

IMPACT REPORT · OCTOBER 2026

Camp Gedi Summer 2026

A look back at our third summer, the experiences that brought our community together, the impact shared by campers and families, and what we're learning as we continue to grow.

3
Seasons of camp

25
Campers per session

9.75
Family experience rating out of 10

0
Families who said we fell short

WHERE WE STARTED

Where we started, and **why we kept going.**

Camp Gedi began in 2024 as a three week pilot with a small group of families and one big question: What happens when a learning environment is built around relationships, agency, and belonging? We sought to understand the impact of a summer program focused primarily on the children understanding themselves and their community better.

By the end of that first summer, we had our answer. The children didn't want it to end, parents told us it had changed something at home, and staff shared it was transformative and unlike any school or camp they had worked in.

After collecting further data and feedback it was clear this couldn't be a one-time experiment. We decided, before the summer was even over, that Camp Gedi would become a permanent part of the ecosystem we're building.



2024
Our first three-week pilot

3
Seasons of camp

2
Three-week sessions each summer, July and August

25
Campers per session, so every child can be genuinely known

This past summer was our third season. The structure has remained the same since our first year. It's intentionally small so that every camper can be genuinely known. But the experience itself is never fixed.

Camp Gedi is a research-focused, dynamic learning environment, and we continually evolve what we do based on what we are learning from children, families, educators, and one another. One-to-one and group coaching, individual and collaborative projects and our unique approach to staff training are not static programs or components we simply layer onto camp. They are part of an evolving model that we test, study, refine, and sometimes rethink entirely.

> Our goal is not to arrive at a perfect structure and replicate it year after year, but to build a learning environment capable of changing as our understanding deepens.



ÉTIENNE BRÛLÉ PARK, TORONTO

Where camp **happens.**

Camp Gedi is rooted in Étienne Brûlé Park, a stretch of ravine along the Humber River in Toronto's west end. The landscape gives children daily opportunities to move through trees and trails, explore the river, and build a relationship with the land, while still being deeply connected to the life of the city around them. Our home base is not a traditional camp property or a contained campus. It's a place within the city where nature, community, and urban life meet.

Old Mill subway station is used for pickup and drop-off. When weather or air quality makes the ravine unsafe, we move to our indoor location. This summer we partnered with The Lane School of Music. During Community Week, the third week of each session, we intentionally expand beyond our home base, spending time learning from local businesses, and experiencing different neighbourhoods and parks across Toronto.

The city itself is the learning environment.

Who **we are.**

Camp Gedi's mission is to create extraordinary summer experiences that celebrate unique identities and build strong, inclusive communities, while integrating social-emotional learning with hands-on, child-led exploration.

Radical empathy

Fostering deep compassion and understanding for oneself and others.

Intergenerational community

Belonging and connection across ages.

Compassionate inquiry

Asking questions with kindness to promote exploration.

Experiential learning

Learning through hands-on experience and active participation.

Collaborative partnership

Working together with campers, families, and staff for shared success.

Every staff member is trained to hold a coaching stance as their approach to conversations with campers, with families, and with each other. That training deepens every summer: this year's staff team built on two prior years of findings about what actually helps a child feel safe enough to grow.

TWO WAYS OF LISTENING

Who **we served.**

At Camp Gedi, we seek to understand each child before meeting them on day one. Every family completes a detailed registration form, and we invite families to complete a voluntary research survey that helps us understand the broader community we are serving.

REQUIRED

Individual Child Registration

Our registration process helps us understand the child in front of us. We ask about:

- Interests, passions, and strengths
- Challenges, struggles, and triggers
- Socialization styles and relationships
- What helps a child feel safe and regulated
- What helps them feel connected and like they belong
- Information our staff should know to build a meaningful relationship with them

VOLUNTARY

Family Research Survey

Our research survey helps us understand the community and learn from the experience. We ask families about:

- Demographic and family information
- Their hopes and goals for their child
- Their understanding of social emotional learning
- Their perspectives and experiences related to their child's development





What families **hoped for.**

We asked families what they hope their child will experience or develop through their time at Gedi.

"Find safety in his own body."

"More awareness of themselves and the world around them."

"Build meaningful relationships."

"Opportunities to be creative and expressive."

These responses are not simply collected and filed away. Together with what we learn through registration, daily observation, staff reflection, and conversations with families, they become part of Gedi's ongoing learning cycle. Every family who enters Gedi contributes to our understanding of what children need to feel known, safe, connected, and capable of growth.

A day at **Camp Gedi.**

At Gedi, the day is intentionally designed as a learning environment, not a schedule of activities. While the specific activities evolve from year to year, the underlying rhythm creates continuity and helps children know what to expect while still leaving room for curiosity, choice, and discovery.

CONNECT

Gedi Gathering + Land Acknowledgement

01

The day begins in circle, giving campers and staff a chance to reconnect, check in, and arrive together.

IMAGINE

Imagination Spark

02

A short creative or reflective prompt invites curiosity, imagination, and engagement while setting the tone for the day.

EXPLORE

Nature + SEL Learning

03

Campers move into the ravine for nature-based exploration alongside experiences designed to develop social-emotional awareness and skills.

BELONG

Community Lunch + Grounding

04

We eat together as a whole community, followed by a grounding meditation and the Gedi Mantra. Shared meals are part of how we build belonging, not simply a break between activities.

REFLECT

Storytelling

05

A picture book and guided questions connect the day's themes to stories, perspectives, and opportunities for reflection.

CREATE

Hive + Bee Projects

06

Campers contribute to the Hive Project, a collaborative project created by the whole camp, while also working on their individual Bee Projects, which give each child space to explore personal interests and growth.

PRACTICE

Coach & Connect

07

Campers develop and practice foundational coaching skills with one another in pairs and small groups. This is distinct from the individual coaching conversations each camper has with a staff member at least once a week.

PLAY

Camp-Wide Games + Sport

08

Movement and play create opportunities to practise collaboration, communication, persistence, and joy in less structured contexts.

CLOSE

Farewell Gedi Gathering

09

The day ends in a circle, giving the community an opportunity to reflect, reconnect, and close together. Families are welcomed into this final gathering.



Connect: Gedi Gathering



Explore: the ravine and river



Reflect: Storytelling

What this looks like **in practice.**

The value of this structure is not in the individual activities themselves, but in how they create opportunities for children to practise the skills and ways of being we are trying to understand and develop.

Community Partnership Agreement

On the first day of each session, campers and staff co-create a Community Partnership Agreement on a large banner. Rather than receiving a predetermined list of camp rules, the group considers together what safety, consent, participation, respect, and care for one another and the land should look like in their community.

Human Knot

Campers work together to complete a Human Knot, a simple physical challenge that becomes an exercise in communication. The group can only untangle itself by listening, communicating clearly, noticing others, and adjusting their approach.

Build a Mini Village

Campers use natural materials found in the ravine to create a shared community. The activity then becomes a springboard for a deeper question: What actually makes a community thrive? The physical act of building becomes an opportunity to think about belonging, collaboration, leadership, and the conditions that allow communities to flourish.



Coaching as **a practice.**

Coach & Connect is intentionally developmental. Campers are not expected to know how to coach one another. Staff first introduce foundational skills such as active listening, asking open "what" questions, and staying curious rather than immediately offering advice or solutions.

The following day, campers begin practising these skills with one another in small groups. They might start with something familiar and low-stakes, such as talking about a favourite book or video game, before gradually applying the skills to more meaningful questions and situations.

Children learn by doing.

We do not simply teach concepts like listening, collaboration, self-awareness, or agency. We create repeated opportunities for children to experience, practise, reflect on, and apply them.

Bee Projects and **Hive Projects.**

Two complementary parts of Gedi's learning model: individual agency within a collaborative community.



WHAT DO I WANT TO LEARN?

Bee Projects: learning through agency

Each camper chooses a Bee Project: something they want to learn, improve, create, or practise. Projects begin with the child's own interests and give them opportunities to set goals, make choices, navigate challenges, and experience their own growth.

In 2026, projects included building a chess board for a dad who loves chess, learning a fishtail braid, creating LEGO structures from natural materials, learning stop-motion animation well enough to teach a friend, and practising nail art. The goal is not the finished product. Bee Projects give us a window into how children approach learning when it matters to them: how they persist, adapt, seek help, and recognize their own progress.



WHAT CAN WE CREATE TOGETHER?

Hive Projects: learning through community

The Hive Project is a collaborative project created by the whole camp. Every camper has a meaningful role, creating opportunities to practise communication, collaboration, decision-making, and making space for different strengths.

In July, campers created a stop-motion film about a child who discovers an AI robot that separates him from his friend group, leaving him with the decision between an artificial creation that seems to understand him deeply or his human friends. In August, campers created a superhero Bee story that was staged as a play with a complementary book.

COMMUNITY WEEK

Taking Gedi **into the city.**

Each session closes with Community Week, five days when Gedi leaves Étienne Brûlé and expands into the city. The shift creates more movement, new environments, and opportunities for campers to practise what they have been learning in real-world community settings.

In 2026, Community Week included

- A music experience and scavenger hunt taking us through High Park's Zoo and ending at Jamie Bell Adventure Playground
- A full day at Peach Berserk participating in a "Craftivism" workshop where campers made a silkscreen representing something important to them and created t-shirts!
- A candle-making workshop at Kandl
- A clay workshop at Clay with Me
- The ROM's Bees: A Story of Survival exhibition
- Workshops with local authors and illustrators at Another Story Bookshop
- Outdoor pizza-making with a visiting chef in Sorauren Park and Christie Pits Park
- Visits with residents at Delmanor seniors' residences, where campers practised connection across generations



Community Week ends with a Farewell Gathering built around three questions:

What are you taking with you?

Who made you feel like you belonged?

What do you want to remember?



Family Festival **Weekend.**

Gedi is built on the belief that children grow within communities, not in isolation.

The Family Festival Weekend brings campers, families, and staff together for an overnight experience at Haute Goat Farm, designed to extend the Gedi learning environment beyond the camp day. Families learn, create, eat, explore, and reflect together through activities that draw on Gedi's core practices of curiosity, connection, experiential learning, and collaborative partnership.

The weekend includes

- **Collaborative creative experiences,** including storytelling and group projects
- **Nature and animal-based experiences** that encourage curiosity and connection to the natural world
- **Shared Gedi Gatherings** where families reflect, ask questions, and build community together
- **Family Buddy Time,** connecting families across the Gedi community
- **A parent and caregiver coaching workshop,** extending Gedi's coaching and compassionate inquiry practices into family life
- **Shared meals and informal time** that create space for intergenerational connection
- **A Hive Project showcase,** where campers share their collaborative work with their families

From camp community to family community

Rather than simply telling parents what their children have been learning, we invite them to participate in the same kinds of experiences that ask us to listen differently, stay curious, collaborate, and make space for different perspectives. The Festival culminates in a shared closing gathering where children and families reflect on what they have experienced and what they are taking with them.

Creating a positive experience is important to us, but what matters more is the network of relationships around each child. When families, educators, and children are learning alongside one another, the principles of Gedi can move beyond the camp environment and become part of a larger, intergenerational community.

Coaching and **restorative practice.**

At Gedi, adults are not positioned as the people with all the answers. They are trained to help children develop the capacity to find their own.

Staff are trained in coaching practices that emphasize active listening, curious questions, reflection, and agency rather than instruction or advice. In 2026, campers began learning these same foundational skills through Coach & Connect, practising how to listen, ask questions, and support one another.

When conflict occurs, staff use a restorative approach rather than a punitive one. The focus shifts from determining who should be punished to understanding what happened, who was affected, what needs to be repaired, and how everyone can move forward. Gedi's protocol follows six stages:

01 **Establish safety** for everyone involved.

02 **Support regulation** before attempting to resolve the conflict.

03 **Hear each person's perspective** individually.

04 **Understand the impact** of what happened.

05 **Identify needs and responsibilities** together.

06 **Agree on how the harm will be repaired,** with documented follow-up.



Together, coaching and restorative practice create a consistent philosophy across the Gedi environment: children are capable of insight, responsibility, repair, and growth, and our role is to create the conditions that help them develop those capacities.

POST-CAMP FINDINGS 2026

The story **the data tells.**

The 2026 Post-Camp Survey opened on August 24. As of this report, 16 families have responded, and the picture that's emerging is remarkably consistent: families are telling us, in their own words, that Camp Gedi didn't just fill three weeks of summer. It changed how their kids see themselves, and how their families talk to each other.

9.25 / 10

Average rating of their child's overall experience

9.75 / 10

Average rating of the family's overall experience

9.5 / 10

Average likelihood of recommending Camp Gedi to another family



11 of 16 families said the experience exceeded or far exceeded what they had hoped for. The remaining 5 said it met their hopes fully (these 5 are returning families, so they know what to expect from Gedi!). **0 families**, at any point, in any response, said Camp Gedi fell short.

Belonging and trust

Across 16 families, every single one agreed that:

- ✓ My child was able to be themselves at camp.
- ✓ My child had opportunities to build meaningful relationships with other children.
- ✓ I trusted the Camp Gedi team with my child.
- ✓ Expectations and boundaries were clear.
- ✓ My child felt physically safe at camp.
- ✓ My child felt emotionally safe bringing problems or concerns to staff.

On every other belonging and safety statement we asked about (respect for differences, open communication when problems arose, feeling comfortable raising a concern, staff attentiveness), 15 of the 16 families agreed.

Growth families noticed

Every family reported growth in how their child communicates needs and feelings, how they identify and express emotions, and how independently they solve problems.

When we asked which areas stood out most, two rose to the top: **confidence and communication**, followed closely by emotional awareness, emotion regulation, and independence.

All families said what their child practiced this summer will “definitely” or “probably” carry into school, friendships, or family life.

What families **are saying.**

"Thank you for the experience of a lifetime. No amount of words can do justice to our gratitude and how Ira has benefited from Camp Gedi. Your leadership, passion, grit, heart, the entire team, the community and program you have built and continue to build, immersive curriculum, make Camp Gedi the best program there is, and our community is better because of it. As parents, we were always well informed, and felt so well taken care of, beyond our imagination."

Saurabh and Shagun, Ira's parents

"My child is more themselves after Camp Gedi… These 3 weeks were the only weeks where [she] would come home and I feel that she had been challenged during the day, she got to learn something new, her confidence has grown, and she has learned amazing new physical and emotional skills."

Petra's parent

"Neurodivergent kids are not always very fortunate in the environments they find themselves in. The community culture at Camp Gedi has given him the space and skills to build meaningful friendships both with other campers and staff. You guys are running a profoundly impactful summer camp for kids who need it the most."

Keltonn's parent

"Before Camp Gedi, our children could sometimes feel shy or lonely when trying to connect with other children, especially because of language and cultural differences. At Camp, we noticed them becoming more comfortable, confident, and willing to participate."

Nima and Nika's parent

"This camp allowed our daughter to spend full days outside exploring nature and working as a team member in a group of kids of various ages… Before camp our daughter was connected to her emotions but couldn't always express it clearly. After her Camp Gedi experience, she was able to more clearly articulate her emotions, and her vocabulary around emotional intelligence became more expansive."

Samantha, Beatrice's mom

"They know they are unequivocally able to be themselves without judgement, and they love to explore and learn new things about the city we live in."

Elston's parent

"This past [Family Festival] weekend filled my cup. I felt accepted and truly seen by all of the people that attended the event. It was freeing to merely be in a place where I knew my child was safe enough that I could let my guard down for a minute. Camp Gedi has felt like a safe space from day one. This is the type of programming that I wish Isabel could have had access to all year round."

Kristina Gazdag, camper parent



Three weeks did this. Three weeks gave a shy child the words for her feelings, gave a neurodivergent camper a place to build real friendships, gave a newcomer family a bridge past a language barrier.

Imagine what nine months in a **school environment** could do.

Where the **support went.**

Our Pay What Feels Good model means every family pays what they can.

C$382
Average family contribution this summer

C$1,550
Suggested cost per camper

Our 2026 operating costs

Staffing	**C$24,337.80**
Family Festival Weekend (August)	**C$12,665**

Farm activities, food, bus, tent rentals, project materials and port-a-potty rental. Typically this number is doubled, but our July Family Festival was cancelled due to wildfire air quality.

Daily food and nutrition for campers	**C$9,831**

Funded fully by the Moez & Marissa Kassam Equity Fund.

Camper activities, projects, and supplies	**C$3,551.85**
Community Week experiences	**C$3,250**
Indoor camp location	**C$2,500**

Rain, heat and air quality backup.

Camper, family and staff t-shirts and welcome packages	**C$1,400.18**
Insurance, safety, and documentation	**C$864**
Total	**C$58,399.83**

Funded in part by the Kassam Equity Fund, the Fresh Air Fund, the Aqueduct Foundation, several individual donors, and a handful of major camp-specific donors, alongside what families themselves contributed through Pay What Feels Good.



From pilot to permanent, **and beyond.**

Camp Gedi began in 2024 as a three-week pilot with an open question: could a different approach to learning, built around relationships, agency, and community, create a meaningful difference for children and families? Three seasons later, the answer is strong enough to move beyond the camp itself.

The model remains intentionally small, with 25 campers per session, but it is not static. What we learn through Camp Gedi continues to shape how we think about coaching, restorative practice, social-emotional learning, agency, and what children need to thrive within a community.

From camp into the world

Coaching practices, restorative approaches, and learning environments built around connection are now informing active partnerships and pilots with:

Pickering College · Holy Trinity School · Camp Arowhon · Mansfield Outdoor Centre · Montcrest · Keystone School · Clover Schools · Humewood Community School · Bright Age Early School (Uganda) · Antigua Global Explorers (Guatemala)

In Guatemala, with Antigua Global Explorers, we are testing our first Micro Village. These partnerships allow us to ask a larger research question: **what elements of the Gedi model are transferable across different schools, communities, cultures, and learning environments?**

Toward **Gedi Village.**

The long-term vision is Gedi Village, a permanent campus in Toronto that looks different than what we've seen before: a research and learning ecosystem where we can continue developing the model and share what we learn with learning communities in Canada and beyond.

SINCE 2024

Camp Gedi

Where this work began. Our living laboratory.

BY 2028

Micro Village in Toronto

A smaller-scale environment to test what a year-round Gedi community might look like.

THE VISION

Gedi Village

A permanent research and learning campus in Toronto.

We are not trying to build a program and replicate it unchanged. We are building an approach to learning that can keep learning itself.

What's **next.**

We're looking to grow and build our camp model into a micro village and ensure our camp continues to impact the lives of children every summer. If this resonates, we'd love to talk about what a deeper partnership could look like.

Offer a workshop

Offer a workshop or learning experience for the children, or introduce a local business our campers could learn from during Community Week.

Fund a camper's spot

Help fund a camper's spot directly, so that a family who cannot afford C$1,550 does not have to choose between Camp Gedi and something else.

Feed the community

Support our nutrition program, which fed nearly fifty children across six weeks this summer.

Build the Micro Village

Become an ongoing contributor and help us reach our next concrete milestone: opening our Micro Village by 2028.



We are three years into building something we believe matters: a learning environment that treats children's emotional and social development with the same care and intentionality we expect in academics, and a model that is now being tested and refined in schools, camps, and communities beyond Toronto.

We are also committed to being honest about what we are learning. Some of our numbers are strong. Others are still early. Some questions remain unanswered. That is part of the work.

“Thank you for trusting us with your children. Camp Gedi only works because families are part of it.”

Ashley Baylen, Cofounder, in the final daily email of the August session



Ashley Baylen
Cofounder, Gedi Village Foundation



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