



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Camp Towhee Virtual brings game-changing connection and community to children and youth with learning disabilities and mental health issues

TORONTO, ON—Child Development Institute (CDI) is on a quest to battle social isolation brought on by COVID-19 with a virtual adaptation of its beloved Camp Towhee program for children and youth, with session dates kicking off this April.

“Connecting with peers and caring mentors fosters a community and sense of acceptance, which are critical pillars of good mental health and well-being,” said Trish McKeough, Manager of Therapeutic Recreation Programs and Director of Camp Towhee.

Children and youth with learning disabilities and mental health issues (LDMH) are now facing invisible barriers to learning and living more than ever. COVID-19 social distancing has compounded the challenges they face, leading to struggles in school, at home and with their peers, placing them at the utmost risk in this context.

Camp Towhee Virtual changes the game in mental health by stepping into the boots of a mighty hero, fighting back against the risks of social isolation affecting children and youth.

This year’s lineup of exciting therapeutic camp activities includes the legendary Dungeons and Dragons role-playing game, a life-changing, virtual journey bursting with daring rescues, testing battles and endless adventure. Children and youth navigate a world reliant on collaboration with players to pursue a goal and gather treasure, all while learning and engaging in the process of socialization from the comfort and safety of home. This therapeutic approach to building life-long skills, such as active listening, communicating emotions and problem-solving, offers a lifeline to children and youth with LDMH, turning feelings of desperation and isolation into renewed hope and an ability to thrive.

CDI’s evidence-informed LDMH services, which include Camp Towhee, focus on self-regulation, interpersonal awareness and the strengthening of lifelong skills—providing children and youth who often experience feelings of being ‘different’ or ‘less than’ a chance to shine and build brighter futures.

For over 50 years, the Towhee Summer Residential Treatment program (Camp Towhee) has provided a life-changing, therapeutic environment where children and youth ages 10-18 can safely express themselves and build life-long tools of resilience through adventure-based play.

According to an internal CDI research study conducted in 2015, Camp Towhee participants experienced:

- Decreased anxiety symptoms;
- Increased social problem-solving and coping strategies;
- Increased self-esteem
- Development in skill mastery; and
- Maintenance of gains into the school year following treatment.

Camp Towhee Virtual is offering an April Break session from April 12 – 16, as well as summer sessions in July and August.

Registration is now open for [eligible](#) participants by [clicking here](#).

ABOUT CHILD DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Child Development Institute (CDI) is an accredited children's mental health organization in Toronto, Ont., mandated with the mission to support the healthy development of children, youth and families. A leader in the field, CDI develops and delivers world-class, evidence-based mental health programs and services across four streams: Early Intervention, Family Violence, Integra Learning Disabilities & Mental Health, and Healthy Child Development.

For more information about CDI, please visit: childdevelop.ca.

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