
2026
SUMMER
IMPACT
REPORT

Looking Back On Summer 2026

Summer camp is one of the clearest expressions of what Lay-Up is built to do. Young people spend full days playing, learning, navigating challenges and growing alongside coaches and staff who are not only role models, but older youth and community leaders. The impact this has on their confidence, sense of belonging, and belief in their own ability to lead and grow is palpable.

At Lay-Up, we grant grace to children, youth and youth coaches. We believe in unconditional positive regard for a young person who is still growing, learning and figuring out who they are. Sport gives us a powerful environment to do this — one where young people can experience challenges, build relationships, navigate stress and develop the confidence to keep moving forward.

By 2030, Lay-Up needs to prepare 3,500 young people in Toronto to navigate real-world problems. That means giving them more than basketball skills. It means building the skills, confidence and relationships they need to navigate their futures and sustain their wellbeing — readying them for employment, social lives, transitions and the opportunities ahead of them.

This summer, we saw that model in action. We saw young people take risks, build relationships, recover from mistakes, try again and discover new possibilities for themselves. These moments are the reason Lay-Up exists — and the reason we are committed to building a future where every young person we serve is better prepared to navigate whatever comes next.

-Micaella Riche, Executive Director

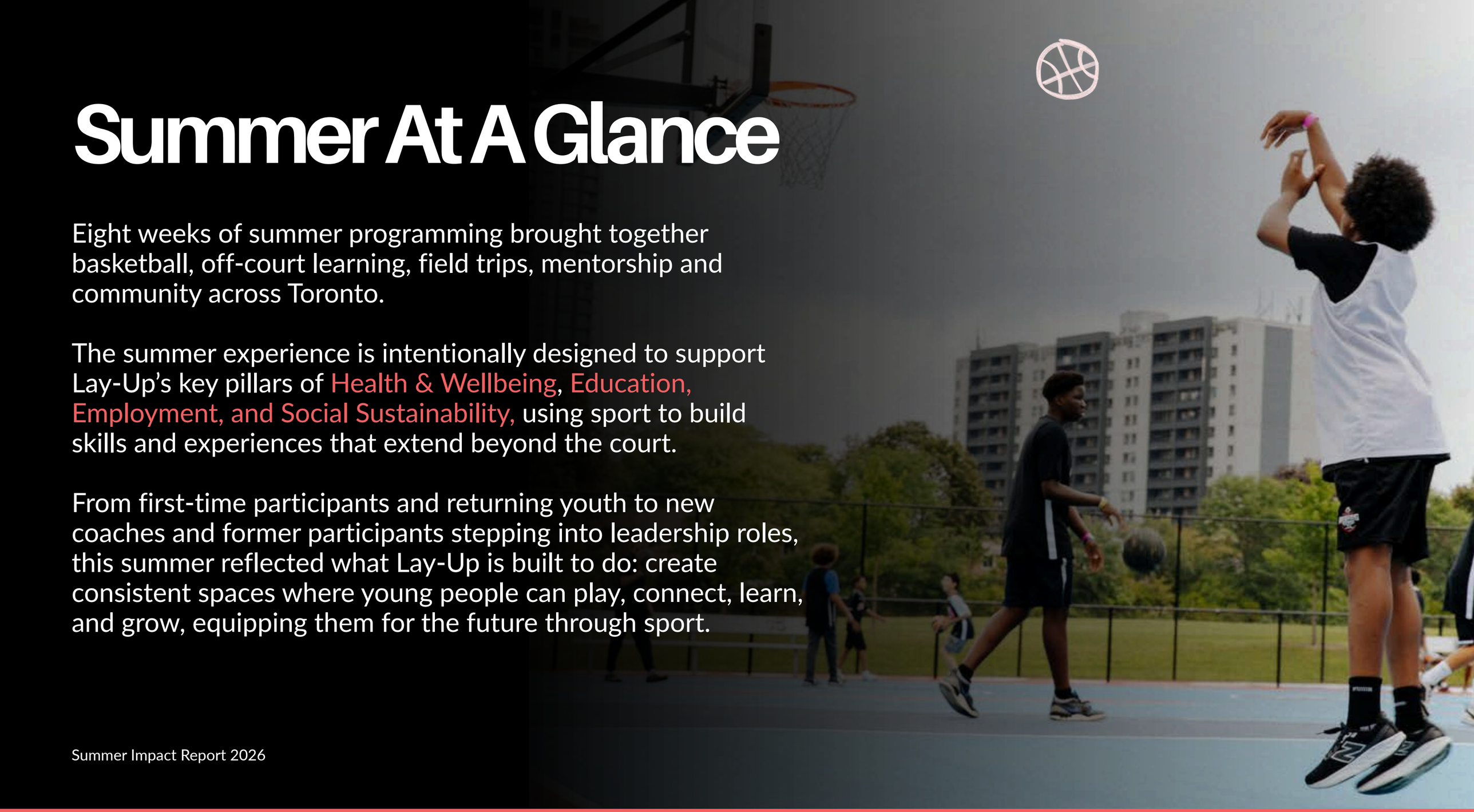


Summer At A Glance

Eight weeks of summer programming brought together basketball, off-court learning, field trips, mentorship and community across Toronto.

The summer experience is intentionally designed to support Lay-Up's key pillars of Health & Wellbeing, Education, Employment, and Social Sustainability, using sport to build skills and experiences that extend beyond the court.

From first-time participants and returning youth to new coaches and former participants stepping into leadership roles, this summer reflected what Lay-Up is built to do: create consistent spaces where young people can play, connect, learn, and grow, equipping them for the future through sport.



Across The City

This summer, Lay-Up expanded programming to reach more young people across Toronto.



290
youth participants

50
youth employees

8
neighbourhoods

8
weeks of full day programs

140
hours of connection per participant



Coaches Are The Core

Positive sport experiences don't just happen. They are created and **shaped by coaches** who prioritize belonging, design intentional experiences, and **build meaningful relationships** with the young people they lead.

This summer, Lay-Up's youth staff continued to grow through dedicated coach training, on-court preparation and new leadership opportunities across programs.

50 young people were employed across Lay-Up's summer programs, taking on roles in coaching, site leadership, outreach, administration, creative programming and program development.

Coach Demographics

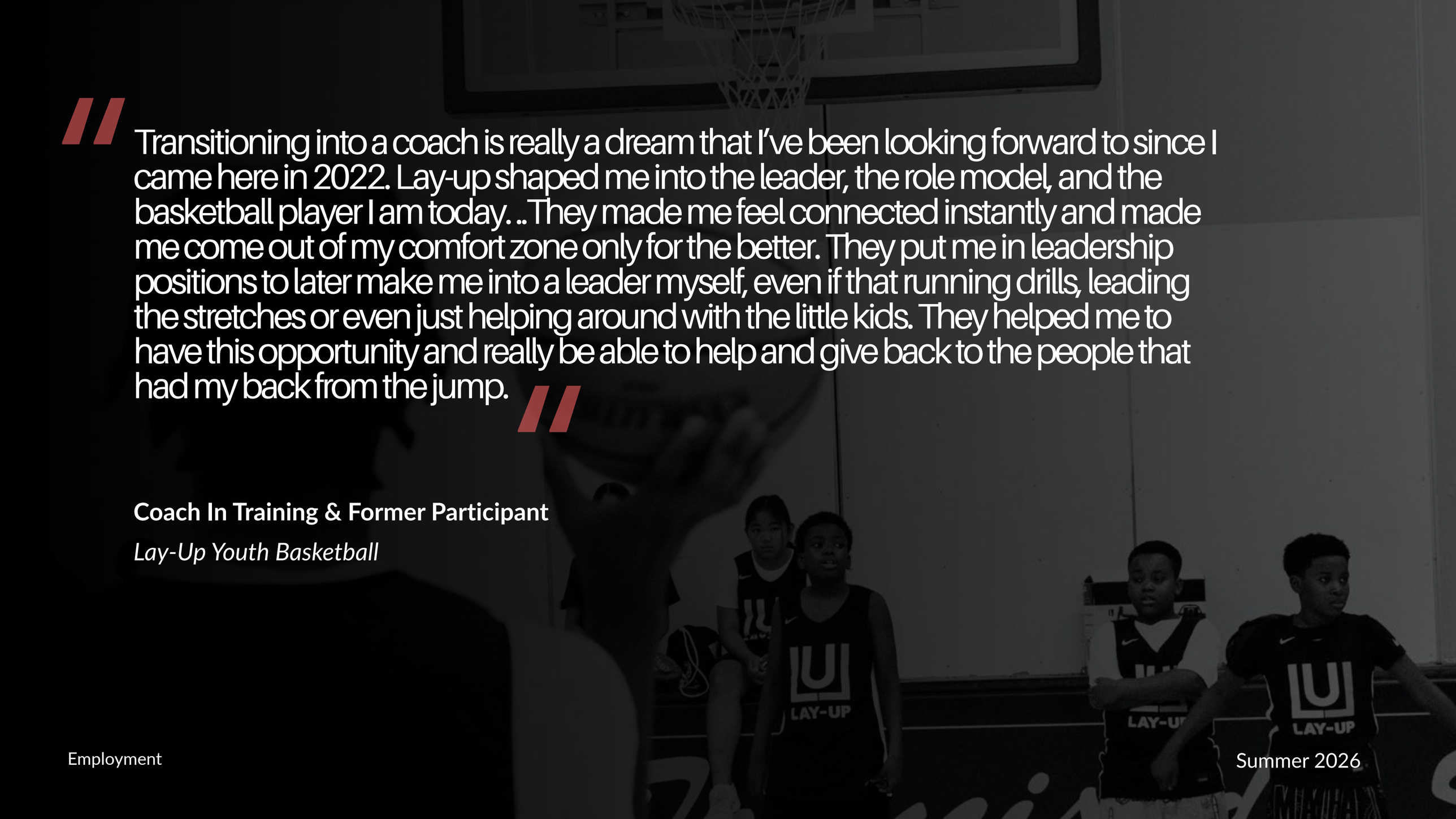
50 young leaders
15 – 30 years old
97% BIPOC
67% female-identifying

Coaches In Training

This summer, 12 Lay-Up program graduates returned as **Coaches in Training (CIT)**, taking their first steps into leadership and employment alongside role models and mentors.

The CIT role gives young people the opportunity to **learn alongside experienced coaches**, build confidence and leadership skills, and support the next generation of Lay-Up participants.





"Transitioning into a coach is really a dream that I've been looking forward to since I came here in 2022. Lay-up shaped me into the leader, the role model, and the basketball player I am today. ...They made me feel connected instantly and made me come out of my comfort zone only for the better. They put me in leadership positions to later make me into a leader myself, even if that running drills, leading the stretches or even just helping around with the little kids. They helped me to have this opportunity and really be able to help and give back to the people that had my back from the jump."

Coach In Training & Former Participant

Lay-Up Youth Basketball

Employment

Summer 2026



Off-Court Summer Programs

Lay-Up Summer Impact Report 2026

Building Skills Off The Court

18 Creative Workshops
4 Fuel For Life Nutrition Workshops
16 STEM Workshops

Alongside basketball, participants learned through off-court experiences designed to build skills, spark curiosity and support development across Lay-Up's key pillars.



CREATIVE

Photography
Sneaker Design
Clay Character Building
Poster Design



LITERACY

Math Literacy Program
STEM with Visions of Science
Reflective Writing &
Journaling Session

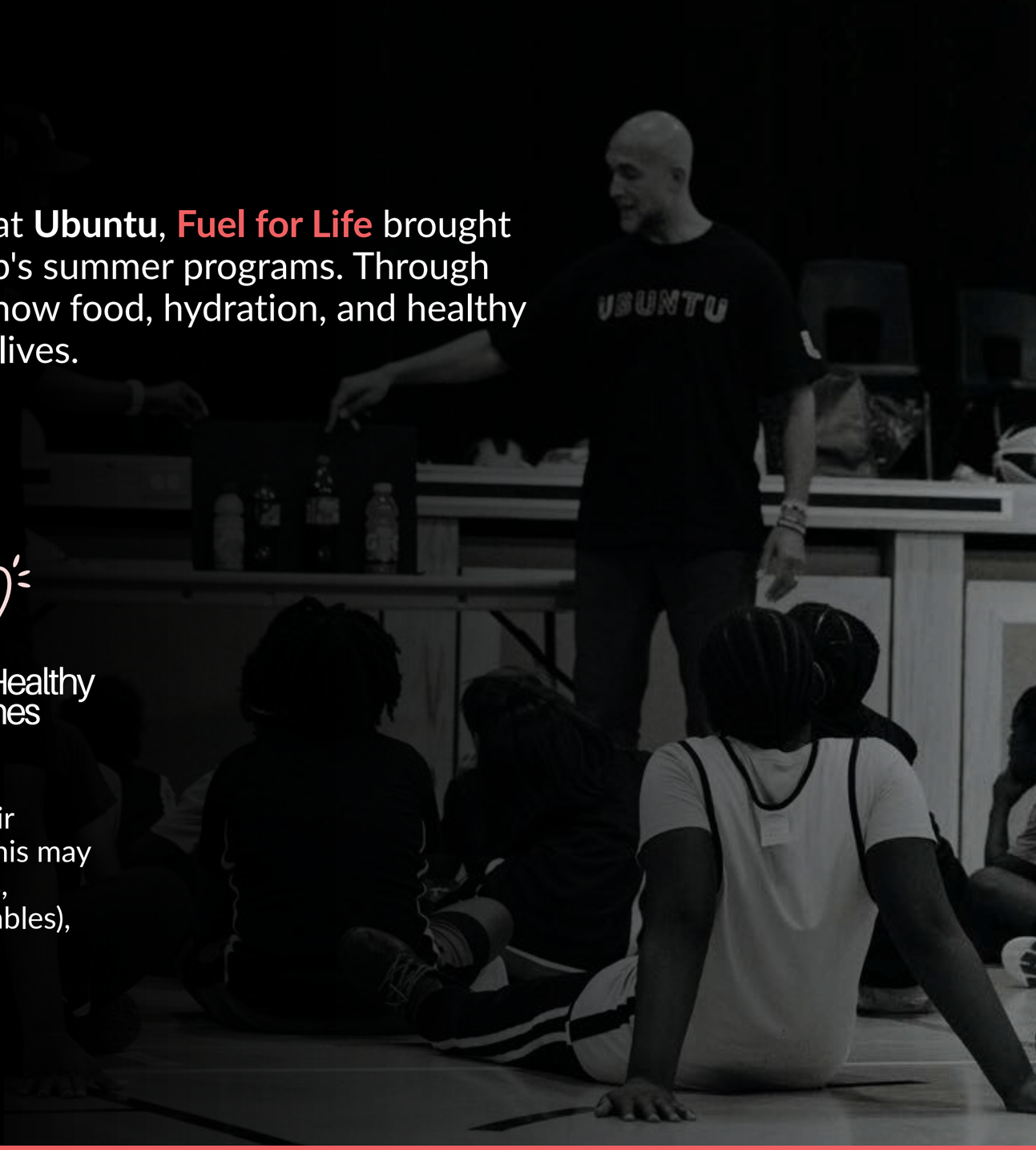


WELLBEING

Fuel for Life Nutrition
Self-Care
Wellness Activities

Fuel For Life Nutrition

In partnership with **Sun Life** and our community partners at **Ubuntu**, **Fuel for Life** brought nutrition education beyond the classroom and into Lay-Up's summer programs. Through interactive, hands-on workshops, young people explored how food, hydration, and healthy habits can support their energy, well-being, and everyday lives.



WHAT PARTICIPANTS EXPLORED

- Fueling for Activity
- Creating Balanced Meals and Snacks
- Hydrating to Feel Good
- Building Healthy Routines

67% of parents surveyed

Agreed that they have noticed an increase in their child(ren)'s awareness of healthy eating habits. This may include talking about healthy vs. unhealthy foods, choosing healthier options (e.g., fruits and vegetables), or showing increased interest in healthy foods.

STEM With Visions of Science

Over the years, Lay-Up and **Visions of Science** have combined program expertise to design basketball-based **STEM experiences** that **teach through play.** This summer, young people brought science, technology, engineering and math to life right on the court.

WORKSHOPS AT A GLANCE

DATA + ANALYTICS
Exploring player stats, shooting hot spots and how data can influence the game.

DESIGN + ENGINEERING
Using the engineering design process to develop plays, prototype sneakers and solve performance challenges.

HEALTH + SCIENCE
Connecting nutrition, hydration and the science of performance.

MEDIA + TECHNOLOGY
Exploring branding, storytelling and the technology behind sports media and broadcasting.



Math Literacy Program

This summer, Lay-Up integrated math literacy into basketball programming, connecting classroom concepts to real-world experiences. Participants explored mathematical concepts in an engaging, collaborative environment designed to strengthen critical thinking while fostering a more positive relationship with math and learning.



Education

AGES 6-10 | BUILDING FOUNDATIONS

Through basketball-based games, younger participants practised counting, addition, and subtraction, discovering how foundational math skills apply to the game.

AGES 11-14 | APPLYING MATH IN ACTION

Older participants explored statistics through inquiry-based activities, learning how data can inform player performance, coaching decisions, and a deeper understanding of basketball.



Intro to Photography Workshop

Photography workshops returned this summer, where participants got behind the camera to learn the basics, experiment with photography and capture summer at Lay-Up through their own lens.

Workshops were developed and led by Antonio Keleta, a Lay-Up Crossover participant who has continued to sharpen his skills and build his platform as a photographer across the city. Now a community leader, Antonio is sharing his skills and experiences with the next generation of young people.

Education



I enjoyed learning new things about basketball, like how to be a better teammate, show good sportsmanship, and learn other things about basketball that I never knew before. Another thing I enjoyed about Lay-Up was how all the coaches felt like friends to me instead of teachers. When I made a mistake during drills or games, the coaches encouraged me to do better and never made me feel bad about myself. I really enjoyed this camp, and I would be sad if I couldn't come back to Lay-Up next year.

Lay-Up participant
Lawrence Heights

Lay-Up helped Nadiya feel valued and included, enough to say that she now wants to volunteer when she is age appropriate.

Lay-Up Parent



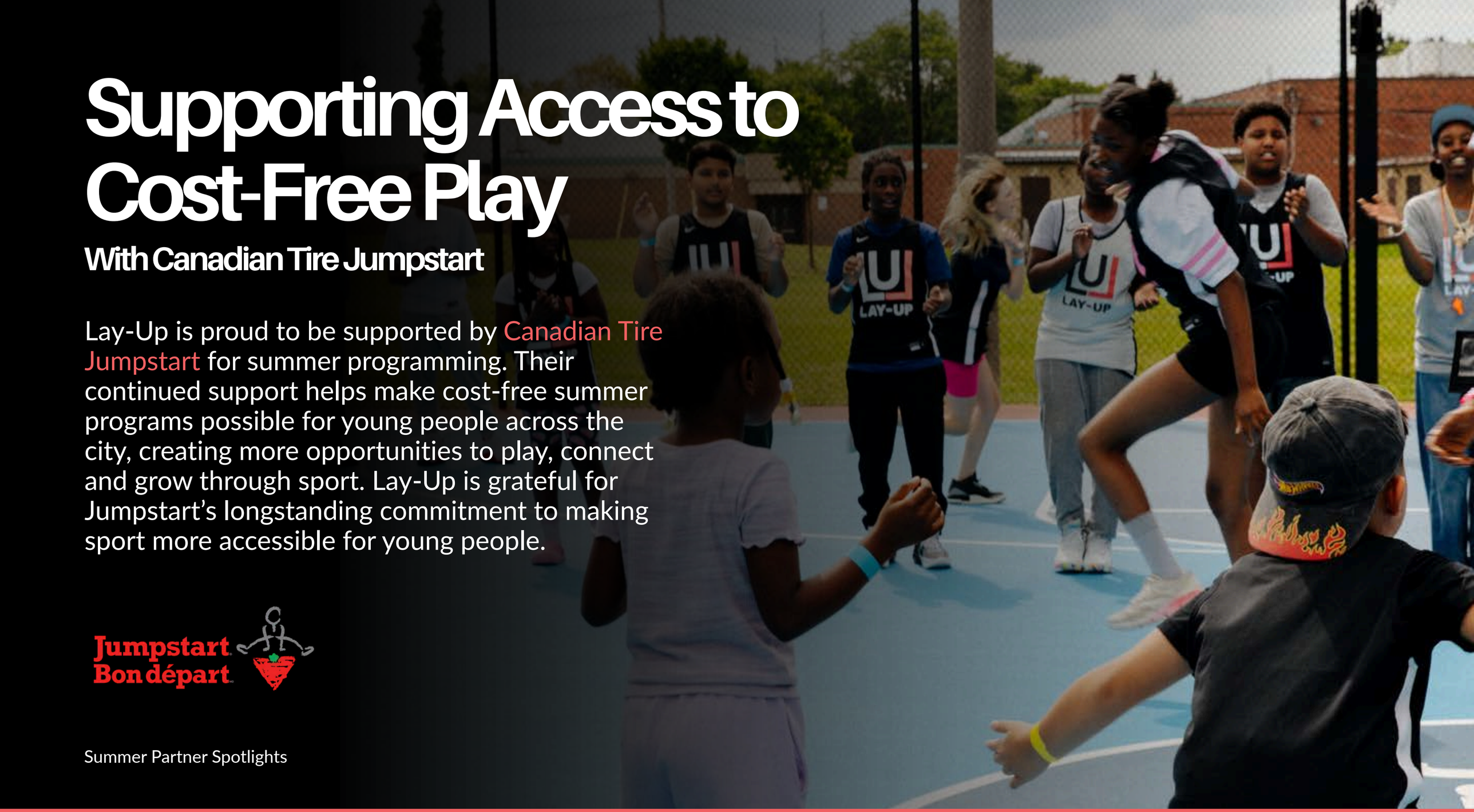
Summer Partner Spotlights

Lay-Up Summer Impact Report 2026

Supporting Access to Cost-Free Play

With Canadian Tire Jumpstart

Lay-Up is proud to be supported by Canadian Tire Jumpstart for summer programming. Their continued support helps make cost-free summer programs possible for young people across the city, creating more opportunities to play, connect and grow through sport. Lay-Up is grateful for Jumpstart's longstanding commitment to making sport more accessible for young people.



Summer Partner Spotlights

Summer Play Days

With Tangerine Bank

Together with Tangerine, Lay-Up hosted two city-wide Play Days, bringing participants and coaches from across the city together to play, compete and celebrate. The days create opportunities to build new relationships, strengthen connections across communities, and experience Lay-Up beyond their individual program locations.



Tangerine
Forward Banking

The Breakfast Club

With Canadian Women in Sport

This summer, a group of young, aspiring female Lay-Up coaches came together in partnership with Canadian Women & Sport to design and deliver The Breakfast Club.

This girls-only morning program was created to provide a welcoming, space where participants could build meaningful relationships, strengthen their sense of belonging, and explore new activities before the start of camp.

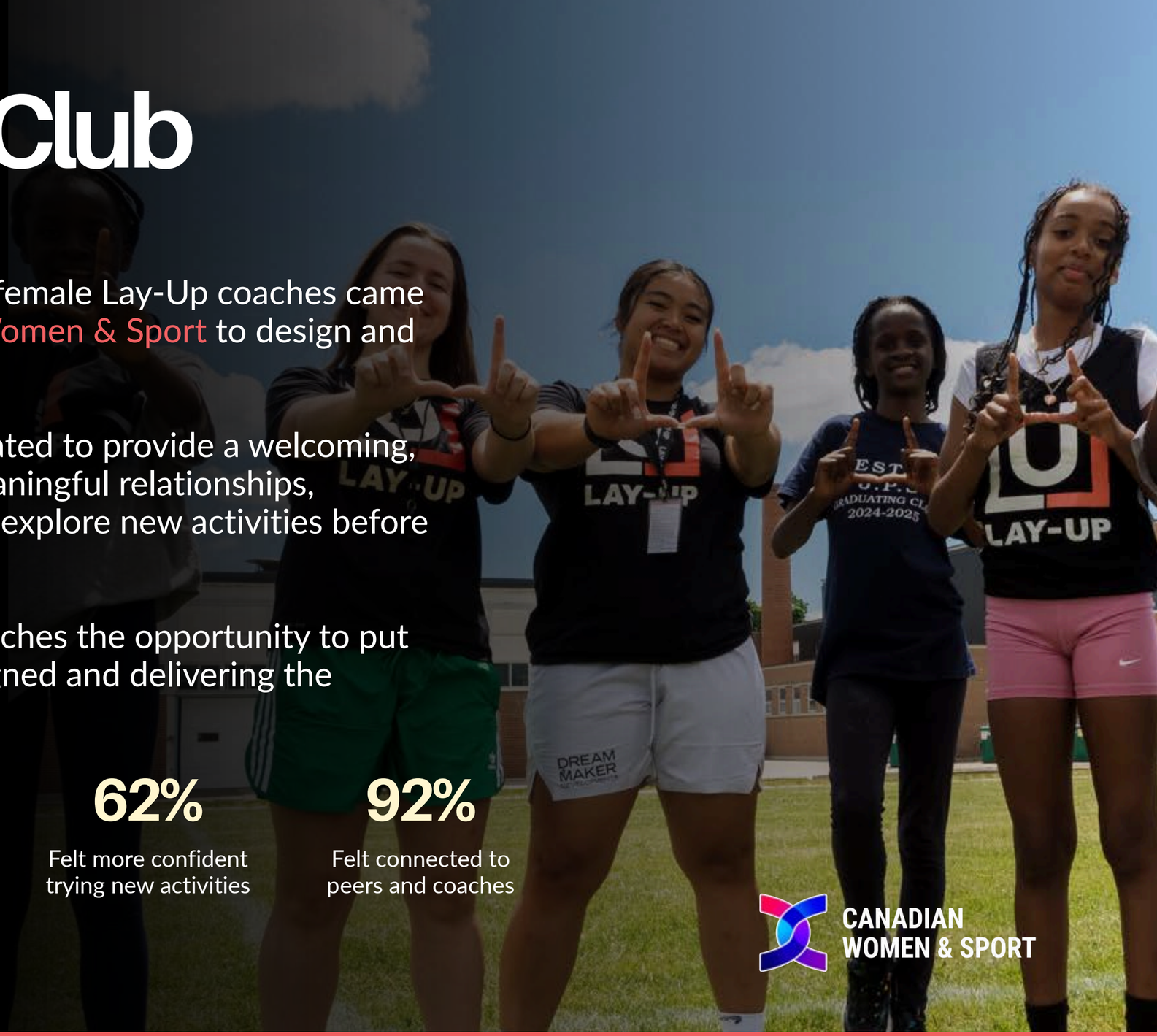
The program also gave young female coaches the opportunity to put their leadership into action by both designed and delivering the program weekly!

14 hours
of added connection with coaches and friend's through the program

97%
said they want to keep participating in sports or physical activities after The Breakfast Club

62%
Felt more confident trying new activities

92%
Felt connected to peers and coaches



CANADIAN WOMEN & SPORT

Measurement, Evaluation & Learning

At Lay-Up, measurement and evaluation are central to how programs are designed, delivered, and improved. Through participant and youth coach feedback, parent surveys, and ongoing community engagement, Lay-Up ensures its programming remains responsive to the needs and experiences of the young people and communities it serves.

01 | Youth-Centred Eval

Play-based surveys created opportunities for younger participants to share their experiences in ways that felt natural, engaging, and age-appropriate.

02 | Staff Co-Creation

A collaborative workshop brought staff perspectives into the evaluation process, identifying opportunities to strengthen programming and learning.

03 | Continuous Leanring

Feedback from youth, families, and staff informs ongoing program improvements, helping Lay-Up adapt to the evolving needs of its communities.

This summer, our evaluation tools have evolved to truly speak the youth's language. From play-based surveys with the kids, to a summer program co-creation workshop with the coaches, this summer's evaluation cycle informed our work in meaningful ways to meet the dynamic realities and changing needs of the Lay-Up community.

Beyond the Court: Measuring Our Impact

Physical Health & Wellbeing

91%

of parents reported improvements in their child's physical health and wellbeing.

76%

of participants agreed Lay-Up helped them become more physically active.

Confidence & Personal Growth

88%

of parents noticed positive changes in their child's confidence.

74%

of participants agreed Lay-Up helped them become better team players.

Connection & Belonging

97%

of parents reported positive interactions with Lay-Up coaches and staff.

66%

of participants agreed they feel a sense of belonging at Lay-Up.

Source: Summer 2026 Parent and Participant Surveys. Results reflect respondents' reported experiences and observations.

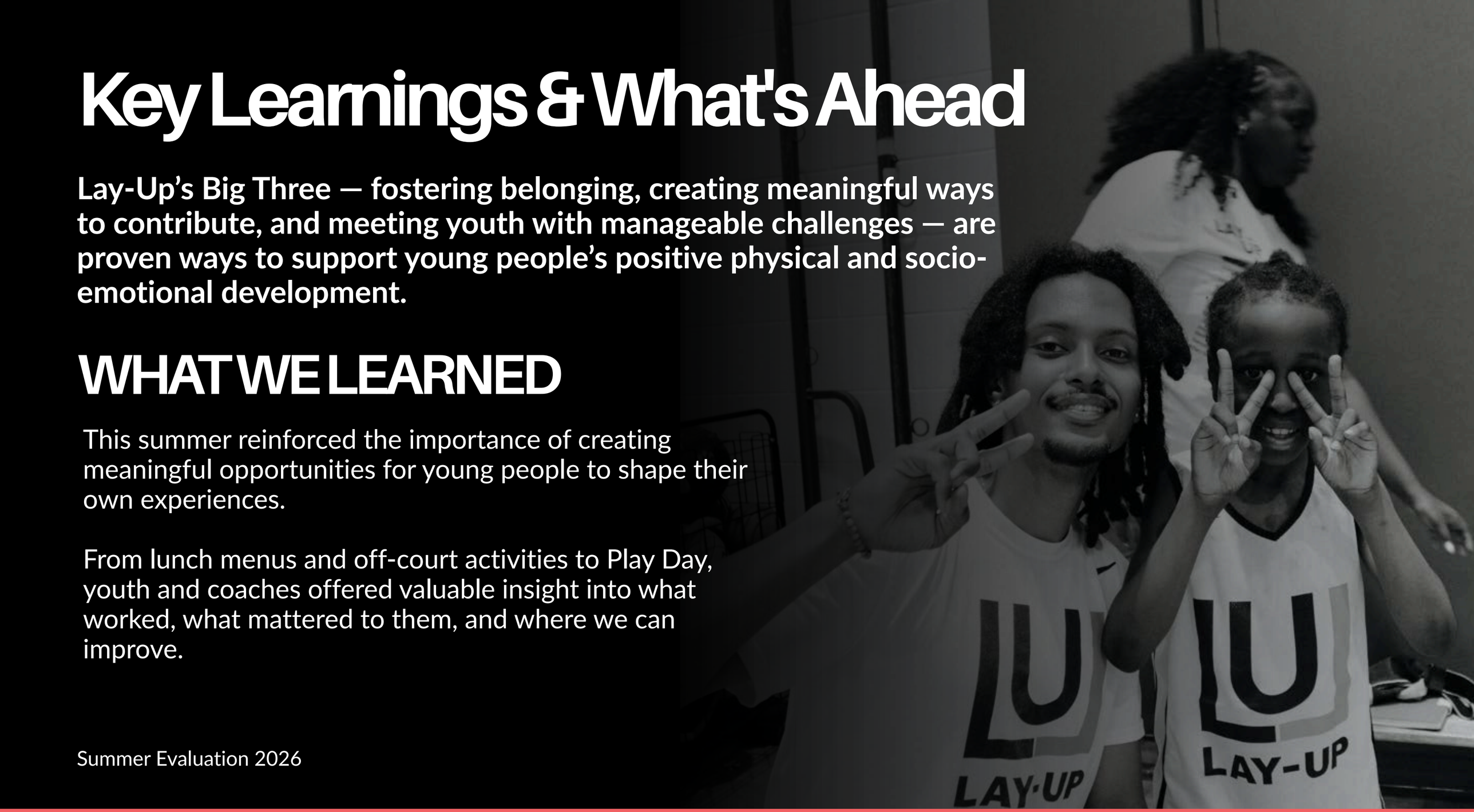
Key Learnings & What's Ahead

Lay-Up's Big Three — fostering belonging, creating meaningful ways to contribute, and meeting youth with manageable challenges — are proven ways to support young people's positive physical and socio-emotional development.

WHAT WE LEARNED

This summer reinforced the importance of creating meaningful opportunities for young people to shape their own experiences.

From lunch menus and off-court activities to Play Day, youth and coaches offered valuable insight into what worked, what mattered to them, and where we can improve.



Key Learnings & What's Ahead

The direction is an evolution of how we work: evidence will continue to inform what we do, while the young people closest to our programs will play a greater role in determining how we bring it to life.

WHAT'S AHEAD

That learning is shaping what comes next for Lay-Up. Going forward, developmental evaluation principles will increasingly inform how we design, test and evolve our programs.

We will pair evidence-informed practice with ongoing data collection, knowledge sharing and meaningful youth participation — creating opportunities for young people to help shape how our programs respond to their needs, experiences and ideas.





To our partners, supporters, and community collaborators,

THANK YOU.

Your generosity and commitment make it possible for us to deliver cost-free programs that help young people build the skills, confidence, and relationships they need to navigate their futures.

LAY-UP