

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Art of Becoming



A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

Every Thrive program is rooted in the belief that “becoming” is an active, creative process. It begins with reflection: asking who we are, what matters most, what strengths we already carry, and what future we want to help create.

For young people, these questions help transform possibility into purpose, and purpose into action. For Thrive, these same questions shaped our own season of becoming: a year of reflecting on our strengths, clarifying what matters most, and building toward the future with greater intention.

After a landmark year of growth in 2024, we entered 2025 asking important questions about our future. Could we sustain this level of impact? Could we strengthen the systems behind our work? Could we grow with intention while preserving the creativity, care, and community connection that make Thrive so powerful?

Over those 12 months, we answered these questions not just by thinking, but by doing. In 2025, Thrive replicated the level of impact achieved in 2024, and did so more efficiently.

It showed us that the momentum of the previous year was not a one-time peak, but a foundation we could build on.

We are building toward a Thrive that can reach more children and youth earlier in life and help bridge the opportunity gaps that continue to shape young people’s futures. Gaps between urban and rural communities. Between families with access and families without. Between young people who are seen, supported, and included, and those who too often have to fight for those things.

At its heart, Thrive’s work has always been about possibility. The possibility that a young person who feels unsure can find confidence. That a child who feels unseen can feel they belong. That creativity can open the door to leadership. In 2025, we carried that same belief into our own future.

That is the art of becoming.

Pari Rajagopalan | President & CEO
Tina Osen | Board Chair



2025 AT A GLANCE

The art of growing with intention



3,261

Young people reached in Ontario, British Columbia, and through national initiatives.

This reach was not driven by one program alone. It reflected a broader, more flexible model of arts-based leadership development, one that met young people in schools, camps, community spaces, corporate engagement days, neighbourhood activations, and seasonal moments of need.

1,743 in our core
pathway

Multi-session programming delivered over weeks, building confidence, connection, and leadership.

LCE 1,461 | BTC 185 | YLI 97

1,518 through access
points

More entry points for youth, families, and partners to experience arts-based leadership across the year.

Kits 750 | Activations 520 | Thrive Days 248

1,870

participants in Ontario

1,260

participants in British Columbia

131

reached through national initiatives

662

**volunteer hours contributed to
Thrive**

OUR CORE LEADERSHIP PATHWAY

A pathway from creativity to confidence to leadership

Creative practice builds confidence. Confidence builds connection. Connection builds leadership.



AGES 8 - 13

**Learn Create
Explore**

1,461

participants in 2025.

Discovering a sense of self. Hands-on leadership learning in classrooms, after school, and at summer camp.



AGES 11 - 15

**Build to
Change**

185

participants in 2025.

Seeing beyond the self. Participants build empathy, strengthen relationships, and explore the issues that matter to them.



AGES 14 - 18

**Youth Lead
Impact**

97

participants in 2025.

Becoming changemakers. Youth choose a real-world issue and lead an arts-based project in their own community.

Each stage of Thrive's core suite of programming is designed for a different moment in a young person's development, and each is a deep, sustained investment in the young people who take part.

WHAT WE BUILT DIFFERENTLY IN 2025

More flexible. More responsive. More intentional.

In 2025, Thrive's growth was not only about reaching more young people. It was about becoming more flexible, responsive, and intentional in how young people could access our work.

Across the year, we tested new formats, adapted programs for different needs and contexts, and expanded the ways young people could experience arts-based leadership programming in schools, camps, community spaces, specialized learning environments, corporate-supported activations, and moments of transition.

Creating more year-round access.

One of the clearest shifts in 2025 was Thrive's movement beyond the traditional school-year model.

After hearing from teachers, school partners, and community members about the need for high-quality, affordable programming during school breaks, Thrive officially launched Learn Create Explore as a summer camp. This allowed young people to continue accessing creative leadership programming outside the classroom, while giving our team the opportunity to test how one of our core programs could work in a more intensive seasonal format.

The camp model created space for deeper creative projects, stronger peer relationships, and more sustained confidence-building. It also helped Thrive build toward a more continuous youth development pathway — one where young people can stay connected to creativity, belonging, and leadership throughout the year, not only during the school day.



WHAT WE BUILT DIFFERENTLY IN 2025

Adapting Programs for More Young People

In 2025, Thrive became more intentional about adapting programs so more young people could participate meaningfully.



We expanded our adaptive programming for children and youth with disabilities, strengthening our ability to deliver arts-based leadership experiences in ways that respond to different learning, communication, sensory, and participation needs. This work reflects a core belief at Thrive: access is not only about offering a program. It is about designing programs so young people can participate fully, feel seen, and experience success.

In British Columbia, we deepened this responsive approach through our work with ARIES and Genesis, specialized Vancouver School Board programs supporting Indigenous students and students who have become disengaged from school. These partnerships gave Thrive an important opportunity to adapt arts-based leadership programming for youth who benefit from more flexible, relationship-centred approaches to learning and leadership.

We also adapted Youth Lead Impact through our partnership with Friends of Ruby to support youth who were not in education, employment, or training. This helped us better understand how arts-based leadership programming can support older youth navigating complex transitions, identity, belonging, and future planning.

Together, these examples show Thrive becoming more responsive — not changing the heart of our work, but strengthening how that work can meet young people where they are.



WHAT WE BUILT DIFFERENTLY IN 2025

Building Deeper Community and Corporate Engagement

Thrive also expanded the ways partners could participate in our mission. In 2025, we launched Thrive Days, a new corporate engagement model that brought volunteers from HUB International and Markel Canada directly into hands-on, arts-based youth programming. Thrive Days reached **248 young people** and gave corporate teams a more meaningful way to connect with our work — not only as funders, but as active participants in creating spaces of creativity, confidence, and connection.

We also launched a new back-to-school supply drive with HUB, mobilizing teams across the country to collect donations and assemble **350 kits for young people**. Together, these initiatives strengthened community relationships and created more entry points for youth, families, volunteers, and partners to connect with our programs.



THE ART OF LISTENING

Strengthening how we measure impact



In 2025, Thrive strengthened not only how we deliver programs, but how we listen to young people. Across LCE, BTC, and YLI, our evaluations showed a clear pattern: when youth are given creative, supportive spaces to participate, collaborate, and lead, they begin to see themselves differently, as more confident, more capable, and more connected to the people and possibilities around them.

Learn Create Explore

Recognizing that traditional written evaluations were not equally accessible for every child, Thrive introduced a simplified four-question pre- and post-program survey using a red, yellow, and green sticker system. Students responded visually, while facilitators guided small groups through the questions, explained unfamiliar words, and made sure participants understood what was being asked before they answered.

This gave us a clearer and more inclusive picture of how children were experiencing LCE.

Across the evaluation, green responses increased by 11 points overall, while red responses decreased by 4 points. The strongest growth was in leadership identity: students' sense that they could be a leader in class increased by 20 points. We also saw gains in students feeling they could do hard things, try something new when nervous, and work with someone they do not normally work with.

EVALUATION QUESTION

CHANGE

Do you feel like you can be a leader in class?

+20 pts

If you feel nervous about something new, do you still try it?

+8 pts

Do you feel like you can talk to or work with someone you don't normally talk to?

+8 pts

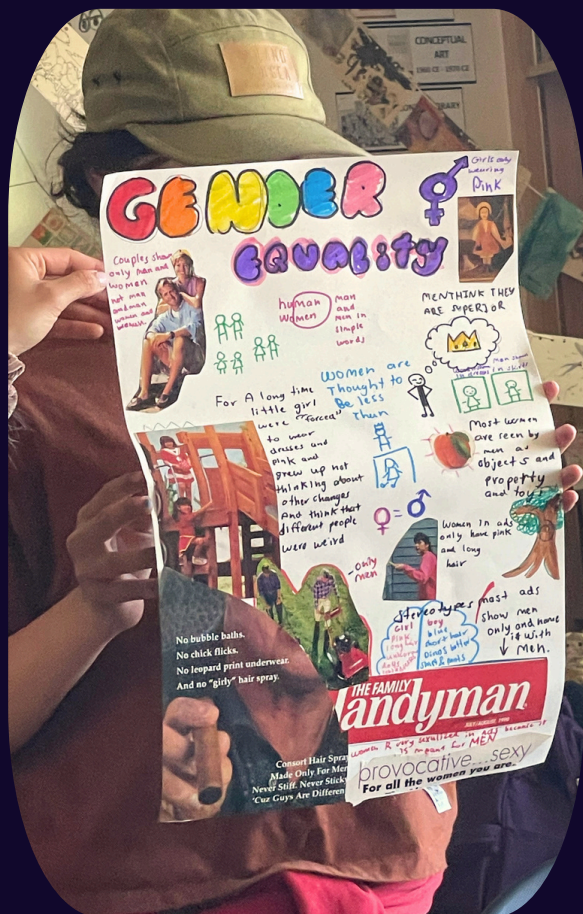
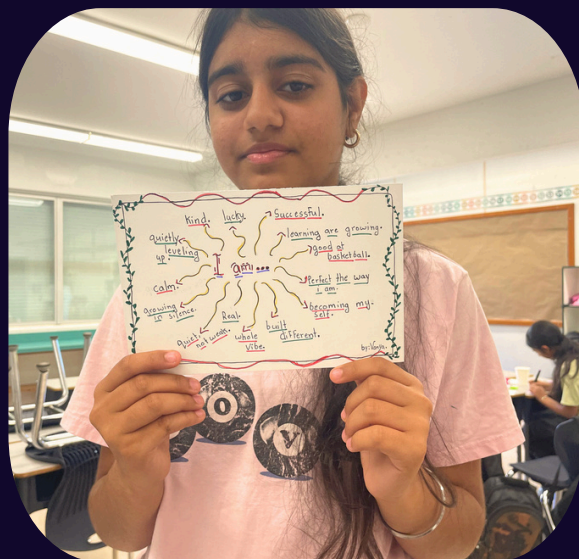
Do you feel like you can do hard things?

+9 pts

THE ART OF LISTENING

Build to Change

BTC evaluation results showed strong participant engagement and encouraging signs of growth in youth agency, confidence, and leadership practice. Post-program respondents reported a positive experience, with 100% saying the program was enjoyable, 92% saying they practiced and improved leadership skills, 87% saying they practiced and improved foundational skills, and 85% saying they would participate in BTC or another Thrive program again.



Youth Lead Impact

YLI continued to show the power of arts-based leadership programming for older youth. In 2025, the program exceeded its participation goal, engaging 109 youth across six cohorts and one Youth Summit. This included 94 youth ages 15–18 and 15 youth ages 19–29.

The launch of the YLI intensive model was especially successful, with four summer intensives running over capacity and generating waitlists. Participants built future-ready skills including critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, adaptability, persistence, digital literacy, and complex problem-solving. YLI also expanded to reach youth navigating significant barriers, including youth through Friends of Ruby and Vancouver Alternative Secondary Schools.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY

The 2025 Thrive Youth Anti-Gala

Unconventional. Unforgettable. Unapologetically cause-connected. Our third annual Anti-Gala once again reimagined what a fundraiser could be, trading long speeches and formalities for immersive art, powerful storytelling, and a room full of people ready to invest in young people.

The 2025 Anti-Gala welcomed over 500 guests on November 12, 2025 and raised \$525,000 in support of Thrive's free programs for children and youth across Canada.



THE NORTHBRIDGE CHANGEMAKER AWARD

“Art isn’t a luxury. It’s oxygen for the kids who have spent their entire lives holding their breath.”

JUSTIN BORSATO | 2025 NORTHBRIDGE CHANGEMAKER

The 2025 Northbridge Changemaker Award recipient was Justin Borsato, a Vancouver educator who has worked alongside Thrive for nearly 20 years at Britannia Elementary in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside.

At the Anti-Gala, Justin reminded the room why arts-based programming matters so deeply. Programs like Thrive, he said, are vital to the confidence of young people facing barriers because they offer creative, emotional, and social pathways to self-worth and belonging that traditional programs often fail to provide.



Three years ago, an Indigenous Grade 7 student arrived in his classroom quiet, guarded, and almost entirely disconnected from school. Records showed she had attended roughly twenty percent of the time between kindergarten and Grade 6. She was not yet reading. She had few friends and rarely spoke to her classmates, spending most of each day hidden beneath the hood of a hand-me-down sweater. Justin tried every strategy twenty years of teaching had given him. None of it gained any traction.

Then, during an art activity, everything changed. The class was drawing portraits of their kindergarten buddies. Instead of a pencil and paper, she chose a small easel and began to paint. Someone called her an artist and something shifted.

When Thrive arrived at Britannia for its week-long immersive arts programming, that spark grew stronger. Thrive gave her more space to create, to work alongside professional artists, and to experience herself as capable. Every student had the chance to work with the artist that week, but one student never left his side — and most of the brushstrokes on that wall are hers. The mural still stands as a symbol of the community she had finally joined. By June, she was someone different. She smiled freely. She was part of the class. When she graduated, she didn't thank Justin with a store-bought card. She gave him a beaded keychain she had made herself.

THRIVE YOUTH LEADERSHIP AWARDS

Celebrating young leaders

The Thrive Youth Leadership Awards celebrate the self-defined growth, excellence, and leadership of the young people we serve selected by a panel of past recipients.



Yekta Yousefian

Yekta, 15, moved to Canada just two years ago, arriving to an unfamiliar language, school system, and community. She responded the way she approaches everything: with quiet determination. She joined art and music classes, pushed herself to speak up even when nervous, and built friendships one small act of courage at a time.

Today, Yekta is the classmate who notices when someone is new or left out — because she remembers what that feels like.

“Being a leader isn’t about being the loudest. It’s about being kind, responsible, and showing others that you care.”

Sofie Khan

Sofie, 18, first stepped into leadership through Youth Lead Impact, creating a climate-change project on upcycling clothing. That spark became a blaze: she went on to serve as President of the TDSB Student Senate and co-founded MiracleMinds Canada, a youth-led non-profit bridging the STEM gap.

Now a second-year student at Toronto Metropolitan University, Sofie recently founded The Application Era, a platform helping students navigate university applications.

“Thrive was the spark. It first taught me that leadership is about empowering others — and that lesson continues to guide me today.”

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Our 2025 Financials

Figures below are drawn from Thrive Youth Development Canada's financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2025, audited by BDO Canada LLP.

Revenue



Campaigns & events	\$461,069
Corporations	\$248,578
Foundations	\$167,440
Individuals	\$162,848
Government grants	\$12,904
Other	\$3,520

Expenses



Programs	\$476,479
Program advancement	\$499,323
Administration	\$76,039
Fundraising & outreach	\$17,804
Amortization	\$463

SUMMARY	2025	2024
Total revenue	\$1,056,359	\$1,444,004
Total expenses	\$1,070,108	\$1,357,715
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	\$(13,749)	\$86,289
Net assets, end of year	\$266,741	\$280,490
of which: internally restricted contingency fund	\$211,761	\$211,761

Thrive's audit, conducted by BDO Canada LLP, resulted in a qualified opinion — a standard designation in the charitable sector, reflecting the fact that donation revenue cannot always be independently verified. No concerns were raised about Thrive's internal controls or reporting. Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

LOOKING AHEAD

The art of becoming

If 2025 was the year Thrive became clearer about what we are building, 2026 is the year we begin bringing that vision to life.

The year ahead will be one of expansion, experimentation, and deeper impact. We are growing beyond what has traditionally defined Thrive's delivery model, moving into new communities, reaching young people during more moments of the year, and strengthening the pathways that help participants move from creativity to confidence to leadership.

NEW COMMUNITIES

Prince Edward County & Calgary

Thrive launches in **Prince Edward County** — an important step in testing how our arts-based leadership model can reach young people beyond major urban centres. We also launch in **Calgary**, expanding our national footprint and creating new opportunities to serve youth in communities where access to creative, confidence-building programs is not always guaranteed.

DEEPER ACCESS

LCE Intensive Support comes to B.C.

We will pilot the **LCE Intensive Support stream** in **British Columbia**, building on the strength of our adapted programming in Ontario. This reflects one of Thrive's most important beliefs: that every young person deserves access to creative spaces where they can participate fully, be seen clearly, and build confidence in ways that meet their needs.

A YEAR-ROUND PATHWAY

More ways to create, connect, and return

New **Spring Break programs** in Toronto and Vancouver, continued growth in summer programming, and an in-person **Youth Summit pilot** in Toronto will build a stronger year-round pathway — one that gives young people more than a single point of contact. It gives them repeated opportunities to create, connect, lead, and return.

STRONGER LEARNING

A better way to listen

Thrive will roll out a **new evaluation tool across all program streams**, allowing us to better understand participant experience, measure growth more consistently, and listen to young people in ways that are accessible, meaningful, and useful. Our impact stays rooted not only in numbers, but in the real experiences of the children and youth we serve.

THIS IS WHAT BECOMING LOOKS LIKE

We are not simply adding more programs. We are building a stronger, more responsive ecosystem of arts-based leadership development — one that can meet young people in classrooms, camps, community spaces, adapted learning environments, youth leadership gatherings, and new regions across Canada: expanding with purpose, learning as we grow, and building the future of Thrive around the young people who deserve every opportunity to shape their own.

THANK YOU

Our supporters

Every young person who found their voice in a Thrive program this year did so because of you, our funders, partners, donors, artists, volunteers, board, and staff.

NATIONAL LEAD CHAMPION



CATALYST

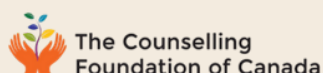


LUMINARIES



The Bradstreet Family Foundation
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TRAILBLAZERS



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THANK YOU

VISIONARIES



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INDIVIDUALS

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Meghan Maher

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THANK YOU

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