

Katimavik



PRESS KIT

KATIMAVIK AT WORK IN
YOUR COMMUNITY





Dear journalist or editor,

Katimavik invites you to speak with a young Canadian today. We invite you to listen closely, and then ask yourself how we can best channel the boundless energy, eagerness and, above all — hope — residing in Canada's youth. How can we help Canada's youth become engaged citizens and productive members of society? As these young Canadians hone their skills and gain maturity, how can our nation's communities also benefit?

Katimavik has been doing precisely that, investing in our youth and communities for 35 years, and in the process has "graduated" more than 30,000 young Canadians. It is the nation's preeminent youth volunteer service-learning program — a structured, full-time program that in the past year alone:

- *dispatched nearly 1,000 young Canadians to some 60 host communities all over the country*
- *helped more than 500 volunteer based not-for-profit organizations deliver essential community services*
- *provided Canadian youth with invaluable training in leadership, teamwork, second language proficiency along with a variety of other skills*
- *strengthened Canada's knowledge economy by encouraging young people to pursue their post-secondary education*
- *and most importantly, had a lasting impact on communities from coast-to-coast-to-coast and delivered life-changing experiences that forever touched the hearts and minds of those involved with Katimavik.*

We began by inviting you to speak with Canadian youth. We also suggest you listen to Katimavik alumni and to the communities that have been part of this uniquely Canadian experience. You'll hear a chorus with one message: Katimavik has changed countless lives. Young people have discovered their country as they discovered something about themselves. They have found inner strength and perseverance; they have acquired skills, competencies and character; they have matured. These emerging adults are able to set clear goals for themselves and have a better understanding of what they want to achieve post-Katimavik. Communities have been able to deliver services they would not have been able to without our contribution. Communities have been able to better serve those in need.

Best regards,

Victoria Salvador
National Director of Communications and Marketing



OUR VISION

Civically engaged youth committed to building a nation, one community at a time.

OUR MISSION

Engage youth in volunteer service and foster sustainable communities through challenging national youth service programs.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To positively impact youth through Katimavik's competency-based program that focuses on personal, social and professional development.
- To positively impact communities.
- To positively impact Canada by exposing Canadian youth to the regional and cultural diversity of the country and its two official languages.



HISTORY

1977 — Genesis and ideals

Katimavik (which means “meeting place” in the Inuktitut language) is founded. The initial driving impulse was to educate youth and spur lifelong civic engagement through community service. In its first year, Katimavik mobilized 1,000 volunteers who worked on projects in more than 80 communities.

1977-1986 — Maturity and growth

In its first glory years, many Canadians discovered other regions of Canada for the first time. They learned languages and acquired skills, while growing in body and mind.

In 1985 — Katimavik honoured

As its alumni ranks swelled to 15,000, Katimavik’s influence also grew. During International Youth Year, the United Nations honoured Katimavik with an award for its environmental involvement.

By 1986 — Over 17, 000 volunteers

Katimavik contributed to the education of over 17, 000 young Canadians by engaging them in volunteer service, community involvement, cultural discovery, the practicing of Canada’s official languages and environmental protection.

1986-1994 — The difficult years

Katimavik’s federal funding was interrupted. The program survived, much diminished, as an outdoor recreational and training centre in the Montréal suburb of Île-Perrot.

1994 — Rebirth

Katimavik’s budget was reinstated, and in 1994, 66 volunteers from Ontario, Québec and New Brunswick took on projects in six communities. Annual participation has since grown to over 1,000 volunteers yearly in some 90 communities.

1999 — International recognition

Katimavik took part in the International Association of National Youth Service (IANYS) conference in El Paso. A five-year strategic plan was being deployed to help guide Katimavik into the new millennium. The first Meet Your MP events were held on Parliament Hill.





2000-2001 — Two new leadership programs established: Leader 16-19 and Leader Plus 22-26.

2004 — Katimavik participated in the IANYS international conference in Accra, Ghana. Katimavik signed a partnership with Vancouver Island University that provided university credits for our volunteers.

2005 — University credits

Capilano College in North Vancouver, British Columbia, recognized the Katimavik program by awarding credits to students who successfully complete the program.

2006 — ROI proven

Katimavik was able to report that each dollar spent by the Katimavik program generates a return of \$2.20 in each of the communities that work with our volunteers.

2007-2008 — Program modernized

Several modifications were made to the learning program. The objective is to allow Katimavik to more efficiently and scientifically measure the progression of each youth's personal development.

2008-2009 — Competency model adopted

Katimavik restructured the service-learning program for volunteers. Instead of focusing solely on improving skill-sets, the new model favours the development of our volunteers' personal, social and professional competencies.

2009-2010 — 6-month programs introduced

Starting in September 2009, Katimavik offered the following programs: "Eco-citizenship and Active Living", "Second Language and Cultural Identity" and "Cultural Discovery and Civic-Engagement".

2009-2010 — Post-secondary credit

Cégep Marie-Victorin (QC, 2009) and George Brown College (ON, 2010) recognized the Katimavik program by awarding credits to students that complete the program.

2010-2011 — A renewed focus on community impact

The communities that host Katimavik groups are selected based on criteria that reflect the areas of impact targeted by Katimavik: social services; poverty reduction; formal and non-formal education (focus on literacy); arts, culture and heritage; sports and leisure; environment and sustainable development; media and communications; and social justice.

U.N. Recognition

In February 2008, Katimavik was granted special consultative status by the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). This acknowledges Katimavik's contribution and leadership in national youth service, and provides opportunities to share insights, information and best practices with the 54-member ECOSOC. In the late 1980s, Katimavik was also honoured with an award from the UN for environmental involvement.



THE KATIMAVIK PROGRAM MODEL

What is Katimavik?

Katimavik, Canada's leading national youth service-learning organization, gives Canadians between the ages of 17 and 21 the unique opportunity to take part in an intensive six-month volunteer service program.

Katimavik groups reflect the socio-demographics of Canadian society and are usually made up of 50% young men and 50% young women as well as a certain percentage of visible minorities and aboriginal volunteers. 70% of a group is composed of anglophones while the remaining 30% are francophones.

Each Katimavik house needs to replicate Canada's geographic landscape. A typical group is composed of the following members:

- 1 bilingual Project Leader from anywhere in the country
- 1 volunteer from British Columbia or Yukon
- 2 volunteers from the Prairies, North West Territories or Nunavut
- 4 volunteers from Ontario
- 3 volunteers from Québec
- 1 volunteer from a maritime province (New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, or Newfoundland and Labrador)

The project leaders are passionate about the work they do and have a gift for communicating with and guiding the high-energy young people in their care. The group lives together, plans meals, coordinates schedules and other activities cooperatively. The volunteers quickly learn the hard lessons of compromise and leadership.

Over the course of their six months with Katimavik, each volunteer contributes up to 650 hours of volunteer service in communities outside of their home region. For example, a young person from Québec may teach French to children in a small-town in Saskatchewan, while improving their own English language skills by interacting with the group and host community. Similarly, an English speaking youth from Western Canada might help develop hiking trails in Québec or in Acadian New Brunswick.

The work and cooperative living aspects of the program are challenging and intensive. No one can "opt out," and the rigorous pedagogical component is built on decades of experience. Despite the challenges, the individual and social rewards are significant. Our ultimate goal is to ensure everyone leaves the program energized, eager to keep contributing to society and better prepared for higher education.



THE EDUCATIONAL VISION

The Katimavik program is founded on two principles: experiential learning through volunteering (service-learning) and a competency based approach to learning.

Through the practical experience they gain from the program as a whole, volunteers develop personal, professional and social competencies. These competencies are connected to goals established by the volunteers themselves for the short, medium and long term. They prepare youth for their future roles in the workforce and as members of their communities. The eight program competencies are expressed in terms of expected results and are measurable against a series of indicators termed performance criteria.

The eight Katimavik competencies

1. **To interact with others in a variety of situations** — Volunteers learn how to establish interpersonal relationships, to communicate with their peers, to work in teams, to plan activities, to resolve problems and to manage conflict situations.
2. **To adopt an open attitude towards the diversity of social and multicultural realities** — Volunteers are able to become involved in a variety of different living environments, to forge significant links with members of the communities and to appreciate the nature of these communities.
3. **To communicate in both official languages** — Volunteers have numerous possibilities to acquire second language competencies and are constantly encouraged to do so. For many of the young volunteers, this represents the first time in their lives that they come into close contact with representatives of the other linguistic group.
4. **To engage in diverse work experiences** — Volunteers learn to organize their work, to work as part of a team and to understand the value of volunteer work in the organizations and communities they become involved in.
5. **To apply habits that favour a healthy lifestyle** — Volunteers develop healthy lifestyle habits, apply the principles and practices of a balanced diet, manage a variety of activities in their daily lives and participate in active leisure activities as well as other initiatives which promote mental health.
6. **To develop an integrated vision of environmental protection and sustainable development** — Volunteers assess environmental impact in their daily lives, investigate practices and environmental resources in their region and act in ways consistent with sustainable development.
7. **To become civically engaged** — Volunteers come to understand how to develop a position on various social challenges, to express their points of view, to implement projects that benefit the community and to identify areas for further involvement.
8. **To prepare to integrate into the job market, post-secondary education or other life event** — At completion of the program, volunteers are able to identify their competencies and can plan concrete actions for the future.

LEARNING THROUGH SERVICE AS A PRODUCTIVE “GAP YEAR” OPTION

While relatively new in Canada, “gap years” are gaining acceptance as being a viable and valuable option for youth. Data shows that a well thought-out gap or interim year before post-secondary studies helps young people do better in their future academic/vocational careers while preparing them to achieve their overall personal goals.

Canadian higher learning institutions, including Dalhousie and McGill, support the idea of a well-structured gap year as they allow admitted students to defer to the following academic year should they choose to take an interim year. In the United States, Harvard University has been recommending a gap year in its admission letter for almost 30 years.

Nearly a dozen Canadian universities have integrated service-learning into their student programming, and two now grant credits for Katimavik participation.

Recent studies affirm that participating in a structured period of full-time service-learning has national benefits:

- It gives youth time to reflect and mature, following which they return to their studies with greater energy and focus
- It supports a more educated citizenry and therefore the creation of a knowledge economy
- It enhances civic-engagement, lifelong volunteerism and giving.

According to a study by Cathy Campbell and Michael Ungar of The Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC), in collaboration with The Resilience Research Centre School of Social Work of Dalhousie University, “...many participants said that they could have benefited from taking a time-out before deciding what they wanted to choose [as] a career, thus what postsecondary studies are required.” In an ideal world, say Campbell and Ungar, a range of options and programs would be available to prepare students for the transition to postsecondary studies. Such programs would give young adults the chance to explore different avenues and give them a better idea of their skills and interests. Taking a break from formal education allows them to experience life away from home. In reality, Canadian programs in this vein are few and far between.

Katimavik is an ideal option for young Canadians that need more time, concrete experience and active reflection before choosing their future. Their service-learning programs are focused on volunteer service and give young adults a head start as well as the chance to discover a new path. In addition, Katimavik provides a safe and structured environment with a solid track record.



Taking the time to find yourself

It is a common belief among guidance counsellors that if youth want to find their path, they must first find themselves. According to Isabelle Falardeau, conference speaker and guidance counsellor at Collège de Maisonneuve, "it is essential to get in touch with your personality, areas of interest, values and the role you want to play in society. You have to know yourself before you can know where to go." Katimavik gives young adults the chance to think outside of the box and get to know themselves better.

By leaving the comfort of home and entering unknown territory, Katimavik volunteers expose themselves to new realities. As a result, they gain a great deal of maturity. "Katimavik gave me self-confidence. After the program, I went to university because I wanted to; because I discovered through my volunteer placements the kind of work I have a passion for. I now know that I love working outdoors for environmental causes and delivering public education. I am working towards a career that incorporates these things by studying biology," asserts Megan Clark, 2008-2009 alumna.

Using Practical Experience to Make the Right Decision

Another piece of advice that guidance counsellors often give is that there is nothing like practical experience to discover the reality of a given field and to know whether or not it is right for you. "Before Katimavik, I was just a boy with a lot of potential, but unable to see what I wanted in life or how to get it. After finishing high school, I believed I needed some sort of real-world experience before pursuing university studies," explains Adam Joyce, a 2007-2008 volunteer. Young Canadians that participate in Katimavik get the chance to add one or two work experiences to their resume in not-for-profit organisations whose work ranges from environmental protection, promotion of heritage, fight against poverty, literacy, communications, sports and leisure, social services and more.

It is not uncommon to see volunteers finding a true passion for their work, even if they didn't start off with an interest in that particular area. "During Katimavik, my daughter discovered that she loved to cook, and when she came home, she decided to finish high school and apply for professional training to become a chef," says Suzanne Bergeron, the mother of an alumna. One of Katimavik's goals is just that: to create an environment that promotes exploration, challenge and adventure. Volunteers may take some risks, but they end up making valuable discoveries.





Katimavik fast facts

- Katimavik offers intensive 6-month programs for Canadians between the ages of 17 and 21.
- The programs are based on
 1. service-learning
 2. volunteer work experience
 3. group living
- The programs focus on civic engagement, leadership skills, official languages, the environment, cultural discovery and a healthy lifestyle.
- Volunteers stay in one or two Canadian host communities, live in groups of 11 in a house rented by Katimavik, and volunteer 28 to 35 hours per week for local non-profit organizations.
- Volunteers are accompanied by a project leader, who supervises activities and ensures the program's successful implementation.
- Examples of volunteer work projects: maintain hiking trails, assist care providers, restore historical sites, office work, organize festivals, work with seniors and people with learning disabilities, and many more!
- Eligibility requirements: volunteers must be 17 to 21 years of age when the program starts, be a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident and have never participated in the program before.
- Selection is based on socio-demographic criteria as the groups must be representative of the Canadian population. A typical group is generally composed of 1 person from British Columbia or the Yukon, 2 from the Prairies, the Northwest Territories or Nunavut, 4 from Ontario, 3 from Quebec, and 1 from the Atlantic provinces.
- Groups are mixed and 70% of participants are English-speaking while 30% are French-speaking.
- Katimavik covers the cost of transportation, food, lodging and program activities.



Executive Bios

KATHERINE RETHY Board Chair

Katherine Rethy lives in Toronto. She is an experienced corporate director and executive, having worked more than 20 years in industrial companies. She has extensive general management experience, covering both P&L and functional leadership, with a focus on the areas of supply chain and operations management, logistics, and enterprise risk. She has served as a director of publicly and privately held companies, and as an advisor and mentor to professional organizations, CEOs and high potential managers.

Throughout her career, Katherine has been devoted to her family and maintained her passion for Canada, the North, and the environment. She has a strong belief in the need to mentor, coach and develop youth to help keep Canada strong and vibrant. She has mentored formally and informally in the workplace, with the Schulich School of Business International MBA program, the Executive Roundtable, and with the Women's Executive Network, where she is a member of the Toronto Advisory Board.

Katherine's formal educational background includes an MBA, a Bachelor of Laws, and a BSc. She is also a graduate of the Institute of Corporate Directors/Rotman Director Education Program. She is currently studying toward a Master's Degree in Leadership for Sustainability at the University of Lancaster in the U.K.. She is a three-time recipient of the Canada's 100 Most Powerful Women Award (2004, 2005 and 2006) and in 2007 was named to the Canada's Most Powerful Women Hall of Fame.

DANIEL LAPOINTE Chief Executive Officer

Daniel Lapointe has a solid 20-year background as an executive director in the not-for profit, financial, cultural and health sectors. Namely, he has served as executive director for the Canadian Hemophilia Society, La Magnétothèque (a library of audio books for the blind) and for the Canadian Institute of Actuaries, the professional order of Canadian actuaries.

He holds an MBA from the HEC Montreal and a master's degree in political science from the University of Québec in Montreal.

Lapointe possesses a unique combination of vision, teambuilding and management expertise. His track record of management success, wealth of experience, and commitment to community service are valued assets in our ongoing efforts to grow Katimavik's service offering.

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