

MARCH BREAK Report!



2018





This year's March Break Career Exploration Program focused on the increasingly technological nature of young people's lives. More and more, growing up today means you are almost born with digital tech and grow up in a social media world. Hence, we wanted to focus on not only post-secondary trajectories, career exploration – as we do every year – but we also wanted to focus on young people, social media and digital technology. In doing that, we were able to really tap into the zeitgeist of the moment as it relates to young people who are, in so many ways, growing up in a whole new digitally interconnected world. The week focused on this new reality and made sure we instilled fun, education, technology and Hip Hop!

As is the case every March Break, we had a diverse set of participants, which included Mentors, young future SBL mentees from both Oakdale and Brookview as well as current Westview High school students. That mix made for a vibrant energy in the very cool Mozilla Space. We also got to learn new and exciting things about our eclectic mix of students which is always an unexpected benefit. This year we even had the chance to try a set of whole new activities like Battle Sports and digiPlaySpace. Increasingly at SBL, we are becoming aware that in order to continue to provide exciting, meaningful and engaging activities for our youth, we are going to have to get really familiar with the very new and emerging technological trends, the increasingly social media nature of our young people's lives and the clear fact that they are going to have to keep teaching us about what is cool and hip!

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



We would like to express our deep appreciation and heartfelt thanks to all of our partners! First, we want to thank Mozilla for providing an amazing and digitally connected space where we hosted our week-long program. Many thanks goes to KPMG, TIFF, and Kids Up Front who continue to work with SBL in making so many things possible. To one of our newer partners Shopify, many thanks for opening your doors to our incredible youth!

We are very appreciative of our continuing partnerships with our media partners the CBC and Toronto Star. We are able to make March Break what it is because we are able to continually rely on our longstanding partnerships. To our long time partners Toronto District School Board, Westview Centennial Secondary School and Focus On Youth, we deeply value your ongoing support of our young people and our broader programs. Each and every one of our partners, in their own way, help make our March Break Career Exploration promising and without you this educational and meaningful week would not have been possible!



FOR THE

CONVENTIONS



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MENTORING PROGRAM



CBC

The media landscape is continuously changing as digital trends are disrupting the ways we traditionally consume content. We asked young people to think about the new digital landscape as they went behind the scenes at CBC and witnessed how the news is prepared, curated and delivered. From on screen personalities to the desk staff, there is a lot of background research that goes into making the news. Being in the Metro Morning studio was a memorable and nostalgic moment – a familiar room that has had its share of SBL guest speakers sitting down to have a conversation with host Matt Galloway. The day concluded with some words of wisdom from CBC's Dwight Drummond who is a former resident of the Jane and Finch community and also an award winning news anchor and reporter.



MONDAY PROGRAMMING



TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION: HIP HOP'S HUMBLE BEGINNING

The Hip Hop Tech Session focused on the very humble beginnings of hip hop. The youth were exposed to the social and political conditions that made hip hop possible. The federal policies, urban renewal better known as gentrification and the gutting of social programs that created the conditions that made hip hop come alive and thrive. Our young people learned the four (or five) elements of hip hop and the meager tech needed to create a cypher, a beat, to MC or DJ or to create graffiti art which has, over time, turned into a multi-billion dollar economic industry but also, a lifestyle. The session wrapped with all the youth trying their hand at DJing, with full DJ equipment including two turntables, a set, learned about sampling and created their own graffiti styled tags, which in effect are Graffiti nicknames. Coming out of the workshop, young people learned how Hip Hop was technologically disruptive which led to innovation.

BUBBLE SOCCER

As the world awaits this summer's FIFA World Cup, the world famous soccer tournament, we thought it would be fun to play a slightly altered version of the sport. Imagine wearing a massive bubble that adds 15 lbs to your weight. Now imagine running the length of a soccer field having to dodge your opponents as to avoid a nudge that likely ends with you off your feet all while trying to score a goal. That was the fun experience our mentees, mentors and staff had a chance to enjoy before taking the bubbles off and playing a more traditional version of the "beautiful game" we call soccer.



TRANSITION

PROGRAMMING

TORONTO STAR

As the landscape of media continues to evolve, newspapers are finding their footing by adapting to the digital climate. We stop by The Star to learn how the newsroom is changing and what that means for the future of work for young people. As we took a tour of the newsroom meeting writers and reporters they echoed the importance of internships and that getting any kind of experience in whatever field you are pursuing is key.



TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY

As we support young people along their education journey towards their individual paths to success, for many it means pursuing a college or university education. What better way to support that transition into post-secondary then to have SBL alumni share their expertise? This year, we had Abdulkadir Nur and Whitney Smith provide insights on their post-secondary experience.

Our Grade 8s (mentees) got a crash course on course selection (academic vs applied) as they prepare to enter high school. Our Grade 11 & 12 Mentors explored a post-secondary syllabus, the structure of tutorials vs lectures, and the academic supports available to them.



WATERFRONT ADVISORY PROGRAMMING

KPMG

There are few sights in the city that match KPMG's 46th floor view of the Toronto Waterfront and skyline. Our young people enjoyed the breathtaking backdrop of the city, while in conversation with young faces from KPMG exploring careers from audit to tax. The day capped with a guided tour giving our young people a sense of the cultural atmosphere at this Big 4 accounting firm.



DIGIPLAYSPACE

Welcome to digiPlaySpace, a cutting edge tech exhibit featuring installations focused on empowering audiences to see everyday technology in new, exciting and innovative ways. Our Grade 8 students from Oakdale and Brookview had the opportunity go on a tour and play with cool tech! They interfaced with the equipment that allowed them to use their voice and body movements (kinetics) to control a video game, instead of using a traditional gaming controller. Ultimately, the digiPlaySpace at TIFF allowed our youth to learn more about the latest advances in all different kinds of technology, learned new ways of interfacing with tech all while having loads of digital fun!



WEEKEND PROGRAMMING

TIFF TOUR, Q&A, FILM SCREENING

Each year SBL's March Break Career Exploration provides access to a behind the scenes look at the inner workings of the Toronto International Film Festival - exploring TIFF's rich history, its architectural design, and the production of film. We engaged with a panel of TIFF staff gaining insights about their unique career journeys, and the important idea that success is not a linear path but rather a winding road with forks along the way.



Our afternoon concluded with a private screening of 'Attack the Block' a film that combines comedy with sci-fi! The theatre was filled with laughter as the youth loved watching London teenagers defend their neighbourhood from extraterrestrial beings!



THURSDAY PROGRAMMING



EXPLORING CAREERS

Picking a career or even thinking about career paths can be stressful! Whether you are in high school, a young adult or even a Grade 8 mentee, we find it vital to expose our young people to many different careers and paths. To that end, our youth had a chance to explore, chat and mingle with many different career professionals such as a doctor, lawyer, teacher, software engineer and even an urban planner.

This year, we actively sought out and highlighted female professionals in historically male dominated careers sending the powerful idea that careers are not gender based. The panelists shared their personal stories of their journeys to success while all agreeing that their paths were not easy. The underlying message from all professionals was: it might not be easy but the trick to having a fulfilling and lasting career is simply doing what you love.

SELF-ESTEEM AND DECISIONS WE MAKE

Today, youth live in a technological world that has opened many different creative paths and streams for young people to express themselves, but the other side of that is their lives are now extremely public which means that anyone and everyone can watch their every tweet, post and snapchat. In this social media and cyber-connected world, it is vital for our young people to understand the value of loving themselves.

This workshop explored and pushed youth to think critically about the interconnectedness of our lives and the role it plays in how we feel and what we think of ourselves and others. Using props, young people demonstrated different ways to express beauty about themselves and those around them. We thank SBL alumni and founder of Flaunt It, Sariena Luy for facilitating this workshop. Check out her work at <http://www.flauntit.ca/>



THE

PROGRAMMING



SKYZONE

Over the years, we found exposing youth to different types of physical activity increases the likelihood they'll be and remain physically active throughout their lives. We took our young people to SkyZone where they tested their flexibility, built mentor relationships and engaged in a competitive game of dodgeball. For a number of youth, it was their first time going and they had a blast!



FREDDA PROGRAMMING

SHOPIFY

Shopify's intentional design of the workspace sets the tone for how a conducive work environment should look. We witnessed staff sitting in spaces where they felt most comfortable, whether at a desk, on a sofa, in a lounge space, or even some who were working from home and beamed into the office on one of the screens. Our young people quickly had their assumptions challenged about how workspaces were supposed to look and saw how workplaces can also be productively disrupted. Spotify's staff took the time to share their day-to-day work along with their educational journeys that have led them to their current roles.



A DIFFERENT BOOKLIST

Our trip to A Different Booklist has become an annual tradition and the highlight of the week for many young people. A Different Booklist invites our youth to experience literature in a unique way. The bookstore boasts a selection of literature that is not only written by local authors but is appealing to a wide range of ethnically diverse young people. Our visit is an opportunity for each young person to pick a book that resonates with a piece of their identity while engaging in histories and stories they were not likely to be taught in traditional classrooms.

As we ended our visit, we created time capsules with our names and a message, which will be buried across the street where A Different Booklist used to be located.



FIGHT DAY

PROGRAMMING



BATTLE SPORTS

What better way to end the week than to channel your inner child through an exciting game of Dart of War? Can you remember the last time you played with Nerf darts? Now imagine a space filled with unlimited nerf darts and building blocks to create the perfect fort. Don't forget to picture about 35 young people ready to tag each other out in 1.5 hours of fun. In the spirit of exploring new spaces for the week, we wanted to make sure it was not only limited to careers. We wanted to try new activities that many young people may not have tried.

Check out our recap video on our YouTube channel that includes our time at Battle Sports.



EVALUATION

Youth Quotes.

“PICKING OUT A FREE BOOK WAS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY AS WE DON’T GET TO VISIT BOOKSTORES THAT REPRESENT US MUCH OFTEN, SO OWNING A BOOK THAT DOES, FEELS NICE.”

—(MENTOR PARTICIPANT)

“It was a fun experience being downtown and it’s nice to be in an environment where we are not in all the time. It was nice to explore the city.” —(MENTEE PARTICIPANT)

“This March Break I enjoyed myself because I experienced a lot in one week. It’s also great because some people wouldn’t take their March Break to do things for younger youth.”

—(MENTEE PARTICIPANT)

“This program is the best one I’ve been in because they show nothing but love and determination towards our lives and future.”

—(MENTOR PARTICIPANT)



TRANSITION

Results.

80% of youth agreed the SBL March Break program has helped me better understand ways to achieve my career goals.

88% of youth agreed the SBL March Break Program helped me gain an in-depth understanding of different careers.

87% of youth agreed the Mozilla space made learning more enjoyable.

92% of youth agreed the SBL March Break Program helped expose me to different careers.

80% of youth agreed the SBL March Break Program helped me better understand the transition into Post- Secondary (ie. University, college, apprenticeship).



SUMMARY

Outcomes.

OUTCOMES:

Through our youth-centered, systems focused approach, the program addresses:

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT & YOUTH LEADERSHIP

- Ontario youth are able to navigate the resources within their communities
- Ontario youth are exposed to opportunities within their community & their city
- Ontario youth are aware & involved in conversations regarding their community & future

Through intentionally creating spaces for relationships to develop we are addressing:

Youth Friendly Spaces & Communities:

- Youth are engaged in their communities
- Ontario youth have safe spaces that are accessible and engaging

Having a strong management & mentor team allows us to engage youth within the community. Therefore, during each step of the March Break program we are addressing the following:

BUILDING STRONG & CONSISTENT RELATIONSHIPS

- Ontario youth have a consistent and caring adult
- Ontario youth form & maintain healthy relationships



By providing innovative workshops & exposure opportunities/ outings throughout the program, we are addressing:

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION & APPRENTICESHIP

- Ontario youth are aware & informed on various educational opportunities
- Ontario youth receive training and exposure that will help them achieve academic success

EMPLOYMENT/ ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SOCIAL CAPITAL

- Ontario youth have greater access to employment opportunities
- Ontario youth receive training & support to help secure future employment

By providing a healthy lunch & recreational activities throughout the March Break we are ensuring that:

- Ontario youth are healthy and active
- Ontario youth are mentally and emotionally well

Outcomes Cont'd.



SUPPORTERS

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*Thank You for
your continued
support!*