-Waututh)
8. Delta (Tsawwassen, Musqueam)
9. Burnaby (Hul’qumi’num’ and Squamish)
10. Merritt (Nicola-Similkameen)
11. West Kootenays (Sinixt, Syilx, and Ktunaxa)
I’m really sad that Take a Hike wasn’t here when I was in grade 10 and started struggling. I feel like if I had been a part of this class back then, that I wouldn’t have slid so far. I am so happy to be in the program now. This is the first time that I have felt seen for who I am instead of for the stuff I’m doing wrong.

TAKE A HIKE SAANICH YOUTH
September 30th, 2021, marked Canada’s first Truth and Reconciliation day. At Take a Hike, we recognized the day as a time to reflect and asked our team members to use the day to continue their personal learning towards Reconciliation and Indigenous history in Canada.

Take a Hike continued towards Reconciliation this year by hiring an Indigenous Consultant, Jo Chrona, to conduct a review of Take a Hike’s program and model from an Indigenous education perspective. Jo Chrona named five recommendations to enhance existing program elements with an Indigenous perspective, and an additional five recommendations for new program elements to better serve the Indigenous youth in our programs while providing a new perspective of learning for all youth who participate in Take a Hike. Upon Jo Chrona’s recommendations, we have also hired Rocky James to join our team as a Director of Indigenous Relations to aid us as we begin partnerships with First Nations communities and as we prepare to open a program in partnership with the Stz’uminus Education Society, an important step for Take a Hike as this will be our first program partnership with a First Nations community.
Everyone deserves to feel seen as they are and feel safe doing so. Take a Hike youth deserve the same. We believe in the power of safe and caring relationships built with Indigenous adults throughout the program structure.

Last year, Take a Hike’s team took part in San’yas, anti-racism Indigenous cultural safety training, which provided crucial and important learning for Take a Hike’s team on the history and experiences of Indigenous communities in Canada. Jo’s recommendations included continuing learnings like San’yas and to explore Indigenous-specific resources to ensure we can support staff to weave in Indigenous ways of knowing and being into our program and how we support Indigenous youth within our program.

Overall, Jo Chrona found that Take a Hike was uniquely placed to provide educational experiences that align with education practices that honour Indigenous knowledges about effective teaching and learning in ways that respect and support the well-being of the individual, the community, and the land.

Our goal with this continued work is that all Indigenous youth at Take a Hike feel that they are safe, represented, valued, and able to fully be themselves.
35% identify as Indigenous

18% identify as a racialized Canadian

9% identify as transgendered, non-binary, or gender fluid
In February, it was exciting to get back to Seymour Mountain for our Moonlight Snowshoe event. With COVID-19 restrictions still in effect, Take a Hike decided to engage our community in our first annual Take it Outside challenge. And boy, did you all deliver! We had a great time seeing all the amazing adventures folks took part in to support Take a Hike.

During the Take it Outside Challenge, our community:

- Accomplished 316 Hours outside.
- Took part in 216 Adventures.
Why doesn’t every class have a counsellor. Don’t [adults] know how hard it is to be a teenager right now? When I come in and can talk about what is going on for me at home, I feel like there are 2 heavy balls lifted off my back and I can head back to class and focus.

“TAKE A HIKE SAANICH YOUTH”
MONTHLY MEMORIES

SEPTEMBER

Introduced Take a Hike’s program to Saanich youth in partnership with the Saanich school district. This program became Take a Hike’s 8th program in BC.

NOVEMBER

Celebrated Coast Capital Savings nomination and receipt of the 2021 AFP Greater Vancouver Chapter Giving Hearts Awards Community Pandemic Response - Business Category! Take a Hike is honoured to commemorate our entire community of supports on National Philanthropy Day.

FEBRUARY

Moonlight Snowshoe came back to Seymour Mountain. We were excited to welcome back the Take a Hike community to the mountain with our signature event. Hot chocolate from Purdy’s kept us warm as we gathered together for our first in-person event since the pandemic started.
The Vancouver Take a Hike youth enjoyed their spring trip by learning how to sail a tall ship with SALTS.

Hosted the Growth & Gratitude Webinar Series to the Take a Hike community. Two webinars focusing on Caring for Ourselves and Caring for Others and in recognition of Mental Health month shared the core concepts of the Take a Hike program with donors, champions, and community member.

Celebrated 43 youth walk across the stage in celebration of graduating from the program and moving on to their next adventure.
Nicky Calvert was introduced to Take a Hike in a unique way. As a believer in changing the trajectory of the lives of youth, Nicky became a supporter for not only the youth in the program now but for those who will benefit from the program in the future.
I was introduced to Take a Hike quite a few years ago. At the time, I had decided to switch my career path into non-profit work and in preparing for this switch I took a course on marketing for non-profits. There, I met Jaydeen Williams, the former Executive Director of Take a Hike and we thought that Take a Hike would make a great case study for our group project. The impact that the life-changing work carried out by Take a Hike stayed with me and I thought about the program often after the course was over.

As an avid hiker and backpacker, I understand how much joy spending time in the outdoors can bring and have experienced how much being in nature can be a very real need. I have also seen what can happen to youth when they don’t receive the support, they need in order to overcome life’s challenges such as addiction, mental health struggles, and all the other things life can throw at us. That’s why when I learned that Take a Hike’s early intervention approach integrates important time outdoors, I knew that it would be worthwhile to support the program. I believe we need to give youth the best possible start in life and the opportunity to gain the skills they need to navigate the hard parts. It’s so amazing to see Take a Hike empower youth to change the trajectory of their lives!

Although I hopefully have many years ahead of me, I still felt like legacy giving was something I wanted to pursue with Take a Hike. As an immigrant living far from my family and as a single person, I wanted to make a will so that if anything was to happen to me, my wishes would be clear and easier to carry out. I’m not someone who is able to make a major gift, but I am fortunate enough to own my home and can make the most of that equity through an estate gift. I truly believe in the life philosophy of leaving the world in a better place and so the decision to give back through philanthropy in this way was a natural one.

One of the reasons I chose to leave a legacy gift for Take a Hike in my will is that not only is there a clear need for Take a Hike in changing the lives of youth but also that Take a Hike is a replicable, sustainable program that I can see growing and thriving for decades to come. I know my gift will support Take a Hike to make a powerful impact well into the future. I’m also a monthly donor which I know to be a great way to provide reliable revenue to an organization to enable programs to keep running. This helps me support Take a Hike now as well as after I’m gone. Ultimately, for me, giving truly brings me joy - I think it’s because being able to have a positive impact on someone else’s life gives me an immense sense of purpose.

I heard someone say recently that privilege isn’t the presence of perks and benefits, but rather it is the absence of obstacles and barriers. I consider myself privileged, and so it is my hope that my small contribution will positively impact the youth in the Take a Hike program so that they can courageously navigate life’s obstacles, thrive, and live life to its fullest.
We are celebrating the successes of 143 youth this year - doubling our program impact from 4 to 8 locations since 2018. And we are ready to keep growing!

We have had conversations with 13 different school districts to achieve our next growth goal. We see incredible demand for the Take a Hike program across the province including in the Thompson/Okanagan region where we are planning our next region. It just goes to show how impactful the Take a Hike program is to the youth in our communities.

This year represents an exciting new chapter for Take a Hike as we work to make our program even more impactful for the youth in our communities. We have achieved the goals of our strategic plan and are ready to propel forward into the next stage of Take a Hike empowering youth across BC to build resilience, strong relationships, and achieve success – however they define it all.

Thank you to our supporters, volunteers, and community members who empowered youth to change the trajectory of their lives this year.

GORDON HATCHETT
CEO, Take a Hike Foundation
It is because of the incredible results seen in the youth at Take a Hike that I know giving to Take a Hike is worthwhile.

KAREN FLAVELLE, CHAIR, PURDY’S CHOCOLATIER
Take a Hike partners with public school districts to deliver this life-changing program. School districts contribute everything they provide to any other alternate program, including teachers, youth workers and the classroom space.

Take a Hike Foundation layers in the elements beyond the public education system’s capacity that are essential to our youths’ success, including clinical counselling, adventure-based learning, a meal program, and more.
Thank you for your ongoing support and interest. Take a Hike would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone who generously supported Take a Hike with a gift in 2021 – 2022. Your generosity makes change possible; it represents your commitment to empowering youth to achieve success – however they define it.

Thank you
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE - LIFETIME GIVING OF $100,000+

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Take a Hike would like to acknowledge the Government of Canada for the Canadian Emergency Wage and Canadian Emergency Rent Subsidies received during this time.
GET INVOLVED WITH

CONNECT
Stay connected with youth stories, Take a Hike updates and more by signing up for our newsletter and following us on social media.

SHARE
Take a Hike thrives when it is integrated within communities that allows us to build a network of support around each youth. We want more people and organizations to know about us so that we can offer our resources and collaborate with them to leverage their strengths and resources as well.

VOLUNTEER
Passionate about the outdoors or interested in tutoring or mentoring youth? Volunteer in our program or introduce our work to someone you might know.

DONATE
Change the lives of youth today but becoming a supporter of Take a Hike.

Takeahikefoundation.org
604 638 3385