

Monthly Message: What March Break makes possible at Streams

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March is such a strange month, especially in Canada.

The snow is half melted, half clinging on for dear life. The days are a little longer, but not quite warm. School is in full swing, but everyone is just a bit tired.

Right in the middle of it all sits March Break.

For some families, it is a long-awaited pause. For others, it is a logistical puzzle: Who will watch the kids? How do we keep them busy? What can we afford?

Underneath all of that, there is something else: possibility. A whole week of it.

At Streams, we think a lot about what to do with that kind of time. Not just how to fill it, but how to honour it.

Because March Break is not only a break from school. It can also be a break from routine, from labels, from "I'm not that kind of kid," and "I could never do that." It can be a window for trying on something new.

In our March Break programs, I have watched this play out in quiet, powerful ways.

A child who has never picked up a paintbrush spends an afternoon experimenting with colour and suddenly discovers they love blending blues and greens until it looks like the ocean. Another who has been constantly told that they are "too loud" finds a place where volume is not a problem, it is presence, and it belongs in a script or a song.

Some kids arrive with a clear sense of what they want to do. Others show up because a parent or guardian just needed somewhere safe and positive for them to be for the week. Both are welcome. Both matter.

What I love about March Break at Streams is that it gives room for both rest and stretch.

There are moments of silliness and laughter, when the main goal is just to enjoy being together. There are also moments where a facilitator gently nudges a child to try something that feels a little outside their comfort zone. Reading a line out loud. Sharing an idea with the group. Finishing a project, they are tempted to abandon halfway through.

None of these moments are huge on their own. But together, they add up.

Midway through the week, you start to see small shifts. Kids who walked in on Monday in withdrawal from not having their devices are suddenly deeply focused on a canvas, a script, a piece of fabric, or a set of ingredients. Children who did not know each other at all are trading jokes or cheering each other on. You hear things like, "I never thought I could do that," or "Can I try again?"

That is the opportunity I see inside March Break.

In a world that tells children to hurry, keep up, perform, it offers a brief window where the goal is to explore, create, and connect. To let their minds and hands work in a different way. To experience what it feels like to be in a space that is safe enough to take small risks.

And for us as adults, it offers an opportunity too.

An opportunity to see our children in a new light. To notice how brave they are when they step into a room full of strangers. To notice how kind they can be when they welcome someone who is new. To listen to the way they talk about what they did that day, and pay attention to what lights them up.

It is also an opportunity for us as a community to decide what we value.

When a local business sponsors a program slot, or a donor gives so that a child can attend on scholarship, they are saying, "We believe this kind of week matters." When a parent chooses an arts camp instead of just more screen time, they are saying, "Your development and creativity matter." When volunteers and staff show up early, stay late, and steady the edges of the day, they are saying, "Your sense of belonging matters."

At Streams, we do our best to make sure that March Break is not only about keeping kids occupied, but about opening doors. We offer programs in creative areas like art, performance, music, and culinary skills, and we work hard to remove barriers through subsidies and scholarships whenever we can.

Because underneath all of it is a simple belief: given the chance, children will surprise you.

Give them time. Give them tools. Give them a safe, welcoming space, and they will show you new sides of themselves. Curiosity you did not know was there. Patience you were not sure they had. Gentleness with others. Pride in their own work.

This March Break, whether your child spends it at Streams, at home, with family, or somewhere else entirely, my hope is that you will be able to see and celebrate some of those small surprises. The moments that hint at who they are becoming.

And if you are someone who believes, as we do, that these opportunities should be within reach for every child, there are a few ways you can help:

You can enroll a child or share our March Break offerings and upcoming programs with a family who might benefit. You can support our scholarship fund by becoming One of 1000, our campaign to find 1,000 monthly donors giving \$10 a month so we can keep saying "yes" when cost is a barrier.

Most of all, you can keep believing that what happens in one week in March can echo far beyond it.

Because sometimes the most important growth does not happen in the big, shiny moments. It happens in the ordinary ones: in the middle of the year, in the middle of a class, in the middle of a week that might have otherwise just passed by.

And those are exactly the moments we are here for.