

Synergy

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About Synergy



Synergy Youth and Community Development Society (operating as Synergy) was established specifically to serve the needs of a community that has been growing at an extremely rapid rate over the past 12 years. The demographics of Chestermere and Area are very young with almost a third of the residents being under the age of 20 years. A number of community assessments and a formal Social Plan, completed in 2012, identified youth programming, volunteerism and community leadership as sectors requiring formal support and development. Synergy was incorporated under the Alberta Societies Act on November 6, 2013 with a mandate to deliver a continuum of leadership education opportunities to youth and their community.






The present Synergy staff team has a total of over 85 years of experience working with children and youth in a large variety of environments from education to social work to health care. In addition, they have over 40 years of experience in developing and administering youth and community programs and services. Synergy has been in operation for 4 years, and over time our youth programs have gained a reputation of being very safe and highly inclusive places to belong.



Synergy serves Chestermere, Langdon and SE Rocky View through youth programming, events, community initiatives, partnerships with other local non-profit organizations, local schools and more.



Synergy operates out of the Centre for Community Leadership, located at
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Chestermere, AB
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MISSION

To cultivate the development of leadership and wellness education in Chestermere, Langdon and South East Rocky View.

VISION

Engaged, Empowered and Healthy Community Leaders

VALUES

Relationship

Inclusion

Collaboration

Holistic
Education

Benevolence

Mentorship

MENTORSHIP

Mentorship is a clear theme throughout all Synergy programs. We value a continuum of mentorship wherein each age group provides guidance to those younger than themselves. Often, the education derived through mentorship relationships is reciprocal, with the younger generation supporting their elders. As mentorship is a core value practiced throughout all of our programs, it is common for youth and adult mentors to be involved in more than one program at a time. We encourage Synergy members and volunteers to move fluidly from one program to another as their needs change or they feel drawn to serve in other areas.

Synergy's Principles of Practice

The Synergy team acts as practitioners of social good who are committed to the following accountabilities:

- To seek out our community regularly and thoughtfully to gain an informed understanding of their need for programs, services and supports.
- To honour existing social structures and respectfully learn from those who have gone before us.
- To take great care not to impose our perception of program needs on the groups we serve.
- To be solution and strength-based focused.
- To be wholly inclusive and participatory.
- To apply a systems approach to decision making amongst our colleagues, partners and Synergy members.
- To effectively practice collaboration.
- To communicate in an open, honest, and transparent manner.
- To dedicate ourselves to strategic planning, flexible consultation and genuine learning
- To practice collective responsibility for the quality of community life.
- To advocate for and facilitate a continuum of reciprocal mentorship throughout Synergy and the community at large.



Leadership & Wellness Programs

YELL Youth Council (Youth Encouraging Lasting Leadership) - AGES 13-17+

Empowers youth to become conscientious members of their community through leadership education such as volunteerism, social activism and self-determination. With support from adult mentors and positive collaboration with external organizations, youth develop healthy social connections and leadership skills through extensive community engagement. **This program is currently funded until June 30th, 2018.**



SHOUT

SHOUT BOYS (AGES 10+)

Boys Council offers a structured program designed to promote boys' natural strengths and increases their options about being male in today's world. With the mentorship of caring adults and teen mentors, boys learn to be engaged and successful in their schools, families, and community and be connected to positive and constructive activities. SHOUT Boys focuses on building self-confidence, strong self-esteem, and respect for others while coping effectively with challenges in their life and having hope for their future.

SHOUT GIRLS (AGES 10 - 12)

Girls Circle offers a structured support circle designed to nurture self-awareness, positive relationships, resiliency, critical thinking and authentic voices. With the encouragement of caring adults and teen mentors, the girls explore themes and topics which are relevant to their lives, such as, friendships, being a girl, trusting ourselves, body image, goals, sexuality, and much more. The girls express themselves through sharing their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in a safe space, and further through creative or focused activities such as role playing, journaling, poetry, drawing, collage, etc. **SHOUT Boys & Girls is currently funded for the remainder of 2018.**

CREATIVE KIDS (AGES 7 - 9)

Develops and promotes confidence and critical thinking as well as problem solving skills. This program has a creative arts basis which helps to promote confidence, as well as, develop critical thinking and problem solving skills. Children build healthy relationships and develop trust and resiliency with community mentors and local facilitators. **This program is currently on hold due to funding restrictions.**

YOUTH INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (AGES 15 - 21)

Local youth are given a leadership education opportunity through hands on work experience and real life jobs skills, while helping them engage with community organizations in a mentorship relationship. Throughout the program, youth engage in extensive, professional, leadership training which benefits both the individual youth and their capacity to make healthy contributions to the community as a whole. Interns take the lead on important community initiatives such as the Positive Ticketing Program. **This program is currently funded until August 3rd, 2018.**

LANGDON SUMMER DROP-IN (AGES 10+)

This program offers free, structured outdoor programming for youth ages 10 and up, and runs every weekday during July and August. Held at Langdon Field with the help of Youth Interns, youth have the opportunity to play games, sports, create artwork, make new friends, and more. Langdon Drop In offers a purposeful and safe place to spend weekday afternoons during the summertime. **This program is currently fully funded for 2018.**

YOUTH LEADERSHIP RETREATS

Retreats such as the Annual Superhero Retreat provide a platform for youth to youth mentorship and for Youth Interns to practice their leadership skills while facilitating a leadership education focused retreat for pre-teens and younger teens. **This program is primarily funded by Synergy fundraising and user fees.**

HOMEWORK HELPERS (GRADES 4 - 12)

Offers help with homework in all academic areas. Students are mentored by older students as well as adult staff and volunteers. The focus is on developing problem solving skills, using an adaptive learning model, and emphasizing fundamentals. Wellness education techniques are used to reduce test anxiety, increase academic self-confidence, and maintain a positive attitude towards education. **This program is currently funded to occur once per month.**



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM (AGES 12 - 21)

Wellness support mentors work one-on-one with youth in need, connecting them with appropriate professional services and when appropriate, engaging them in community activities and programs. The Wellness Support mentor has the role of being a consistent, healthy, non-parent, adult relationship support within the community. **This program is currently unfunded.**

YELL COFFEE TALK (AGES 13 - 17+)

A weekly opportunity for youth to meet as a community group to build healthy relationships with peers and mentors. This is an informal setting where youth reconnect and discuss the social issues that are important to them. Coffee Talk provides a safe haven for youth to be their authentic selves without being judged and to feel accepted as human beings who have value in our community. This is also a chance for youth to learn about what opportunities are available and receive information on how to get involved in community projects and activities. **This program is currently fully funded for 2018.**

YOUTH WELLNESS RETREATS

Intensive bonding experiences for youth, their peers, and community mentors. Retreats focus on building healthy relationships while developing healthy risk taking, interpersonal and intrapersonal competence, and resiliency. **This program is currently unfunded.**

WELLNESS EDUCATION EVENTS/WORKSHOPS

Wellness focused events (such as World Suicide Prevention Day) and workshops are offered to educate the greater Chestermere Community to create a stronger support network for youth. **Events and workshops are currently fully funded for 2018.**

CHESTERMERE DROP-IN (PILOT)

Chestermere Drop In offers unstructured drop in time for youth ages 12 and up. Held at the Centre for Community Leadership, youth and community members are invited to play games, chat with mentors, or just come for a safe place to hangout. The laid-back nature of the program allows youth to shape it into whatever they wish, to provide a purposeful place to spend time. **This program is currently unfunded.**



Wellness Profile

WELLNESS EDUCATION

The Wellness Education Program is a positive, preventative education program that is rooted in healthy relationships and community mentorship. A trained Wellness Education Mentor serves as an anchor for one-to-one and group relationship building, as well as for the adult volunteer mentors. The Mentor provides opportunities for youth to have meaningful and enriching relationships with their peers and non-parent adults in the community, allowing for the overall healthy development of the community's youth. Further, the Wellness Education Mentor is a consistent and sustainable healthy adult present in the lives of youth who are suffering from Adverse Childhood Experiences. The overall desired outcome is the healthy development of our youth. **Our formal wellness program offering dedicated one-to-one support is currently unfunded. The Synergy team provides as much one-to-one support as they are able to outside their core program work.**

PROGRAM GOALS

Provide preventative and early intervention mentorship support to at risk youth (and their families) at a community level.

To operate a community centre which offers structured programs that are directed toward resolving specific problems faced by youth as well as opportunities for informal drop in.

Provide opportunities for youth to develop healthy relationships with peer groups and adult mentors at a community level.

Provide educational opportunities around youth wellness for youth, families, community members, and professionals.

Wellness Highlights

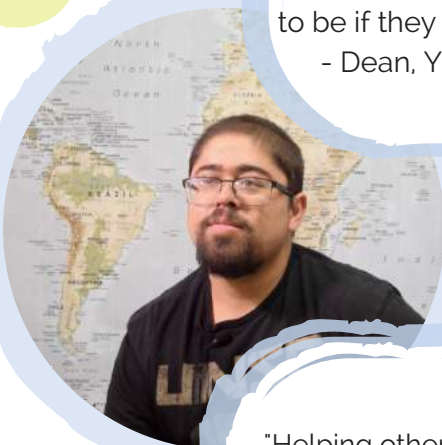
Youth under the age of 20 years represent the largest segment (31.4%) of Chestermere's total population (Chestermere 2017 Census).

Youth wellness cases are steadily increasing with referrals coming in from Alberta Health Services, Children's Services, Rocky View and Calgary Catholic Schools, Private Nurse Practitioners, parents, grandparents, and peers

Synergy's initial wellness cases had 15% not attending school, 35% were LGBTQ youth, 10% were transgender youth, 30% were serious depression or suicidal ideation cases.


Volunteerism

The Impact of Mentoring




"The main impact I see on the kids is that they feel at home... like everyone is there to help them. It shows them that they have a place to be if they need anything."

- Dean, Youth Mentor




"Helping other people out always has a positive effect on yourself... it builds your self-esteem and confidence."

- Connor, Youth Mentor



"With the kids, when they build relationships with you in that way, it creates such a good place for them... Maybe it's something they don't have in their lives."

- Shiya, Youth Mentor



"I definitely see that they have someone else to look up to... It feels really good to know that I can be there for them."

- Keeland, Youth Mentor

There are diverse volunteer opportunities with Synergy, ranging from event assistance to helping out at the Centre to weekly youth mentorship, either through programming or one-to-one. Synergy always welcomes new volunteers of any age - many of our mentors are youth themselves!

The Benefits of Mentoring

Investment in preventative and early intervention strategies toward the enriched social, mental and physical health of children, youth and families



BETTER OVERALL
QUALITY OF COMMUNITY

MENTORING INFLUENCES THE POTENTIAL FOR



Advanced Education



Better Employment



Economic Stability



Stronger Social Network

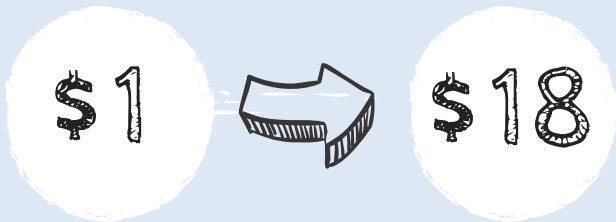


Increased Philanthropy

And youth who have the benefit of mentoring are much more likely to take on *Leadership* roles.

SOCIAL RETURN ON INVESTMENT

due to youth mentoring is estimated at \$18 for every \$1 contributed by Canadians.*



ADDITIONAL EFFECTS OF MENTORING

Increased resiliency

Decreased incidence of:

Helps to break the cycle of poverty

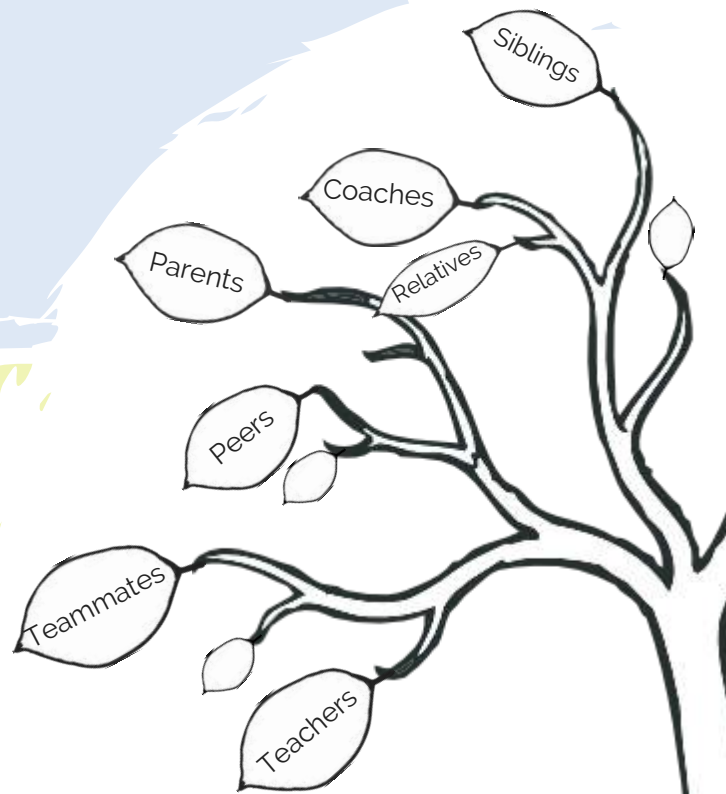
School drop-outs

Bullying

Obesity

Suicide

Crime



THE RIPPLE EFFECT

When a youth is mentored, many others benefit in a variety of direct and indirect ways.

How has Synergy impacted you?

"Through countless opportunities Synergy has provided, I've been able to become a leader in my community, learn new skills, not to mention develop my pre-existing skills. The multitude of programs the committed leaders and community volunteers put on there ensures there's something for everyone! Arguably the most important part of Synergy is the people you work with. Whether through my participation in Synergy's internship program or generally volunteering through YELL, I've gotten to meet many amazing people and build priceless connections. These people have been accepting of me despite my flaws, and have shaped me into a caring and unique individual. These people have pushed me to be my best, and helped me make dreams realizations. They helped me realize even teenagers can make a difference, how even alone I can make the world a better place. I can now realize the impacts of my actions, and inspire future and previous generations. I can do whatever my heart desires, knowing I have a team of amazing, inspirational, powerful individuals behind me."

- Youth Intern

"After 4 years, there's just so much that I could never put into words. I've definitely grown into the person that I want to be, and I've matured in every way possible. I've done so many cool things... even speaking about my own personal victim stories in front of large crowds of kids which is really scary and it's something that a lot of people would struggle to talk about one-on-one in the first place. They've just helped me build my confidence in who I am, and I've really started to care about the world around me."

- Past YELL Participant

"I have seen monumental increases in my own mental health and state of being as both a direct and indirect response to the skills and support I have received from Synergy. The Synergy staff has always gone beyond their job descriptions and responsibilities, putting the youth ahead of themselves, even outside of regular program hours. The personal advancement I have received directly from Synergy's members and programs seems to influence me outside of the Synergy office too. I have become a stronger, more confident and more social individual since joining Synergy."

- Youth Mentor

"I'm so glad I found Synergy. I don't have any friends, but now I have an entire family."

-Youth Participant

How has Synergy impacted you?

"Synergy teaches our children something that nowadays is becoming harder and harder to find. It's teaching our children empathy, how to give back, how to respect others... Synergy is very much a hands-on approach, it's not just sitting in a classroom taking notes. It's dialogue, it's an unconditional, unbiased, non-judgmental safe environment where you feel you can be your true self, and have support all around you... by people you can really look up to, by people who can guide you on the right path to making some smart decisions."

- Synergy Parent

"For my family, it's eased a little bit of pressure that I feel that I couldn't speak to my parents about. My children now have other people to go to, other individuals that they can look up to and it's allowed them to make decisions that are far more advanced than the age they're at. They have all this confidence and decision-making skills that have been brought to them that allow them to think a little bit further than what's just inside the box."

- Synergy Parent

"Through active participation in SHOUT, YELL, and Retreat programs our own family members have grown immensely, rose to their potential, and taken great joy while doing it. The team at Synergy wear empathy and compassion as badges of strength that encourage youth to access them in confidence when life is amazing, and when struggling with challenges amplified by their sensitive stage in life... We are thankful for Synergy, its team members, and its ongoing successful execution of its mission to create effective youth programs, encourage volunteerism, and develop community leaders. We couldn't imagine an Alberta without Synergy."

- Synergy Parent

"I am not sure it is easily expressed how Synergy has impacted my family. Synergy provides my son with a place where he can be his own person without judgements. The Leaders and older youth provide guidance so my son can make a better decision about things. I also find myself enjoying the positive interaction with the youth of our community! Seeing so many caring young people renews my hope for a better tomorrow! Thank You Synergy for all that you are and do!"

- Synergy Parent

Our Supporters

DONORS

Bowest Appliances
Chestermere/Langdon Oilmen's Association
Chestermere Lifepath Wellness
F45 Training
The Lakeshore Spa
Langdon Medical Clinic
Mountain View Credit Union
Paul Waite
Trail Appliances
United Cloud
United Homes Canada
Westjet

BUILDING DONOR RECOGNITION WALL



Recognizing all those who contributed to our new home, the Centre for Community Leadership.

PARTNERS & SUPPORTERS

Many of Synergy's programs, events, and initiatives would not be possible without the support of our many partners who have donated their time, talent, and treasure to the community.

City of Chestermere
Alberta Recreation and Park Association
Chestermere Community and Social Services
Chestermere Whitecappers
Prairie Waters Elementary School
Catholic Womens League
Chestermere RCMP
Market Grade
Chestermere Scouts
Lake Ridge Community Church
Imagination 150
Chestermere Regional Community Association
East Lake School

Chestermere Regional Food Bank
Chestermere Agricultural Society
Camp Chestermere
Calgary Regional Primary Care Network
North Bow Community Facility Board
Langdon Community Garden Society
Langdon Community Collaborative
Langdon OK Club
Langdon School
Prairie Grounds Café
Sylvan Learning Chestermere
Chestermere Art Guild
Lemonade Day Committee
Prince of Peace School

Sarah Thompson School
Stepping Stones to Mental Health
Amanda Alexov
Chestermere Therapy Dog Society
Chestermere Lake Middle School
Chestermere Historical Society
Khalsa School Calgary
Rainbow Creek Elementary
High Five
Chestermere High School
Langdon Community Association
Langdon Recreation Centre
Waiting Room Café
Wild Spirit SUP
Rocky View County

Thank You!



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