

Shopify Guests  
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welcome2shopify

2019

SIBI  
SUCCESS BEYOND LIMITS

MARCH BREAK  
REPORT





# INTRODUCTION

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Our Annual March Break Career Exploration Program is always evolving, growing and changing. 2019's version was no different. We always endeavor to design our March Break Career Exploration Program anew every year and tailor it to the interests and aspirations of our young people. This year we focused on careers in law, tech, and politics. A new addition this year was convening a panel focused on community work, writing, the corporate world and the non-profit sector. We also had our young people deeply discuss and explore what being politically active meant in 2019, outside of just voting, we thought about how different careers intersected with politics. We also took this year's group down to City Hall and spoke with a sitting Toronto City Councilor, had a tour of City Hall and discussed in-depth how decisions are made that inevitably shape our communities. If we had to pick one word to describe this year's March Break Career Exploration Program, it would be well-rounded. And the conversations our young people had with the professionals from various careers, fields and walks of life were more about their journey to where they were rather than the heights to which they have ascended. While working hard was a general theme, the key takeaways for the youth this year was that there are many paths, twists and turns to get to where you ultimately end up, and where you're supposed to be and that's ok.







## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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March Break 2019 was a wide ranging and in-depth exploration of career paths and professional backgrounds, and we could not have done this on our own. As is the case each year, we would like to thank Mozilla for hosting us! Their revamped space worked perfectly for us. We would like to thank our partners Toronto District School Board and Westview for a longstanding partnership that makes this week possible. TIFF has also been a longstanding partner and this year provided us access to their studios and professionals in the world of film and media. To the different workspaces we visited like McCarthy Tetrault, Shopify, TD Bank and City of Toronto who have helped with making this possible and such an enriching experience for our mentors and Grade 8 students. To the mentors and students that trusted us and spent their March Break with us, you are who this is for, and you are behind all of the success of the program. Again, to our partners and guests, you brought our plans to life through your support, energy and commitment to the genius of the young people who own this program. To the SBL staff team, while many people are taking down-time, you turned it up.

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PROGRAMMING

# MON- DAY





# HIP HOP LITERACY



For the Hip Hop and Tech workshop, SBL Youth learned about the social conditions that produced Hip Hop! As well as the creativity of poor, working class Black and Brown youth in New York City that made Hip Hop possible! SBL Youth also explored the connections between politics and how decisions made by politicians structure neighbourhoods. We made connections between the South Bronx and Jane and Finch and how creativity sparked the hip hop movement! For the second half of the workshop we explored the elements of hip hop: Mcing, DJing, Graffiti, Breakdancing. During the course of the workshop, SBL Youth were able to try their hand at creating their own 'graffiti tag,' listened to some samples and even watched a DJ demonstrate to them how to cut, mix and scratch. SBL Youth left the Hip Hop Tech workshop with a deeper understanding of the ways hip hop – the art and the culture – has always been both creative and political.





# MCCARTHY THERAULT

Day 1 of our March Break program kicked off with our first visit to McCarthy Therault in the heart of downtown Toronto. On the 53rd floor, youth were able to have lunch provided by the firm while enjoying a fabulous view of the entire city! After a delicious lunch, we got the opportunity to engage in a Q & A with a panel of lawyers representing different areas of the law. Our youth asked many questions to the lawyers, including how their experiences were in post-secondary and even now as a lawyer in the firm. We had a few students in the room that were thinking of law as a possible career choice and this visit to the firm definitely gave them the opportunity to get more clarification about the law profession and to network with the lawyers in the room! A statement that really resonated with the youth was “You are not defined by your grades and not by anything. You are who you are. Work hard, you are special”. We would like to give a special thank you to Eric Yu, Asma Bala, Damilola Katibi, George Plummer, Sabrina Bruno, Leah Ostler and to our wonderful hosts Vivian Ntiri and Atrisha Lewis for sharing their time and wisdom with our youth.



**“YOU ARE NOT DEFINED  
BY YOUR GRADES. YOU  
ARE WHO YOU ARE. WORK  
HARD, YOU ARE SPECIAL”.**





## BUBBLE SOCCER

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Day 1 of our March Break ended with laughter as SBL mentors and students competed in a friendly game of Bubble Soccer at the Scarborough Soccer Association. For many of the youth, this was their first time participating in Bubble Soccer, where the rules of the game are that you have to wear a bubble while trying to dodge their opponent to score a winning goal. This was a great way to end the day because it allowed our youth to build relationships with each other and to get some exercise!



PROGRAMMING

# TUES- DAY





## TD BANK TOUR

Day 2 of our March Break program brought us to the 54th floor of the TD Bank tower where we had the opportunity to learn more about TD's financial history in Toronto and to get a tour of TD's office space that was restored from the 1960s. Furthermore, the youth were able to see artifacts and pictures of Toronto during the 1960s time period all the while being able to look out the window and see how Toronto has grown and developed since then. We were all fascinated to learn more about TD, its history in Toronto, and to learn about the various career possibilities that are available.



## TRANSITION TO POST-SECONDARY

Some of the most pivotal moments in our lives are moments of major transition. One such transition is embarking on education after high school. No matter the path, this post-secondary transition brings with it feelings of excitement, curiosity and anxiety. To ease the uncertainty, we took a trip to Ryerson University where our young people got a crash course on what to expect as a university student, what it means to be a well-rounded student, and financial does and don'ts. The trip ended with a tour of Ryerson's campus and we soaked in the sights and sounds of Ryerson's Student Learning Centre and hung out on their beach themed 6th floor.





## PICTURE PALACE AT TIFF



When it comes to quality sound, projection and imaging in film everyone knows that TIFF is the best place to be in Toronto! Therefore, it is not a question why TIFF would feature Picture Palace, an exhibit that allows its visitors to learn more about lighting, colour, framing, movement, sound and effects. Our grade 8 students from Brookview and Oakdale were fascinated to learn about the different roles and responsibilities that happen behind the scenes in creating a film. This exhibit allowed for self-expression where our youth were able to get into character by trying on different costumes and to test out the equipment that is needed in film production. TIFF's Picture Palace allowed our youth to learn about possible career opportunities and the latest technology in film, all the while being able to have fun!

## BEACH VOLLEYBALL

With the wintery weather that we have received in the last few months, what would be a better way to end off day 2 of our March Break program than playing indoor beach volleyball! We got the opportunity to enjoy fun in the sand with a game of beach volleyball where our youth had a wide variety of skill levels. For instance, we had some youth who were beginners and some who were experts (such as being their school's volleyball captain!) Our youth enjoyed every minute of beach volleyball combined with the music that was being played, which made it an enjoyable experience for all!









PROGRAMMING

# WED- NESDAY





# SHOPIFY

This is our second time being at Shopify and each year it gets bigger and better! This workspace visit started off with breakfast where our youth got to start the day with fruits, juices and pastries. After our wonderful breakfast, our youth got a tour of Shopify and were able to learn more about the company. Our youth were amazed to see the Shopify work environment where the workspace was enjoyable and comfortable, such as choosing to work at a desk or sofa, having lunches prepared by chefs or to even have access to curated books to build the skills and assets of its employees. Hearing from the perspective of our youth, Shopify sets an important tone and example by showing them that there are workspaces that exist which value its employees and their mental health. Our workspace tour ended with a Q and A session with a few of Shopify's employees where they got to share their unique journey to Shopify and were able to answer questions from our youth. Amongst the many questions that were asked by our youth, the most consistent and popular question was "How do you get a job at Shopify?" We definitely enjoyed our visit to Shopify, a special thank you to the panelists and to our host Shavonne Hasfal-McIntosh.





# TOWARDS YOUTH

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Towards Youth: A Play and Radical Hope is a production about hope and optimism in uncertain times. The play is based on a research study that was conducted in drama classes across Canada, England, Greece, Taiwan and India where educators and youth work together to explore what hope looks like based on their respective socio-economic status, geographical location and current societal issues. The play took the audience on a journey across the world where the cast changed roles, costumes and even accents in order to get the audience members to understand what a youth in a different country experiences daily. For many of our youth this was the first time being at a play, and they enjoyed every second!









PROGRAMMING

# THURS- DAY





# EXPLORING CAREERS

It's important to love what you do and follow your passion. In light of that, we invited a range of young professionals to share their individual journeys with us. They shed some light on what their thoughts were in high school if someone had asked them the difficult question, "Where do you see yourself in 5 years." In addition to this, during our smaller breakout sessions the youth were able to ask many questions and have a more in-depth conversation with the panellists about their professions. We would like to thank our panellists for their time and wisdom: Byron Gray, Chef Angel, Danny Stone, Marina Samuel, and Desmond Cole.



## TIFF

An annual tradition of our March Break Program is providing young people with behind the scenes access to the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). We got the opportunity to learn more about film production, TIFF's strategic architectural design and TIFF's unique history in Toronto. We also had an amazing opportunity to engage in a Q and A with TIFF staff about their career journey to TIFF. Our youth learned from hearing the different stories of the panelists that each path to success is a journey and is never linear. The youth also understood how invaluable volunteering and networking are, and how that may lead to future career opportunities.

Our afternoon ended with a private screening of *Jinn*, a coming-of-age film about the struggle of changing identity and the impact of that on one's self, friends and family. The theatre was filled with awes and laughter, and was definitely a film that resonated with all in the room.







**PROGRAMMING**

**FRI-  
DAY**



## A DIFFERENT BOOKLIST



Reading can bring out the best in youth and more importantly expand their horizons. We partnered up with A Different Booklist to offer everyone an opportunity to choose a book of his or her choice, on us! This bookstore offers a variety of books that feature authors of colour who may not be found in mainstream bookstores. This has sparked an interest in some of our youth to read more. This interest stems from youth relating to the stories presented by authors that look like them. Our traditional trip to this bookstore has been a great way to end off the March Break Program.

## CITY HALL

Our March Break was filled with important conversations centred around the future of work, the current state of education, and recent financial changes to OSAP. What guided these conversations were the important questions young people were asking throughout the week, which ultimately culminated in a visit to City Hall. As we entered the lobby, we marvelled at a model replica of the City of Toronto, immediately locating Jane and Finch. We had the opportunity to get a tour of the Council Chambers and sit down with Councillor Jennifer McKelvie to bring together all that we learned from the week and we ended with the many new questions our young people were just beginning to ask and explore.





# BATTLE SPORTS

A well-rounded week includes a change of pace, some easy natured competition and physical activity. Every March Break, one highlight of the week has always been the Ultimate Nerf Dart Battle! We cycled through half a dozen different versions of the game and ended with the final showdown – which was a Free For All, leaving one person standing. As always, smiles, laughter and fun is the best way to end the week!









# EVALUATION

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"Being able to select and purchase a book from a historical store that represents our ancestors meant a lot. Being able to own a book with so much meaning was sentimental and I'll cherish my book. This also inspired me to read more stories and books by black authors."

- (Program Participant,16)

"Grabbing a book meant a lot to me because I like to read new things and learn new vocabulary and SBL helped to make that possible for me."

- (Program Participant,14)

"Being downtown all week was an amazing experience, I got the chance to visit new places and meet new people"

- (Mentee,13)

"SBL is an amazing program that builds relationships through experiences. This experience was educational and eye-opening. I never noticed the various careers and opportunities that are available for youth and the path to be successful. One more thing that I learned is to find something that you are passionate about and you will be successful."

- (Program Participant,16)



96%



of attendees felt more confident & ready for employment

100%



of attendees felt they better understand ways to achieve career goals

96%



of students stated that they built good relationships with staff, including other students and mentors

95%



of attendees felt they better understand the transition into post-secondary

90%



of Grade 8 students felt the program helped them to think about what they want to do after high school

100%



of participants and mentors gained insight on how to make themselves appealing to employers

# SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

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*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



# SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

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*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



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## THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

