



EMPOWERING VULNERABLE YOUTH National Overview 2025-26

“Creating innovative education since 1995, the new LEAD program meets the needs of today’s youth. Together, we can empower our young people to lead their lives with self-confidence, creativity, character and hope.” Marilyn Field, MSM

Our MISSION:

Using the LEAD values of Listen, Empathize, Act & Drive, youthLEADarts empowers vulnerable youth across Canada/Turtle Island with self-confidence, creativity and hope to lead positive change - in themselves and their communities.

Our METHOD:

youthLEADarts Inc. is a national charitable organization that offers accessible LEAD programs for youth across Canada. We use the transformative power of the arts, technology and LEAD values in workshops where our Teaching Artists and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers foster an inclusive and supportive environment. Young people can step beyond their life challenges and embark on self-discovery, skill-building and leadership training through creative play. This equips them with self-confidence and hope for their future.

- LEAD is the brainchild of education visionary, Marilyn Field, MSM, inspired by young Elijah Brown and teaching artists Lori Sherritt-Fleming, Shelley MacDonald, Roy Mulder and Deirdre Potash.
- To build self-confidence and purpose, youngsters practice how to **LEAD: Listen, Empathize, Act, Drive** as they creatively play:
 - L** – Listen openly to others.
 - E** – Empathize with others who think differently.
 - A** – Act to make positive change.
 - D** – Drive yourself to achieve your dream.
- LEAD’s four values pair with the traditional Indigenous Medicine Wheel for wellness and unity.
- LEAD workshops include media and technological arts, drama, creative writing, spoken word, dance, music, visual, Indigenous and culinary arts. Schools and community organizations can integrate LEAD into their own curriculum.
- Results: young people feel empowered with self-confidence, creativity and hope to contribute to society.



youthLEADarts relies on donations of \$20,000 per community region to deliver LEAD programs.

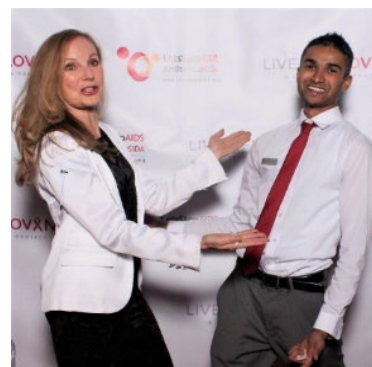


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Our BACKGROUND:

Education Visionary, Marilyn Field, MSM:

- TDSB teacher Marilyn Field founded DAREarts (Thrive) in 1995 and LEAD in 2020 as educational empowerment programs that have reached over 220,000 children across Canada.
- Proven results: confidence and hope have led to increased school success. *"I got hope wakin' up every day," Leroy, 16*



Teaching Artists Bring LEAD Programs Across Canada:

- **youthLEADarts** has strong roots across Canada. From beginning in 2020 with 60 youngsters in British Columbia, we now run programs in Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia.
- **youthLEADarts'** outstanding, multi-cultural Teaching Artists use the arts, technology and the LEAD values to empower our young people.



TOGETHER WE CAN:

1) BUILD YOUNG LEADERS IN COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA:

- Each group of up to 30 youth aged 6 to 19, engage in a series of arts workshops (in-person and online) in schools and community centres.
- Experienced Teaching Artists and Indigenous Knowledge Keepers work with teachers to mentor the youngsters.
- The youth **explore** how LEAD -Listen, Empathize, Act, Drive- nurtures them. They **engage** in collectively creating multi-arts productions that express their voice. They feel **empowered** when they see how they can LEAD change and inspire hope.



2) CONNECT YOUNG LEADERS ACROSS CANADA:

- Youth connect nationally and share their ideas, including addressing Truth and Reconciliation online at www.youthLEADarts.com and social media, mentored by the LEAD mentoring team.

"Thank you for doing this for the kids in our community: an amazing opportunity for them!" Parent, Lismore, NS



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‘LEAD’ OUTCOMES for YOUTH:

- Increased self-confidence and purpose
- Widened perspective for open-minded decision-making
- The drive to stay in school, build life skills and contribute to society

‘LEAD’ OUTCOMES for COMMUNITIES:

- Positive alternatives to drugs, gangs and violence make safer communities.
- Confidence and hope lead to self-reliant communities that strengthen our economy.



WHY youthLEADarts?

“LEAD’s positive effect on the social and emotional progress of the children resonates long after the program ends...” Justin Borsato, Vancouver school teacher

- Today more than ever, kids need to feel that they are heard and loved.
- LEAD includes all of Canada and all kids’ challenges.
- Kids are inspired locally *and* connected nationally.
- Kids of diverse backgrounds and cultures are brought together.
- Kids learn unequivocally that they have what it takes to be a great leader.
- Each workshop begins and ends with a LEAD Circle where inclusivity, equality and respect are practiced.
- LEAD pairs with Canada’s Indigenous Medicine Wheel and Traditional Teachings.
- LEAD’s four values - Listen, Empathize, Act, Drive - give kids a practical pathway that they can follow in their personal lives to build self-confidence and purpose.



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‘LEAD’ IS CURRENTLY IN FOUR PROVINCES ACROSS CANADA:

- **Vancouver, BC**
- **Barrie, ON**
- **Montreal, QC**
- **Nova Scotia: Lismore, Little Harbour, Barneys River & Pictou, NS**

COST PER COMMUNITY:

• Program Development (<i>research, curriculum, training, evaluation</i>)	\$ 3,000
• Program Delivery (<i>teaching artists, Indigenous elders, young mentors</i>)	\$10,000
• Program Materials (<i>supplies, technology, space, transportation, showcase</i>)	\$ 4,000
• Marketing and Communication	\$ 2,000
• Other (<i>Insurance, Taxes & Contingency</i>)	\$ 1,000
• TOTAL:	\$20,000

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

• National Sponsor	\$25,000
• Sponsor a Provincial Community	\$10,000
• Sponsor a Community Program	\$ 5,000
• Sponsor a Teaching Artist or Elder	\$ 2,500
• Sponsor One Daylong LEAD Workshop	\$ 2,500
• Sponsor Technology (<i>laptops, videography, etc.</i>)	\$ 1,500
• Sponsor a Youth	\$ 1,000
• Sponsor T-shirts/stickers (<i>gives identity & belonging</i>)	\$ 500
• Sponsor Education Supplies	\$ 200

You can donate at www.youthleadarts.com

Or e-transfer to donate@youthleadarts.com

Or call/text Lori 778-319-6524 or Shelley 778-883-0781 or Marilyn 416-616-2821

“I moved out of my comfort zone and now I feel brave!” Brittany, 11



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TESTIMONIALS:

Our Young People:

- *"Now I know good leadership has more than one trait." Butterfly 12*
- *"I discovered my voice and how to use it." Hamza 13*
- *"I learned how to recognize and break cycles." Devin, 13*
- *"Now I look for what is good for all of us, not just me." Emanuel 12*



Justin Borsato, Britannia Elementary School teacher:

- *"youthLEADarts elicited profound discussions and projects outlining difficult subjects like racism."*
- *LEAD gives youth the opportunity to broaden the umbrella of art to meet and nurture their individual needs and interests. Youth were consumed by the LEAD values and continue to promote them."*
- *"Students were motivated to succeed because they felt connected to the youthLEADarts team who took time to form meaningful relationships with each of them. As a result, students were inclined to be vulnerable and explore their feelings effectively. Their ideas and emotions translated seamlessly into their projects."*



Parents & Community Leaders:

- *"My kids are so enjoying the youth LEAD program! They look forward to going every month." Parent*
- *"The focus of the youthLEADarts workshop I attended was L for Listen. The participants were challenged to take risks, trust each other and demonstrate teamwork to achieve their tasks. It was wonderful to watch how engaged the kids were working together." Community Leader*



Elder Amanda White, retired Indigenous Education Knowledge Keeper, Vancouver School Board, and residential school survivor:

- *"youthLEADarts gives Indigenous youth skills that fill the void between old ways and new ways: to become pioneers of new ways "*
- *"In finding their voices, the youth call forth the true image of our people and, through youthLEADarts, are able to destroy the distortion of which many have been victims for too long."*



"We all can lead change when we listen." Mark Critch



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LEAD's OUTSTANDING TEACHING ARTISTS:

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

Lori Sherritt-Fleming, President, is an award-winning children's author, performer and teaching artist. She founded the Tickle Trunk Players Theatre for Literacy and performs at major international festivals. Her STEAM based publications are: 'Hungry for Science', 'Hungry for Technology', 'Hungry for Engineering', 'Hungry for Math' and 'Hungry for the Arts'. Fitzhenry & Whiteside.

Candice Halls Howcroft is a member of the Squamish Nation, learning their culture and traditions from them over 20 years. She shares her knowledge as an Essential Skills Instructor at the Native Education College and as an Artist/Squamish Nation Liaison.

Trish De Luca is a fundraising professional and creator of programs for positive change. Working in film studios of Disney, Paramount and Warner Bros gave her insights into leadership and impact. For LEAD, Trish is developing 'After-school Power Programs' for youngsters that build positive thinking and confidence in a fun and safe space.

David Lyle brings his unique Indigenous voice to everything, including host of Nations at War documentary series on APTN. He has a distinguished career as a screen and tv actor and director, including in APTN's Health Nutz, Alaska Daily, Ice Road Terror, Supernatural, CW Network show Arrow, and CBC's Arctic Air. David is also an accomplished acting and dialect coach.

Damian Rumph is a teacher, writer and storyteller on the Traditional Coast Salish Lands of the Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw), Tsleil-Waututh (səlilwətaʔt) & Musqueam(xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) Nations. In students of diverse backgrounds, he uses writing, performance and film to enable language acquisition.

Brunella Battista is a multimedia artist with works screened at the UN's World Peace Forum, and broadcast on CBC, Bravo!, Channel M. She is an internationally published writer, photographer and seasoned performer on stage and TV.

QUEBEC:

Deirdre Potash is a renowned Quebec teaching artist who develops and delivers transformative arts programs. She has partnered with The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, DAREarts, Atelier 19, etc. to deliver small and large-scale programs. Based in Vaudreuil-Dorion, Deirdre travels widely with her message that "art feels good". www.artwill.ca

NOVA SCOTIA:

Shelley MacDonald, Vice President, is an award-winning performing artist and filmmaker who is of Mi'kmaq and Scottish ancestry. With 20+ years of experience as a teaching artist, she has collaborated on theatre and film projects across Turtle Island, creating meaningful cultural experiences that focus on social justice to help create systemic change.

Melanie McDuff is the heartbeat of youthLEADarts NS. She is the youth mentor for our monthly youth leadership program and is instrumental in the programs' design and delivery. Her leadership style is collaborative, inclusive and inspirational.

Roy Mulder's focus is creating strong audio-visual media. He is acclaimed for his underwater videography and heads the Canadian Marine Environment Protection Society.

ONTARIO:

Marilyn Field, MSM, is an internationally acclaimed education pioneer who founded DAREarts in 1995 and LEAD in 2020. Her methods have reached over 220,000 children in Canada. In 2001, she conducted at the Nobel Peace Prize's 100th Anniversary.

Tina Tucker Bye and her husband founded Grove Hall, a community-driven performing arts centre in St. Laurent, QC with year-round performances in dance, theatre, music and arts education for all ages.

Sheniz Janmohamed is an author, teaching artist, spoken word artist and land artist who has performed internationally for over 10 years, including at the Jaipur Literature Festival, Aga Khan Museum, and Vancouver Writers Fest.

NWT: D'Arcy Moses is Indigenous Dene designer and member of AKWE:KON, the Canadian Aboriginal Designer Trading Group.