



  
**ThriveYouth**  
Development Canada



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# Introduction

Since 1996, Thrive Youth (formerly known as DAREarts) has delivered **art-based leadership programs** to children and youth in underserved communities facing barriers to success. Our programs empower young people to reach their full potential and thrive.



# What We Do

We are a leadership development organization first. Our goal is to empower our participants to try new things, take positive risks, and build a solid sense of self.

What sets us apart is that instead of focusing on young people that have already demonstrated their leadership capacity, we see our programs as a critical intervention for children and youth who, for many reasons, may never consider themselves as leaders without support.



## 1 Participants

We work with partners such as school boards, educators, and service delivery organizations to select participants for our programs, young people who struggle with traditional learning spaces or face barriers in their lives.



## 2 Arts as a Vehicle

We leverage the power of arts-based learning because of its capacity to: be an accessible form of participation, promote self-confidence and self-efficacy, and support an exploration of reconciliation.



## 3 Leadership Development

Our leadership development curriculum is based on a Theory of Change Model that provides an intentional pathway to build confidence within oneself, among peers, and in the broader community.



# Our Approach

We believe leaders aren't born, they're grown.

Each of our programs are built around a Theory of Change Model that aligns with our program plans, curriculum, and leadership development goals. The model supports our participants as they move from exploring self identity, peer-to-peer interaction, and finally their place in their community.

## THEORY OF CHANGE MODEL

### **COMMUNITY**

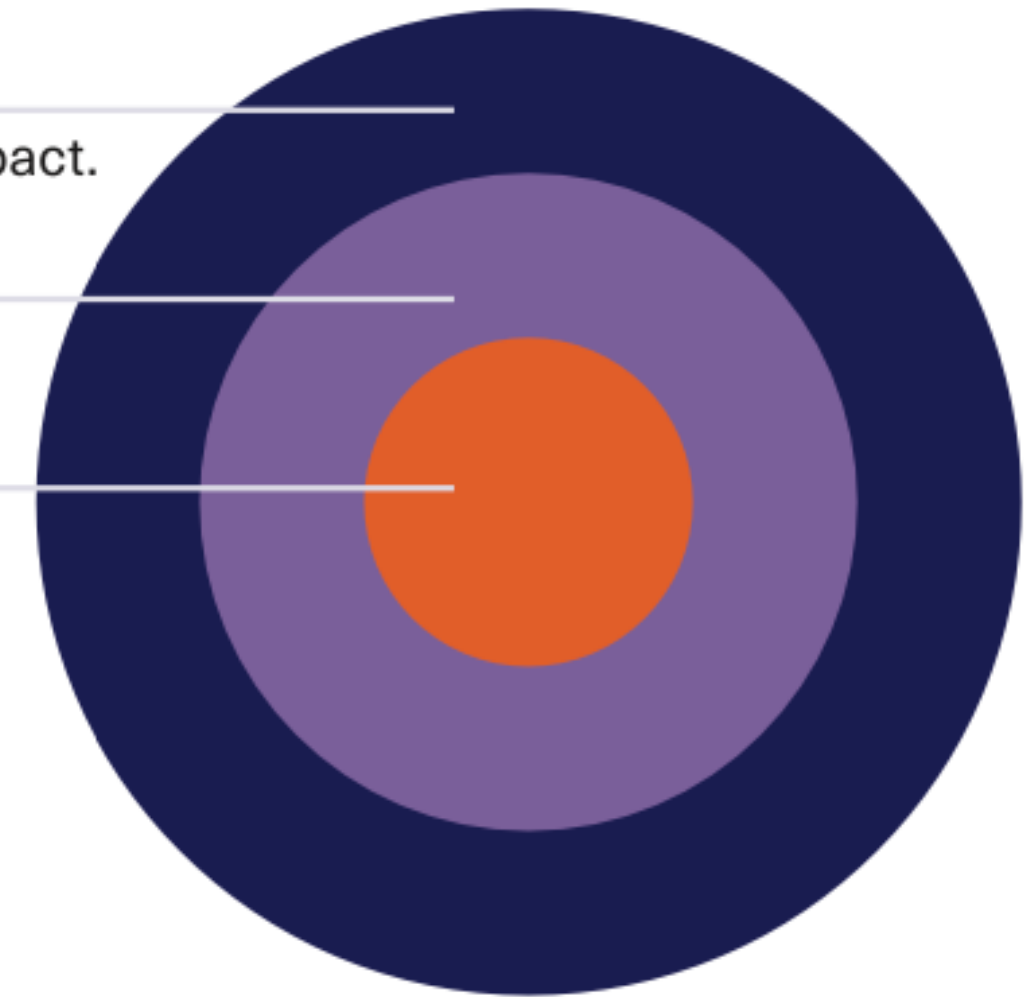
We can make an impact.

### **OTHERS**

I am not alone.

### **SELF**

I have a voice.



**SELF** Teaching youth they matter, to see their own abilities

**OTHERS** Helping youth to learn skills to work within a peer group

**COMMUNITY** Guiding youth to tackle a broader issue, together



# A Continuum of Programs

Thrive offers programming for children and youth aged 9 to 17 that follows a learning trajectory, with each program focusing on a different part of our theory of change model.

Moving through the programs, our participants learn that they have power within themselves, to work with others, and to make real world changes. This has an incredible impact that helps show them what they're capable of pursuing in their lives and opens up potential paths for their future that they may not have been able to imagine previously.

## LEARNING TRAJECTORY

### AGES 9-12

Most time in **self** and **others**

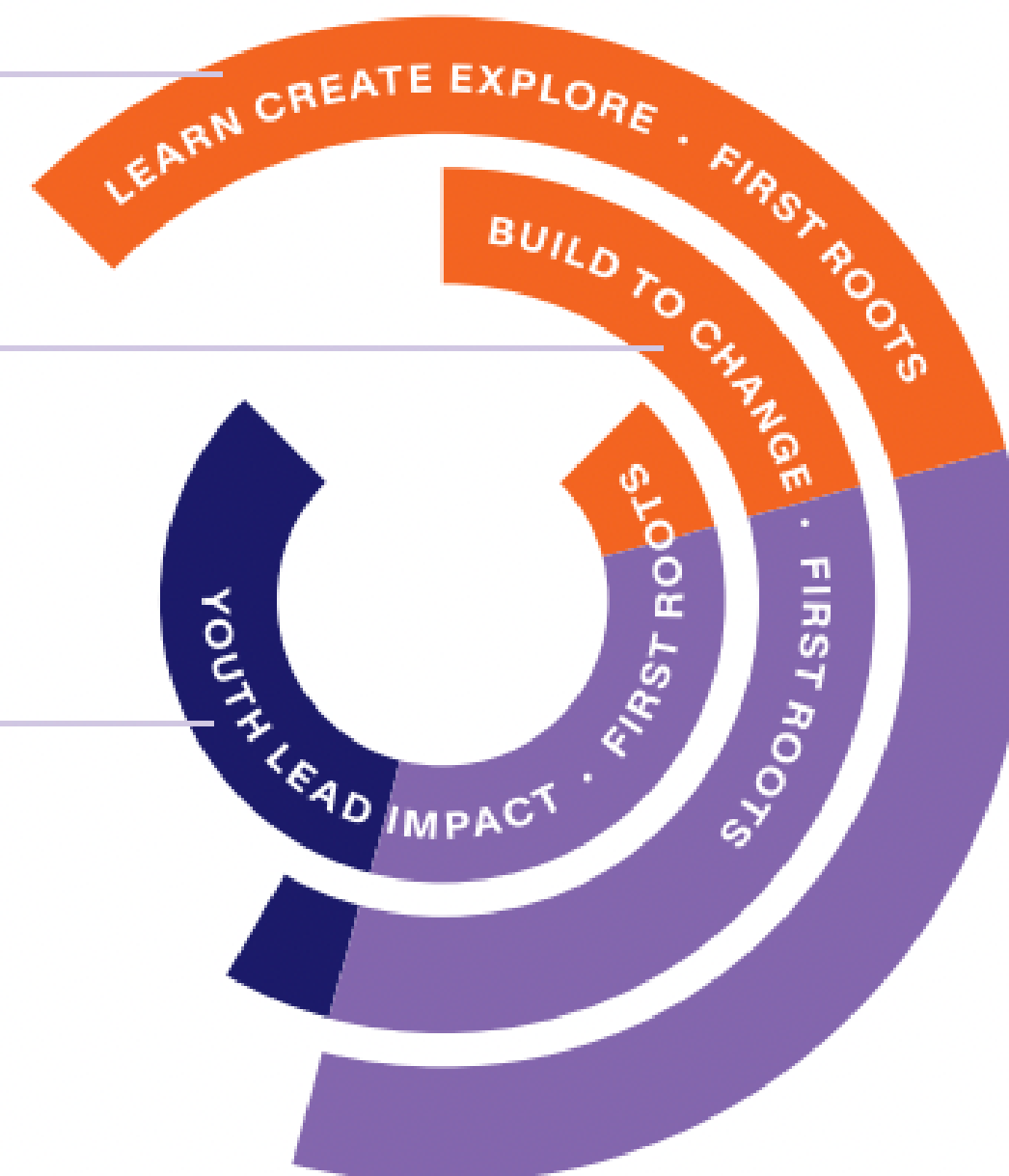
### AGES 13-14

Most time in **self** and **others**, then moving into **community**

### AGES 15-17

Some time in **self**, then most in **others** and **community**

■ **SELF**  
■ **OTHERS**  
■ **COMMUNITY**







# Our Programs

Thrive offers a range of in-school, out of school, and after school programming for children and youth aged 9 to 17. The overarching goal of all of our programs is to empower our participants to feel like they can make a difference in their own lives and the lives of people around them.

Each of our programs is led by a Thrive Youth facilitator along with a professional artist in our artist educator network.

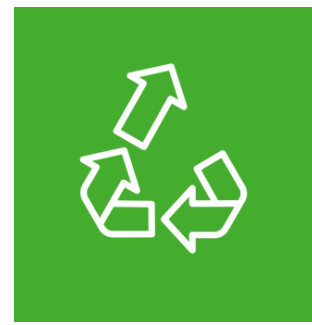
We offer four programs:

1. Learn Create Explore: In-School
2. Learn Create Explore: Out of School
3. Build to Change: After School
4. Youth Lead Impact: After School and In-School

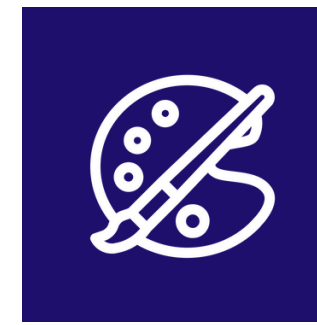


# Art Forms and Artist Educators

Our leadership development programs are grounded in experiential learning that challenges our participants to explore art forms and try something new. Our artist educators represent a wide array of art forms, including but not limited to the ones listed here.



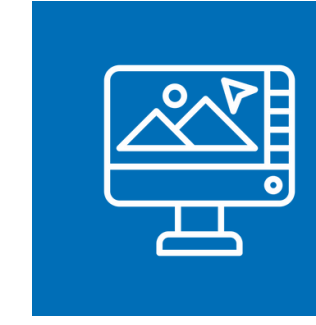
Upcycling



Visual Art



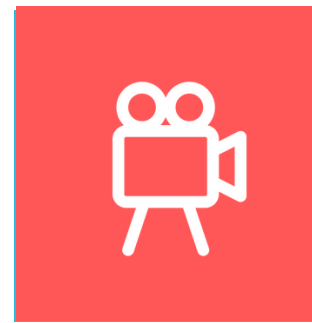
Photography



Digital Art



Spoken Word



Film



Dance



Zine Making



Beat-Boxing



Fashion



Drama



Deejaying



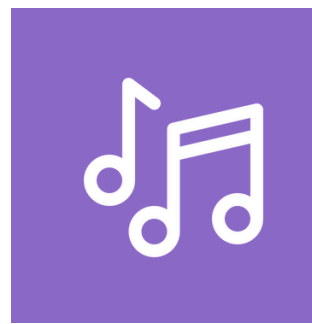
Culinary Arts



Architecture



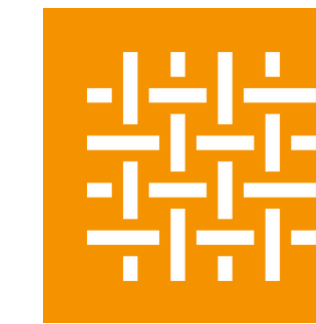
Sculpture



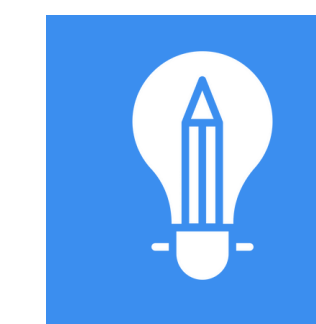
Music and Song-writing



Papermaking



Weaving



Language Arts



Post Production



# Learn Create Explore (LCE): In-School

LCE in-school is 90 minutes a day for five days. The program allows whole classrooms to experience innovative and impactful workshops designed to support the development of critical leadership skills. It provides equitable access to programs while acting as a bridge to our more intensive out-of-school programming.

## Program Basics

**01**

### **Self-Knowledge**

Participants gain a better understanding of who they are including their interests, dreams, goals, and potential.

**02**

### **Connection to Peers**

Participants experience firsthand how to use kindness and positivity to create a sense of belonging for everyone around them.

**03**

### **Ability To Affect Change**

Participants realize that teams can achieve great things when they listen, share, connect, and commit.



# Learn Create Explore (LCE): Out-of-School

LCE out-of-school is our flagship program bringing together students aged 9 to 13 from up to 15 local schools to develop their leadership skills through arts-based experiential learning. Students can be nominated by teachers or principals to join the program.

## Program Basics

**01**

### **New Cohorts**

Nominated students join a new peer group to explore a variety of artistic disciplines while learning and practicing key leadership skills for one day a week for ten weeks.

**02**

### **Out of School**

Participants explore a variety of artistic disciplines with local artists and visit creative spaces in their city to reinforce what they've learnt.

**03**

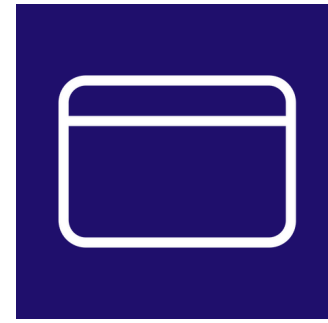
### **Leadership Skills**

Thrive's curriculum allows participants to learn and practice key leadership skills such as problem solving, communication, and teamwork.





# Why Out of School?



## **A chance to leave labels behind**

For many of our participants, the way other students perceive them is a major barrier stopping them from trying something new. Without their existing peer group, they are emboldened to take positive risks which helps build self-esteem and new habits.



## **New friends**

Over half of our participants struggle to make friends, but after completing our program, close to 100% report that they made new friends. This sense of connection is an important part of building overall mental wellness and improving self-confidence.



## **The ability to explore**

Offering programs out of school gives our participants the chance to explore and create in some of the most renowned creative spaces in their city, an opportunity that they may not have otherwise.



# Build to Change (BTC): After-School

Build to Change (BTC) is a free after-school program for youth aged 12 to 15 running for ten, 90 minute sessions. The program is intended to support young people who want to make a difference in their community using the arts, but aren't quite sure where to start.

Youth will participate in a variety of arts and skill-building workshops that create space for learners to feel confident, capable, and connected while exploring a unique balance between project management skill-building workshops and a variety of art forms.

## Program Basics

**01**

### **Real World Issues**

BTC supports participants as they begin to identify issues that matter to them and find ways to address it through the arts.

**02**

### **Skill-Building**

Participants have the opportunity to engage in a variety of artistic disciplines and new skill sets including project management, communication, and collaboration. They also see tangible examples of how local artists use these skills to take action on the issues that matter to them.

**03**

### **Ability To Affect Change**

Using the skills they've gained through the course of the program, participants feel more confident addressing real world issues and feel capable of making a difference where it matters most to them.



# Youth Lead Impact (YLI): In-School and After School

This 10-week program combines elements of a skills lab with an innovation incubator, providing a platform for youth aged 14–18 to develop their project planning, conflict resolution, communication, digital literacy, organizational, and collaboration skills. This is achieved through project-based learning, with guidance from dedicated staff, experienced artists, and community change-makers.

## Program Basics

**01**

### Choosing an Issue

As a group, the participants choose an issue to address through their project work. Through this exercise they will learn and practice how to pitch their ideas and find team consensus.

**02**

### Learning

This unique program gives participants the opportunity to connect with and learn from community changemakers working to address the issues they are most interested in.

**03**

### Taking Action

Participants work together on a project in an art discipline of their choosing that will act as an intervention towards addressing their issue of choice.





# Impact

Thrive is committed to creating measurable impact in the communities we work with. We evaluate our work with both qualitative and quantitative tools, including pre and post program surveys, interviews with community stakeholders, and daily opening and closing discussion circles. Read more about how we're making a difference in the lives of our students, their schools and communities.



# Our Reach





**86%**

**of students report they feel like their "best selves" working with us**

**2/3**

**teachers and parents reported seeing positive changes in their child after working with us**

**96%**

**of students identified as a leader after working with us**

**100%**

**of parents and teachers reported that they would approve of their student/child working with us again**



**"Two weeks of engaging and informative programming delivered as only [Thrive Youth] could. The guest artists each brought their own unique talents and presented outstanding lessons which the kids thoroughly enjoyed. [Thrive Youth] continually sets the standards of what an educational program should be; a program which not only enriches the knowledge of the arts, but also explores and expands the emotional qualities of the learners. Britannia cannot thank you enough for your continued support. Our students are better because of it."**

**– Justin Borsato, Vancouver School Board Teacher**



**“I have had the pleasure of working with [Thrive Youth] for the past 6 years and have been immensely impressed every year at how much of a difference the program has made for our most vulnerable students. I have observed an improvement in self-esteem, behaviour, motivation and overall well-being in my students that have been involved with [Thrive Youth]. I would highly recommend [Thrive Youth] as an enrichment program for all students and will definitely continue our partnership with [Thrive Youth] at Dovercourt PS as it has made a huge impact on the students at our school.”**

**– Chi Le, Toronto District School Board Principal**



**My experience was special because not everyone gets to do this and I made bonds with new people which I am proud to call me friends. I am more interactive. I'll be more willing to open up to new people and give them a helping hand”**

**– Jante, Grade 8 Student**



**“Music day was my favorite because I learned how to sing songs and learn about speaking out. My [Thrive Youth] experience was exciting because I got to speak for myself and learn new things. I used to be shy and not speak, but after I was in [Thrive Youth] I started to speak!”**

**– Kimora, Grade 4 Student**





# Next Steps

For questions, concerns, or to join our network of partner schools, please contact Lisa Norton, Director of Programs & Impact..

[lnorton@thriveyouth.ca](mailto:lnorton@thriveyouth.ca)