



# ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



# ABOUT US

Girls Who LEAP: Lead to Empower & Act with Purpose is a registered non-profit volunteer-run society that provides leadership and mentorship opportunities as well as wrap-around supports for female-identifying and non-binary youth in the Downtown Eastside and Grandview Woodlands communities.



## MISSION

To mentor and empower female-identified youth as leaders by nurturing life skills, building meaningful connections and purposefully impacting our community

## VISION

To promote positive social change on a local, provincial, national and global scale by fostering community engagement, mentorship and early intervention for youth

Girls Who LEAP: Lead to Empower & Act with Purpose Society operates on the unceded territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səl̓ílwətaʔ/Seilwitulh (Tseil-Waututh) Nations

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

## Perception. Pivot. Perspective.

How we interpret each situation that presents itself.

How we are constantly pivoting to navigate each unexpected turn.

How we can choose which lenses we use to view and react in each scenario.

Changing your perceptions of a situation can change your perspective.

I recently shared my admiration of spiders to our LEAP youth. Most of us either love them or we are scared to death of them. However, from my perspective, spiders are truly symbols of creativity, flexibility, independence and resilience.

Spiders are some of the hardest workers I know. They have to rebuild their web every day as they weather through unknown elements. They recycle the silk to either weave a new web or reinforce the foundations of their current web; constantly practicing to master their skills. These webs are truly a work of art - with a solid centre core capable of capturing food many times its size but yet each web can sway different ways while being stretched beyond its comfort zone. More importantly, these webs are anchored to its environment in order to hold firm. Over the past year, Girls Who LEAP has embraced and thrived under the same metaphors. Our youth have built a solid core foundation through our 500+ sessions to weather through all the unexpected curveballs that have come our way.

We've learnt to adapt and pivot. We've figured out how to thrive under the loving care of our amazing volunteer mentors. Our anchors are our incredible community partners and supporters who ground us and continue to provide once-in-a-lifetime opportunities for our youth and families.

We took a LEAP of faith just a little over a year ago when we realized that COVID would mean shutting down our program if we stayed stagnant. Our board of directors and mentors didn't even blink an eye or hesitate to make the impossible possible so that we can continue to move forward. Our GWL community rose up to uplift each and every youth and their respective families over these hard months, whether it meant providing meals, donating grocery gift cards or opening up a safe space to call home. We have been rooted in our four pillars while being surrounded by love and culture. There is so much to be thankful for!

Chen kw'enmántumi (we thank you)

- MITRA TSHAN -

**"THE GREATNESS OF A COMMUNITY IS MOST ACCURATELY MEASURED  
BY THE COMPASSIONATE ACTIONS OF ITS MEMBERS."**

**- CORETTA SCOTT KING -**



# PROGRAMS

Here is a glimpse at what we've been running this past year:

- Violence Against Women & Girls
- STRONGHER™
- Girls Who PLAY: Passion for Lifelong Athletics in Youth
- Rooting for Her
- Well & Wise
- Juniors & Seniors Weekly Sessions
- Community Outreach Projects
- Mentorship Pods
- POWER Weekends and Sessions - Day and Overnight
- Cultural Sessions



Our top highlights:

- Publishing our LEAP workbooks on our four pillars
- Finishing our Circle of Courage resiliency button blanket
- Providing over \$50K in supports to families through our amazing partners
- Over 10,000 hot meals and snacks provided
- Over 500 sessions both virtually and in-person
- Over 4,000 total attendance
- POWER weekends and sessions, especially our overnight trips!



*"GWL really helped me realize my priorities in life. What I should be focusing on to make my future brighter."  
- Tiana, GWL Alumni & Mentor -*



## LEADERSHIP

### PERSPECTIVES

Following our Fall theme of resilience, we focused on perspectives and how situations and outcomes may be interpreted differently by each person based on lived experiences and other factors. There are certainly things outside our control but how we choose to view and respond is within ours. Our youth worked on acknowledging their inner strength and foundational values to shine light and positive perspectives on their past, current and future goals.

*"If you really believe in yourself and persevere through hard times, you can get anything done."  
- Kailani, 14 -*

## ACTION

### CIRCLE OF COURAGE GRATITUDE

It's all about celebrating our amazing community! We worked on a year-long resiliency button blanket based on the Circle of Courage teachings by Dr Martin Brokenleg: belonging (whale), mastery (raven), independence (eagle), generosity (wolf). Our sessions celebrated a year of tenacity and growth with a mixture of youth, family, elders and mentors where we practiced gratitude in recognizing those that have supported us in our year of growth through cultural songs and drumming. We followed up with a land-based weekend where over half the girls camped for the first time in their lives!

Our POWER sessions are facilitated in partnership with ShEvaluesco and Sugiit Lukxs Designs.

## EMPOWERMENT

### PERSEVERANCE

We spent time reflecting on the actions that each youth has taken this year to persevere for themselves, for each other, for our community and how they can leverage this perseverance going forward into the summer. Each 12 hour day was jam packed with team activities, sessions in the forest, around the camp fire and even in the pool!

## PURPOSE

### FOCUS WITH A PURPOSE

As we head into a new chapter and school year, we want to weave a sense of purpose into our every day routines. Sometimes the journey ahead can seem daunting, so we broke down each path into stepping stones. These milestone moments can help jumpstart us when times get tough. We can lean back on our values and our foundational purpose to help refocus us along our journey. Let's not forget those that can help along the way - our family, our friends, our mentors and community!



# PERSEVERANCE

PERFORMED BY  
SHAHAR & EVA

What does perseverance mean to you  
Pushing forward. Never withdrew  
Whenever you're feeling blue  
Family and friends can help too  
If you don't know what to do  
Always remember your personal values  
Determination, patience and motivation  
They're what you need to build a good foundation  
Encouragement, achievements and recognition  
Use these to fuel your ambition  
Now you have everything you need to head toward your destination  
Whether it's to live comfy and wealthy  
Or simply just be healthy  
Be proud and capture all your success with a selfie.



## We couldn't have done this without you!

*"We are so grateful to partner with Girls Who LEAP! It is rare to find an organization like this who genuinely puts the interest of youth first. They successfully support, encourage, mentor, and teach their youth while making fun experiences and memories. The love, care, and intention behind their work is inspiring."*

*- Kasha Butler, Executive Director, Face of Today -*

## PARTNERS

FACE OF TODAY



The Vancouver  
Basketball Foundation™

## COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS



Vancity  
Community Foundation



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

As a volunteer run organization, our mentors put in countless hours as we firmly believe that all our funds should benefit our youth directly. We are extremely proud of our low 2% administration that covers our insurance and liability costs!



**\$65,153**

SPECIAL PROJECTS

**\$23,314**

POWER SESSIONS

**\$22,919**

WEEKLY FOOD

**\$13,414**

TRANSPORTATION

**\$10,714**

WELLNESS PROGRAMS

**\$10,417**

WEEKLY SUPPLIES

**\$5,975**

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTS

**\$2,990**

SPECIAL EVENTS

**\$3925**

ADMINISTRATION

**\$1927**

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

**\$745**

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**\$161,492**

TOTAL EXPENDITURES



