

CNIB Lake Joe 2019 Year in Review

**Enriching lives, making memories, building
independence on the shores of Lake Joseph**



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CNIB Lake Joe: a year in review

Since 1961, CNIB Lake Joe, an accessible camp on the shores of Lake Joseph in Muskoka, has been providing Canadians who are blind or partially sighted with a unique blend of recreation and skills development in a safe, inclusive environment.

In 2019, Lake Joe welcomed 1,630 visitors:

- 597 campers – children, youth, adults, seniors, and family members – plus 40 intervenors/support staff, a total of 637
- 221 staff and special guests attending CNIB Foundation and Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (VLRC) events and meetings*
- 260 guests from community groups enjoyed Lake Joe in our shoulder seasons**
- 500 cowboys and cowgirls kicked up their heels at the CNIB Muskoka: Taste of Country fundraising event

Why Lake Joe? **A camper's perspective...**

"Being at Lake Joe is a feeling like no other. It has allowed me to learn so much about myself and others. I'm excited to say that I'm never going to let my visual impairment hold me back in any way. Often my life has been full of fear, but I finally, fully and truly feel confident, excited and hopeful of what my future has in store for me. Thanks to CNIB Lake Joe, I've never felt more like myself."

**Camryn,
16-year-old camper, CNIB Leadership
Development and Counsellor in Training
program participant**



Counsellors in Training 2019 team (with staff) helping to support and facilitate programs.

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*CNIB Foundation & Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada events and meetings at Lake Joe:

- Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (VLRC) Praxis apprenticeship program for staff training and certification in the areas of vision rehab therapy
- CNIB U – an orientation program for new CNIB Foundation, VLRC, and Deafblind Community Services staff
- Northern Exposure for grade 5-8 students from W. Ross MacDonald
- American Sign Language Immersion program for staff
- ON/QC Board retreat, welcoming 36 board members (and spouses and children) from the regional boards across Ontario and Quebec
- CNIB philanthropy team meeting
- CNIB Friends and Family weekend
- Guide Dog Users of Canada Conference & annual general meeting
- Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada management meeting
- first-ever International Learning Retreat for camp professionals who serve people with sight loss.

**Bookings with community groups and partners:

- "Celebration of Life" to honour Bill Vastis, passionate advocate, loyal mentor and devoted CNIB Lake Joe team member
- a private wedding
- Bracebridge United Church
- COMPASS (Concurrent Outpatient & Psychological Addiction Support Services)
- Eppleworth Adult Learning Centre
- Lions Governance Reunion
- Parkwood Institute
- Sunnybrook Hospital



The beach at CNIB Lake Joe. The perfect place to relax.

2019 Program Overview

CNIB Lake Joe offers a range of innovative programs that are changing what it is to be blind. This summer, registration for summer programs was enthusiastic with all Adult weeks and Family weeks at or near capacity. We had an **overall increase of 7% from 2018** with registrations for **Children and Youth programs increasing 70% from last year!**

Program Participants	2016	2017	2018	2019	2019 vs. 2016	2019 vs. 2017	2019 vs. 2018
Adult	291	271	311	344	18%	27%	11%
Children/Youth	62	46	72	122	97%	165%	70%
Family	148	129	213	171	16%	33%	-20%
TOTAL	501	446	596	637	27%	43%	7%



A young boy experiences the Inuit Blanket Toss.

2019 Program Highlights

In 2019, **four new programs** and **nine new sport, recreational and educational activities** were introduced, with a focus on youth leadership and providing more opportunities for participants of all ages to try new things, learn skills, build confidence, independence and most of all have fun!

CNIB Lake Joe also welcomed 30 handlers and their guide dogs – a record number of dogs onsite at one time – from across the Country for the **Guide Dog AdvoCamp**. Generously sponsored by Royal Canin, the event brought guide dog handlers together to network with their peers and strengthen self-advocacy skills.

New Youth Programs

Leaders-in-Training introduced youth aged 16-18 to various leadership concepts through skill development. Connecting over 20 youth from across the country, the **CNIB Leadership Development Program** focused on developing the leaders of tomorrow through public speaking, advocacy and mentorship opportunities and the **Counsellor-in-Training** program brought youth together for two weeks to refine their leadership abilities and job-readiness skills.



Camp counsellor Josh prepares a camper for a tandem bike ride.

These new programs were in addition to these popular ongoing programs:

4 Children & Youth programs:

- CampAbilities
- PLAY (Pushing Limits for Active Youth)
- SCORE (Skills, Confidence & Opportunities through Recreation & Education)
- Summer Camp (included English immersion for French-speaking youth)

4 Adult programs:

- three Adult Weeks (two of these weeks welcome Deafblind campers and their intervenors and one week included a stayover)
- Adult mini camp

3 Family programs:

- three Family Weeks

Why Lake Joe? **A staff perspective...**

"I'm so proud to be part of the team and to have worked as a program facilitator this summer. Lake Joe has given me the confidence and reaffirmed that I can do anything...just because I can't see the stars, doesn't mean I can't reach them. I'm going to keep advocating and smashing barriers and changing what it means to be blind today."

Emma Van Dyk,
Lake Joe Camp Counsellor and past camper



Emma (right) outside the Rec Hall assisting a camper with a craft activity.

New Sport, Recreational and Educational Activities in 2019!

Thanks to the generous support of CNIB Lake Joe Donors:

- there is a brand new Showdown Table (a combination of table tennis and air hockey) in the Rec Hall;
- the Rec Hall's outdoor patio area has been screened in, extending seasonal programming opportunities;
- there are new pottery wheels as well as a kiln;
- the apartment in PCL (staff building) has been transformed into a Learning Lab – it was the main venue for the Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada Praxis apprenticeship program;
- a new "pop-up podcast" program was initiated;
- the shuffleboard court has been resurfaced;
- an 1,800 square foot multi-sport court (basketball, tennis, badminton, pickleball, volleyball, etc.) has been constructed;



CampAbilities volunteer leads an exercise group on the multi-sport court.

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- an outdoor pizza oven has been installed by the campfire pit, providing unique culinary training opportunities as well as new dining experiences;
- and, the new boathouse installation has been completed, including new railings, expanded deck/programming space and additional docking slips. A new water slide has also been installed.



What goes up, must come down. A young camper at the top of the slide.

CNIB Muskoka: Taste of Country

More than 500 guests kicked up their boots on August 24 at CNIB Muskoka: Taste of Country in support of CNIB Lake Joe. This signature event raised over \$350,000 to help transform CNIB Lake Joe into a year-round camp for children, youth and kids-at-heart. Once again, we were fortunate to have Joan Kelley Walker from The Real Housewives of Toronto, as our tremendous emcee. The event featured line dancing, real western BBQ, scotch tasting, live country music featuring acclaimed Juno Award Nominee, Beverley Mahood and friends, a mechanical bull, spectacular fireworks – and much more!

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The event was a tremendous success thanks to Lake Joe Advisory Board Member and event Chair, Nancy Simonot and her dedicated committee: Tracey Burton, Tom Cross, Marie Hewitt, Helen Hunt, Michaela Hutchison, and Chelsey Penrice.

Lake Joe Volunteers

More than 60 staff and volunteers participated in the annual 'Spring Clean Up Weekend' in May with 32 Cub Scouts from the Toronto 115B Cub Scout Pack working to collect truckloads of leaves and branches from the grounds. Fourteen volunteers from Deloitte and Beaver Creek also worked hard to get CNIB Lake Joe ready for winter!

Twenty-three dedicated **camp volunteers** gave more than 1,090 hours of service to ensure every camper had the best possible experience at CNIB Lake Joe, often volunteering for a full week (or more!) at a time.



One of our fabulous groups of volunteers who made Adult Week so special for our guests!

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The following twelve leadership volunteers diligently served on the **Lake Joseph Centre Advisory Board in 2019**, providing essential advice to management and supporting Lake Joe's strategic and operating plans:

- Robert Froom, Chair
- Corey Braun
- Dawn Clelland
- Shawn Dale
- Lion Peter Hammond
- Terry Kelly
- Jason Mitschele
- Neil Modi
- Nancy Simonot
- Blair Spry
- Derek Thompson
- Jim Tokos

Why Lake Joe? **A volunteer perspective...**

"Until you experience a week at Lake Joe, it's hard to describe. Over the past 10 years I usually come up for Adult Weeks. These campers are just a fantastic, fun-loving group. It's hard to imagine that they wouldn't usually get the chance to canoe or go water-tubing in the summer, but at Lake Joe everyone gets that chance. It is incredibly rewarding to help someone sail or canoe for the first time. There's always a something new and you laugh a lot. After ten years volunteering at Lake Joe, I like seeing clients that I've known for quite some time...it's nice to be part of the furniture!"

Dave Revill,
10-year Lake Joe volunteer



Dave tandem biking with a client.

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Philanthropy Partners

CNIB Lake Joe Vision Team

The CNIB Lake Joe Vision Team raises funds for the "Sponsor a Camper" bursary fund and highest priority needs at CNIB Lake Joe. In 2019/2020, the CNIB Lake Joe Vision Team is working to raise \$3 million to transform our beautiful facility into a year-round camp with expanded program offerings, including winter activities like snowshoeing, ice fishing, skating/hockey, and cross-country skiing. By the end of October 2019, the CNIB Lake Joe Vision Team has raised over \$1.8 million!

- Tim Hogarth, Co-Chair
- John Firstbrook, Co-Chair
- Susan Creasy
- Randall Oliphant
- Nancy Simonot
- Bob Buchan (honourary member)

Lions Clubs International

Lions Clubs International and CNIB share a passion to change what it is to be blind today, working together to achieve common goals through fundraising initiatives, volunteer and promotional opportunities with a focus on CNIB Lake Joe. In 2019, Multiple District A (MDA) Lions raised \$40,000 to help complete the boathouse project and help campers of all ages enjoy water activities! Lions also support the camp through other initiatives, including donating essential items from the [Lake Joe Wish List](#). Lions from District 5M10 continue their incredible support removing barriers for campers from Northwestern Ontario.

The CNIB and MDA Lions Committee 2019/20 included the following Lions:

- Lion Bill MacKenzie, Chair
- Lion Barb Ennis
- Lion Peter Hammond

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Other Resources

- [CNIB Lake Joe Wish List](#)
- 2019 Lake Joe Donor Impact Report (in progress)

CNIB Lake Joe Staff Team

- Monique Pilkington, Executive Director
- Eugene Chong, General Manager
- Lindsay Garrett, Camp Program Manager
- Kelly Hayes, Guest Services Lead/Office Coordinator
- Sherri Helsdingen, Lead, Community Engagement and Team Operations
- Barry Quick, Facility Operator

In 2019, the CNIB Lake Joe Staff Team (including lead seasonal staff Ally Fujs, Taylor Crews, Karen Alexander-Rybak and Vanessa Lester) was the proud recipient of CNIB's prestigious "See Beyond Go Beyond" team award for exceptional service.



Eugene Chong, Kelly Hayes, Lindsay Garrett, Sherri Helsdingen, Barry Quick, and Monique Pilkington posing with the CNIB See Beyond, Go Beyond Team Award certificate.

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Philanthropy Team

- Alain Saumur, Senior Director
- Monika Fox, Associate Director
- Tara Oliphant, Manager
- Eyre Purkin-Bien, Senior Advisor



It's all about the team! Campers work together to design a "cabin flag".

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CNIB Lake Joe
4 Joe Finley Way
MacTier, ON P0C 1H0

Web: cnib.ca/lakejoe

Email: lakejoe@cnib.ca

Toll Free: 1-877-748-4028