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Close-out Report

*Prince George*

Year 9

*2025*

*EXECUTIVE SUMMARY*

**Adventures in Health Care**, aRotary initiative, is a youth-focused, experiential learning program that introduces high school students to career and educational pathways in the health care sector. Now in its ninth year, this collaboration addresses critical workforce challenges in rural and northern British Columbia by helping students to learn more about themselves and post-secondary education and employment options in health sciences.

Spearheaded by the Rotary Club of Prince George Yellowhead, this multi-day, in-person program is delivered in partnership with School District 57, Northern Health Authority (NHA), College of New Caledonia (CNC) and University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). Each partner plays a key role in program design, delivery, and resource support. Together, these organizations provide students with immersive, hands-on experiences—including hospital tours, health care simulations, campus visits, and direct interaction with professionals.

Yellowhead Rotary chairs the planning meetings as well as coordinates and provides support with logistics, meals, volunteer chaperones, registration, and travel for out-of-town participants. School District No. 57 oversees student selection and pre-event training. CNC and UNBC deliver academic and simulation-based programming, while Northern Health offers real-world exposure to clinical environments and staff.

In 2025, the program introduced several new elements:

* A community health session hosted by BC Cancer
* Involvement of alumni volunteers, now enrolled in post-secondary health programs or working in the field

Student feedback from the 2025 event confirmed overwhelmingly positive outcomes:

* All participants reported the program met or exceeded expectations
* CNC’s hands-on “Saving Emily” simulation ranked highest among daily highlights
* Students expressed strong interest in speaking with more health care professionals
* Meals and peer-to-peer interaction were also highly rated

The program’s **long-term impact** is evident through follow-up surveys of its alumni from 2017–2019:

* 75% pursued post-secondary education
* 97% of those chose health-related programs
* Many are now employed by Northern Health or continuing their studies at CNC or UNBC

Going forward, the program seeks to:

* Expand to new communities through Rotary partnerships
* Increase bursary and scholarship opportunities
* Deepen student-professional engagement
* Continue building a sustainable local health workforce pipeline

The Adventures in Health Care Program is a proven, community-driven model that connects youth to real opportunities in health care. With strong outcomes, growing alumni engagement, and committed inter-agency collaboration, it serves as a blueprint for rural workforce development in British Columbia.

# PROJect Overview

## Background

The health care sector is an important part of the socio-economic fabric of rural British Columbia, creating employment for a highly skilled workforce while addressing social challenges faced by residents of northern British Columbia.

Given the importance of health care, there is a strong interest to strengthen linkages with this industry, our High Schools, Colleges, University, and our youth. The Rotary *Adventures* brand and programs have involved more than 75 years of partnerships with Rotary Clubs in Canada and community organizations and businesses. The Rotary *Adventures* programs provide a platform for them to partner with their community in developing a local program with marketing, registration, travel, communications, accommodation, security and food services for events designed for youth participants. The collaboration aims to provide young people with valuable experiences and insights into the health care sector, fostering future interest and involvement in this critical field.

The key to the success of the Prince George Adventures in Health Care Program is the joint and delivery efforts and collaboration of Northern Health, College of New Caledonia, University of Northern British Columbia and School District No. 57 along with the Rotary Club of Prince George Yellowhead.

## Key Roles for Agencies

Rotary Club of Prince George Yellowhead

The role of the Rotary Club of Prince George Yellowhead is to extend the recognized *Adventures* brand, develop and provide oversight of the Adventures in Health Care Program in Prince George with support of the other collaborating agencies, organize, and oversee the Adventures in Health Care event. The other roles of the Rotary Club with respect to the Program include chairing the planning meetings, providing resources to be adult chaperones for students, assist as registrars for the event, partnering in delivering meals with the collaborating agencies, coordinating travel and safe return of any out-of-town students and marketing through the Rotary network.

School District No. 57

The role of School District No. 57 is a to support the development of the overall Adventures in Health Care Program to meet high school education standards. For Year 9 School District No. 57 lead the program by providing in kind support throughout the year to reduce the cost to student participants, marketing the Program through its school networks both within and outside of the school district, developing the application package, leading the School District No. 57 student application evaluation and interview process, and providing staff throughout the event as support to the students and collaborating agencies. In addition, they delivered an online mandatory participant lab safety course.

Northern Health

The role of Northern Health is to design and provide a comprehensive, engaging, and exciting Program for its portion of the event agenda including facility tours consistent in theme with other portions of the event. For Year 9 Northern Health has further supported the development of the Adventures in Health Care Program by providing in kind and financial support and venues to reduce the cost to student participants, hosting their lunch lunch during its portion of the event, marketing the program though Northern Health and other health sector networks and health care professionals.

College of New Caledonia

The role of the College of New Caledonia is to design and provide a comprehensive, engaging, and exciting Program for its portion of the event agenda consistent in theme with other portions of the event. With respect to Year 9 the College of New Caledonia developed and delivered the agenda items related to its portion of the event and provided financial and in kind support, and venues to reduce the cost to student participants, providing their lunch during its portion of the event, marketing the program through post-secondary sector networks and health education.

University of Northern British Columbia

The role of the University of Northern British Columbia is to design and provide a comprehensive, engaging, and exciting Program for its portion of the event agenda consistent in theme with other portions of the event. For Year 9 the University of Northern British Columbia further supported the development of the Adventures in Health Care Program by providing in kind and financial support, providing their lunch during its portion of the event and venues to reduce the cost to student participants, marketing the Program through post-secondary sector networks and education professionals.

## Organizing Committee Members and Volunteers

The Adventures in Health Care Program – Prince George was planned and developed as a joint initiative of all collaborating agencies. The key contributors are listed in Table 1.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table 1: List of Organizers by Agency – 2025** | **Member** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
| Yellowhead Rotary Club | Ron Davis  Cathy Hellyer |
| Northern Health | Sandra Rossi  Emelye McFarlane  Katrina Molendyk  Leah Likes |
| College of New Caledonia | Jennifer Scott  Dan Ramacharran |
| University of Northern British Columbia | Nathan Lachowski  Tammy Klassen-Ross |
| School District No. 57 | Steven Foster |
|  |  |

The design and delivery of the Adventures in Health Care Program would not have been possible without the support of many agency staff and volunteers that organized hands on education modules for student participants during the event. The support of agency staff and volunteers were also vitally important for the student interview and selection process.

**Yellowhead Rotary continued experimenting with the Community Day in 2025, with BC Cancer hosting a half-day session, increasing the program’s depth by offering hands-on learning about cancer prevention, early detection, and career opportunities in oncology. This collaboration broadened the educational impact and strengthened ties between health care providers and local youth.**

This year also saw the addition of a new group of volunteers, Alumni of the program itself, now young adults attending U.N.B.C. and C.N.C., with some having earned their undergraduate degree and continuing studies while others are now working at Northern Health at the University Hospital.

## Related Activities

The Adventures in Health Care Program is part of a larger set of activities designed to introduce students to career and educational opportunities including:

* School District No. 57 Career Programs which introduce students to a wide variety of career paths.
* Work Experience 12 course offered by School District No. 57 high schools, as well as work placements for select programs in School District No. 57
* Futures in Health at CNC and Careers in Health Care at UNBC field trips offered by the College of New Caledonia and University of Northern British Columbia in partnership with School District No. 57
* College of New Caledonia and University of Northern British Columbia campus tours, scholarships, and bursaries
* Northern and Rural Pathways to Medicine
* Northern Medical Program
* Northern Health career fairs and recruitment web site – specifically those branded “Grow Our Own”.
* Engage and support with reference materials other Rotary Clubs to develop their own local Adventures in Health Care program.

It is expected that collaboration on the Adventures in Health Care Program will lead to expanded Program offerings delivered by these agencies to further develop career pathways in health sciences in rural British Columbia.

## Project Objectives (from the Project Charter)

The Objectives of the Adventures in Health Care are:

1. To support the continued development of the rural health care sector within British Columbia
2. To design a youth-focussed event in 2026 and beyond that creates youth awareness of educational and career opportunities within the health care sector.
3. To increase the supply of health care professionals
4. To contribute to the student population and post-secondary education enrolment in northern British Columbia
5. To develop and continue to refine an application process and select as many students as possible for the Adventures in Health Care Program in Prince George.
6. Provide a forum for health care delivery agencies and education providers to collaborate to design and build partnerships that are linked with but go beyond the Prince George Adventures in Health Care
7. In the future as the Program develops, pursue sustainable Rotary Health Care Bursaries/Scholarships at CNC and UNBC as well as other northern post-secondary schools.
8. Participate in an advisory role with other Rotary clubs who are investigating the program concept with an eye to duplicate the Prince George model.

## Duration of Commitment – Memorandum of Understanding

Discussions around establishing a formal Memorandum of Understanding (M.O.U.) began following the 2019 program. With ongoing turnover in partner leadership roles and a reliance on informal communication and past practices, misunderstandings had become more common. To address this, a formal M.O.U. was introduced in 2022. It now serves as a clear reference point for all parties, supporting continuity, clarity, and accountability. The M.O.U. is reviewed annually by Rotary and program partners at the start of each planning cycle in the fall.

# Outcomes

## Participant Survey Response - 2025

During the event, the student participants were asked to provide feedback. All participants responding to the survey indicated that the program met or exceeded expectations.

* Participants were very positive about all hands-on experiences and negative to lectures in the typical classroom settings.
* The highlights identified by students each day were many, but overall CNC topped the rankings with a team approach that really impressed the youth. The team concept to focus on “saving Emily” with a wind-up team survey using the Kahoot platform.
* The meals and snacks were well received by the students on all four days although the introduction of breakfasts this year had very little uptake by the youth.
* Participants seem to take note of, and express positive comments about being in an environment of likeminded (health care focused) students and organizers.
* There was a general indication of wanting to talk to more professionals.
* Although not expressed in words, it was clear from observations during the four days that some where doing school work during the lunch breaks. Clearly the three days off of school is a stretch for some, particularly so close to exams.

## Survey – Alumni 2017/18/19

* Reflections(pre-pandemic) - With the program in existence for 9 years, all the students from the first three years (2017, 2018 and 2019) have graduated not only from high school but also undergraduate studies. Rotary has stayed in contact with most of them and is able to report what if anything they have done after high school. *For detailed responses, refer to APPENDIX 1 – Alumni Reflections – 2024*
* Status – The pre-pandemic cohort are now between twenty-one and twenty-four years of age. From the same survey we updated these 113 young adults and where they are regarding post-secondary education and/or employment status. The participation rate in post-secondary studies was 75% with 90% in health sciences. *For more detailed information, refer to APPENDIX 2 – Alumni Status - 2024*

## Funding Sources

The current funding for Adventures in Health Care – Prince George includes funding support from Northern Health, CNC and UNBC as well as Yellowhead Rotary. Since day one in 2017, surpluses and/or deficits have been managed by the Rotary Club of Prince George Yellowhead for the exclusive use of Adventures in Health Care – Prince George, as per the 2016 Adventures in Health Care Charter.[[1]](#footnote-2)

## Volunteer and Agency Staff Support

The hard costs of the Adventures in Health Care – Prince George program do not reflect the significant in-kind contributions of volunteer and agency staff time. These individuals are essential to the development, marketing, coordination, application review, and student selection processes that ensure the program’s success. The dedication and effort invested by agency partners and Yellowhead Rotary volunteers are invaluable, and the program could not operate effectively without their ongoing support.Looking Forward

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## Suggested Improvements from Agency Representatives

* Continue to engage the media with the same approach used in 2025.
* Examine vegetarian component of meals to see if there are opportunities for improvement.
* Rotary to investigate funding support of meals from the greater community.
* Involve more Rotary and now Alumni volunteers at the event to support daily needs of students, emergencies, etc.

# GROWTH

It's a testament to the program's success and the value it brings to the participants that the program has been recognized as valuable and duplicated not once but thrice with the launch of sister programs in the Northwest in Terrace in 2023, the Peace Region in 2024 and Quesnel in 2025.

# CONCLUSIONS

The overriding feedback from the students leads us to believe that by participating in hands-on experiences in a variety of activities the students have gained practical knowledge and skills that complimented their formal high school education.

This practical aspect has enhanced their understanding and provided a tangible connection between theory and real-world application, fostering deeper engagement and motivation.

Consequently, students seem to become more driven to excel in their studies and complete their educational programs more efficiently. This underscores the importance of incorporating **experiential learning opportunities**, particularly in fields like healthcare, to optimize student learning outcomes and overall academic success.

Ron Davis, Chair

Adventures in Health Care - Prince George

ROTARY CLUB OF PRINCE GEORGE - YELLOWHEAD

July, 2025

**APPENDIX 1**

**Alumni reflections - 2025**

*Jessica Alsop, Powell River*

* Attended in 2019
* Bachelor of Health Sciences – May, 2024

I attended the Healthcare program in 2019. It was a huge reason why I decided to explore speech and language pathology and what originally sparked my interest. I am a huge fan of the program! I attend STFX University in Nova Scotia. After I graduate next year, I am hoping to start my Master’s Degree in Speech and Language Pathology

*Rachel Aussem, Prince George*

* Attended in 2018
* U.N.B.C. - Bachelor of Social Work, 2024

Adventures in Healthcare allowed me to discover what I did not want to do, which is incredibly useful information. It helped me find my space in social work and supports my role in advocating for acknowledgment of social workers in healthcare spaces.

*Josie Duque, Prince George*

* Attended in 2017
* U.N.B.C. - Undergraduate – Biomedicine – 2023
* U.B.C. School of Dentistry – Class of 2027

In 2017, one of the first sessions at the College of New Caledonia was in the dental labs.  The minute I stepped foot there and learned about all the various aspects of dentistry it solidified that I wanted to study dentistry!

I graduated from UNBC with Bachelor of Health Sciences in Biomedicine last year and am now just finishing my first year at UBC Dentistry school – class of 2027.

*Molly Patterson, Prince George*

* Attended in 2019
* U.N.B.C. - Biomedicine – 2025

I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do, but after finishing the program I had a much better idea of what it would take to go into medicine, which is now my goal. I would strongly recommend this program for those that have a keen interest in health care but have no plan or career pathway.

*Jasmine Turnbull, Terrace*

* Attended in 2018
* U.N.B.C. -Undergraduate - Nursing – 2024

.  Adventures in Health Care allowed me to experience a snippet of many health science careers ultimately leading me to choose a career in nursing! I graduated from UNBC 2024 and am about to start my first job at Mills Memorial in Terrace BC.

I remember this program fondly as I met wonderful people who have moved on to various healthcare professions, it also broadened my understanding of what other health professions do. It has made collaboration within the hospital settings less stressful.

*Savannah Reeves, Prince George*

* Attended in 2017
* U.N.B.C. – Nursing – 2023

I attended Adventures in Health Care when I was in grade 10 in 2017. Having hands-on experience and getting to talk to individuals about their careers in different healthcare fields was an unforgettable experience. Adventures in Health Care is a great opportunity to get teens inspired about their future in healthcare and helping others.

My update is I am a Registered Nurse at UHNBC working on the Internal Medicine Unit for just over one year now. I'm looking forward to going into teaching at UNBC for the nursing program as I have realized how much I enjoy education and the impact it has on young healthcare professionals.

**APPENDIX 2**

**A closer look**

Data and interview collected since the program’s inception in 2017 have been overwhelmingly positive.

The original cohort of 111 students who attended between 2017 and 2019 have been monitored since that time until 2024. Of that cohort, 79% have continued their studies in health sciences, some with certificates as health care aid, but most with extended studies that include Sonography, Nursing, Chemistry, Social Work and Biomedicine to name a few.

As of the spring of 2025, 90% have graduated from school at UNBC or CNC and are working in their chosen field or are pursuing further studies.

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**APPENDIX 3**

The annual surveys from the program participants and their families over the years continue to confirm the positive results of the program. This suggests that the program meets its objectives and providing valuable experiences for those involved

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In addition, the feedback has been instrumental in maintaining and improving the program, as it highlights what aspects are working well and what areas may benefit from further attention or development. The addition of new agencies has also helped to broaden the program offerings. The hard data collected tells us that those who continue through high school and choose the health care field enter the workforce **three to four years** earlier than the norm for most professions.

**Since its inception in 2017, the program has delivered a hands-on one-to-one program to three hundred and fifty students and online to three hundred high school students across British Columbia.**

1. Charter – Adventures in Health Care V2– July 16, 2016 <https://adventuresinhealthcare.com/org-resources> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)