



Please **support** Co-operative Young Leaders



Introduction

On behalf of the Ontario Co-operative Association (OCA) and the Co-operative Young Leaders (CYL) program, we thank you for taking the time to consider this **youth sponsorship opportunity**. Any contribution would help support a series of week-long summer camp experiences in both Aylmer and Richmond Hill Ontario, in the summer of 2025. These experiences prepare youth between the **ages of 13 and 18** to advance their leadership, teamwork, and communication skills, as well as their knowledge, and understanding of how co-operative business and their values contribute to the greater good.

Many youth are still suffering from the effects of unexpected lockdowns, social restrictions, and fear; it is time for them to go back to being kids again. The generosity of our sponsors make it possible for youth to go to camp without families bearing the financial burden. Your contribution would help sponsor youth campers to attend a week at CYL camp, participate in various co-operative activities, and provide an opportunity for young people to make lifelong friends, feel valued, and just be themselves.

In this package, we have included some information to help you make an informed decision about sponsoring or donating to CYL including: an overview of the program, testimonials, program weeks and levels, why you should consider supporting the CYL program, and information about the OCA.

Here at OCA, we know the true power of the summer camp experience and the growth that youth experience while attending CYL. We are proud of all that the co-operative sector currently does to support youth, and recognize that there is always more we can do. We thank you in advance for your consideration of sponsoring our program!

Yours co-operatively,

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Ontario Co-operative Association

CYL Program Overview

Co-operative Young Leaders was created in 1967 and has served over 6,000 youth - thanks to the credit unions and co-operatives who continue to support the program. CYL is a week-long summer camp that allows young people to learn, grow, and have fun. And along the way, amazing things happen – a touch of magic you will only find at CYL!

Sponsoring CYL is an investment in youth and in your co-operative. Your support allows us to provide youth with valuable life and career skills, while gaining important knowledge about the co-operative sector. In return, sponsors can gain the loyalty and gratitude of their young members, while having the opportunity to work with campers and facilitators throughout the year.

CYL offers a series of week-long summer camps to young people aged 13 to 18. This unique experiential learning program brings together youth from across Ontario to interact in a safe, secure and nonjudgmental environment. It empowers them to be explorers, trailblazers, visionaries, and adventurers, while equipping them with the change-making tools and skills they need to succeed in the world. Bringing together youth with co-operative mentors creates a relationship that embraces and enhances their leadership potential; campers develop self-confidence, learn from inspiring guest speakers, and have fun with traditional camp activities. A typical day may include skits, wilderness activities, co-op tours, interactive learning sessions, and sports.

CYL has all the traditional things that make summer camps fun – hikes, campfires, swimming, sports and hanging out – but campers also participate in activities that emphasize leadership, communication, and teamwork. They will create and operate their own co-op store called the 'Snack Shack,' and even share in the daily leadership of their CYL week.

While CYL takes place over July and August, we are continuously developing our curriculum and programming throughout the year. This summer, over 80 youth will attend the camp at either the Gay Lea Foods' Co-operative Education Centre in Aylmer, or at Lake St. George in Richmond Hill, Ontario. Both sites are amazing and offer great facilities, good food, and a beautiful environment surrounded by nature.



Program Overview Cont.

CYL has served and continues to serve, people in the communities across Ontario. Our youth campers, facilitators, and staff come from all over Ontario - including your community!

CYL has three main goals:

1. To provide youth with a fantastic summer camp experience in a safe and secure environment;
2. To develop leadership skills and foster self- confidence, and self-awareness; and
3. To create a stronger awareness of co-operatives and their values and principles that guide our sector.

Highlights

- One-part experiential learning and one-part fun camp activities.
- The history of CYL is rooted in co-operative principles and how co-operatives contribute to the greater good.
- Participants come to a camp where they are accepted and valued for who they are, know that they are in a safe and non-judgmental space, and learn how important personal values are.
- Participants learn new leadership, team building, and communication skills.
- Participants meet youth from across the province and forge relationships and friendships that can last a lifetime.
- CYL offers a unique learning experience, while also providing an opportunity to have fun playing sports, learning how to be part of a team through outdoor games, relaxing and talking openly at a campfire, and discovering that we all have value and something special to contribute to the world.
- CYL is a three-year program designed to continue improving the campers' knowledge of what it means to be a great leader, their understanding co-operatives, and showing them that every job can be done co-operatively.

Learn more about CYL!
Visit cyl.coop

Program Weeks and Levels



July 13 to July 18, 2025
Co-operative Education Centre

Explore the wonder of co-operation as we learn about the history of co-operatives and discover the CYL community that awaits! Explorers provide campers with an understanding of the values and behaviours of leadership, teambuilding, and communication skills. Learn what makes a 'great' leader in a judgement free environment where everyone is welcome. This week is open to campers ages 13 to 14.



July 19 to July 25, 2025
Co-operative Education Centre

Blaze a trail towards co-operation as we focus on our CYL community, learn to overcome communication challenges, and lead the way towards building great teamwork and co-operative leadership skills. Leadership activities focus on stereotyping, the rumor mill, influence of social media, diversity, and equality. Campers begin to take over leading their camp while having fun exploring the great outdoors. This week is open to campers ages 15 to 16 and/or campers that have completed Explorers.



July 26 to August 1, 2025
Co-operative Education Centre

This week we help solidify basic knowledge of the co-operative business model, support and foster the young co-operative leaders of the future and provide campers with the tools to make a difference in their community. Campers work in teams to create a co-operative that addresses a need in their community, and develop a communication and marketing plan which is presented to a panel of senior co-operative representatives. Visionaries take over the responsibility for leading the camp with the support of facilitators. This week is open to campers ages 16 to 18 and/or campers that completed Trailblazers.



August 9 to August 15
Lake St. George

Experience the adventurer spirit and fun as you join youth from across Ontario for the week. Leading the way with the help of your facilitation team, you will learn new leadership and team-building skills, enjoy engaging conversations about social media, and have fun with our wilderness challenge, canoeing, and other water activities. You will come away from the week having made new friends and learning about how the co-operative sector supports the greater good. This week is open to all youth ages 13 to 16 and campers who have completed Explorers.

Testimonials

Here is what our campers had to say about CYL:

- I really enjoyed the camp; it was a fun experience.
- It was fun and we learned lots.
- It was the first camp I went to, and it was a great experience, very different from what I was expecting.
- I loved it and I hope I can come back next year.
- It's great with lots of opportunities for fun and learning great leadership skills.
- I think that CYL is a camp with many learning experiences that teach us many life lessons that I am already finding helpful. I also like the fact that people come from a variety of places.
- CYL is a one-week summer leadership camp which supports individuals on their path to communication success.

Here is what our parents had to say about CYL:

- My daughter loved it. Thank you!!!!
- My son had a great time. We appreciate the opportunity for our children to attend.
- We look forward to future registration, my daughter cannot wait to come back next year.
- Thank you, Carol and the team for making it a memorable event for our daughter as she is making friendships and memories for life.
- Thank you CYL, for the wonderful job.
- My oldest daughter completed CYL as a participant and has spoken of her interest in becoming a facilitator when she is of age.
- Very good experience for my child, well done.
- What a fantastic program. It turned out to be somewhat life changing for our daughter. She truly came back from camp a stronger, more focused, and confident young lady. It's been rewarding seeing the difference attending CYL camp has made in her life.
- We would like to thank you for the opportunity. Our son had an amazing time and is still talking about the different experiences. He is already looking forward to coming back next year.

Why Sponsor/Donate to CYL?

Sponsoring or donating to CYL will have an extremely positive impact on the youth who participate in our program.

The CYL three-year program is rooted in leadership and co-operative principles and values. We come together with facilitators from the co-operative sector and CYL Alumni to help prepare youth to go out into their communities and lead by example, be a champion for the greater good. At end of the program, campers will leave with:

- An understanding that the very best of leadership is about listening and learning from others.
- Opportunities to help those around them want to succeed and move forward with excellent leadership skills.
- An understanding that sometimes the smallest things they do through their leadership can have a major impact on those around them.
- An appreciation of the importance of leadership, diversity, and equality in their community.
- A recognition of their worth and the personal satisfaction they receive by being a “great leader.”

Sponsoring or donating to CYL will have an extremely positive impact on your co-operative or credit union and your owners/members.

As the CYL program roots its learning and experiences in the principles of co-operation, youth will leave camp with a unique and stronger connection to the co-operative sector. This provides your organization and the greater co-op sector with new members, staff, and co-operative champions. Your co-operative will be supporting the future leaders of our sector!

Employees are also welcome to volunteer as facilitators at the CYL program.

This opportunity is available for any staff member of co-operatives in Ontario or CYL Alumni. This gives your staff team the opportunity to learn more about the co-operative sector, connect with other members from the sector, and make a difference in the lives of young leaders.

You will be recognized as a sponsor or donor on the CYL website, and we will promote your co-operative on our social media platforms.

Why Sponsor/Donate to CYL?



The co-operative sector values integrity, excellence for member service, care for others, independence, and fun the same way that CYL does. We know that you are passionate about supporting the well-being of your communities, and we are too. We want to work together to make a real difference.

The CYL program aligns with the co-operative sector's mandate to educate and support youth. At CYL, the program supports youth development and aligns with the co-operative education as we also focus on learning and social development during our camp activities and sessions.

We believe that youth should be empowered to be co-operative leaders in the world. We also believe that youth deserve an opportunity to be understood and to be seen in a nonjudgemental and inclusive environment. CYL provides youth in Ontario with an incredible opportunity to discover more about themselves and their role in this world. Your co-operative can work with us to help young people succeed.

One thing our sector has in common with the CYL program is an 'unwavering focus on people.' CYL has served thousands of youth for almost 60 years, and we are so excited to welcome the next generation of leaders through our doors in the summer of 2025. **With your support, incredible things can happen.**

About the OCA

CYL is run by the **Ontario Co-operative Association**, a non-profit co-operative that was originally formed in 1989 and officially incorporated in 2002. Our Board is comprised of nine voluntary directors that represent co-operatives and credit unions across the province. Guided by Co-operative **Principle Five: Education, Training & Development**, there are many ways that we help both young people and adults learn and grow personally and professionally. Adopting a more co-operative mindset and an understanding of why co-operatives exist, how they work, and the impact they have on our communities, brings us all a step closer to creating a more inclusive social economy.

Our **mission** is to champion the co-operative movement in Ontario. Our **vision** is that we will support a co-operative sector that is growing, innovating, and building a better Ontario. We are a co-operative that exists to serve our members by providing the information, tools, programs, and resources to help strengthen and grow their organizations and the communities they serve. In doing so, we support the co-operative sector as a whole.

Our **membership** is comprised of organizations that believe in the co-operative principles and are invested in the future of the sector. With their commitment we:

- Support our members' success (and the success of all Ontario co-operatives) through the provision of programs, training, tools, and resources;
- Promote our members and communicate co-operative innovation and solutions, opportunities, as well as the challenges facing the Ontario co-operative sector;
- Advocate with and for our members for a more favorable legislative and regulatory environment in Ontario that supports the growth and sustainability of the co-operative sector;
- Educate students and teachers, as well as those engaged and/or employed in co-operatives through a variety of programs that elevate co-operative awareness, understanding, and opportunities; and
- Encourage co-operatives to connect, collaborate, and act as a coordinated group to help build a higher profile with the public, the provincial government, and with each other.

Learn more about the OCA!
Visit ontario.coop