



**TAKE A HIKE**  
FOUNDATION

# Director of Philanthropy, Individual Giving



Executive Profile Presented By

THE  
**DISCOVERY**  
GROUP

# Overview of Take a Hike and the Role

Young people aged 15-24 are more likely to experience mental illness and substance use than any other age group. Started over 25 years ago, Take a Hike empowers vulnerable youth to change the trajectory of their lives with a full-time mental health and emotional well-being program embedded in an alternate education classroom.

*How?* Take a Hike engages youth with intensive, continuous clinical counselling, outdoor experiential learning, and community. Our public school district partners provide high quality education, and together, we empower youth with the skills and resilience they need to graduate high school, build healthy relationships, and achieve success – however they define it.

## **Our mission addresses our desire to:**

- Empower youth, wherever they might be in their journey.
- Support skills development by youth that set them up for success today and beyond.
- Continuously improve the quality of our service offering in aid of our mission.

Take a Hike is a young organization that has achieved incredible success in a short time. With an ambitious strategic plan that aims to meet the growing needs of the community, a planned expansion to Ontario, and our upcoming 25th anniversary, we have plotted a course to strategically and deliberately grow our team of fundraising professionals.

**Key among our new hires will be the new role of Director, Individual Giving.** The Director will gather the various branches of our major gifts program into a cohesive whole, ensure the systems and processes are in place to grow our major gifts and planned gift program, lead a small team, and manage our top individual donors.

This is a compelling opportunity for an experienced major gift fundraiser to:

- Join an organization whose staff and leadership truly live their mission and are devoted to youth;
- Build a program within a successful and growing social profit organization;
- Collaborate with kind and committed donors to make a direct and impactful difference in the lives of vulnerable youth;
- Have fun! At Take a Hike you can truly show up as you are.

# Information for Candidates

This search is being led by Take a Hike's search partner, Christoph Clodius at The Discovery Group, at [christoph@thediscoverygroup.ca](mailto:christoph@thediscoverygroup.ca).

If you or someone you know is interested or curious, please be in touch.

## Application Timing and Selection Process

All submissions should be received by September 26, 2024. Please apply to Christoph with a cover letter/expression of interest and resume/CV, in the same document please. After applying, candidates will have the chance to share their experience and ask questions throughout the process.

## Compensation & Benefits

We have budgeted a salary of \$91,500 - \$130,000, commensurate with experience, based on a 37.5-hour work week.

Generous employer-paid benefits (including MSP premiums) include: extended health and dental, including a Health Spending Account; Retirement Savings Plan with employer matching; four weeks' holidays, an additional holiday closure and generous personal and bereavement days to support mental wellness, family wellness, or other needs; and professional development budget and training opportunities.

## Workplace Location

This is a full-time permanent position based in our downtown Vancouver office with a minimum of two days a week in the office and availability for some evenings and weekends and/or travel within BC, dependent on the needs of the department. A one time financial credit will be given to support home office needs.



### **Diversity and Inclusion**

Take a Hike values the diversity of the people it hires and serves. Diversity at Take a Hike means fostering a workplace in which individual differences are recognized, appreciated, respected, and responded to in ways that fully develop and utilize each person's talents and strengths. Individuals who identify as LGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous, racialize Canadians, or candidates with lived experience in mental health are encouraged to consider this opportunity.

*Take a Hike takes our commitment to mental health seriously and we live our values.*

### **Land Acknowledgement:**

We acknowledge that the land on which we live, learn, work, and adventure is the unceded traditional and ancestral territories of the Coast and interior Salish people. This land is home to many diverse Indigenous peoples and we honour their connection to the land, oceans and rivers. We respect the importance of the environment to our strength as a community – a value that Take a Hike Foundation shares. Our commitment to reconciliation can be found on our website [here](#).



## About Take a Hike Foundation

Take a Hike Foundation is a leader in providing early intervention and prevention mental health support in partnership with public school districts in BC. Founded in 2000 with one program in Vancouver, in 2017 we set a ten-year vision of scaling to every community in BC with a need, capacity and desire for the program.

**To learn more about Take a Hike Foundation:**

<https://www.takeahikefoundation.org>

Over the past five years, Take a Hike's program capacity has tripled and we now serve up to 300 youth annually through 15 programs across three regions:

1. Lower Mainland: Vancouver, Burnaby, Delta, West Vancouver and, opening in September, Coquitlam & Mission.
2. Vancouver Island: Nanaimo, Cowichan Valley, Sooke, Saanich.
3. Interior: West Kootenays, Merritt, Vernon, Penticton and Central Okanagan.

In this time, Take a Hike has discovered *critical practice-based evidence* as to what program ingredients help youth make positive changes. This evidence, combined with existing empirical literature from education and psychology, has resulted in a one-of-a-kind program in Canada. The Take a Hike model includes staffing each program with a teacher, youth worker, and mental health clinician. Through the program, youth are offered an intensive opportunity to counter past negative experiences in school and improve mental health and resilience ahead of a critical transition time in their lives. Youth can stay engaged in school, receive support and treatment, and be referred to additional community-based services, thereby improving their health, increasing their ability to complete their education and be successful in life – however they define it.





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# Strategic Plan

July 2024 – June 2028



## Vision

All youth believe in their potential and are on their path to success.

## Mission

Take a Hike empowers vulnerable youth with intentional clinical counselling, land-based learning, and community. Our public school district partners provide high quality education, and together, we empower youth with the skills and resilience they need to graduate high school, build healthy relationships, and achieve success – however they define it.

## Scaling Aspiration

By June 2028 we will have reached our scaling aspiration to:

- Grow to **25 programs**, serving up to **500 youth annually**. Add
- programs in the **Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Thompson/ Okanagan, National Capital, and Ontario Golden Horseshoe**
- regions. Assess feasibility of **exponential growth**.

## Strategic Priorities And Objectives



### Grow Program Impact

- Grow to 25 Programs.
- Continue research and development to deliver high-quality programming based on the Program Model and Theory of Change.
- Support youth to fully engage in, and benefit from, the Take a Hike Program.
- Help youth transition to what is next for them.



### Engage People

- Attract, develop, and retain the right staff, volunteers, and partners for growth.
- Maintain a strong culture that aligns with Take a Hike's values as we continue to grow.
- Build an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible organization.
- Establish effective workforce planning processes including succession planning and developing a strong leadership pipeline.



### Expand Our Community Of Champions

- Raise the philanthropic and government resources required to implement the strategic plan.
- Deliver an exemplary donor experience through exceptional engagement and stewardship.
- Connect community to philanthropy through relationships and aligned values.
- Build brand awareness to expand a dedicated donor, volunteer, youth and partner community.



### Build Capacity For Growth And Success

- Ensure effective change management practices support and care for all engaged in change.
- Adopt technology and automation for greater efficiencies, effectiveness, and youth impact.
- Optimize systems for effective cross-country operations.
- Ensure governance structure supports national growth.

# The Take a Hike Program

Five days a week throughout the school year, and weekly in the summer, Take a Hike youth participate in four core program activities:



*“Academics at Take a Hike are different – I work hard, and my teachers support me so that I can be successful. I’m learning things I didn’t know before, and I made the honour roll for the first time.”*

- Take a Hike youth

## Academics

Self-paced, individualized education plans and a focus on experiential learning give youth the opportunity to relate to academics differently and take all the courses required to graduate high school.

As well as spending four days a week in the classroom, youth spend one day each week learning outdoors where they can test and apply knowledge to real-life situations. Youth report increased engagement in academics and course retention by learning experientially and in the wilderness.

## Counselling

Embedded in each classroom is a full-time registered mental health clinician who provides continuous, intensive support, helping youth develop social and emotional skills, work through challenges, and address mental health concerns in an individual and group setting. Our mental health clinicians use a trauma-informed approach and a range of evidence-based theoretical models tailored to the individual student’s needs and the needs of their family.

For many of our youth, Take a Hike is their first encounter with therapy. Whether checking in for ten-minutes between classes or taking the time to work through a personal crisis, youth have access to full-time mental health support both in and out of the classroom.



## Outdoor Land-Based Learning (ABL)

Land-based learning provides youth with regular opportunities to disconnect from technology and social media, as well as substance use and other habits, while developing resilience and self-awareness that help them navigate the challenges of life and achieve their goals. Physical exercise and mindfulness practices improve mental and physical health, and working in teams helps youth build and test relationships that are supported by a team of trained staff.

The Take a Hike program involves one full-day field trip each week and two annual multi-day wilderness trips ranging from three to ten days. Around half to three quarters of our youth will leave their community for the first time with Take a Hike.

*“The wilderness trips were the biggest learning experiences for me. I feel that this is because people tend to be far more honest and vulnerable with themselves and others while out of their comfort zone. This allowed some very important conversations with myself and others.”*

- Take a Hike Alumni

## Community

Every week, youth engage in service-learning and volunteering in their community in the spirit of giving back in gratitude for the support they have received. Through this volunteer work youth also experience first-hand the value and significance of their own contributions.

Youth are supported in the classroom by volunteer tutors and mentors who offer specialized skills to help them with different courses and encourage them with their academic work. Through this community in the classroom, youth learn to realize they are surrounded by safe and caring adults, and to trust that they belong to a community that cares about them and will support them.



*“The highlight of community work for me is seeing the big bright smiles on the people I have helped; it just warms my heart.”*

- Take a Hike youth



### Each youth annually engages in an average of:

- 178 days of programming
- 41 individual clinical counselling sessions
- 161 hours of group counselling
- 300+ hours of land-based activities
- 10-20 hours of community volunteering
- Academics that enable youth to complete requirements for graduation



Take a Hike's evaluation tools and processes are grounded in our Program Model and Theory of Change, which was developed in collaboration with experts in child and youth development and Indigenous education. Throughout each school year, we measure and compile a number of metrics that we publish annually in our Yearbook and elsewhere, including graduation rates and mental well-being measures.

Take a Hike's mental health clinicians conduct detailed intake questionnaires and annual pre- and post-program surveys with each participant that include a range of questions related to our target outcomes (e.g. social and emotional skills, resilience, connectedness, and mental health and well-being). In addition to measurable metrics, youth needs and outcomes are regularly assessed by well-trained program staff, and youth reflect on their own outcomes and achievements through activities like journaling, feedback and regular counselling sessions.

Take a Hike leaves a powerful, positive impact – for youth and communities – change that lasts for their lifetimes and beyond, positively affecting future generations. In the long term, Take a Hike supports youth to become resilient young adults who have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to face and overcome life's challenges and forge their own path.

The deep transformation experienced by each individual is a direct result of the intentional, evidence-based program Take a Hike delivers. This investment in each youth leads to ripple effects that extend to communities and society at large. Graduates rely less on medical support services and problematic substance use; stay clear of criminal behaviour; and are far less likely to experience homelessness. These ripple effects have even been quantified by the accountancy and professional services company PwC: for every dollar invested in a Take a Hike youth, they generate \$5.60 to \$13.40 in social return to their communities.

## **Our Commitment to Indigenous Youth and Reconciliation**

In 2023, 35% of Take a Hike's youth identified as Indigenous. We strive for a community of practice that is informed and guided by First Peoples principles of learning.

We are committed to work closely with Indigenous Leaders and First Nations to ensure our program is inclusive, safe, and culturally responsive. Our efforts towards reconciliation and relationships with Indigenous communities are woven into our program and our organization by our program team, previous led by our Director of Indigenous Relations. We endorse the Canada Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) 94 Calls to Action and the calls to justice from the Final Report on the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWGs). With the guidance of our Indigenous partners, we are aligning our work with the spirit and intent of BC's implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

## **Program Model and Theory of Change**

Over the past twenty-plus years, Take a Hike has developed a proven, trauma-informed model that is grounded in best practice evidence.

This approach, combined with existing knowledge from education and psychology, has resulted in a one-of-a-kind program in Canada. We believe that learning must be approached as a holistic process that simultaneously supports the development of the mind, heart, body, and spirit.

Take a Hike's program environment is based on several core elements that allow youth who have endured past adversity to thrive:

- Relationships that are safe and caring
- An environment that is safe and predictable
- Individualized support that meets their unique and changing needs
- Relationship continuity through shared time and learning among staff and youth
- The belief that all youth can succeed and that what constitutes success is individually determined

In 2022/23, we updated our Theory of Change to weave in new learnings and approaches, including more trauma-informed language and attachment theory; a greater focus on culture, diversity, and the individual needs of youth across the province; and increased focus on youth development and personal growth.

## Philanthropy at Take a Hike

Take a Hike depends on our supporters to provide these programs; we receive no ongoing dependable government funding.

So to help achieve our ambitious goals, the Development Team has created a plan to guide growth in philanthropic and other revenue from a diversified range of sources. Since the beginning of the last strategic plan (2021/2022), Take a Hike has seen its annual revenue grow from \$2.6 million to \$6.4 million with a target to achieve \$10 million annually by the end of the current plan (2028). This growth is due in large part to a deeply committed and growing community of private donors who believe in the youth Take a Hike serves and their success.

Given this performance, coupled with internal plans (which focus on raising awareness of Take a Hike's brand) and external trends around youth mental health, there is potential for significant, additional growth in individual mid- and major gifts revenue over the next years.

Capacity building is a strong priority for Take a Hike in order to achieve its strategic goals. In addition to a Director, Individual Giving, Take a Hike has recently hired a Senior Manager, Annual Giving to join the current team of ten and has plans to continue to expand the Development Team by four additional roles in the next 18 months. Take a Hike has had success in cultivating major gifts to date, with several 7-figure gifts having been pledged. Our major gift threshold is \$25,000.

The Director will inherit a strong and active portfolio of established, long-term donors who have supported Take a Hike on an ongoing basis, some since we were established; the opportunity therefore exists to engage them in a deeper and transformational manner. The Director will also partner closely with donors, the Senior Manager of Annual Giving, and other staff to identify and qualify new major gift prospects. Finally, given Take a Hike's relative youth, our planned giving program has been reactive; we will look to the Director to begin to implement gift planning best-practices and develop our long-term potential in this area.

## Key Responsibilities

Reporting to the Senior Director, Development, the newly created Director, Individual Giving serves as an integral member of the organization and development leadership team, building a robust individual major gifts program to advance Take a Hike's mission.

The Director is responsible for identifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding potential and existing individual donors, with a focus on qualifying and upgrading Take a Hike donors. The Director of Individual Giving will build on and establish and implement comprehensive systems and strategies to increase the number of donors and revenue from major gifts with a personal target of \$1,000,000 annually.

Three key priorities will be to increase renewals and leverage increased giving, grow the pipeline of individual major donors, and institutionalize a planned giving program.

The Director, Individual Giving will join a Development Team that describes themselves as "passionate, hard-working, collaborative, respectful, and flexible". The role will supervise two staff (and growing with the needs of the organization) with the specific role(s) yet to be determined.

### Specifically, the Director will:

#### Fundraising + Donor Relations

- Develop and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy for an individual major and planned giving program grounded in best practices that influences individual donors, donor advised funds, estates, and family foundations.
- Actively manage a portfolio of new and existing donors to develop and implement comprehensive individual strategies for qualifying, cultivating, soliciting, and stewarding major and planned gift donors.
- Thoroughly qualify new and lapsed prospective donors to ascertain interest and readiness in giving at a major gift level.
- Maintain a stewardship portfolio, ensuring that donors receive personalized correspondence, reports, and updates in a timely and professional manner.
- Work in partnership with Foundation teams to coordinate strategies with assigned prospects, developing tailored and personalized proposals, and actively participating in and occasionally taking the lead with cultivation events.



- Identify giving patterns of current donors and high-level prospects. Identify donors with potential for growth and increased involvement with Take a Hike.
- Act as a key ambassador of the organization at events, conferences, meetings, etc.

### **Leadership + People Management**

- Provides direct management, supervisory responsibilities, and establishes priorities for individual and/or major giving team members as the team grows to meet the needs of Take a Hike
- Recruits, onboards, trains, and evaluates staff and ensures resources are in place for ongoing mentorship and professional development.
- Provide leadership and direction to team members through advice, interpretation of policies, procedures, and processes, including resolution of issues related to daily activities.
- Assists in the development, implementation and evaluation of operating procedures and policies related to the efficient and effective operation of the individual and/or major giving team(s) with a goal to maximize fundraiser productivity.
- Foster a positive and respectful workplace and cooperative working relationships with employees, and other stakeholders.
- Contribute to an organizational culture that is safe and ethical which attracts, retains, and motivates employees to contribute to the successful delivery of programs and services.
- Act as an ambassador for Take a Hike's culture, ensuring all team members understand and are living our values, following our Team Guidebook and are championing Take a Hike's brand.

### **Database, Compliance and Donor Privacy**

- Ensure compliance with all relevant fundraising regulations and donor privacy laws.
- Safeguard donor information and maintain confidentiality.
- Record account activity in relationship management system to facilitate open communication and team-based fundraising
- Keep meticulous donor records to improve donor engagement and identify major gift prospects.

# Traits & Competencies

## The ideal Director is:

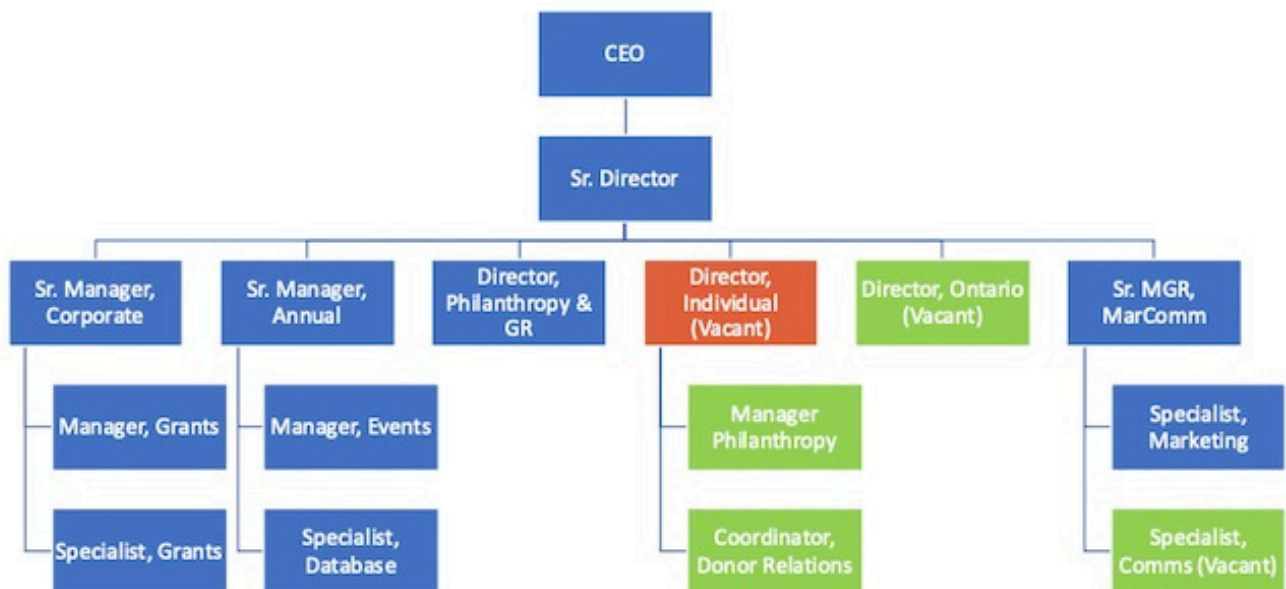
- Passionate for youth and supporting vulnerable populations; lived experience with the mission would be a significant asset.
- An action-oriented and experienced relationship builder and major gifts fundraiser who loves engaging with others and the thrill of asking for a gift.
- Experienced working in or building a “best practice” individual giving program. A keen and visionary builder. Can help elevate the sights of our team and staff. Collaborative by nature.
- Highly emotional intelligent and has comfort with being vulnerable; open to self-reflection and sharing among safe and caring team members. A sense of humour is essential.
- Confident, seasoned, and credible; gravitas and assertiveness to lead conversations with high net worth individuals, influential volunteers, and Take a Hike leadership.
- Nimble and agile to thrive in a growing and changing environment.
- Able to influence, persuade, and collaborate with individuals and teams at all levels, both internally and externally.
- Adept at making data-informed decisions; analytical, solutions-oriented, and can identify key trends, establish benchmarks, and provide credible analyses and business recommendations.
- Excellent in organization and time and project management.

## Desired Qualifications

- Significant and progressive strategic fundraising experience, including a proven track record in major gift fundraising, donor stewardship, and donor and engagement
- Expert relationship manager with proven success in identifying, soliciting, and securing gifts, ideally including a strong track record closing gifts at the 5- to 7-figure level.
- Expert knowledge of fundraising and donor cycles, and major and planned giving.
- Demonstrated experience working closely with and supporting key volunteers to help them confidently and successfully engage in major gift fundraising.
- Excellent interpersonal skills with ability to inspire confidence from staff, and other stakeholders.
- Experience managing and leading a staff of other fundraisers.
- Previous experience managing high performing fundraising teams.

- Ability to think strategically and manage competing priorities in a high-volume and results-oriented environment.
- Excellent written and verbal communication and presentation skills
- Ability to work with confidential information, data, and materials.
- Strong computer skills: comfort with Microsoft Office suite and basic knowledge of CRM databases (Salesforce is an asset).
- Bachelor's Degree (supplemented with a fundraising diploma and/or CFRE certification preferred) or equivalent education, training, and experience.
- Commitment to Association of Fundraising Professionals code of ethics and standards.
- Knowledge of Non-Profit sector and CRA fundraising rules and guidelines.
- The ability to work varied hours as needed; some travel through the province will be required, as will local travel to meet with donors.

## Development Team



# Take a Hike Foundation Leadership



**Gordon Matchett**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Take a Hike Foundation

Optimistic, sociable, and strategic, with over 25 years of experience in the not-for-profit and corporate sector. Gordon is responsible to the

Board of Directors – and entire Take a Hike community – for the current operations and future direction of Take a Hike. Gordon's strategic approach and ability to build strong relationships has nurtured the growth and success of the organization since he joined in 2016.

Having earned a Master of Business Administration, Gordon has held senior positions in several other charities as well as a major Canadian bank. Having accomplished so much in his career, he decided to take three years off to travel and reflect on life, pursuing his passion for self-improvement and becoming the best version of himself. After his travels Gordon returned to BC, doing some consulting work in social enterprise, and worked with the Dalai Lama Centre during the Dalai Lama's visit to Vancouver in 2014.

Outside of work, Gordon likes to decompress and plan small trips in his free time from walks in Stanley Park, to kayaking and downhill skiing with those closest to him. Of course, if time allows for it, he would like nothing more than to take an extended vacation to Southeast Asia, visiting bustling cities and tropical island paradises for the food, marine life and freedom of riding scooters around the island. Ask Gordon about the overall operations of Take a Hike, who to contact for more insight into the organization, and anything travel related.



# Take a Hike Foundation Leadership



**Larissa Hayes**  
**Senior Director of Development**  
**Take a Hike Foundation**

Larissa leads Take a Hike's Development team where government relations, fundraising and marketing collaborate.

Applying her passion for what the not-for-profit sector and philanthropy can achieve, she personally assists generous individuals and corporate donors in connecting their philanthropic goals with Take a Hike's mission.

Larissa started her career in the federal government. After which, she began working (and found her inspiration) in charitable organizations serving missions from healthcare to social services, and she eventually found philanthropy and professional fundraising in 2014. Her humorous, strategic, and data-driven personality coupled with her forward-thinking work style cultivates a comfortable environment where donors and co-workers alike feel empowered by their decisions. Larissa's passion lies in helping others succeed by laying down the groundwork and leaning into people's strengths to support their goals.

Outside of the office, she likes to knit, cook and travel with her husband to tropical island paradises like Phú Quốc Vietnam. Ask Larissa about the different ways to get involved with Take a Hike as well as the statistics and data behind supporting our program or her childhood obsession with and collection of Popples.



## Navigating complex challenges for social profits

The Discovery Group is an international consulting firm dedicated to the social profit sector. We believe that social profit organizations can change the world. Since 2017 it has been our mission to help social profits across the globe achieve their vision and elevate community impact. We work side-by-side with our clients to help them envision change, determine how to make it happen, and put the necessary tools and skills in place for success.

[www.thediscoverygroup.ca](http://www.thediscoverygroup.ca)

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