



FOUNDRY FOR COMMUNITY

Fostering community spirit through youth volunteer action

As part of Foundry and the YMCA's commitment to keeping young people engaged, and to improve overall wellness during the summertime, this year Prince George launched the **Foundry for Community (FFC)** program. The program is targeted to youth aged 12 to 16, and recruited 9 youth for its inaugural cohort in Prince George. This initiative was designed to elevate youth connections, foster peer social relationships, strengthen community ties, and cultivate future leaders.

The primary structure of Foundry for Community is to offer youth exposure to unique areas of need in their community, and have them discuss and reflect on how their own experiences and interests direct them to engage. Ultimately, the goal is for the group to collectively agree to focus on one specific area of need and to impact it positively. The youth are provided with a budget to create their intended service plan and become agents of change. They have complete autonomy to establish, create, and implement their project while staff are there to offer guidance and support.

The primary focus of FFC is equipping these youth with essential leadership skills such as decision making, critical thinking, team building, and problem solving. By empowering the youth, they are enabled to be more aware of and actively address local needs while being led to see that young people can influence their communities for the better.

Through their engagement with Foundry for Community, the Prince George youth had the opportunity to receive mentorship from local delegates such as community police officers and Mayor Simon Yu. Following this, the youth identified a need that resonated with them communally and this shared purpose inspired them to initiate a service project, applying their acquired skills. The focus was chosen to be animal welfare. Partnering with the Prince George Humane Society, the youth organized a fundraising event titled **"The Summer Fur Fest."** This included games, a photo booth, concessions, food trucks and local vendors. They were able to successfully raise **\$1,120** for the organization.

This group of dynamic young leaders keenly drove the project initiative, and also engaged with local leaders, social media and TV platforms for the event. Their fresh perspectives and innovative approaches were crucial to the project's success. The youth's involvement demonstrated their ability to tackle challenges from a unique viewpoint and implement creative plans all while giving back to the community.

Participation in Foundry for Community equipped the youth with 40 hours of volunteer service this summer, promoting a spirit of collaboration, a sense of belonging, and active engagement on the whole with the community of Prince George, BC.

See some pictures below.









