

CNIB Lake Joe 2020/21 Year in Review

**Enriching lives, making memories, building independence
on the shores of Lake Joseph since 1961**



Our response to a global pandemic

While our CNIB Lake Joe team was eagerly planning for a busy summer of in-person programs, the pandemic had other plans.

In May 2020, the Government of Ontario announced that overnight camps were not permitted to operate. Our staff quickly responded to this difficult news and committed to calling all of our registered campers to check in and see how they were doing.

In May, we launched [CNIBLakeJoe@Home](#) virtual programs – opportunities for our community to come together and experience the magic of CNIB Lake Joe from home. From coffee chats to arts and crafts, trivia sessions and campfire singalongs, these programs have become an integral part of CNIB Lake Joe programming, breaking down barriers and increasing access to participation Canada-wide all year long.

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



Two girls participating in CNIB Lake Joe Camp-in-a-Box Zoom sessions outside in the fresh air.

“The kids had such an amazing time over the last few weeks through the Camp-in-a-Box program. It was so nice to connect with past camp counsellors/friends and meet new ones. Thank you to everyone involved for such an amazing experience in uncertain times.”

Sarah Knip (parent)

2020/21 Program Highlights

We launched two virtual programs (coffee break and family trivia) in May 2020. In July, we unveiled a full suite of virtual programming that continued throughout the 2020/21 season.

- **220** unique participants registered in **26** new CNIBLakeJoe@Home programs, participating in **3,275** program hours.
- Participants were enthusiastic about CNIBLakeJoe@Home programs, registering **594** times (88% registering for 1-5 sessions).
- **9%** of participants were from outside of Ontario.
- **58%** of attendees were children and youth (29 years and under).
- **42%** of attendees were adults (30 years and over).
- **15** staff members and **27** volunteers led programs.
- **350** physically-distanced dock hosts, guests, donors and volunteers celebrated at the CNIB Muskoka: Dock-to-Dock: Party with a Purpose fundraising event.



A young CNIB Lake Joe camper smiling, about to open her summer Camp-in-a-Box.

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New Child & Youth Programs

- CampAbilities Care to Share
- Camp in a Box: Week #1 “Summer”
- Camp in a Box: Week #2 “Nature”
- Camp in a Box: Week #3 “Sports”
- Camp in a Box: Week #4 “Arts”
- Camp-in-a-Box: Winter
- Kids Craft Corner
- Leadership Lounge
- Little Joes
- Making Music for Kids
- Reindeer Games



Young campers show off their Camp-in-a-Box contents.

With \$10,000 in funding from the Military Police Fund for Blind Children, we created our first-ever **CNIBLakeJoe@Home Camp-in-a-Box program**. One hundred children (ages 6-18) from across Canada registered for four weeks of summer programming, all at no cost to families.

Camp boxes filled with accessible activities and materials brought virtual Zoom sessions to life with lots of fun challenges and activities away from the screen too.

We met with campers for four weeks, Monday – Friday, twice daily, at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. for an hour via Zoom. Each week had a different theme: “everything summer camp,” nature, sports, and arts & crafts. This program was booked solid with happy campers.

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New Family Programs

- Campfire: Songs & Stories
- Family Evenings
- Family Trivia



The whole family joining in on a CNIBLakeJoe@Home virtual program with Stela Trudeau, Music Specialist via Zoom.

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New Adult Programs

- Adult Craft Corner
- Adult Evening Program
- Art Series: music, dance, art, drama
- Canada Day Games
- Coffee Break
- Curiosity Corner
- Dock-to-Dock Party
- Fitness Friday
- Let's Get Moving
- Music Monday
- Music Through Time
- CNIB Lake Joe Talent Show

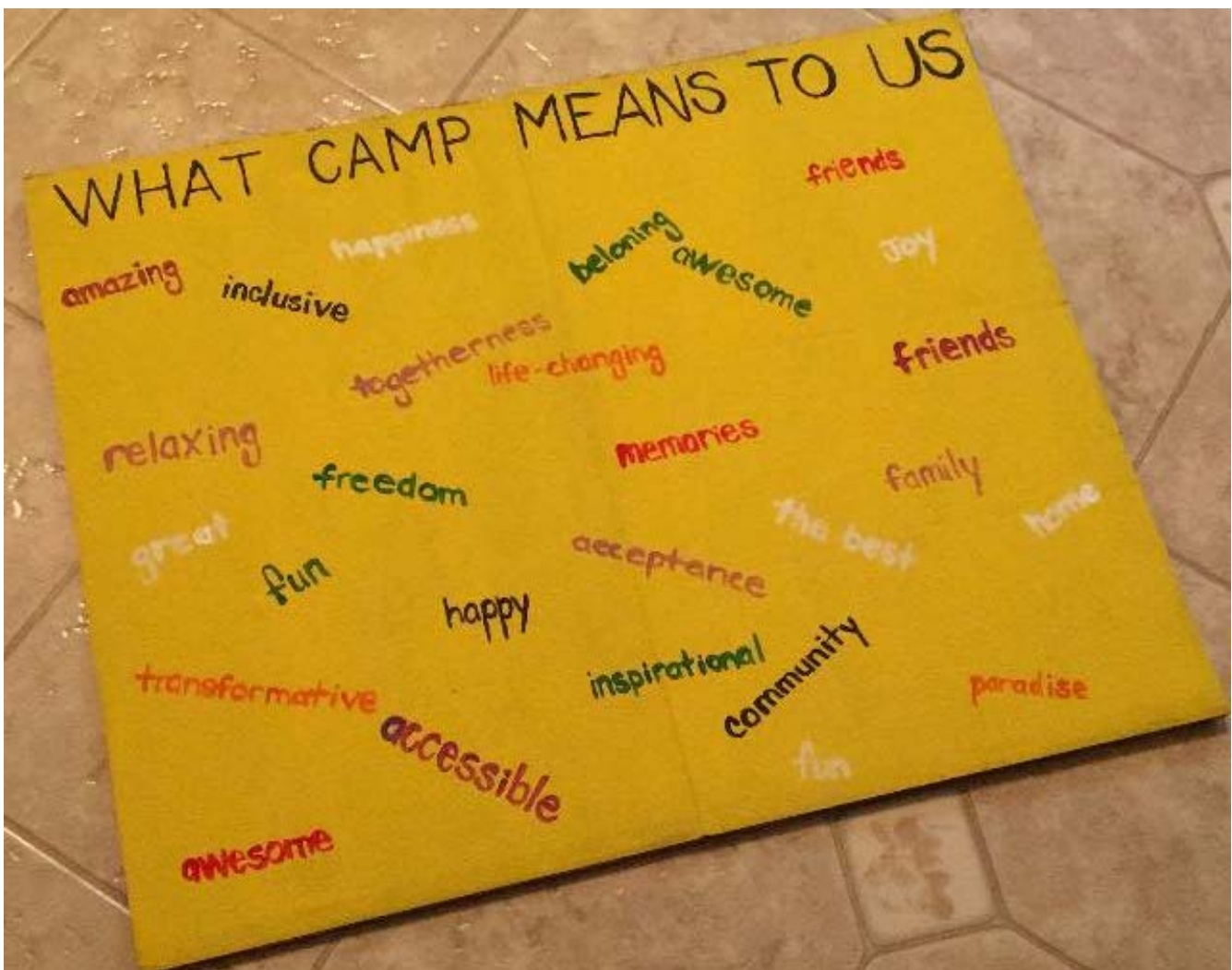


CNIB Lake Joe's Dock-to-Dock virtual party, complete with a pizza-making demo using the new outdoor pizza oven. Eugene Chong, General Manager, top left photo. Lindsay Garrett, Program Manager, bottom right.

Why Virtual Camp? **A camper's perspective...**

“It's good to know that we can all get on that group coffee chat. It made me feel very connected physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. It's not the same as being at camp, but it made me feel like I could look forward to something...thank you!”

Sue Nikita,
Long-time CNIB Lake Joe camper



A craft project that a camp counsellor created by asking people on Facebook to describe CNIB Lake Joe in one word.

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

“It brings me joy sharing my passion for the arts with those around me. I am lucky to be able to connect with so many amazing staff and participants. I had always dreamed of one day working at CNIB Lake Joe and can now say I am part of the CNIB Lake Joe family!”

Stela Trudeau,
CNIBLakeJoe@Home Music Specialist



Stela singing the CNIB Lake Joe song on YouTube.



View our growing collection of recorded virtual programs – including the CNIB Lake Joe song – on the CNIB Lake Joe YouTube playlist.

NEW in 2020/21 **Thanks to our Donors!**

- **Accessible and inclusive music programs** – Online campfire sing-a-longs, talent shows, and music history classes tapped into talents and lifted spirits for participants of all ages.
- **Out on the water** – An **Inflatable Water Element** makes popular water activities more fun! A **Replacement Sail for our Hobie Catamaran** is putting the wind back in our sails, and a new **150hp outboard motor** will keep our pontoon boat cruising and tubing. A **Zodiac Rescue Boat** will help keep CNIB Lake Joe guests safe.
- **New adaptive sports equipment** – With the addition of a **Beep Baseball Set**, whether in the batter's box or the field, players use a combination of strength, skill and auditory senses to focus on the beeping ball and buzzing bases. A new accessible **Disc Golf Set** is also fun to play outside! Individual players throw a flying disc at a target called a basket. The winner completes the course with the fewest throws.

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- Phase one of CNIB Lake Joe's **Adventure Zone** is complete with the addition of an **accessible climbing tower**. The structure includes various climbing options with harness and safety devices for guests of all abilities.



The accessible climbing tower stands 32' high with a climbing surface that is 12' wide and comes with leading-edge safety equipment.

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- **Acoustic Treatment and Upgrades in Dining Hall & Lounge** – To address noise levels, a new sound-absorbing wood ceiling was installed in the lounge, and the dining hall ceiling was lowered. With the renovation and a new fireplace, the dining hall and lounge give our visitors a cozy place to hang out with improved acoustics.



The Lounge featuring a beautiful new wood ceiling

NEW in 2020/21 Online Camp Store!

The CNIB Lake Joe Online Store opened for business! Featuring the latest and greatest Lake Joe merchandise – t-shirts, sweatshirts, mugs and more, guests can now shop online using our accessible online platform.

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CNIB Muskoka: Dock-to-Dock: Party with a Purpose

CNIB Muskoka: Dock-to-Dock: Party with a Purpose made history as Canada's first and largest socially distanced, synchronized dock-to-dock party from coast to coast. We raised over \$195,000 (net) and had over 350 participants, including sponsors, dock hosts, guests, donors, and volunteers.

CNIB champion and event Emcee Joan Kelley Walker kicked off the event via Facebook Live with camper Alicia Chenier who shared how CNIB Lake Joe has shaped her life, built her confidence and independence and impacted her future path. Radio station 104.1 The Dock kept the live dock parties hopping with a special radiothon telethon from 2-6 p.m. Live musicians and celebrities in our 'party pontoon' boats visited 15 docks on Lake Joseph and Lake Muskoka and another 11 virtual docks via Zoom. An incredible line-up of event musicians and celebrities included



Joan Kelly Walker, Event Emcee, on the party pontoon in front of a donor's dock.

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Joan Kelley Walker (Emcee), Rod Black (Host), Beverley Mahood, Mac Shepherd, Shawn Brady, Colin Jennison, Dayna Reid, Will Hebbes, Leah Daniels, Al Rowe, and the "Muskoka Girls" band.

CNIB Lake Joe hosted a "virtual dock" with campers joining the festivities for the first time ever. Guests enjoyed watching dessert pizzas made in our pizza oven and getting tips for making pizzas at home; beer tasting and pairing tips with Muskoka Brewery; and many prizes.

Six big items from the Wish List were funded through the event (see pages 8-9), PLUS camp bursaries for children, adults, and families.

The event was a tremendous success thanks to Lake Joe Vision Team member and event Chair Nancy Simonot and her dedicated committee: Tracey Burton, Tom Cross, Marie Hewitt, Helen Hunt, and Michaela Hutchison.

CNIB Lake Joe Volunteers

Despite the pandemic, our dedicated CNIB Lake Joe volunteers stayed engaged as Virtual Vision Mates, Zoom facilitators/guest speakers, and performers at Facebook Live fundraising concerts.

Three long-time volunteers received an **Ontario Volunteer Service Award**. Offered by the Ontario Honours and Awards Secretariat, this award recognizes 5+ years of continuous service to an organization:

- 5+ years: Dawn Clelland (Board), Rob Froom (Board), Vivian Chong (camp volunteer)
- 10+ years: Dave Revill (camp volunteer)
- 20+ years: Jim Tokos (Board and camp volunteer)

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CNIB Lake Joe Advisory Board 2020/21

Our leadership volunteers continue to provide incredible guidance and support as we operationalize our strategic plan:

- Robert Froom, Chair
- Corey Braun
- Dawn Clelland
- Shawn Dale
- Terry Kelly
- Jason Mitschele
- Neil Modi
- Mark Nelligan
- Nancy Simonot
- Blair Spry
- Derek Thompson
- Jim Tokos
- Stephanie Wilsack
- Audrey Wubbenhorst

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



Camp Abilities staff and campers from the summer of 2018.

“CNIB Lake Joe has taught me that if you believe, you can achieve. Anything can be accomplished in life, no matter the limitations, and this camp has been no exception. As most camps were cancelled in the summer of 2020, CNIB Lake Joe persevered and launched virtual programs. Being involved with the virtual sports camp, I witnessed all the smiles on the screen and active participation. Volunteering at CNIB Lake Joe will change your life in such a positive way, leaving you with experiences that will be remembered for a lifetime.”

Corey Braun, CNIB Lake Joe Advisory Board member and Program Coordinator, Camp Abilities

Philanthropy Partners

Lake Joe Vision Team

Members of the CNIB Lake Joe Vision Team are philanthropic leadership volunteers who help raise funds for highest priority needs and bursaries to boost participation at CNIB Lake Joe. As friends and neighbours of the camp, they lend expertise and advice to support and guide the philanthropic efforts that power program development and delivery at CNIB Lake Joe while leveraging their networks to build, strengthen and steward partnerships.

In 2020/21, the Lake Joe Vision Team continued efforts to help raise funds in support of the \$3.2 million capital campaign to build a new multi-purpose recreation and teaching facility, providing essential indoor space to smash barriers to inclusion through sports, recreation and skill development. In the face of the pandemic, this team transitioned to achieve incredible fundraising success for CNIB Lake Joe virtually. By the end of March 2021, they had raised \$1.6 million in support of CNIB Lake Joe.

Lake Joe Vision Team 2020/21

- Tim Hogarth & John Firstbrook, Co-Captains
- Susan Creasy
- Joan Kelley Walker
- Randall Oliphant
- Nancy Simonot
- Honorary member: Bob Buchan

Lions Clubs International

Lions Clubs International and CNIB share a passion for changing 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.

CNIB / MDA Lions Committee 2020/21 (Lions' members)

- Lion Bill MacKenzie, Chair
- Lion Barb Ennis
- Lion Bob Tanner

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The CNIB and MDA Lions Committee were pleased to honour District A4 as the **District of the Year** winner for raising the most funds in support of CNIB, along with 14 local clubs who raised the most funds in their District with a **Club of the Year** award. Bravo!

CNIB was pleased to present the prestigious **CNIB Knight of Lake Joe Award** to 35 Lions who have demonstrated a passion for CNIB programs and advocating for Lake Joe. In addition, four members of the community were bestowed with a **CNIB Colonel Baker Award**. This award recognizes an individual's exceptional community involvement and outstanding efforts to change what it is to be blind today. It was a special thrill to recognize Bruce Roulston, a Hagersville Lion and CNIB Lake Joe participant, for his selfless contributions to CNIB.



Bruce Roulston (centre), receiving a CNIB Colonel Baker Award.

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Meet the CNIB Lake Joe Team

Our dedicated staff team shares their gifts to make a difference in the lives of campers and ensure that participants have a fantastic experience at CNIB Lake Joe.



CNIB Lake Joe team on Zoom: Row 1: Sherri Helsdingen, Lindsay Garrett, Barry Quick. Row 2: Ally Fujs, Kelly Hayes, Eugene Chong. Row 3: Monique Pilkington

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

CNIBLakeJoe@Home Virtual Program Staff:
Melyssa Belanger, Youth Leadership Specialist
Sienna Fonza, Sports and Recreation Coordinator
Ally Fujs, Music Program Coordinator
Emilee Schevers, Arts & Crafts Coordinator
Stela Trudeau, Music Specialist

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CNIB Philanthropy Team

- Tara Oliphant, Manager
- Eyre Purkin-Bien, Senior Advisor



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**Web / Site Web : cnib.ca / inca.ca
Email / Courriel : info@cnib.ca / info@inca.ca
Toll Free / Sans frais : 1-800-563-2624**