

NOVEMBER 1, 2026 | Youth Leadership Animators

What does it mean to be a leader in the church? For eight young people from across the United Church of Canada, this summer was an opportunity to explore that question through the Leadership Animator program.

The Leadership Animator program employs six youth (ages 15-21) from across Canada to participate in leadership development, vocational discernment, Collective conference leadership, and church staff placements. Now in its third year, the Leadership Animator program continues to empower youth and expose them to the life of the wider church.

This past summer, the Leadership Animators took part in General Council, helped lead workshops and discipleship groups at Collective 2026, and spent time shadowing church staff to learn more about the work happening in congregations and communities.

They also ensured they took the time to learn from one another. During time together at Crieff Hills, they shared stories about their lives and experiences in the church, enjoyed a nature walk, and explored the church's role in truth, reconciliation, and decolonization.

Opportunities to connect happened online, too. Through daily gatherings, the young leaders took turns guiding worship and land acknowledgements, while learning about everything from anti-racism and Indigenous reconciliation to church history, finance, and growth.

But leadership isn't just about learning how to organize an event or lead a group. It's also about building relationships, encouraging others, and helping people recognize their own potential.

Through these experiences, the Leadership Animators each year gain confidence, explore their passions, and discover the many ways they can be involved in the life of the church. They're also bringing fresh perspectives and voices to a wider church where youth leadership continues to grow in importance.

Thank you for supporting programs like the Leadership Animators through Mission and Service. [Let's give generously.](#) Together, we're helping young people grow in faith, discover their gifts, and shape the future of our church.